

THE WORD WHO IS LIFE: THIS IS OUR  
SUBJECT

*Blessed Antonio Rosmini's Commentary on the Introduction to  
St John's Gospel  
Edited and Explained*

*J. Anthony Dewhirst*

Bible quotations, unless otherwise noted, from “New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.”

ISBN 978 1 899093 04 5

© J. Anthony Dewhirst

First Published 2011 by  
THE ROSMINIAN INSTITUTE OF CHARITY  
St Mary's, Derryswood, Womersley, Guildford,  
Surrey GU5 0RA, United Kingdom.

Printed by Short Run Press Limited, Bittern Road,  
Sowton Industrial Estate, Exeter EX2 7LW, United Kingdom.  
[www.shortrunpress.co.uk](http://www.shortrunpress.co.uk)

Title: Taken from 1 *Jn* 1: 1 (JB).

FRONT COVER: Statue of Blessed Antonio Rosmini, Domenico Greco di Milano,  
Centro Antonio Rosmini, Isola di Capo Rizzuto, Calabria.

BACK COVER: Icon of the Holy Trinity, Andrei Rublev (c. 1370–1430), Tretyakov  
Gallery, Moscow.

# Contents

	Page
Contents	3
Foreword	5
Abbreviations	7
Introduction	9
1. The Eternal Word	24
2. Commentary on the First Three Verses of John	58
3. In Him was Life and the Life was the Light of Men	89
4. The Resurrection and the Eucharistic Life	131
Bibliography	185
Index of Biblical References	187
Index of Persons	190
General Index	193

## Foreword

This is the second of Rosmini's great theological works, the first being the *Antropologia soprannaturale* which I edited in 2010. Like this work the *Introduzione del Vangelo secondo Giovanni commentata* [A Commentary on the Introduction to the Gospel of John] is characterised by philosophy, theology and Scripture marvellously and harmoniously intertwined and enriched by references to the Fathers of the Church, St Thomas and other great authors.

I first translated the work in 1975 and note that I mentioned there that to my knowledge this was the first translation into English. I made this with the help of George Elson's *Our Life in Christ*. The latter consists in a selection of texts from the *Commentary*. The years have rolled on and I have since discovered William Lockhart's translation. This now lies in the Rosminian archives at Stresa. I have not used this manuscript for the present book but I have made some corrections to my own translation and modified it in certain places, particularly the references in the footnotes with the aid of the Critical Edition which was published only in 2009. In 1975 I used the Revised Standard Version of the Bible where possible. I have replaced this with the New Revised Standard Version. This is not always the preferred text of Scripture scholars, but it has the advantage of inclusive language for those who prefer this. I also originally said, 'I am happy to acknowledge my gratitude to Fr. Thomas Deidun for translating for me (with greater elegance and accuracy than I could hope to achieve) several Latin passages in the text. For the rest I must take the responsibility for any errors in translation'. I am glad to repeat this acknowledgement here.

It is not an easy work to read, and though I have tried to make it attractive and presentable, this is always limited by the profundity of Rosmini's thinking. My attempt to use inclusive language has not always been successful. Some expressions are traditional and unfortunately cannot be altered without doing violence to the text.

Finally I would like to thank Janet Blackman for proof-reading this book.

J. Anthony Dewhurst  
St Mary's Derryswood

24 January 2011

## Abbreviations

Antonio Rosmini	A.R.
Antonio Rosmini, Introduction to his Life and Teaching	Cleary
Antropologia soprannaturale	<i>AS</i>
Catechism of the Catholic Church	CCC
De Concilio Tridentinum Sessio	Conc. Trid. sess.
Dewhurst, J. Anthony	J.A.D.
Durham Translations	Durham
Edizione Critica	Ediz. Crit.
Edizione Nazionale	Ediz. Naz.
Epistolario Completo	<i>EC</i>
La lettura biblica di Rosmini ne "l'introduzione del Vangelo Secondo Giovanni Commentata"	Losacco
L'introduzione del Vangelo secondo Giovanni commentata	<i>IVG</i>
Presentazione dell'edizione critica de "l'Introduzione Vangelo secondo Giovanni commentata di Rosmini"	Tadini
Principi della scienza morale	<i>Principi</i>
Rosmini, Priest, Philosopher and Patriot	Leetham
Sacra Pagina, The Gospel of John	Moloney
Summa Theologica	ST
The Diaries of Blessed Antonio Rosmini	<i>Diaries</i>
New International Version [of the Bible]	NIV
The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version	NRSV
The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version	RSV
The Jerusalem Bible	JB
The New Jerusalem Bible	NJB

(Article = art.; Book = lib.; Chapter = c. or cap.; Section = sez.; Volume = vol.)

## Introduction

Rosmini's work, *L' Introduzione del Vangelo secondo Giovanni Commentata*, [The Commentary on the Introduction to the Gospel of John] was begun back in 1839. He left it aside until he reached Gaeta in 1848, when he took it up again in circumstances which were truly harrowing for him. Like his *Antropologia Soprannaturale* [Supernatural Anthropology] and his crowning achievement, his *Teosofia* [Theosophy], it was left unfinished. We can only conjecture why this was so, but all three works were still in preparation at the end of his life and there is no doubt that the harassment and ill-treatment to which he was subjected from the Papal Court, the Austrians, the Jesuits and others hostile to his works, took a toll on his health which in any case was precarious and which may have been mortally affected by poisoning in 1854. This incident which he believed had occurred at a family gathering has never been definitely established and he refused to divulge the name of the alleged assailant. Another factor may well have been the number of works he was publishing after he returned to Stresa in 1849 which included the *Introduzione alla Filosofia* [Introduction to Philosophy], the *Logica* [Logic] and, to cap it all, the demand for further clarification of his work entailing a reluctantly begun and unfinished work *Il linguaggio teologico*. He began this at the end of October 1854 giving him only 7 months before his death on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1855.

It may be of interest to the reader if I place the writing of this book in its historical context and for this I am indebted to Samuele Francesco Tadini who has edited the Critical Edition of the work and written a most informative introduction to it.

### Rosmini's mission to Rome

On 31<sup>st</sup> July 1848 a courier arrived to see Blessed Antonio from the Ministry of Turin while he was at the health spa at S. Bernardino nei' Grigioni. He received a despatch inviting him to go to Turin to receive a diplomatic delegation from the King of Sardinia and thence to the Holy See. Rosmini was enjoined to achieve two objectives, a Concordat between the Church and the Kingdom of Sardinia and a confederation of Italian States under the presidency of the Pope. Rosmini departed in the first half of August, arriving in Rome on the 15<sup>th</sup>. He had an audience with Pope Pius IX two days later. The Pope showed how pleased he was to see him; not only this but he was informed on 21<sup>st</sup> that the Pope wished to make him a Cardinal. Word went round that the Pope wanted to make him Secretary of State. Moreover the Pope was open to the objectives of the Mission. His Diary of Charity tells us that in October he was made a consultor of the Sacred Congregation of the Index! Rosmini by now was heavily involved in the restless events engulfing Rome. Moreover, the new Piedmontese government changed its policy and was now only interested in an anti-Austrian military league. Rosmini found he could no longer fulfil his original mission concerned with forming a confederation of states or a concordat and resigned

his mandate. On 15<sup>th</sup> November Count Pellegrino Rossi, the Prime Minister, was assassinated. Rosmini was asked to form a new Ministry but he found the list of ministers had been extorted by threats of violence and he deemed this unconstitutional. Moreover, he did not receive a clear lead from the Pope and so he resigned from his task on 17<sup>th</sup> November. It is indicative of the events that his resignation was immediately accepted.

In his letter of 29 November from Gaeta to his sister-in-law Adelaide Rosmini Serbati, probably his closest friend and confidante, he writes 'The following morning, the 18<sup>th</sup>, I returned to the Palazzo Albani, but though my frank letter to Galletti has been praised by all parties, yet I was advised to take precautions. Seeing therefore the way things were developing and foreseeing that the Pope would leave Rome (a course which I recommended to him), I decided to go to the Villa Albani outside the Porta Salara, with my horses and carriages in readiness. At the same time I let the Pope know where I was and told him I would follow him, and he was pleased to accept my offer.'<sup>1</sup>

Cardinal Antonelli, on the orders of the Pope, gave him two blank passports telling him that it would please the Pope to follow him to wherever he decided to go. Rosmini stayed for eight days at the Villa Albani while he prepared his four horses and two carriages for the journey to Gaeta. On 25 November he was in the Sacristy taking off his vestments after Mass when the Curate of San Bernardo gave him the news of the Pope's flight the previous day.

The following excerpt is taken from the Dairy of His Travels 25 November.

After being at the Villa Albani for a week, I left there for Gaeta to follow the Pope who had fled Rome the day before. I set out with two coaches drawn by my two horses as far as Albano from where I sent them back to Rome with the stable boy. In one carriage was the brother of the Pope Count Gabriello Mastai Ferretti with professor Montanari of Rossi's ministry, in the other I with my secretary D. Toscani and my coachman Raffaele Loreti.<sup>2</sup> Having made the circuit of the walls we came to the Porta S. Giovanni. Having arrived in Albano we could not join the mail coach through lack of a permit and arrived at Terracina with eight horses and coachman. From there we had the post horses. Having arrived at 5 o'clock in the morning at Portella the first region of the Kingdom of Naples, they did not want to let us to pass because the passports had not been signed by the Minister of Naples in Rome, but after we revealed our names

<sup>1</sup> Antonio Rosmini [= A.R.], *Epistolario Completo* [= EC], Casale Monferrato, Tipografia Giovanni Pane 1892, vol. X, lettera 6292, pp. 463–469; Cf. Claude Leetham, *Rosmini, Priest, Philosopher and Patriot*, [= Leetham] Longmans Green and Co., London 1957, pp. 388–389.

<sup>2</sup> 'Count Mastai had a blank passport signed by Cardinal Soglia where we wrote the name of Antonio Ciampoli. In my blank passport I noted down myself, my secretary and two domestics, one of whom was my cook, Raffaele Loreti, and ex-minister Montanari passed for the other....In one carriage was Count Mastai with Montanari, in the other I, with my secretary. One was driven by Loreti, the other by my groom.' A. R., *The Diaries of Blessed Antonio Rosmini* [= *Diaries*], *Diary of the Events of My Life (Diary of Charity)*, Short Run Press, Exeter 2008, p. 204.

they let us enter, with a declaration which I made to hold the police official absolved from any reproach etc. and we arrived in Gaeta towards 11 o'clock in the morning of 26 September. The Pope's brother travelled under the name of Signor Agostino Ciampoli. There we paid our respects to the Holy Father, who in fact remained unknown in Gaeta, sheltering in a horrible room in a most wretched hotel of Giardinetto.<sup>3</sup>

### At Gaeta and Naples

It would appear that Rosmini and his companions first stayed at Mola near Gaeta. But next day they returned to Gaeta and were given hospitality by Canon don Francesco Ogera. Apparently Rosmini moved between Lola and Gaeta for the first part of January 1849, definitively returning to Gaeta on 17 January.<sup>4</sup> On 22<sup>nd</sup> January he came to Naples with Toscani, Montanari and the coachman Loreti on the Spanish steamboat the Lepanto. They lodged at an albergo but on the 24<sup>th</sup> went to Signori alla Missione ai Vergini.

News of his presence in Naples caused different prominent people to come to visit him, such as Carlo Troya, the historian, Professor Palmieri, Vito Fornari and the Jesuit priest, Liberatore. Meanwhile a coldness towards him became manifest on the part of the Neapolitan police and some leading figures of the papal court, among whom were Cardinal Antonelli and Monsignor Stella. The latter, who was confessor to the Pope and the spiritual director of Baroness Maria Koenneritz, directly prohibited her reading the works of Rosmini. She was greatly troubled by this and asked for and obtained an audience with Pius IX who reversed the prohibition and admonished Monsignor Stella. Count Lovatelli told Rosmini about how Stella was insulting him calling him a 'hypocrite of great cunning', a Communist, a real plague in the Church, and that in his writings the name of Jesus Christ was never mentioned. In spite of these calumnies coming from the pontifical court, Pope Pius IX continued to show him the greatest kindness, often asking for news of Montanari and was still definitely intent on making him a Cardinal.

In the midst of all this Rosmini took up again his writing and his studies. In fact on 26 January he took in hand once more the *Commentary on the Introduction to St John's Gospel* which he had begun ten years earlier at Stresa on 18 October 1839.<sup>5</sup> He did this with tranquillity which sprang from a deep humility and certainty of the truth and was thus able to accept quietly the attacks of those who were hostile to him. Count Avogadro della Motta wrote *Rivista retrospettiva di un fatto seguito in Vercelli con osservazioni intorno al diritto legale si libera censura* (A retrospective Review of a matter ensuing in Vercelli with observations regarding the legal right of free censure); this was published

---

<sup>3</sup>*Diaries, Diary of my Travels*, p. 100.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>5</sup> A.R., *L'introduzione del Vangelo secondo Giovanni Commentata*. He had completed the first six Lezioni [= Readings].



anonymously by De Gaudenti and aimed at Rosmini's book of the *Della Cinque Piaghe della Chiesa*<sup>6</sup>, regarding what Rosmini held regarding the election of bishops. Also the Oratorian Father, Agostino Theiner entered the lists with his draft of the *Lettere storico-critiche intorno alle Cinque piaghe*, [Historical critical letters regarding the Cinque Piaghe] which was published in Naples by Cannavacciuoli in 1849. From the publishing house of Manfredi came at the same time another book against the *Cinque Piaghe*. This was the work of Father Stefano Spina, a Redemptorist, and the title speaks for itself, *Il parricidio attentato dell' abate Rosmini Serbati roveretano cioè la piaga mortale che alla S. Cattolica, Apostolica, Romana Chiesa sua e nostra madre commune ha egli cercato di fare con suo velenosissimo opuscolo intitolato Le cinque piaghe della Santa Chiesa* [The Parricide attempted by Abate Rosmini Serbati, from Rovereto, that is, the mortal wound he has attempted to inflict with his most poisonous book, *The Five Wounds of Holy Church*, on the Catholic, Apostolic Roman Church, his and our Mother]. These authors intended that their writings should compel the Pope to condemn this work of Rosmini.

Apart from these theoretical attacks which he was able to rebut with great authority, he also had to put up with the ill-will of the Austrian government who considered him an enemy because of his love for Italy. Rosmini had manifested this as far back as 1823 when he preached the Panegyric on Pope Pius VIII's death.<sup>7</sup> Added to this was his desire to uphold the rights of the Holy See and first and foremost its freedom. Finally the Austrians envisaged that if he was made a Cardinal he would enjoy the power which went with it. King Ferdinand II of Naples saw in Rosmini a supporter of free institutions; the Neapolitan police, therefore kept him under control. Rosmini was constantly anxious that the religious who gave him hospitality and his many friends who visited him might also be harassed as well.

These difficult days did not prevent him from continuing with his writing and he reached the second book of the work.<sup>8</sup> While he was staying at the Signori alla Missione ai Vergini, there were also young students, all of whom esteemed him and we have an interesting reminiscence of one of them, Giovanni Battista Manzi who wrote later on in his life,

Although Rosmini's troubles were at their height one would never have thought it to look at him, always affable and smiling. This clearly revealed his tranquillity which had to come from his joy at being able to dictate those immortal pages on the Gospel of St John. Part of this sublime treatise was written at the Vergini, and I recall him asking one of

---

<sup>6</sup> A.R., *Delle cinque piaghe della Santa Chiesa* [The Five Wounds of Holy Church], 1848.

<sup>7</sup> When he printed it he had expanded it and made it a political document in which he manifested his support for Italy (remember he was an Austrian, living in Austrian territory) that it should prove itself to be a worthy son of Pius VIII. Rosmini had difficulty publishing this Panegyric which was censored by the Austrians. After this incident he was regarded with suspicion and the Austrians were loath to grant him a passport to leave Austrian territory and kept an eye on him.

<sup>8</sup> More precisely, Reading XXXIII. Book 2 begins with Reading XXX.

my companions to bring to the library a work of St Augustine, among others, as he needed it because he was commenting on the Gospel of St John. I even believed that he was internally happy. Seeing him follow the Pope, surrounded by the esteem of those cardinals who were guests at the Vergini, Cardinals Patrizi, Barberini, Ostini and the priest Hohenloe, who, as I experienced, had a veneration for Rosmini, made me believe that he was at the summit of his fame. A young man at the time, I knew nothing about the Index, nor of the uproar in important circles. I thought he was happy, because, as I have said, he looked serene and peaceful to me.<sup>9</sup>

### At Sant' Efrem Nuovo

On the 13<sup>th</sup> March he moved to the Convent of the Capuchins at Sant' Efrem Nuovo. The visits of friends thus became less frequent and gave him more time for study and prayer.<sup>10</sup> The 4<sup>th</sup> April was Easter Sunday and Rosmini sent greetings to the Pope. On the 10<sup>th</sup> he received a reply but hardly the one he expected. Rosmini wrote in his diary as follows:

The Pope wrote to me at Naples on this date in these words: "With paternal affection we exhort you to reflect on the works you have published in order to modify them, or correct them or retract them. We have charged Cardinal Mai to examine them." Here is what had transpired. After the Pope singled me out for the Cardinalate telling me that the consistory would be in December, some cardinals (among whom I believe was Cardinal Patrizi) accused me before the Holy Father, as if in my last two little works "Le Cinque Piaghe" and "La Costituzione" [The Constitution] there was some erroneous teaching. Others also of the Jesuit faction had probably acted with the said cardinals (among whom I believe was Father Melia a Jesuit who wanted to extract a great number of condemned propositions from my works), and spread grave suspicions about me in the ears of the Pope.

The Pope had me speak about this with Monsignor Corboli in September or October last. The latter informed me that the Pope would like me to compose a letter to him in which I would express clearly my feelings and with it dispel the given accusations, to which I immediately assented.

Some days after the audience with the Pope, he spoke to me roughly in this way, "You know that there are some people who have been thumbing their noses at you. Now what is one to do? We are obliged to satisfy everyone because *sapientibus et insipientibus debitores sumus* [I am a debtor to the wise and the foolish] Monsignor Corboli will have spoken to you of a letter which I would like you to write to me and that I would then have printed." [I replied] "Yes, your holiness, I am most willing to do it, but I would

<sup>9</sup> Giovanni Battista Manzi, Priest of the Mission, Piacenza, 4 August 1908.

<sup>10</sup> Six days after his arrival he took up his pen again up to the beginning of Reading XXXVI and on 21<sup>st</sup> March continued as far as the first part of Reading XXXIX. He took up the work again on 28<sup>th</sup> March reaching Reading XL. The following day he continued up to Reading XLVII. On 8<sup>th</sup> April he resumed his writing and reached Reading LVII.

need to have pointed out to me precisely what the erroneous points are". The Pope replied with a kind expression: "I will send Monsignor Corboli to you. You can come to an understanding with him on the points he mentions". After a few days Monsignor Corboli was with me and spoke these words to me: "The Holy Father has charged me with showing you what points the declaration desired by him must deal with. Indeed he showed me a long list of points on your works which were presented to the Pope. But I found them unfounded and I have told the Pope that I could not take the task of communicating them to you, and the Pope did not press the matter greatly. But another note contained four or five points on which reading your two little works denounced as erroneous, I found that it would be a good thing if you clarified better your understanding to satisfy the public and your adversaries, and these are: 1<sup>st</sup>: saying as you do that the election of Bishops by Clergy and people is of divine right; 2<sup>nd</sup>: your clear inclination to have the liturgy translated into the vernacular; 3<sup>rd</sup>: speaking badly of the Scholastic writers; 4<sup>th</sup>: what is done is of divine right; 5<sup>th</sup>: your wish that the State should be separated from the Church."

I was somewhat astonished to hear such opinions imputed to me, and had the Monsignor note the difference between what I had written and what was attributed to me. Then I asked him that, having carefully examined the matter, he himself would dictate to me the letter I had to write to the Pope, which I would copy and faithfully sign. The expected disastrous events having occurred in Rome, it was only in Gaeta that I had the draft of the letter to the Pope which Monsignor Corboli had undertaken to draw up for me. In Gaeta, then, in December or January last, I copied this letter with a few alterations which did not affect the substance of it and took it to the Holy Father, who welcomed it kindly saying that he would read it later.

Meanwhile in Gaeta my adversaries tried everything to lower me in the mind of the Pope, and the whole Papal Court treated me with extreme coldness, often even with lack of courtesy and contempt. After some days the Pope said to me: "I have not yet had time to examine thoroughly your letter, however, it appears to me, having glanced at it, that the point in which you speak of the election of the bishops by clergy and people does not seem to be explicit enough." I said that the Holy Father after having examined everything might deign to point out to me or have me add better expressions, because I would completely accept his desires and suggestions, and the Pope said he would think about it, and that he would talk about it, or some other expression. Meanwhile I went to Naples in the January of that year and did not think further about it, awaiting the orders of the Pontiff. At the beginning of February, I was lodging in Naples at the Virgini with the Fathers of the Mission. Signor Spaccapietra the Provincial visitor and superior of that house came to Gaeta to visit the Pontiff, who said to him: "What is Rosmini doing?" He replied "Studying etc". Then the Pope said: "I would like him to amend the letter he wrote to me" and he emphasised the point of the elections by clergy and people being of divine right; "tell him this". Spaccapietra returned to Naples and reported the conversation to me. This was most unexpected to me because it was contrary to the understanding which I had had with the Pope himself, but I replied to Signor Spaccapietra, that if this would please the Pope, I would

---

<sup>11</sup> A.R., *Diaries, Diary of the Events of My Life*, pp, 210–213.

deal with it. He added that the Holy Father was not bothered about the other four points, but only the one about the intervention of the people in the election of bishops. I then immediately wrote a letter to the Pope expressing again my complete submission to all his wishes and reminding him that we had already agreed that he would think the matter over and then let me know the outcome, and for this reason I was still calmly waiting for his directions in order to fulfil them. But as I now felt that he desired that I should think things over, if I understood him correctly, I suggested to him a formal retraction on the point that the intervention of the people in the election of bishops is of divine right, in so far as other people could deduce from such an opinion, contrary to what I thought, that the Church had erred by changing the ancient way of electing bishops. I had no reply to this letter which was dated the tenth of February, and which I entrusted to the Nunciature of Naples. Meanwhile in my absence from Gaeta my adversaries worked even more with the Pontiff against me (as also against my friend the ex-Minister Montanari), to such a point that Monsignor Stella, one of the secret Chamberlains and confessor to the Pope, forbade Baroness di Koenneritz, his penitent, to read my works. (She had recourse to the Pope who gave her permission to read them freely), and said in the Pope's anti-camera: "that I am a great hypocrite, a wound of the Church, a communist, who never mentioned the name of Jesus in my books etc. etc.". More than one person who heard such things, among whom was Count Lovatelli, reported such things to me and also others in Naples, where it had already been written previously. Nevertheless, before I departed from Gaeta for Naples the Pope, had again assured me that his wish to make me a Cardinal was unchanged and he said this to Baroness di Koenneritz and Montanari, when the rumour was circulating in Gaeta that the Pope had given up the thought, and some Cardinals said that "the Pope dithered between his conscience and the promise he had made to me". In these circumstances and under these influences, then, the Pope wrote the letter to me on 10 April which I mentioned in a passage further above, in which he did not take the matter further to please the ignorant, nor did he speak any further of the election of bishops and of the two works *Delle Cinque Piaghe* and the *Costituzione*, but of my works generally and said they ought to be modified, corrected or retracted without indicating further any particular point, in this way leaving me totally in the dark. Nevertheless Cardinal Mai, to whom the Pope said he had handed over the examination of my works, came to Naples. I promptly went to him, to find out what should be done; but what? The Cardinal had refused the task, and the Pope had excused him from taking it on: a new embarrassment.<sup>11</sup>

Rosmini wrote back to the Pope on 12 April 1849:

I will joyfully retract and condemn anything that might be found against the decisions of the Church in my works as a result of Cardinal Mai's examination. I wish to lean wholly on the authority of the Church, and I should like the whole world to know that I adhere to this authority alone, that I rejoice in the truths that it teaches me, and I glory in retracting any errors into which I may inadvertently have fallen, contrary to its infallible decisions.

Rosmini handed over the letter to the Nunciature of Naples. He did not receive a reply and it is impossible to know whether the Pope got it or not. Some day after Cardinal Mai arrived in Naples, Rosmini met him in the hope of knowing the mind of the Pope, but as said above, the Cardinal simply told him that he had refused the task of examining Rosmini's works as he knew little about metaphysics. Moreover, knowing that as regards the election of bishops, the Cardinal's attitude was different from what he held in the *Cinque Piaghe*, he asked the Cardinal whether he thought there were errors which ought to be corrected. His reply deeply distressed him as he detected that there was another problem. At the end of the conversation he perceived that more than ever he was at the centre of a storm which kept on increasing. He thought primarily of the Institute which would suffer through him and whose very survival might perhaps be compromised. Meanwhile the suspicions of the Neapolitan police increased regarding his relationship with the Capuchins of S. Ephrem and because they feared what might happen. They began to treat him coldly and distantly, so he decided on his own that he should leave the Convent.

Monsignor Luigi Passavalli Puecher<sup>12</sup> relates an example of the way Rosmini was treated by the Capuchins: this was given him by Monsignor Signani, Bishop of Nepi and Sutra. The Bishop relates that when Rosmini came down to say Mass in the morning he often met him standing by the vestment press, waiting for ages in vain for some one suitable to help him to vest and take him to the altar to celebrate Mass. The Bishop said that the outrageous indifference of these brothers towards a man whose friendship was held in honour by eminent people who were the most learned in Europe was obvious. He was greatly moved to witness such a humble resigned attitude, waiting and waiting to satisfy his devotion. More than once he personally helped him to vest and did his best to hasten his going into the Church.<sup>13</sup> Monsignor Puecher adds that if he hadn't been told this by Monsignor Signani he would never have known, as Rosmini did not utter a word about it. In the midst of all this suffering and after some days of illness, Rosmini took up again the draft of the *Commentary on the Introduction to St John's Gospel* on 7th May<sup>14</sup>.

### **Rosmini returns to Gaeta**

Rosmini went to Naples to have his *Operette spirituali* [Minor Spiritual Works] printed and hoped to have them ready by about the twentieth of the month. On the 5<sup>th</sup> June while he waited for them to be printed he continued his work on his manuscript.<sup>15</sup> On

---

<sup>12</sup> He was the brother of Father Francesco Puecher who joined the Rosminians. He was a Capuchin friar who became Provincial at Trent and eventually Archbishop of Iconium. He took part in the first Vatican Council and was very forward-looking and inspired by Rosmini's thought. But he fell into disgrace with Pius IX and retired to Morrovalle in the Ancona Marches. He died in 1897.

<sup>13</sup> Eduino Menestrina, *Rosmini l'uomo e il santo*, vol. 2, Fede e Cultura 2010, pp. 140–141.

<sup>14</sup> As far as Reading LXIV and on 27<sup>th</sup> May he had got to Reading LXXIX.

<sup>15</sup> Up to half of Reading LXXXIII.

### Introduction

9<sup>th</sup> June he departed from Naples for Gaeta on a French steamer, the *Vauban* and arrived there in five hours. In the evening he went to see the Holy Father. He was delighted that he could offer him the *Operette Spirituali* and *Lettere sulle Elezioni* [Letters on the Election of Bishops] which had been reprinted with some additions. A few days prior to this the Sacred Congregation of the Index, gathered at Naples under the presidency of Cardinal Brignole with Monsignor Giannotti attached to the Neopolitan Nunciature. On 30<sup>th</sup> May they had decreed that the *Cinque della Santa Chiesa* and the *Costituzione secondo la giustizia sociale* [Constitution according to Social Justice] should be placed on the Index. On 6<sup>th</sup> June, Pius IX had confirmed the decree. Unaware of this, Rosmini saw the Pope on the evening of 9<sup>th</sup> June and he learned with regret of the impossibility of the realization of the plan of the Constitution.

Finally on 9 June I returned to Gaeta on the *Vauban*, the great French steamer, and the same evening had an audience with the Pope to whom I presented the three works printed in Naples. The Pope immediately told me that he had become anti-constitutional, that he would no longer promulgate the Constitution not even if they cut him into little pieces, that it was irreconcilable with the government of the Church, and that freedom to print, of associations etc. were intrinsically bad things. (What an extraordinary thing!)

Before I left Gaeta he told me that the Constitution would be maintained, it was the least he could do, that his honour was at stake to do anything different; and when I said that some feared the influence which persons of his entourage would exert on him, he added: "That he had promulgated the Constitution with the consent of all the cardinals consulted by him on this three times, and that now not even if the whole of the Sacred College wished him to abolish it, he would not do it!"

Then, taking the opportunity of the letters on the election of bishops reprinted at Naples, I showed him the note in which I made clear my mind regarding liturgy in one's national language, with which he was pleased, and he spoke in such a way that there were no further errors in my works, but only that it was necessary to read them attentively and compare the passages in order to understand them clearly, and that there could be intervention of the people in episcopal elections, when the people were peaceful, but not when stirred up by demagogues etc. Hence he appeared satisfied. Now we shall see what will please His Divine Majesty, how things will eventually turn out.<sup>16</sup>

At the end of the audience Rosmini stayed in Gaeta as a guest of Canon Orgera. On the 11<sup>th</sup> June the police came looking for him requesting his passport. In the evening the man who had accompanied the Commissario told him that he must leave Gaeta because his passport had not been signed in Naples. Rosmini replied that he had come to Gaeta to do the will of the Pope and he took his orders from him. What followed he tells us in his own words:

---

<sup>16</sup> A.R., *Diaries, Diary of the Events of My Life*, p. 213–214.

Towards 11 o'clock in the evening I was getting undressed when the Commissario returned with the first man. I replied that I had retired and was on the point of going to bed, and that they should have the kindness to come tomorrow. They insisted, saying that they wished to speak with me at all costs, even by force. I tidied myself up and opened the door. They came in and started to tell me, that I must leave Gaeta even tomorrow on the steamer for Naples. I repeated the same reply, and, after quite an argument, they went off, with me saying to them, "I hope that you will give me a peaceful night". In fact they didn't come during the night but I passed it without sleeping.<sup>17</sup>

On the next day Rosmini went to see the Pope expecting difficulties and he got them!

The first guards let me pass but having arrived at the room prior to the anticamera a servant placed himself in front of me and said peremptorily in a high voice: "there is an order not to let anyone come into the anticamera". I asked to speak with Cardinal Antonelli, "he is busy", to some Monsignor, "there aren't any; they haven't come yet". I still remained in the so-called waiting room, and behold, Cardinal Antonelli opened the door and started immediately to close it, but not giving him time, I said: "Your Eminence, I need to speak with you urgently". He had to let me enter. I recounted the incident; he protested that he knew nothing about it. He said the police belonged to the King, that they had also thrown out of Gaeta a brother-in-law of his (and it is known that he got him to go saying several times to people, "I do not trust a shit for anyone not even my brothers"), that they have their rules and because my passport was not signed at Naples they were in the right in making me withdraw. This point about the passport not being signed in Naples was a clear and wretched pretext because it was never requested of me by anyone; in any case, it could be regularized if needs be. I then said to him, "I will leave Gaeta without any trouble but I must first have the Pope's orders, and in the eventuality that they are for me to leave, to receive his blessing." And I reminded him that I was not in Gaeta of my own accord but in order to do the will of the Pope given to me on 17 November through the department of his Eminence at the Quirinal, and also these words in the name of the Pope with whom he had first met and taken his orders: "It would give the Holy Father great pleasure if you will be in the place where the Holy Father is when he leaves Rome". He could not deny this, but excused himself for not presenting me to the Pope by saying that he would have had me announced by the Monsignors of the Anticamera, none of whom were there at that hour, and other excuses. On my insisting and saying that an atrocious injury would be done to me if I was thrown out of Gaeta without even first seeing the Holy Father he decided that he would announce me to His Holiness. He entered and was there for a long time. Then Major Yong, who was in charge of the police regarding the security of the Holy Father came out; and after a good while more, Antonelli came out and introduced me. After he heard my account the Pope said: "I was not informed about

---

<sup>17</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 214.

what happened yesterday evening until now and I have told Major Yong to leave you in peace and I have told him that at your convenience, in one, two or three days you may return to Naples of your own accord.” He added that the police in Naples were suspicious of the many people who came to see me, among whom were those they did not like. I said that at Naples I went to no one and that I could not send away the persons who came to meet me without being impolite, what is more I did not know them and there was no conversation in the slightest that could be attacked, I myself being especially most discreet and, if necessary, always defending the acts of the King’s government if they were criticised by any one; which is true. The Pope then said I must be careful in other people’s houses; and when I said that the period of three days was too short because in this heat, to go by land would greatly upset my precarious health and I suffered also by sea because of the small steamers which took so great a time to make the journey, he replied that I should also wait for a large steamer, and that I would not be harassed. He said a lot more from which I could clearly gather that the Pope was no longer for me as hitherto, and that, on the contrary, was gravely biased against me. Deo Gratias.<sup>18</sup>

On a successive visit to the Pope Rosmini expressed the wish to return to Stresa. And on 15<sup>th</sup> June presented his *Memoriale* to clarify facts and justify them. On 17<sup>th</sup> he resumed his manuscript.<sup>19</sup> On 18<sup>th</sup> he received a letter from Monsignor Stella which should have contained a reply to his previous one, but it was unsatisfactory and no mention was made of the *Memoriale*.

### **Rosmini returns to Stresa**

So on the 19<sup>th</sup> June he decided to leave Gaeta. After a short time at Mola to greet the Duke d’Harcourt, he arrived at Capua in the evening and was lovingly welcomed by Cardinal Serra Cassano, by the Vicar General and by the Rector and Professors of the Seminary.

The kindness with which we were received and invited to dine with the Rector and professors compensated for the freezing lack of cordiality in which for a long time we found ourselves.<sup>20</sup>

On 21<sup>st</sup> he left Capua and went to Caserta where he was welcomed by the Redemptorists and passed the night there. On 22<sup>nd</sup> he moved to the Convent of Santa Lucia where he had the satisfaction of being able to pray and study in complete peace. In fact on the same day he took up his writing again.<sup>21</sup> On the 23<sup>rd</sup> he continued writing and began half of the following Reading which he continued the next day, but

---

<sup>18</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp 214–216.

<sup>19</sup> He finished Reading LXXXIII and began the following one.

<sup>20</sup> A.R., *Diaries, Diaries of My Travels*, p. 103.

<sup>21</sup> He finished Reading LXXXIV.



on the 30<sup>th</sup> his tranquillity was sharply interrupted by the police who had caught up with him and informed him of a decree of the Neapolitan Minister of Police ordering him to leave the Kingdom within eight days. Rosmini therefore sent his passport to have it signed so that he could leave. But after four days a new decree cancelled the previous one allowing him to extend his stay. Rosmini wished to leave but was advised that he would need a new signature and would have to send his passport back to Naples.

The Superintendent said to me: “Do not be disturbed because I believe this to be an intrigue”, and *sotto voce*, “by some red hats”. Finally my passport arrived, signed in Naples.

All this troublesome bureaucracy did not disturb Rosmini’s clarity and the desire to continue writing the draft of his new work, so on 5<sup>th</sup> July he got down to work again.<sup>22</sup> But on the 12<sup>th</sup> he unfortunately finally stopped writing it and never continued at a later date. It is difficult to know the reasons for this. These were the years when his works were being attacked and their meaning was misrepresented and distorted. Moreover, he did not finish either his *Antropologia soprannaturale* [Supernatural Anthropology] or his *Teosofia* [Theosophy]. And these would be published posthumously. They were specifically not published by Rosmini ‘because I see only too well that these are not the right times for their being accepted; this age needs milk; it is not capable of taking solid food.’<sup>23</sup> Finally, he was working on the *Logica* [Logic], and his unfinished *Il linguaggio teologico* [Theological Language], the latter at the behest of the Pope is his attempt to clarify his teaching.

The journey back to Stresa was broken by stopping another night in Capua, then on to Monte Cassino, two nights. From there they went to Frosinone, which was full of Neapolitan soldiers. They were unable to find an hotel there but were given accommodation by Monsignor Badia for two days while they tried to find post horses. The 21<sup>st</sup> July found them at Velletri and they arrived at Albano on the evening of the same day. They lodged at the Hotel *Ville de Paris*.

27 July. Knowing that Cardinal Tosti was in Albano and having gone to see him, His Eminence desired us to stay with him in his little house, where he treated us with utmost kindness. Antonio Carli later came to us from Rome.<sup>24</sup>

It was while Rosmini was staying with the Cardinal that he received news on 15<sup>th</sup> August that the Holy Father had ordered an extraordinary meeting of the Con-

---

<sup>22</sup> He got as far as half of Reading LXXVIII. Probably on the same day, after a long pause, he carried on up to the beginning of Reading XCII which was finished on 12 July and also the beginning of the next Reading.

<sup>23</sup> A.R., *EC*, vol. X, letter 6365, to Father Giovanni Maria Carli at Ferrara, p. 567.

<sup>24</sup> A.R., *Diaries, Diary of My Travels*, p. 105.

gregation of the Index at Naples, at which his two works, the *Cinque piaghe* and the *Costituzione secondo la giustizia sociale* were prohibited by a decree of the 30<sup>th</sup> May and confirmed by the Pope on 6<sup>th</sup> June. Rosmini points out that when he saw the Pope after 9<sup>th</sup> June he simply told him that they were examining his works, ‘All this work was kept entirely secret from me and I was not informed of any reason for the prohibition’.<sup>25</sup>

Rosmini passed through Florence on his way back to Stresa where he finally arrived on 2<sup>nd</sup> November. ‘The reason why Rosmini was so long in returning to Stresa was that he had to secure his possessions in Rome, and also because he had not yet been told definitely that the Pope had given up all idea of making him a cardinal, though he had little doubt about the matter.’<sup>26</sup> ‘It was just over a year since he had left his solitude: now they found him white-haired and aged, but the smile that they knew so well was still upon his lips.’<sup>27</sup>

Samuele Tadini writes ‘It is enormously impressive to see how the Roveretan was able to write such profound considerations even in the pain and sufferings of those days. It is certainly true that such complex topics, embracing the theology of the Word, Christology and eucharistic theology, aroused in him a sort of interior tranquillity, the degree of assurance in Providence typical of the saints who even in tribulations manifest an unknown and almost indescribable strength, for they are not in the least focussed on a concept, nor could they be, but on a person — Christ himself.’<sup>28</sup> This abandonment to divine providence, so fundamental to Rosmini’s teaching and to the Order founded by him, guided his whole life. His conduct and behaviour radiated a peacefulness in suffering that could only have sprung from an intense union with God and a constant desire to do his will. He could say with St Paul, ‘*Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak then I am strong*’<sup>29</sup>.

### The editions of the Work

As I explained in my previous book,<sup>30</sup> there are two parts to this work, 1) *Concerning the Generation of the Eternal Word*, and 2) *Concerning Creation made through the Word*. It is thought that the third part would have been *The Incarnation of the Word*.

---

<sup>25</sup> A.R., *Diaries, Diary of the Events of My Life*, p. 218.

<sup>26</sup> Leetham, pp. 402–403.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 404. Cf. A.R., *EC*, vol. XI, letter 6642, to Suor Sofia Maria Rosmini at Milan, p. 79. He mentions his ‘capelli canuti’ [white-haired or grey-haired]. (See also, *The Ascetical Letters of Antonio Rosmini*, vol. VII, trans. Donal Sullivan, Loughborough 2009, p. 25).

<sup>28</sup> Samuele Francesco Tadini, *Presentazione dell’edizione critica de L’introduzione del Vangelo secondo Giovanni commentata di Rosmini*, [=Tadini], Rivista Rosminiana, Anno CIV Fasc. II-III, Aprile–Settembre 2010, p. 341.

<sup>29</sup> 2 Cor 12: 10.

<sup>30</sup> J. Anthony Dewhurst [J.A.D.], *Our Light and Our Salvation*, Short Run Press, 2010.

The work was first published in 1882 at Turin by Stamperia dell'Unione Tip. Editrice. The second edition forms part of the series of volumes comprising the Edizione Nazionale delle Opere Edite ed Inedite di A. Rosmini, (= Ed. Naz.) which we call in English the National Edition. It is volume XXXIII in the series and edited by the late Remo Bessero Belti. It was published in 1966 at Padova by Cedam, Casa Editrice A. Milani. It is lauded by Samuele Tadini, editor of the Critical Edition, for its valuable Preface with its enlightening explanations in particular regarding the Eucharistic Life of Christ which begins with Reading LXIX. A third edition was published in Rome by Città Nuova Editrice 2002 and Edited by A. Capuzzi. Tadini says that this edition though not being a critical one has as its aim to try to return to the manuscript with regard to punctuation, terminology and the general structure of the work. He also translates into Italian numerous passages given by Rosmini in the original language. The Preface of Maria Adelaide Raschini is valuable in singling out passages which presuppose the metaphysics of the Teosofia.

The fourth edition of the work is the new Edizione Critica (= Ed. Crit.) it is volume 41 in the series, published by Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 2009. It is edited by the above Samuele Francesco Tadini. He gives a detailed explanation of his aims. One of the most valuable of these, in my opinion, is his making clear the sources of Rosmini's quotations. The inexactness of some of these provided a real headache for one who wished to refer to the original writing of, say, a Father of the Church. Tadini points out that this must not be attributed to a lack of ability of the author as he would have undoubtedly revised the text if he had been given the opportunity, and some references are from memory. (Being so familiar with the Bible he did apparently quote scripture from memory). With regard to the Fathers, Tadini reminds us that Rosmini had begun to acquire the first volumes of Migne which had begun to be printed in 1844 and wished to take out a subscription to acquire the Greek fathers. Moreover, Tadini has corrected any of Rosmini's references to authorship which modern scholarship has demonstrated to be otherwise. He gives as an example the attribution of *De Trinitate* to Tertullian in Reading XXII, note 120, p. 123, whereas it should be attributed to Novatian which was confirmed by scholarship at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>31</sup> In the course of this book I have followed Tadini's corrections.

As for Rosmini's use of the Scriptures, I refer the reader to my previous book.<sup>32</sup> Suffice it to quote what I said there, 'Rosmini certainly made use of the Greek text of the Scriptures, but his preference was for the Vulgate. Maybe this was also due to the fact that he was familiar with Jerome's works and had a high regard for him. Be that as it may, this led him into inaccuracies especially in a literal use of the Bible where nowadays his quotation sometimes does not fit the context in which he uses it. For instance, speaking of the difference between natural and supernatural faith, he quotes Acts 9: 5 "it is hard for thee to kick against the goad". But these words in the Vulgate

---

<sup>31</sup> Tadini, p. 340.

<sup>32</sup> J.A.D., *Our Light and Our Salvation*, Short Run Press, Exeter 2009, *Introduction*, p. 12.

do not appear in modern versions of the Bible.’ I referred to Losacco’s book, *La lettura biblica di Rosmini, ne “L’introduzione del Vangelo secondo Giovanni commentata”* and I shall refer to it in the course of this book.<sup>33</sup>

As to why Rosmini chose this particular subject to write about, Tadini refers to the Preface of the National Edition where Bessero Belti quotes from an essay of Father Silvestro Candela who opines that Rosmini might have been motivated by the fact that he was preparing to receive the Cardinalate with its honours and burdens, or more probably that with these meditations Rosmini sought to satisfy his longing and intense desire for the truth which inflamed his soul.

Bessero Belti said, in his Preface to the National Edition, that the book is ‘pre-eminently a theological work, but theology as Rosmini uses it, in which he brings together philosophy, morals, and ascetics, in passages which are so spontaneous that the reader usually hardly adverts to it because of the vividness and force which this imparts.’<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Cf., Tadini, p. 340. The Editor of the Critical Edition of the present work uses, as a point of reference, the SixtusV and Clement VIII version of the Vulgate, Venice 1741 and the Polyglot Greek version of the New Testament both of which Rosmini possessed and used.

<sup>34</sup> R. Bessero Belti, Preface to *L’introduzione del Vangelo secondo Giovanni Commentata Libri tre*, Edizione Nazionale [= Ediz. Naz.], Cedam, Padova 1966, p. X. Cf. Tadini, p. 339.

## Chapter 1

### The Eternal Word

The Fathers of the Church are divided as to the interpretation of the words *In the beginning was the Word*. This could be understood as the Word was in the Father, where 'beginning' meant Father. But if this were so, the author would not have said 'was' implying not now! He would have said 'is'. So this phrase means that the Word existed before the world. As in, 'Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.'<sup>1</sup> And also in the book of Proverbs, 'The LORD created me (present tense in the past) at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. (And, as if to explain the beginning of his work, it adds) Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.'<sup>3</sup>

In the beginning was the Word: The opinion of the Fathers	
The Word was in the Father (principio)	The Word existed before the world
Origen, Cyril of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, Theophilus of Antioch, Athanasius.	Gregory of Naziansen, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Severus of Antioch, Theophylact.

#### What is this beginning?<sup>4</sup>

So what is this 'beginning'? It is that first moment in which there were creatures and in which, therefore, time began. When the book of Genesis says, 'In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth'<sup>5</sup> it means not successively but in an instant, otherwise he would not have created them all in the beginning. So this 'beginning' means 'the beginning of created things'. Since time is a relationship that these have among themselves, their beginning is also the commencement of time. The Word therefore already 'was' at the beginning of time which means 'existed before time' which means 'eternity'. 'Before the foundation of the world' can be explained in three ways which are synonyms. So going back to that passage from Proverbs, 'The LORD created me (present tense in

---

<sup>1</sup> Jn 17: 24.

<sup>2</sup> 'I was set up from eternity' in the Douay version.

<sup>3</sup> Prov 8: 22–23.

<sup>4</sup> A.R., *L'introduzione del Vangelo secondo Giovanni Commentata* [= IVG]. Lezione [= Reading] II, p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> Gen 1: 1.

the past) at the *beginning* of his work' is the first one; '*before anything was made*'<sup>6</sup> is the second one; and the third is '*I was set up from eternity*'. This last expression is the more precise one because the first two express an idea adapted to the way we normally think. Our understanding cannot rise to the concept of eternity which is free from all relation with time. In fact when we say the Word 'was before time' or 'he already was when time began', we seem to put a time before time which is not exact and in fact is absurd. Eternity is not *before time* but *without time*. It does not cease to be because there is time, for it has nothing to do with it. In the expression 'before time' the word 'before' normally expresses a relation of time, and relates to 'after' which is a part of time. For instance I might say, 'I will see you before 12.15; if I am late I'll try and make it for 1.30', where these expressions refer to points in time. But in our present discussion the correlative of 'before' is 'the whole of time'. It means 'outside time', that is, eternity.

### **God acts in eternity but not in time<sup>7</sup>**

In the book of Genesis we read '*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*'.<sup>8</sup> Surely God created heaven and earth in the beginning of time? But this poses a difficulty. God acts in eternity and not in time, so the act of creation could not be in any instant of time. Time is the object of the eternal act of God. This act did not occur at a time infinitely removed from the point at which the effect, created things, began to exist. If we think this we fall back into the absurdity that there was another time before our own in which God acted! If God had had to wait for an infinite time before creation, there would have been none because infinite time never ends! We have to conclude that the act of creation and its effect are inseparable and not divided by time. But there is this one difference: the *act* is eternal, exempt from time, whereas its *effect*, at least as regards the sensible world, is such that one of its forms and laws is time created therefore with the world, in such a way that limitations are made together with the things in which they inhere. We are contingent beings.

The act which creates is identical to that which conserves but its *effects* are two-fold; these are distinguished in creatures by means of the succession of time, because the effect is clothed with time. So if the effect, world, is considered in the first instant of its existence it is said to be *created*, but if one considers it in other successive instants it is said to be *conserved*.

If the creating act is eternal and yet created things in their first instant are united with that act without any distance or separated by time, how does John say that the Word already was before created things began? The solution is that John was not referring to the Word being anterior to the *act of creation* but simply that the Word was before the beginning of the world, that is, eternal. We mean the Word is outside time.

---

<sup>6</sup> Douay.

<sup>7</sup> *IVG*, Reading IV, pp.70–72.

<sup>8</sup> *Gen* 1 1 (Douai).

Just as the same divine act makes things exist and is united with them at every instant, so the divine act which makes the Word exist is united to the Word throughout eternity. This act, too, is eternal and outside time. There is no real difference between the act of the Father that produced the Word (generation) and the Word who is produced; both are eternal. The Word *is* the act and an act of the Father. We consider this act under two respects, one as producing, that is, *generation*; and the other as produced which we call *generated*, or Word. We do this because of our imperfect thinking. Both the generating act and the act of creating are identified and neither issues from their most simple principle. We say that the Son proceeds from the Father: not as an effect from a cause since there is no generation from potentiality to act but in an eternal procession. We say that the Son proceeds from the Father.<sup>9</sup> The Word is distinct from the world because it is the divine act itself which does not issue from the divine essence, whereas the world is a term of that act which is distinct from the divine essence.

### **The Word is the exemplar of the world<sup>10</sup>**

The world has an analogical relationship with the Word because the Word is its exemplar. The Word is also the image of the substance of God. *'He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word.'*<sup>11</sup> In so far as this is light and truth the world finds in it its exemplar.

We can consider the Word as he is in himself (or, as we say, Being manifested to himself) or as the Exemplar of the world. In the former case in comparison with the world, we say he existed before it, expressing that the Word is in eternity and the world in time. If we compare the Word as Exemplar of the world with the world, when we say he was before the world we simply express the relation the Exemplar has with its copy.

Now in what does this relationship consist? Normally we would say that there is a relationship of time in so far as a sculptor, say, first conceives the idea of a statue (the exemplar) and then carves it (the copy). But logically, considering the ideas of exemplar and copy, the notion of time is not included. It is not absurd to say that the exemplar and copy could co-exist simultaneously. Here there is *logical* priority of the exemplar to the copy, or cause to the effect. For example in the case of the father and son relationship, there could be no effect without the cause, no son without the father, they are relative terms. So considering the Word as the Exemplar of the world, when

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf. ST I, XXII, II.

<sup>10</sup> IVG, Reading V, pp. 72–74.

<sup>11</sup> Heb 1: 3. 'In this place the Apostle calls the Word the splendour of his glory and the figure of his substance and appears to recall the well known passage of Wisdom 7: 25–26 where the Word is said to be *'the breath of the power of God and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her'* since *'she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness'*. IVG, Readings V (VII), note, p. 73.

St John says 'In the beginning was the Word' he is expressing a logical relation of priority between the Exemplar and the exemplified.

It is about this relationship with the world that the Word is mentioned particularly in the Proverbs of Solomon.<sup>12</sup> '*Ages ago I was set up* (when the Word was *generated*, the world was *ordered*; order is essential to the Word, not to the world), '*at the first before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth*' (here is the exemplar, the concept of the depths logically prior to the depths); '*when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills I was brought forth—when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first bits of soil.*' (Here is the Exemplar, the idea of springs, mountains, hills, rivers, bits of soil, logically prior to all these things: this Exemplar was born from the womb of God, showing that it is not really different from the divine Son). '*When he established the heavens, I was there*' (here the Exemplar is shown to be contemporaneous, co-existent with the act of God creating) '*when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.*' This expresses that in the act with which God made things and governed events of all time from eternity, the *idea* of things and of events was with him; he saw things in his Word and through his Word, and seeing them, he created them; and things being distributed through time, the passage says that Divine Wisdom was in God's presence day after day because his eternal act is related to all time and God is glorified in his own activity. This Wisdom which is related to the world and which God possesses in his Word to whom the act of creating is related as the artificer relates his work to his concept, is that in which men share, hence the words '*delighting in the human race.*' And because this communicable wisdom is pre-eminently in the Word, for this reason St. John says that the Word '*enlightens every man coming into the world.*'<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> *Prov* 8: 23–31.

<sup>13</sup> *IVG*, Reading V, p. 73–74. *Prov* 8: 23–31. *Jn* 1: 9 '*enlightens everyone coming into the world*'. NSRV (note). Luigi Losacco, commenting on Rosmini's use of Scripture in this work says that Rosmini is not excessive in his use of allegory in his use of the Old Testament and in general he depends on the letter of the text, interpreting it in accordance with patristic tradition and without excessively forcing it. Luigi Losacco, *La lettura biblica di Rosmini, ne "L'introduzione del Vangelo secondo Giovanni commentata"*, [= Losacco] Libreria Editoriale Sodalitas, Stresa 1986, p. 26.



### **In the beginning was the Word<sup>14</sup>**

St John does not say ‘the Word of God’ but simply ‘the Word’. This signifies that which is the Word absolutely, the Word per se, the state of being the Word and nothing else, this is his essence. If we utter a word, this is not simply a word but also a sound, not simply an utterance but one which is determined by what is added to it such as a thought or an assertion.

Saying ‘that the Word was’ means that the Word was a complete being. If the Word had not been complete from the beginning we could not affirm that the Word was from the beginning. We are saying that its essence is the act of being, that is, God whose essence is being. Thus the divine word is distinguished from every other word, because every other word needs something added to it and is a word by analogy with *the* Word. Every other word is such by participation.

The divine Word must utter everything otherwise it would be limited. Every other word can only be a repetition of what has already been uttered, though in an imperfect way. An intelligent being can only utter that which is utterable. For this to be so, everything which is in potency must be reduced to a thing in act. Nothing would be utterable if it had not been already uttered by the primordial Word. It is this that makes things utterable and that in which the possibility of all utterable and accidental future things is founded. Finite intelligences have their ontological possibility in the eternal Word.

St. Thomas Aquinas gives the same reason why our Evangelist in this passage says ‘Word’ absolutely and not ‘Word of God’. ‘Although,’ he says, ‘there are many shared truths, yet absolute Truth is one. This is Truth by reason of its essence, that is, it is the Divine Being itself. It is through this Truth that every word is a word. In the same way there is an absolute Wisdom pre-eminent above all things, through sharing in which all wise men are wise; and there is only one Absolute Word through sharing in which all who use words are called speakers. Now it is the divine Word which is the Word *per se* pre-eminent above all things. The Evangelist, then, in order to show this pre-eminence of the divine Word gives us this Word without adding anything else.’<sup>15</sup> This seems to be the reason why the Evangelist is not content with saying ‘λόγον’ but says ‘τον λόγον’, *the* Word, distinguishing it in this way from any other utterances, as St. John Chrysostom<sup>16</sup> and Theophylact<sup>17</sup> have observed.<sup>18</sup>

It seems that originally the external and vocal word denoted what was sensibly experienced. Later, people recognised that this was an external sign representing an

---

<sup>14</sup> *IVG*, Reading VI, pp. 76.

<sup>15</sup> St Thomas, *In Evangelium beati Ioannis evangelistae expositio*, cap. I, lectio I.

<sup>16</sup> John Chrysostom, *Commentarij super Ioannis Evangelium*, hom. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Theophylact, *Enarratio in Evangelium Joannis*, cap. I.

<sup>18</sup> *IVG*, Readings, VI, (VIII), p. 76.

internal thing, an idea, pronounced by the mind, so they used the same expression which signified the external word, leaving it to the context to clarify when it was necessary to give a new signification of the internal thing in the spirit signified by the word.

St Augustine distinguished the external word from the internal word and showed that the internal word preceded the external word. 'Because,' he says, 'before you construct some building, before you begin some big undertaking on earth, the mind generates the plan; the plan is already conceived and the work is not yet realised; you see clearly what ought to be done, but others do not see this until you have made and constructed the building. When you have built and perfected it, men look at the magnificent building and admire the plan of the architect. They are amazed at what they see and they like what they do not see, for who can see the plan?'

In this way St. Augustine makes it clear that the interior word, the plan, is known to men by means of the external actuation of this word, of this plan. He bids his hearers know in some way the word of God, the plan of God, from the external works of creation saying: 'If then at the sight of some great building men praise the human plan, do you wish to see what the plan of God, is, our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, the Word of God? Consider the fabric of this world; see what things are made through the Word, and then you will know what the Word is. Consider these two bodies of the world, the sky and the earth; who can explain in words the designs of the heavens, the fruitfulness of the earth? Who can worthily praise the succession of the seasons, the power of the seeds? See for yourselves other examples which I do not mention in order not to waste your time with a long list; you will spend less time if you think of them for yourselves. From this building, then, consider what the Word is, through which it has been built; it has not been built by itself. Now all the above-mentioned things are seen. They pertain to the bodily senses. But the angels were made through the Word, the archangels, the powers, the thrones, the dominations, the principalities; all things have been made through the Word, so consider at this point what that Word is.'<sup>19</sup> Rosmini points to the influence of Plato on Augustine here and explains that Augustine refines it in his book *De Trinitate*. The Platonists taught that the Word of God was the idea of the world, or the intelligible world. John refutes this error. Rosmini goes on to refer to several Fathers of the Church, Jerome, Irenaeus and Tertullian who treat of the subject. He mentions the Gnostics and the fact that Irenaeus refers to their teaching. The Platonist Aurelius is mentioned by Eusebius and Cyril of Alexandria.

In some passages Plato attributes the creation of the world to the Word of God and the Stoics also use the Word of God to explain creation and Philo speaks of an intelligible world prior to the present one, an exemplar in the mind of God, from which God drew all created things which he also calls the λόγος. The Platonists who came after Christ mention that the λόγος of God is God, but only fleetingly and inconsistently.

---

<sup>19</sup> Augustine, *In Evangelium Ioannis expositio*, tractatus I: 9.

### **The human word and the divine Word<sup>20</sup>**

A further consideration of the divine Word arises from a comparison between the human word and the divine Word.

First of all we make a distinction in the human mind between the *idea* and the *word*. We human beings know the essences of things through the ideas we have of them. In other words we can know what they are. We know what a dog or car is through the ideas we have of them. As you read this, you immediately know what I mean when I refer to a dog or a car but you do not yet know whether they really exist or not, or as Rosmini puts it, whether they *subsist*. To know this we must affirm within ourselves that they really exist and do not pertain only to the realm of ideas. So my conversation with you may be sufficient for you to affirm that this or that object really exists. I believe that the island of Samoa really exists though I have never been to the place. More directly, if you yourself perceive the dog or car that I am speaking about you affirm for yourself that they really exist. This affirmation is the word of the mind. I make it, but ideas are not the product of my mind. We have seen that the most general idea is the idea of being that we naturally intuit, which is not us but an object of the mind given to us making us intelligent beings. Likewise its determinations are not part of us; the mind receives them. Positive ideas depend for their determination on sensations which we receive coming from external objects and to which we are passive recipients. But we could not make any affirmation about the subsistence of what we contemplate in the idea unless we had the idea to contemplate! The idea is the reason of the thing that is affirmed. The natural real things of the human intelligence are finite, that is, they are contingent things which may or not be. Ideas are infinite and eternal. They have an essence which cannot not be. Essence is completely different from subsistence. Contingent beings subsist through a free act of God. So the human mind apprehends essence and subsistence by two distinct acts: intuition has essence as its term; affirmation has the subsistence of contingent things as its term. This latter act follows that of intuition logically speaking, because we cannot affirm what we do not know. Subsistence is known through the essence which makes it knowable. We know what the essence of the thing is that is felt and affirmed.

But if there was a subsistence which was known per se, that is, which was both subsistence and essence, it would in this case be a single object which could be and indeed must be known by one act of the spirit. Such an object could not be a contingent one for the reason already given, but must be a necessary one. If the essence is always necessary, this subsistence would also have to be necessary, having in itself its own essence and forming one being with it. Such a being is God. God is the only being whose subsistence is his essence. God therefore is an *absolute*

---

<sup>20</sup> *IVG*, Reading VIII, pp. 81–83.

being. Also because God is being through his essence he cannot not be intelligible, because essence is the intelligible part of things.<sup>21</sup>

### **Ideas, affirmations and intellectual feeling: the intelligibility of God<sup>22</sup>**

When we discuss God as absolute being whose subsistence is his essence, we are saying that he is therefore *per se* intelligible. We understand things through the intuition of being and through determinations of being obtained through affirmations. Ideas are formed through judgements. If we say 'this cat is black' we predicate the idea of 'black' of this particular animal, where 'cat' and 'black' are ideas previously formed and so on. Now intuition has essence as its term, but in God essence is also subsistence. Affirmation supposes the distinction between essence and subsistence because it is a judgement. If I say 'this cat exists' I attribute existence to this animal which I know to be a cat. Existence here is the predicate, the subject is 'cat' which only becomes the subject through the affirmation or judgement. It is clear that God is not apprehended by an affirmation. The predicate is already in the subject. When I say 'God exists' I am saying that Being is subsistent. Subject and predicate are identical: 'this subsistent being subsists'. The act, then, by which the mind apprehends absolute being whose essence is subsistence, must be a third act which, though unique, unites in itself everything which intuition gives us and everything which affirmation gives us, without being exactly either of these. This act can be called 'intellectual feeling' which agrees in some way with that which theologians use when they call the perception of God *vision*, a word taken from the sense of sight, except that the word vision is most suitable for expressing the way in which the saints in heaven apprehend God, but supposes a distinction and a certain distance between the seeing subject and the object seen; and so it does not seem that we can apply this to the way in which God apprehends and understands himself; whereas the expression *intellectual feeling*, which is more general seems suitable both for the beatific vision and the act with which God comprehends himself. But even this is inadequate because the divine subsistence is intelligible through itself, it is *per se* essence. There is no potentiality in God. There is no distinction between the act of knowing and God's subsistence. This subsistence is *per se* light, *per se* knowledge, *per se* intellectual object.

Divine subsistence, then, understood through itself, has a twofold relationship. That of intelligent subject and that of object understood, but the subsistence is identical and perfectly one. But it is understood through itself in virtue of the intellectual act which makes it understood, a necessary act, because it is necessarily and essentially understood in itself. In so far, then, as the divine subsistence is *per se* understood by itself, a subject or person, it is the Word.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> *IVG*, Reading, VIII, (XII), p. 83.

<sup>22</sup> Reading, VIII, pp. 83–86.

<sup>23</sup> Reading IX, (XV), p. 84.

From all this we see firstly how correct is the observation of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, who writes, “The Word of God is always in act and therefore the name of “thought of God” does not pertain correctly to the Word. In fact St. Augustine<sup>24</sup> says ‘Wherefore he is so called the Word of God as not to be called the thought of God, lest it be believed that there is as it were, something revolving (changeable) in God,’<sup>25</sup> because the word *thought* signifies *discursive inquiry* (*discursus inquisitionis*) and not a complete and final utterance in the mind.’<sup>26</sup>

Finally St Thomas says, “But in God to understand and to exist are the same thing; and therefore the Word of the intellect is not some accident but pertains to its nature. Hence it is necessary that he be subsisting because whatever is in the nature of God is God.’<sup>27</sup> The divine Word is divine subsistence which is at the same time intelligence *per se* and being *per se*.

### Summary

1. God is absolute being and therefore complete being.
2. He is subsistent being.
3. This subsistence is *per se* understood and this is the divine Word.
4. The whole of absolute being is *per se* understood; divine subsistence comprehends itself totally.
5. This pure being is essentially one (there can be only one Word) and therefore other concepts can only be determinations more or less actuated. Ideal being is truth; the Word is truth.

### Unlimited and limited being: the Word and contingent things

Being would not understand and comprehend its own essence unless this comprehension included the modes in which real and subsistent being can be limited. Now, as we have seen, there are no limitations in absolute being otherwise it would cease to be absolute through its own essence. Therefore the modes with which being can be limited are the modes by which being can create something different from itself, outside itself, by which a limited being and no longer an absolute one can exist. The knowledge of these modes is the knowledge of ‘creatable’ things, essences of contingent things. These essences are pure ideas of contingent things to which subsistence is not *necessarily* added but united through a free act of creation. So the Divine Word includes necessarily ideas or essences of ‘creatable’ and contingent things, otherwise it would not comprehend itself perfectly these possible limitations, not its own of course. Hence it is the *exemplar* of possible worlds. It should be pointed out that here we are

<sup>24</sup> Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 15: 16.

<sup>25</sup> St Thomas, *In Evangelium beati Ioannis expositio*. Lect. 1.

<sup>26</sup> *IVG*, Reading IX, (XV), pp. 85–86.

<sup>27</sup> St Thomas, *Ibid.*

dealing with the ideas of 'creatable' things, not the things themselves. These do not subsist except by a free and divine operation which makes them subsist.

This does not mean that the divine substance receives limitations which it cannot receive, but it is *being* and being can be limited. There are in its concept two modes, that of unlimited and immutable being is the divine substance and limited being is the creature. The possibility of creatures is two-fold, *logical* and *physical*: logical possibility is the idea, physical possibility is the efficient cause of creatures or creative power.

The divine Word, then, in so far as it is subsistence understood through itself, has the idea of contingent things: in so far as it is subsistence it has the power of creating them, hence creation is proper to the divine subsistence which creates according to the ideas which it has in itself, in so far as it is understood in itself, or in so far as it is the Word: and therefore creation is an operation which belongs to the whole Trinity which has identical subsistence.<sup>28</sup>

### Summary

1. Being would not comprehend its own essence unless this included the modes in which real and subsistent being can be limited.
2. Limited beings are created beings.
3. The divine Word includes the ideas of possible contingent things.
4. The possibility of creatures is logical and physical. Logically it is the idea which is present in the Word of contingent things which could be realised in fact. Physically it consists in the creative power which can make this happen, that is, the efficient causality of the Word.
5. The Word in so far as it is *subsistence as understood* has the idea of contingent things; in so far as it is subsistent it has the power of creating them.
4. Creation is proper to the divine subsistence and therefore it is proper to the whole Trinity which has identical subsistence.

### The Word as Exemplar<sup>29</sup>

How does the exemplar of contingent things reside in the Word? This exemplar is the intimate knowledge of the power which the divine subsistence has of making being in a limited mode exist. We have mentioned that this is the possibility, not the reality. When we speak of the Word and the Exemplar we are making an imperfect abstraction by which we consider the Word under two aspects, the Word with respect to absolute subsistence and the Word with respect to limited being or the possibility of subsisting as limited being. The divine Word comprehends itself under both these aspects. We have mentioned above the logical possibility of contingent beings and the

<sup>28</sup> *IVG*, Reading X, (XVIII), p. 88.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, Reading XI, pp 88-90.

physical possibility, which is the creative power which can cause this. Now in God, the relationship of these two possibilities is that the physical possibility of creative power precedes that of the logical possibility. The reason is that the creative power is a real force contained in the depth of creative subsistence. The divine subsistence is understood *per se* totally, therefore its creative power is *per se* understood. The creative potency is not like human potency which changes when it passes into act, because there is no potency in God who is pure act. These two possibilities do not have the same order as in the human mind in which the knowledge of the logical possibility precedes that of the physical possibility. Human beings do not have subsistence known through itself and have need of ideas in order to know finite subsistent beings which are not known through themselves. Logical possibility, ideal essence, is known through itself. When we wish to know to what the physical possibility of being extends we must have recourse to logical possibility, to see what is contained in the idea and then this gives us the sphere of physical possibility or the creative power of God.

### **Consequences**

A demonstration of the existence of God
---

In the concept of being there is an infinite and necessary subsistence and subsistences which are finite and possible to be realised. But if all this is found in the concept of being then all this is in being itself, otherwise it would not be in the concept. Thus in the concept of being we find a demonstration of the existence of God. A second consequence is that we find a demonstration of the power which divine Being must have, of realising finite beings contained in the concept of being. A third consequence is that although the human mind in all its reasoning must move from the concept of being, we see on reflection that the concept of being presupposes before it the being from which it proceeds, that is, the subsistence of being. So the relationship which the concept of being and being have in the human mind, where the former precedes and sheds light on the latter, is one thing, the relationship which the two terms have in themselves, through which the concept of being proceeds from subsistent being is another.

### **Absolute subsistence is simple and does not admit any multiplicity or real distinctions.<sup>30</sup>**

Our human way of explaining absolute being and what is contained in it might lead to the belief that it is not simple and that there are real distinctions present but we know that this is not correct because absolute being is simple and does not admit of any real distinctions, it does not admit limits of any sort. Having said this we recapitulate by saying that there are three things, first the unlimited subsistence of

---

<sup>30</sup> *IVG*, Reading XII, pp. 90–91.

being, second the possibility of limited being, third the power proper to unlimited subsistence to make limited being subsist.

*Now the limits which limited being can receive are not outlines in the absolute subsistence so as to constitute many really distinct specific ideas.* Infinite subsistence comprehends all being, even the possibility of finite being and the power to make it subsist. The possibility of finite being extends to all finite possible being and the power extends to being able to realise all finite possible beings; there are no limits.

So where do the determinate and special limits of finite being come from? They come from the creative power belonging to divine subsistence. This determines them and prescribes them with the act by which it wills to create it. *In the divine Word there are not strictly speaking specific and really distinct ideas of various finite beings but solely the possibility of finite being, that is, the universal idea of being.*

With respect to the divine subsistence as absolute and unlimited being this [possibility of finite being] is subsistence manifested *per se*; with respect to finite being not yet subsisting it is simply *idea*.

Now the universal idea of being is communicated to man according to his nature, but not the divine subsistence which is manifest *per se*; and therefore the Word is not communicated to him, but a light coming from the Word.

In this way relative to man, being *per se* manifested, is limited in such a way that man has only the idea or the concept of being, without the subsistence: the notion of the Word and the notion of God are absent, because the Word and God is not limited in any way whatever.<sup>31</sup>

### **God created an orderly universe, manifesting his infinite wisdom<sup>32</sup>**

The divine power proper to the divine subsistence and therefore the Trinity was what determined the special limitations that finite being must have. Was this made in a reasonable manner?

Being most wise, the divine subsistence could not give rise to anything unless it were a finite being in which shone the character of wisdom which conceived and created it. Now this wisdom is manifested in order, that is, the disposition of plurality to a perfect and best unity. This unity is best when it is ordered to its best end, which is God. The final end of the universe is, therefore, God, that is, the manifestation of the glory of God whose glory is his blessedness and holiness, his perfect and absolute being, one and three. Everything must tend to this because God loves only himself and finite being for himself. The same wisdom is manifested in the *way* in which the plurality of beings tended to such a unity and this consisted in the order with which finite beings had to be linked and interconnected with one another, with the subordination of secondary causes, so that all these beings formed one sole order, one sole universe.

---

<sup>31</sup> *IVG*, Reading XII, p. 91.

<sup>32</sup> *IVG*, Reading XIII, pp. 91–93.



But the only order in the divine subsistence is that of the persons, there is no other multiplicity nor real distinction. So where does this law of wisdom come from? The answer is that it is found in the divine subsistence, in so far as this, loving itself infinitely, must necessarily will to produce the *greatest finite being possible* with the *least action*, from which it follows that this being had to be ordered to effect this. The same necessity demanded that finite being should obtain maximum benefit, that is, share in the greatest possible amount of the divine nature. This order in the natural and supernatural sphere had to be the character of wisdom impressed on the work of God.

Again, God *had* to will his work to be ordered because the only exemplar was himself, nor could finite being be other than limited and therefore subject to multiplicity. It was necessary that the unity of order should shine out as much as possible in order that it imitate, as much as possible, infinite being. Creation could only be one though resulting from many parts, from many beings. The universe is one and therefore one in the divine mind. This concept is wisdom created from eternity with the act of creation of the world. All contingent things are not known by God through separate ideas but through one idea only, emerging from the act of creation which is identified with that act.

### **God created the universe out of love for himself<sup>33</sup>**

God loves himself through his essence and he loves being in all its modes; he loves both infinite being and finite being. If he loves what subsists he has a reason for making finite being subsist or creating it. *Good is of its nature diffusive*.

#### **Are there any other universes?**

Could God have created other universes? God is limited in this by the laws of wisdom. These imposed first, that the universe had unity for its purpose, second that it had order and unity in its constitution and connections within itself, third that there was subordination of cause and effect, establishment of laws etc. and any other combination would not have shown and confirmed those most wise laws according to which he operates. So with creation he made all that was possible to subsist taking into account these laws of his wisdom and holiness. The objection could be made that this is a limitation on God's freedom. To this Rosmini replies that the liberty of God is most perfect, because his essential wisdom and sanctity do not limit his power but direct it. He can do only what is perfect necessarily, this is the perfection of divine freedom.

### **Consequences**

1. Although finite created being can be greater and more numerous, if one regards only the omnipotence of the Creator; nevertheless it could

---

<sup>33</sup> *IVG*, Reading XIV, pp. 93–94.

- not be if one regards the other attributes of wisdom and holiness, and therefore that the finite being which subsists through creation is all the finite being that could subsist, taking into account these attributes;
2. God was moved to create out of love which he essentially bears within himself and therefore creation was physically free although morally necessary;
3. The divine plan of the universe is one and comprises all that God made;
4. This plan is not different in God from the act of creation with which it was made distinct and specific. All those modes with which finite being could subsist if it were created more imperfectly in imitation of the infinite, remain indistinct in the divine subsistence.
5. This plan itself was not found by God as a result of reasoning but was always present to him and belongs to the divine Word.<sup>34</sup>

There are continual discussions about creation and Darwinism. Rosmini would have had no problem with evolution, seeing this as resulting from the great act of creation in the best and most orderly fashion. It is in keeping with the law of the least means that the whole development of all species and variations should have been programmed in the one act of creation.

### **The divine plan of creation is not different from the act of creation<sup>35</sup>**

The divine subsistence has no limits in it; it is the power of making finite things subsist. The limits to finite being are deduced from the divine wisdom who lays it down. But there is no reasoning in the divine wisdom; it is always complete and final. The finite object is determined by its own subsistence which comes with the act of creation. The eternal act of creation of the world is the act itself of Wisdom which sees the subsisting world and makes it subsist. This one act both sees the world and seeing the world creates it. It finds that finite being which in the best way possible imitates infinite being. Finding it and creating it are the same thing. This does not mean that infinite being has to make a search in the human sense. It is better to say that it continually encounters finite being, it encounters it from eternity, this actual wisdom is essential to God.

As we have already said, the act of creation is identified with the generation of the divine Word. This act is divine subsistence in so far as understanding itself it manifests itself, which is the divine Word. But at the same time it manifests finite being which imitates the divine subsistence in so far as it can. But to manifest to itself finite being is to create it. But there is one great difference between the generative act and the creative act. The former is necessary because divine subsistence is necessarily manif-

---

<sup>34</sup> *IVG*, Reading XIV, p. 94.

<sup>35</sup> *IVG*, Reading XV, pp. 94–95.

ested through itself, but the latter is voluntary, produced freely through the love which God bears in himself and therefore to all that imitates him.

### **The beginning of the universe**

If we take the beginning of the universe as the big bang, we might imagine that the eternal creation of the world was going on for ages before God decided to explode it into being. But this way of thinking is a human one. There is no time with God. To say that the creation of the world is eternal means outside time. Time for human beings could be said to begin with the big bang but it is a construct of finite created subsistence and has nothing to do with the subsistence of God.

### **The expression λόγός and its meanings<sup>36</sup>**

What are the meanings of λόγός ? ‘St. Jerome writing to Paulinus writes that this word in Greek has many meanings: it means word, reason, calculation, or the cause of each thing by which individual things which are, subsist: all these meanings can be rightly predicated of Christ’.<sup>37</sup>

Now although no human words can be fully appropriate to signify divine things, the Latin Church often uses the Latin word *verbum* to signify what St John expresses by λόγός. The word ‘verbum’ is the most accurate expression to signify the second person of the Blessed Trinity with respect to the Father and to creatures.

#### **With respect to God the Father.**

The name ‘word’ primarily signifies an intellectual act of the spirit which is not a simple thought or intuition, but a pronouncement, judgement or affirmation. It is not a mere ideal notion but the persuasive adherence of the spirit to the real object. The term of this affirmation is not a mere idea but a subsistence. Thus it is appropriate for the second person of the Blessed Trinity who is absolute and subsisting Being, manifested through himself in virtue of his own act, always known and co-eternal which renders him manifest and so generates him.<sup>38</sup>

Rosmini says that many Fathers of the Church say that the Son is the Word because he is the *knowledge* of the Father.<sup>39</sup> Now this is the same as saying that he is the knowledge of a subsistence and not of an idea because the Father subsists, and the knowledge of a subsistence is subsistence itself as known, and it is known not with a mere act of intuition, but with an act of affirmation, of an intellective feeling which

<sup>36</sup> *IVG*, Reading XVI, pp. 95–100.

<sup>37</sup> Jerome, *Epistola. III, ad Paulinum*, De Stud. Scripturarum n. 4. Cf. Reading. XVI, pp. 95–96.

<sup>38</sup> Reading XVI, p. 96.

<sup>39</sup> Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius, Eusebius, Hilarion, Augustine, Fulgentius, Cyril, Rufinus, John Damascene, Anselm, Rupert. Cf. Reading XVI, pp. 97–98, for details of works.

includes the affirmation

The word *reason* on the other hand often indicates an idea used in reasoning. We often say ‘the reason for this is....’. We sometimes find the reason in its subsistent cause. ‘The reason why the garden is wet is that it is raining’. Rain is the reason for the garden being wet — real rain! In this sense it would be appropriate for the second person of the Blessed Trinity. But primarily the Son is not the reason for things but being generated by the Father. Moreover, the word ‘reason’ is used to signify the subjective faculty of reasoning in which case it is not suitable for the Word, except in so far as the Word is the origin of this faculty within us, or as we said above, St Jerome says ‘all these meanings can be rightly understood of Christ’.<sup>40</sup>

Some Fathers say that the word λόγος belongs to the Son because he proceeds from the Father, ἀπαθώς, without any passion or corruption of the generator precisely as knowledge proceeds from the mind.<sup>41</sup> However, not all knowledge proceeds from the mind because ideal notions proceed from the idea which gives them to the mind which receives them. (The mind is passive to ideas). Whereas, as we have seen, the interior word, the affirmation of subsistent things, proceeds from the mind, so the expression of ‘Word’ is more suitable for the Son. But it is not exactly right that the word of the human spirit proceeds without any effecting any change in the spirit because it proceeds from it as an accident, whereas the Word of God does not accomplish any change in the Father to whom it is essential.

St Gregory Nazianzen and St Basil see another analogy between the signification of λόγος in itself considered and applied to the Word; that just as λόγος is intimate to man, so the Son is intimate to the Father. This analogy has greater force if we understand by λόγος the faculty of reason in so far as it is founded on the intuition of being. But nevertheless we are still a long way from finding in it a complete resemblance, because ideal being intuited by the human spirit, is neither the subsistence of this spirit nor identified with it. The being which informs our spirit is one thing, and our own spirit itself is another. Whereas the Son and the Father have the same subsistence.

Λόγος: The Word	
In us	In the Trinity
An affirmation, or judgement whose term is contingent realities (limited beings).	Subsistent being, eternally generated by the Father: knowledge of the Father. An act of affirmation or better, intellectual feeling.

<sup>40</sup> See note 36.

<sup>41</sup> Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Theophylact, Eutimius, *Ibid.*, pp. 98–99, for details of works.

<b>Λόγος</b> belongs to the Son because he proceeds from the Father, as knowledge proceeds from the mind	
Not all knowledge proceeds from the mind because ideal notions proceed from the idea which gives them to the mind. However the word, a better expression, does not proceed from the mind without a change in the spirit. It proceeds as an accident.	The word which proceeds from the mind is a more suitable expression for the Son. The Word does not accomplish any change in the Father to whom it is essential
<b>Λόγος: Reason</b>	
Can mean an <i>idea</i> used in reasoning, or subjective faculty of reasoning, so not suitable for God who does not reason.	But is suitable as seeing that the Word is the origin of this faculty within us. The idea of being is an appurtenance of God.
<b>Λόγος</b> is intimate to man just as the Son is intimate to the Father	
The faculty of reason is founded on the intuition of being: but not on the subsistence of the spirit nor is it identified with it.	The Son and the Father have the same subsistence.

The above table indicates how our human expressions can never be perfectly appropriate when speaking of the relation of the Word to the Father.

### **The nine differences between the human word and the divine Word<sup>42</sup>**

We can enumerate nine differences between the human word and the Divine Word.

1. The human word is produced by the passage from potency to act. But the divine Word is always in act, always generated from eternity.
2. The human word is an accident of the soul; the soul could exist without it as it actually does before the first word is emitted. The divine Word is essential to the divine nature which could not exist without it. Absolute being, God, through his essence necessarily exists in three forms, or Persons. Therefore one cannot think a potency prior to the generation of the Word in God either chronologically or logically, because if there were, there would be something prior to God, but God is being and there is nothing prior to being. The act of generation of the Word does not have a beginning. It is an immanent and simple act; it is first act. There was nothing before this completed act. There is nothing to be conceived or thought. The word 'completed' is

<sup>42</sup> *IVG*, Reading XVII, pp. 100–104.

inexact because it implies that something could be uncompleted; which is not the case. It is due to our time-conditioned way of reasoning.

3. The human word is simply an affirmation leaving in the soul a persuasion and knowledge of the thing affirmed. We distinguished the word from its effects which remain in the soul either temporarily or permanently after it is uttered. The divine Word is not a mere affirmation but also has whatever is positive in our intuition and our feeling. It is not a transient act, nor can it be distinguished from its effects because it is both persuasion and immanent knowledge, but it is more than this and perhaps can be best summed up in the expression which we have already used, *intellectual feeling*. The human mind pronounces many words so the analogy which we use between the human word and the divine Word is appropriate if we refer to the word by which human beings affirm and pronounce themselves, but not with respect to other words which we pronounce regarding things different from ourselves. The reason is that the divine Word is a similitude and image of the Father who pronounces him and generates him and the word with which a human being pronounces himself is what makes him knowable to himself.

4. The human word is made through a union of the idea with the subsistence of contingent things made known through sensations. To know this subsistence means to affirm it in the essence. This is true even when affirming or pronouncing ourselves. We are unknown to ourselves unless we affirm ourselves, pronouncing that we are a real instance of that being which we already know in the idea. Feeling is unknowable in itself. But divine subsistence is also essence known to itself, without the need of any other being to make it known. Being known and affirmed *per se*, is what constitutes the Word of the essential intellectual act through which it is such. There is no need of a synthesis between his essence and subsistence because God is already object *per se*. It has no need of any objective synthesis to objectivise contingent realities, as is the case with us.

5. When human beings pronounce words, the essence which they unite with subsistence stands before their mind as object and is not part of their mind. This is so even in self-affirmation. But God the Father who pronounces his Word does not take from anywhere else the essence which is his subsistence. He pronounces himself with himself. The divine subsistence is continually being pronounced through its own essence, through its own light.

6. The human word is multiple because human beings are limited beings among many others all of which are exclusive in their own right, so they continually need being pronounced to make them intelligible. The divine Word is the only one which unlimited and absolute Being pronounces, that is, divine subsistence. In this he pronounces the physical possibility of finite being and the act of his will which makes it subsist, and therefore the logical possibility or essence and at the same time the subsistence of finite being in its unity, in its order, which makes it one whole and most ordered; this is the created universe with all its acts. He is simply the Word without any limitations.

7. The human word produces simply the persuasion or knowledge of the subsistence of things. It does not produce the things themselves. But the divine Word is

constitutive of the divine subsistence because the Word is essential to it, that is, being *per se* object, *per se* light and *per se* manifest in itself. It is productive of creatures, because the act by which it pronounces them, sees them as loveable in himself, and is also an act of the will with which he makes them subsist. As the author of the letter to the Hebrews says, ‘*and he sustains all things by his powerful word*’.<sup>43</sup> The ‘loveableness’ of most ordered and complete finite being is the ‘loveableness’ itself of the divine subsistence which is shared by finite being, in so far as it imitates the former, though in a limited way.

8. The human word is simply *persuasive* and not *practical*, that is, operative. To make an action operative human beings have to make a second practical judgement by which they affirm interiorly that this action which they will is good for them. This action is distinct from the word itself. These distinctions are not found in the divine Word. The creation of the world is an act determined morally by the ‘loveableness’ of the world in so far as it imitates, as well as finite being can, the divine subsistence loveable of its very nature, in which the world is loved. The act essential to the divine subsistence is that with which the world is created and, moreover, with that one act, because there are no others in God. It does all that it does *ad extra*; and this act is that one Word with which it sees and makes at the same time finite subsistences.

9. The human word receives from the divine word all the parts of which it is composed. First: it receives the essences of things, the possibility of finite being, which becomes the light of reason; second: it receives finite subsistences which it affirms with its persuasive word, and the actions which it affirms as good with its practical word, because all this receives the subsistence of the act of the divine Word; thirdly: the subjective acts of affirmation and judgement are given being by the Word, in which and through which all things are made. The divine Word, on the contrary, receives nothing from a being greater than itself, but only from the Father to whom it is equal, because it is divine subsistence *per se* understood, through its own proper act of intelligence which makes it real object to itself and equally real subject.

Practical words have a greater analogy with the divine Word than persuasive words in so far as they produce an inclination and therefore another action and therefore are productive as a secondary cause, as the divine substance is productive not only of actions but also of substances. But they could not do this unless first pronounced by God who creates them; so they can be called repetitions of what God pronounced from all eternity when he generated the Word.

The nine differences between the human word and the divine Word	
Human word	Divine Word
1. Produced by potency to act	Always in act.
2. Accident of the soul.	Essential to the divine nature.

---

<sup>43</sup> *Heb* 1: 3.

*The Eternal Word*

3. Affirmation leaving the soul persuaded and with the knowledge of the thing affirmed.	Not mere affirmation: it is both persuasion and immanent knowledge. Intellectual feeling.
4. Made through union of idea (essence) with the subsistence of contingent things.	Essence known to itself. The divine Word is Being known and affirmed <i>per se</i> . No need of synthesis.
5. The essence, objective being, is not part of their mind.	God the Father who pronounces his Word does not take the essence from anywhere: it is his subsistence.
6. Human word is multiple	Divine Word is the only one, unlimited and absolute which unlimited and absolute Being pronounces.
7. Human word produces simply the persuasion or knowledge of things: it does not produce the things themselves.	The divine Word, divine subsistence, sees possible finite beings and creates them <i>ad extra</i> .
8. Human word is persuasive, not operative. Second practical judgement needed to make this operative.	No distinction in God. The one act which is essential to the divine substance is that with which God also creates the world <i>ad extra</i> .
9. The human word receives from the divine word, essences (the idea of being and its determinations) and finite subsistences which it affirms. The subjective act of affirmation is given being by the Word	The divine Word receives nothing greater, but only from the Father with whom it is equal. It is divine subsistence <i>per se</i> understood.

***With respect to creatures.***

The second person of the Blessed Trinity is expressed best by the term 'Word'.<sup>44</sup>

The word in human beings is firstly an internal affirmation making the thing pronounced known to the human spirit and secondly an external one which serves to keep it before one's mind, reinforce it and also make it known to other minds. There is an analogy here between the human word and the divine Word. The divine Word, as subsistence pronounced, has a relationship with the Father; and in so far as it is the world pronounced by God it is the fulfilment of the first. It is the divine imitable subsistence and imitated by finite being and at the same time it has a relationship with creatures which subsist through the Word and which, by imitating infinite being as much as they can, express it and manifest it to themselves, that is to finite intelligences. As we saw above, divine subsistence would not be complete without this pronouncement of itself, that is without the Word which includes the physical possibility of finite being. For the same reason it would not be complete if it were not loveable and loved by itself including finite being. Hence it follows that it freely

---

<sup>44</sup> *IVG*, Reading XVIII, pp. 104–107.



pronounces the most ordered finite being loved by it, giving it at the same time its determinate essence and subsistence.

Intelligent finite being is the most noble part of creation and other things are made for it and so that these may praise and glorify God and ultimately share in his perfection and happiness. This begins with the act of creating finite intelligences because they are rendered intelligent precisely by being given ideal being *per se* manifest. This is an appurtenance of the divine Word because it is the logical possibility of finite being which, pronounced in the divine subsistence, dwells in it.

It is through ideal being that we affirm our own feelings, our own subsistence and the subsistence of other finite beings, made known to it through sensations which modify our feeling and through our resulting affirmation we know their essence and affirm their subsistence. "This thing subsists". We refer our contingent feelings to the essence of being shining to our intellect. This has a special analogy with the divine Word. Just as God is manifest to himself and knows all things in himself; so we know all contingent things in ourselves through our feeling, which, because it is not essence, we must refer to ideal being. Divine feeling, however, is *per se notum*.

Rosmini states (and he does this many times in his works) that the essence of being, though it is an appurtenance of being which we intuit, is not the Word because it is not *actuated* being. It is being in *potency*. It is not subsistence; it is pure essence. We have only a negative idea of the Word. The Word is only known through a communication made to human beings in a supernatural way, through grace. This communication is an immediate perception. This humiliates us because we see the limitation of human reasoning and the impossibility of rising to union with God on our own.

### **Profane and divine knowledge<sup>45</sup>**

To illustrate the difference between the learning of philosophers and the communication of grace, Rosmini quotes a long passage from Augustine's *Confessions* in which he says that he read Platonist books which did not tell him the whole story of Christ's Incarnation.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> *IVG*, Reading XIX, 107–113.

<sup>46</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, cap. IX, n. 7. 13. "And first of all, willing to show me how thou dost "resist the proud, but give grace to the humble," and how mercifully thou hast made known to men the way of humility in that thy Word "was made flesh and dwelt among men," thou didst procure for me, through one inflated with the most monstrous pride, certain books of the Platonists, translated from Greek into Latin. And therein I found, not indeed in the same words, but to the selfsame effect, enforced by many and various reasons that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." That which was made by him is "life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shined in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." Furthermore, I read that the soul of man, though it "bears witness to the light," yet itself "is not the light; but the Word

*The Eternal Word*

From this beautiful passage of the great Doctor of Hippo we gather that the human understanding could reason about the internal Word of God; that is, as regards grasping it for itself, it could at least receive the

---

of God, being God, is that true light that lights every man who comes into the world." And further, that "he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." But that "he came unto his own, and his own received him not. And as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name" --this I did not find there. Similarly, I read there that God the Word was born "not of flesh nor of blood, nor of the will of man, nor the will of the flesh, but of God." But, that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" --I found this nowhere there. And I discovered in those books, expressed in many and various ways, that "the Son was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal in God," for he was naturally of the same substance. But, that "he emptied himself and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him" from the dead, "and given him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" --this those books have not. I read further in them that before all times and beyond all times, thy only Son remaineth unchangeably coeternal with thee, and that of his fullness all souls receive that they may be blessed, and that by participation in that wisdom which abides in them, they are renewed that they may be wise. But, that "in due time, Christ died for the ungodly" and that thou "sparest not thy only Son, but deliveredst him up for us all" --this is not there. "For thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes"; that they "that labor and are heavy laden" might "come unto him and he might refresh them" because he is "meek and lowly in heart." "The meek will he guide in judgment; and the meek will he teach his way; beholding our lowliness and our trouble and forgiving all our sins." But those who strut in the high boots of what they deem to be superior knowledge will not hear Him who says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls." Thus, though they know God, yet they do not glorify him as God, nor are they thankful. Therefore, they "become vain in their imaginations; their foolish heart is darkened, and professing themselves to be wise they become fools." And, moreover, I also read there how "they changed the glory of thy incorruptible nature into idols and various images--into an image made like corruptible man and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things": namely, into that Egyptian food for which Esau lost his birthright; so that thy first-born people worshiped the head of a four-footed beast instead of thee, turning back in their hearts toward Egypt and prostrating thy image (their own soul) before the image of an ox that eats grass. These things I found there, but I fed not on them. For it pleased thee, O Lord, to take away the reproach of his minority from Jacob, that the elder should serve the younger and thou mightest call the Gentiles, and I had sought strenuously after that gold which thou didst allow thy people to take from Egypt, since wherever it was it was thine. And thou saidst unto the Athenians by the mouth of thy apostle that in thee "we live and move and have our being," as one of their own poets had said. And truly these books came from there. But I did not set my mind on the idols of Egypt which they fashioned of gold, "changing the truth of God into a lie and worshiping and serving the creature more than the Creator".<sup>7</sup> Trans. Albert C. Outler, *Christian Classics*. Cf. Reading XIX, pp. 107–8.

divine revelation without contradiction, because it is completely in conformity and harmony with the understanding; but, on the contrary, all that pertains to the external Word of God, that is, the operations and manifestations of the Word to human beings, which are not rational in the same way but which must be admitted positively and consequently with obedience of faith to the God who reveals, were not accepted by the philosophers in their pride. They wished to draw everything from their own reasoning, attributing everything to their own talent, boasting of their findings. This refusal to admit the voluntary and positive revelation of the Word is the phenomenon which had to occur *in natural man* deprived of grace; because natural man does not feel God, and therefore he perceives only the material part of the external revelation of God and not the divine part in which it is clothed. He does not believe this, then, because he does not feel it.

We must observe that the external revelation or communication of the Word to created intelligence is carried out through the Holy Spirit. It was through the work of this divine Spirit that the Incarnation occurred, the greatest communication of the Word to humanity. “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.*”<sup>47</sup> Through the work of this same Spirit the ancient revelation was made through the prophets of whom St. Peter said, “*men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*”<sup>48</sup> And as the prophets inspired by the Holy Spirit spoke and wrote about the Word of God, so their words could not be understood nor their writings interpreted without the Holy Spirit giving understanding to minds, explaining internally the meaning of the words which they heard externally. Hence St. Peter teaches: “*No prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation.*”<sup>49</sup>

What the prophets announced of the Word of God, though it was inspired by the Holy Spirit and referred to the divine Word, did not contain the divine Word itself. This was only given to people personally through the Incarnation. The former contained only the announcing of the Word. This presupposed some cognition or even some perception of the Word but not the complete and personal perception of the Word. Peter distinguishes between these two species of spiritual light. The saints of the Old Testament tried hard to find out when and what would come about, including the sufferings and glory of Christ indicated by the Spirit of Christ, but this was not given for them but for future Christians “*It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.*”<sup>50</sup> Peter also compares the old light to a lantern lighting up a dark place, and

---

<sup>47</sup> *Lk* 1, 35.

<sup>48</sup> *2 Pet* 1, 21.

<sup>49</sup> *IVG*, Reading XIX, pp. 108–109.

<sup>50</sup> *1 Pet* 1: 12.

the new light carried by Christ to the morning star, '*So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts*'.<sup>51</sup> The Word then is given to us through the internal action of the Holy Spirit who utters this announcing and the exterior and sensible signification of the Word, but this can not be understood without a new internal operation of the Holy Spirit who makes it understood. St Paul, when speaking of the understanding of the Scriptures, makes a distinction between the letter and the spirit of them, '*for the letter kills but the Spirit gives life*'.<sup>52</sup> Rosmini applies this to the coming of the Word Incarnate. Those who simply recognised his humanity and did not have faith in his divinity are compared to the letter. Their knowledge dies, '*This child is destined for the falling...*', those who believe also in the divinity turn their knowledge to life, '*and the rising of many*'.<sup>53</sup> Christ is also compared both to a foundation stone and a stumbling block, '*Jesus said to them, Have you never read in the scriptures: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes?" Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls*'.<sup>54</sup> The human being of Christ revealed to all and the divine being revealed through the Holy Spirit is signified by calling himself *Son of Man* and *Son of God*. St Hilary comments on the question of Christ '*Who do people say the Son of Man is?*' 'The Lord indeed said, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" And certainly his bodily appearance revealed the Son of Man. Therefore by saying : "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is," he makes known to them that there is something further to be known regarding him besides what he appeared to be; for he was the Son of Man. What opinion regarding himself did he seek? Not that which was confessed about him. What he was seeking for was something concealed, something to which the faith of those who believe in him must reach.'<sup>55</sup> What was hidden from human beings could only be revealed by God, hence St Peter says, '*You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God*' and Christ said to him, '*Blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah! Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven*'.<sup>56</sup> We gather from this that animal feeling cannot have the perception of the Word, it must come from a supernatural source. Natural perceptions come from natural know-ledge. The stimulus which caused St Peter to make this act of faith was occasioned by the humanity of Christ present to him, this was the external expression of the Word from which it received divine power. Similarly, St Thomas would not have confessed the divinity of Christ if, perhaps, he had not seen and touched Christ's wounds.

---

<sup>51</sup> 2 Pet 1: 19.

<sup>52</sup> 2 Cor 3: 6.

<sup>53</sup> Lk 2: 34.

<sup>54</sup> Mt 21: 42–44. Cf. Ps 117; Isa 8: 14–15; 28: 16; Acts 4: 11; Rom 9: 33; 1 Pet 2 4–8.

<sup>55</sup> Hilary, *In Evangelium Matthaei commentarius* 16: 13.

<sup>56</sup> Mt 16: 16–17.

## Conclusions

1. Negative and analogical knowledge of the Word can be acquired with the natural reason and by revelation. Positive and perceptive cognition is only given by the hidden working of the Holy Spirit in the human soul.
2. This work of the Holy Spirit is preceded and accompanied by an external and sensible thing which is the letter in revelation, the humanity of Christ in the Incarnation. This sign and sensible expression is enlivened by the Spirit who acts interiorly so that the soul at the same time perceives at least in an inchoate way, the Word and therefore understands the positive signification of it. This sensible sign is appropriately called the external word of God (*verbum oris* is different from *verbum cordis*).
3. Finally the impression of the divine Word in us through the Holy Spirit results in a moral effect in us if we consent to it and do not place an obstacle in the way. 'And because this morality embraces humiliation, mortification and sacrifice, therefore the supernatural and living perception of the Word leads the soul to take delight in the holiness of the Word, and therefore to recognise, love and imitate his self-denial, passion and the glory which comes from this ultimate perfection of virtue which is fulfilled in patience and sacrifice of natural goods. Now this is repugnant to nature and the pride of philosophers, and therefore all that belongs to the positive, enlivening and holy communication of the Word is hidden from them, also mystical doctrine and the holy desires and sublime effects which follow. Hence we see clearly the line of demarcation between natural knowledge and Christian wisdom.'<sup>57</sup>

Rosmini concludes this reading with a further quotation from Augustine.

'The books of the Platonists tell nothing of this. Their pages do not contain the expression of this kind of godliness--the tears of confession, thy sacrifice, a troubled spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, the salvation of thy people, the espoused City, the earnest of the Holy Spirit, the cup of our redemption. In them, no man sings: "Shall not my soul be subject unto God, for from him comes my salvation? He is my God and my salvation, my defender; I shall no more be moved." In them, no one hears him calling, "Come unto me all you who labor." They scorn to learn of him because he is "meek and lowly of heart"; for "thou hast hidden those things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." For it is one thing to see the land of peace from a wooded mountaintop: and fail to find the way thither, to attempt impassable ways in vain, opposed and waylaid by fugitives and deserters under their captain, the "lion" and "dragon"; but it is quite another thing to keep to the highway that leads thither, guarded by the hosts of the heavenly Emperor, on which there are no deserters from the heavenly army to rob the passers-by, for they shun it as a torment.'<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, cap. VII, n. 21. *IVG*, Reading, XIX, p. 112.

<sup>58</sup> Augustine, *Ibid.*, cap. VII, n. 21. Reading, XIX, p. 112–113.

### **The knowledge of the Word under the Old Covenant<sup>59</sup>**

We derive our natural knowledge from the idea of being (ideal being): we derive supernatural knowledge (or supernatural wisdom) from the Word, that is real being, *per se* revealed. The book of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) states, '*The source of wisdom is God's word in the highest heaven*'.<sup>60</sup> 'In the highest heaven' signifies the supernatural order of knowledge, metaphorically above nature in the highest place. Rosmini asks a question which he attributes to St John Chrysostom, why St John began with the Word rather than the Father, because the Father is the principle of the Word. Rosmini answers that this question deals with the processions of the persons in the Trinity, but the order in which the persons are revealed to the human mind is firstly the Word (being *per se* revealed) and then the Father. It is through the Word that we come to know the Father. '*I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world*'.<sup>61</sup> And although the Father draws all people to the Son<sup>62</sup> this is in order of action not cognition.

St Thomas says that the Jews before Christ did not know God as Father because they did not know the Son.<sup>63</sup> This ignorance of the Word was not complete lack of knowledge but a lack of personal and positive knowledge. They did not have this perception until the Incarnation. It is certain that they had a negative and ideal cognition.<sup>64</sup> The knowledge they had was more than just philosophical because Deiform grace was present which gave some perception of divine subsistence. From this initial perception of God came a spiritual and divine reflection regarding the rational and natural cognition of the Word. Rosmini points out that the chosen people had a revelation of many dogmatic and moral truths through the ministry of angels.<sup>65</sup> Hence Christ says, '*Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad*'.<sup>66</sup> These were surely not natural cognitions or natural-historical ones, but must have been accompanied by grace and an interior light which must be an intellectual perception of those truths shown by sensible signs. But the Word did not speak to them nor did he reveal himself, so they did not have a personal perception of the revealing Word but only some gifts and light. So the author of the letter to the

---

<sup>59</sup> *IVG*, Reading XX, pp. 113–116.

<sup>60</sup> *Sir* 1: 5 This verse is not in the main text of modern versions of the Bible. The NRSV in a footnote mentions that ancient authorities added this as v. 5. Losacco points out that wisdom in this quotation refers rather to a creature of God. Losacco, p. 14.

<sup>61</sup> *Jn* 17: 6.

<sup>62</sup> *Jn* 6: 44.

<sup>63</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *In Evangelium beati Ioannis evangelistae expositio*, cap.I, lectio 1. Cf. J.A.D., *Our Light and Our Salvation*, chapter 13, p. 179 ff.

<sup>64</sup> Rosmini suggests that the Platonic school and the Neoplatonists likewise had a negative and ideal knowledge of the Word, and that the Neoplatonists had drawn theirs from the Jewish Schools in Alexandria where Aristobolus lived.

<sup>65</sup> Cf *Heb* 2: 2.

<sup>66</sup> *Jn* 8: 56.

Hebrews said, ‘*Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son...*’<sup>67</sup>

But it was God who spoke even via the angels and so these revealed truths are called the *word of God*. Note, we say word in the singular because the word of God is one. Many truths revealed in the Old and New Law were revealed by the divine Word, are appurtenances of him and therefore contain some supernatural revelation of the Word himself even though, until the Incarnation, he was not personally manifested to humanity.

**The actual person of the Word was not communicated in the Old Testament but only his gifts<sup>68</sup>**

Grace which consists in a deiform action is divisible. St Paul says, ‘*now there are varieties of gifts but the same spirit*’;<sup>69</sup> and ‘*But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift*’.<sup>70</sup> All special revealed gifts are Christ’s but Christ is not expressly revealed to people; the Word does not communicate himself personally to them. So:

1. The actual person of the Word is not communicated but only his gifts;
2. These truths are many but the Word is one.

Important fundamental facts
The Word is <i>being</i> revealed and therefore <i>per se</i> object. But <i>being</i> is divine subsistence. So the Word must be subject and person. Therefore the Word is subject <i>per se</i> object.

The special revealed truths are given objectively. The Word is being *per se* revealed and therefore the same being *per se* object, but since being is also divine subsistence, he must be subject and person. So he is subject *per se* object. But his subjectivity is hidden in the communication of the specially revealed truths, and therefore his personality. So to say it again: in the Old Testament the person of the Word is not communicated. But when he became incarnate, corresponding to his external words there was an interior grace which gave men the perception of the Word speaking and acting. We have seen elsewhere that this perception could be called *verbiformi*.<sup>71</sup> People apprehended the Word clothed with his humanity.

The special gifts of the Old and New Revelation are therefore gifts of the Word but not the Word himself. Moreover they are appurtenances of the Word. These gifts are not divided in him nor divided among themselves, nor divided from his personality,

---

<sup>67</sup> Heb 1: 1.

<sup>68</sup> IVG, Reading XXI, pp. 116–119. Cf. J.A.D., *Our Light and Our Salvation*, Chapter 3, Deiform and Triform Grace.

<sup>69</sup> 1 Cor 12: 4.

<sup>70</sup> Eph 4: 7. Cf. Rom 12: 3; 1 Cor 7: 17; 2 Cor 10: 13

<sup>71</sup> Cf. J.A.D., *Our Light and Our Salvation*, chapter 16, Baptism, p. 221.

but they are divided in us to whom they are given and in this state they are no longer identified with the Word and therefore can not be called the subsisting expression of the Father, but they possess divine characteristics by reason of their origin.

Now there are *natural* appurtenances of the Word and *supernatural* appurtenances of the Word. The natural light is, as we said, *ideal*, the supernatural is also *real*, because there is in the latter the action of the divine subsistence in the soul. The act of the soul when it receives natural light is called *intuition* whereas when it receives supernatural light it is named *perception*. Natural light is *ideal being per se object* and this can be called an *ideal appurtenance of the divine Word*, whereas supernatural light which accompanies revealed truths in which we have faith is real being or divine subsistence, and therefore we must call this a *real appurtenance of the Word himself*.

### **The special truths are many even though the Word is one**

Moving now to the second question: how are the special revealed truths many whereas the expression of God, the Word, is one? It is necessary to see how all natural truths, all ideas are reduced to one, namely the idea of being and how similarly all supernatural truths are reduced to one, that is to subsisting Truth, real Being, subject per se object, that is, the Word.

How is the one idea changed into many concepts?

1. Each created substance has its own limitation and is exclusively itself apart from all the rest. So when we apply ideal being to one of them we do not know the rest, we have exclusive knowledge of this one separate from the knowledge of the others.
2. This multiplicity of finite substances gives rise to a multiplicity also of exclusive relations each limited to itself. Hence there is a multiplicity of concepts by means of the many applications of being to the substances which are compared with one another to see their relationships.
3. Each created substance is multiple, having accidents, passions, actions etc. Each has its own exclusive nature. And applying being we have as many notions and concepts. Every single notion is the foundation of a different affection of the spirit, hence the plurality of virtues and vices and the multiple accidents of the moral state of humankind although each moral value can be reduced finally to one moral essence, which is the love given to being.

Now multiplicity in the supernatural order depends precisely on the multiplicity of the natural order because grace does not change nature but perfects and ennobles it. So God's relations with us are manifold. God uses multiple means in leading us to Himself. The revelation of God is fragmented into many special truths and divisions of graces and gifts, yet Christ is one, the Spirit who bestows these graces is one. *'Has Christ been divided?'*<sup>72</sup> *'Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of*

---

<sup>72</sup> 1 Cor 1: 13.



*services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.*<sup>73</sup>

**All special truths are reduced to a unity**<sup>74</sup>

Three Questions
1. How are the special truths reduced to a unity, to one sole object which is an appurtenance of the Word ?
2. How is the Word given to us when this object, in so far as it is subject or person, is revealed to us?
3. How are the graces given to us reduced to one grace only, an appurtenance of the Holy Spirit, who is the Holy Spirit himself when he reveals himself to us as person through grace?

All the special truths which we have from divine revelation are reduced to truths which reveal the divine nature, what God has done, and consequently to duties which we have towards God. They concern believing and doing. Truths which regulate actions are based on truths imposed for belief because a moral act is a recognition of the truth understood by the intellect. Theoretical truths are founded on cognitions of the divine Word, because creation and other external actions are done through the Word and they are not distinct in God from that act which constitutes the divine Word. Jesus reduced the whole Gospel to this unity when he said, '*And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*'<sup>75</sup>

The Father, then, is known only through the Son and in the Son and therefore every cognition and supernatural truth is found included and contained in the cognition of the Word who is called Truth and the source of wisdom on whose spirit the angels desire to gaze. All revealed truths are reduced to the Word as to their principle in which they are eminently contained and they are simply so many partial applications to created things of the first supernatural cognition which is that of the Word.<sup>76</sup>

But knowing that these special truths are contained in the one cognition of the divine Word has two degrees because:

1. Either we know this solely because, *de facto*, such truths are used by us to know something about the divine nature and his actions in the world, without our perceiving the Word personally manifesting such truths. This results in *direct knowledge* common to the faithful of the Church of God, and

---

<sup>73</sup> 1 Cor 12: 4–6.

<sup>74</sup> IVG, Reading XXII, pp. 119–126.

<sup>75</sup> Jn 17: 3.

<sup>76</sup> Reading XXII, pp. 119–120.

*reflex* and scientific *knowledge* proper to teachers who reason about revealed truths. Even the Jews had all this knowledge.

2. Or we know that all special truths of which we speak are contained in the Word, and at the same time the Word is perceived personally in the act of revealing them to us, not just to our bodily ears which would not be sufficient, but also to the ears of our heart. This is proper only to Christians and can be suitably termed to *see the supernatural truths in the Word*. Now this degree of knowledge can be divided into the two types above mentioned: direct, which is based on the perception of the Word which is given to all Christians in Baptism, and reflex or theological which is proper to those who reflect on such knowledge and draw from it formulated knowledge. This either deals solely with the Word as object and is termed simply, theology, or also of the Word who acts in souls as subject and person *per se* object, and this is accustomed to be called *Mystical Theology*.<sup>77</sup>

### **Summary of the knowledge given to people before the coming of Christ**

We can summarise the supernatural knowledge given to people before the Incarnation as follows:

1. Special revealed truths.
2. What each truth makes known concerning the divine nature in which they are one, all being reduced to different degrees and aspects of the same thing.
3. As far as grace divided according to special truths is concerned, this divine nature perceived as *per se* revealed or real object perceived was the Word but only objectively understood, not the Word as subject and person. Strictly speaking it was the divine subsistence *per se* manifested, but not acting. So when Jesus said '*I and the Father are one*' we must distinguish the *manifestation* from the *operation*.
4. There was also the promise of the Word coming into the world as subject or person but this did not include an internal communication of this personality. Faith in this promise was enough. The person of the promised Word was indicated by the names of 'God', 'God with us', 'the Father of the world to come', 'the Prince of Peace'. In this sense Abraham could have seen the glory (day)<sup>78</sup> and David could have known that he would be his Lord,<sup>79</sup> although he would be his descendant, without having the personal perception of him.

'So the knowledge of the Word as a person given to the people of old was not positive or perceptive; but negative, rational, symbolic, a mysterious object of faith much greater than Christians now have because the latter have an initial *perception*; and their *faith* refers only to the complete and unveiled perception which constitutes the beatific vision.'<sup>80</sup>

<sup>77</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXII, p. 120.

<sup>78</sup> *Jn* 8: 56. '*Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad.*'

<sup>79</sup> *Ps* 110: 1.

<sup>80</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXII, pp. 120–121.

5. Reflection and philosophical meditation reflecting on what has been revealed organises it into a theology. Rosmini believes some Platonism originated from this Jewish theology and also the Alexandrian School.

Rosmini states that the concepts of the Church of the Old Covenant regarding the divine Word gives us a plausible theory as to how the name Word applied to God was used before the coming of Christ. In the Targum Onkelos which was probably written before Christ, after the word Adonai (my Lord) in Hebrew they added mimra, that is, Word.<sup>81</sup> He comments on the well known passage from Deuteronomy 30: 14, and St Paul's explanation of it in the light of Christ's teaching:

This explains why St. Paul commenting on the Words '*...the Word is very near to you it is in your mouth and in your heart*',<sup>82</sup> and those preceding ones, interprets them of Christ. Here is the passage of Moses:<sup>83</sup> '*Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.*' Now St. Paul, enlightened by the spirit of Jesus Christ who has now come, informs us that for Christians that passage of Moses takes on a new light precisely by Christ's coming, and interprets it according to this new light. Hence he teaches that in the Mosaic passage justice is mentioned which arises in us who are redeemed by faith in the mercy and redemption of Christ, the justice which we hoped for in vain from our own works but which had not yet been given any value by the merits of Jesus Christ. Hence the Apostle says: '*But the righteousness [justice] that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, who will ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down)" that is draw Christ from it who can save you from your sins and so give you justice which is from faith in him "or who will descend into the abyss?" that is, to bring Christ up from the dead from whom is salvation. "But what does it say? "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim)"*'"<sup>84</sup> By this the Apostle means that Christ is Saviour of men through faith. Their sins which spoil their works are remitted through his merits and he is not far off; in fact he is given through the apostolic

---

<sup>81</sup> The Targum Onkelos is the oldest complete Jewish Aramaic text of the Pentateuch. It appears in its final revision in 3rd century AD. It was Palestinian in origin and early transferred to Babylon. It was read as a verse by verse translation with the Hebrew of the Torah in the synagogues.

<sup>82</sup> *Deut.* 30: 14; Cf. *Rom.* 10: 8.

<sup>83</sup> Today it is commonplace that Moses did not write Deuteronomy. The formation of the first five books of the Old Testament is not clear. Cf. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Ed. Brown et al., Geoffrey Chapman 1997, *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, §5 Authorship, p. 4.

<sup>84</sup> *Rom.* 10: 6-8.

preaching and the faith which is placed in it. Through this faith in the preaching, and through baptism by the Church which follows on such faith, the perception of the Word made flesh is given to man which forms the salvation of souls. This is given to the soul through an indelible character and through grace, by which power he is on the lips of Christians who pronounce externally what they feel internally. From all this we see that what was *sermo*, *praeceptum*, *mandatum* etc. for the Jews is, for Christians, the Word or Christ, because if the former words signify a doctrine revealed by God, objectively considered, the latter for us, signify Christ himself, the revealing subject and person, in the knowledge of which all that doctrine is abundantly understood. That objective doctrine becomes for Christians a subject or divine person *per se* object, *per se* revealed as such, revealing himself as a person. So when the psalm says: ‘*Appoint O Lord, a lawgiver over them*’<sup>85</sup> where the Hebrew word *moreh* signifies *doctorem*, it prays that the teacher will come, the knowledge and perception of whom contains all this doctrine, since he, in so far as he is *per se* notum, is *per se* doctrine.<sup>86</sup>

Rosmini enumerates Fathers of the Church who translated or used the word *sermo* instead of *verbum*. He mentions the following, Tertullian, Cyprian, Hilary, Lactantius, Ambrose, Jerome, Epiphanius, Prudentius, Remigius, Anselm. Lactantius sometimes calls the Word, ‘*voce*’.<sup>87</sup>

He says, that although the word *sermo* was not unsuitable for expressing the internal Word of Father, it was not suitable for expressing the personal revelation of the Word to humanity, for the Word is not only doctrine, or the spoken word but is also the teacher speaking. This is Christ who, as such, is proclaimed in St John as follows, ‘*It is God, the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart who has made him known*’.<sup>88</sup> ‘*and there are three that testify in heaven, (that is in the interior of the soul) the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit*’.<sup>89</sup>, and ‘*the faithful witness*’,<sup>90</sup> or ‘*faithful and true*’ and ‘*and his name is called the Word of God*’.<sup>91</sup> These expressions do not simply express the doctrine revealed as the object of the mind but the Word of God, who is both doctrine *per se* revealed and person. We can see how the doctrine of the Old Testament differed from that of the New Testament summed up by St Paul. ‘*For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified*’.<sup>92</sup> What was simply doctrine in the ancient Church becomes also a person *per se* notum, in the new one and therefore the ancient writings received

---

<sup>85</sup> Ps 9: 21 (Douay). NSRV says, ‘*Put them in fear, O Lord; let the nations know that they are only human*’. So the text Rosmini quotes is hardly supportive here. Cf. Losacco, pp. 14–15.

<sup>86</sup> IVG, Reading XXII, pp.121–123.

<sup>87</sup> For details of the works of the Fathers see Reading XXII, pp. 123–125.

<sup>88</sup> Jn 1: 18.

<sup>89</sup> 1 Jn 5: 7. (variant reading).

<sup>90</sup> Rev 1: 5.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 19: 11, 13.

<sup>92</sup> 1 Cor 2: 2.

a new interpretation which was mentioned by Christ himself when he spoke to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. 'Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.'<sup>93</sup> And also, 'You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf.'<sup>94</sup> It was only after his resurrection that he gave his disciples a knowledge of the Scriptures because it was only then that they fully believed in the glorified Christ who fulfilled the prophecies of the resurrection.

### **The moral order**<sup>95</sup>

In the moral order there is the law and the adherence human beings give to it. There is a multiplicity of laws but they can be reduced to a unity in the one simple law, 'recognise being'.<sup>96</sup> In his *Principi della scienza morale* Rosmini explains how all laws are applications of the idea of being. This is the foundation of the moral law in the order of natural knowledge, just as the Word is the Truth and the source of all supernatural truths in the supernatural order. Just as being is one, and the idea of being is one, so also is the moral necessity showing being-to-be-loved as that which is *per se* lovable in intelligent beings. 'And if the loveable object, being, is one, the moral necessity of loving is one, the moral duty is one, the moral appreciation of the intellectual being, which consists in its unlimited love of this being, is one. Every virtue ends at this point. It is the formal part of every virtuous act.'<sup>97</sup> But there is an order of being to be observed according to the quantity of being and therefore love of being is ordered. According as being is known and appreciated, love will be actuated in one way or another. One part will be actuated while others remain in virtual prime act, so we have different virtues, special virtuous acts and the different moral states of man.

If a person knows God, the supreme Being, human actions have one sole end, that is, all love of finite being must be based at least virtually on the love of absolute being, the source and cause of every being. When this order is actuated so that all actions are referred explicitly to God, then the whole of a person's virtue becomes love of God. Virtue has become religion, holiness. It is one because love is one in its different human acts and the object of love is the one supreme Being. If God is known only naturally and negatively, natural holiness is very difficult and only virtue within the limits of human nature. But when the supernatural cognition of God is added, that is, some perception of the divine reality, the whole moral order is elevated and becomes

---

<sup>93</sup> *Lk* 24: 25–27.

<sup>94</sup> *Jn* 5: 39.

<sup>95</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXIII, pp. 126–128.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. A.R., *Principi della scienza morale* [= *Principi*], Ediz.Crit, 23, Roma, 1993[Translated by Terence Watson and Denis Cleary as *Principles of Ethics*, Rosmini House Durham [= Durham] 1988]. See also J.A.D., *Rosmini's Theory of Ethics*, Durham 2000.

<sup>97</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXIII, p. 127.

supernatural because moral order acquires as its object, absolute Being positively known, felt and perceived. As we have seen, this immediate communication of God is accustomed to occur with some exterior manifestation of God, with some revelation, sign or sacrament.

When the Word became flesh he revealed himself externally clothed in his human nature and to this external communication there corresponded the internal and grace-giving perception of the divine person of the Word, who is the principle and foundation of Christian virtue, of Christian perfection, of supernatural virtue.<sup>98</sup>

Every grace is infused through the operation of the Holy Spirit, but he does not reveal himself, not even when he impresses the Word as person. But later on the Word who resides in the soul communicates to it his Spirit first in the form of sensible and apparent gifts and afterwards as *person* as happened at Pentecost and as happens in the sacrament of confirmation. Through this gift of the person one feels not only inspiration to do good but the Spirit's inspiration so that one does not doubt that it comes from infinite being which is recognised as a divine person, because one feels it *per se* acting, *per se* loveable, *per se* virtue.

We find it so difficult to form a distinct knowledge of all this and express it in words! 'These therefore are specific degrees of supernatural and natural virtue which however can always be reduced to the one essence comprised in one sole and simple idea'.<sup>99</sup>

The moral imperative in the natural order.	'Follow the light or reason' and therefore to desire and love being in its order.
The moral imperative in the supernatural order.	To love God with all our soul, with all our heart and with all our mind.

---

<sup>98</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXIII, p. 127.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

## Chapter 2

### Commentary on the First Three Verses of John

#### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The Word of God is the form of our reason and the form of our intelligence through the idea of being which is the principle and means of our natural knowledge. He is also the form of our intelligence on the supernatural level when this natural light of being is ennobled by the gift of himself as person.<sup>2</sup> The Word of God moves us to adhere to absolute being because he is absolute being, the fullness of objective being *per se notum* and person. The communication of the Word is made by some sensible sign, for example, the sacraments, and *par excellence* the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, who is THE sacrament and the source of all others. Rosmini says that when St Paul says ‘*the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God*’<sup>3</sup> he refers to the preaching animated by the Word who acts on our souls as the external word falls on our senses.

Matthew	Proclaimed the humanity of Christ
Mark	Announced the Kingdom of God
Luke	Explained Christ’s eternal and royal priesthood
John	Proclaimed Christ as the Word of the Father

St John wishes to mention the eternal generation of the Word; he is the author of creation and redemption. St Irenaeus says, ‘...just as it was through the Word that God wrought creation, so it was in this same Word that God gave salvation to humanity in creation. So the teaching presented to us in the Gospel begins with the words “In the beginning was the Word”.’<sup>4</sup> He wrote his sublime introduction with which St Augustine says, ‘He transcended not only the earth and the whole extent of the sky and the heaven, but also all the hosts of angels and the whole hierarchy of invisible powers, and so reached Him through whom all things were made.’<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXIV, pp. 128–131.

<sup>2</sup> See also J.A.D., *Our Light and Our Salvation*, chapter 2, Grace, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Eph* 6: 17.

<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses Valentini similiumque*, lib. III, cap. XI.

<sup>5</sup> Augustine, *In Evangelium Ioannis expositio*, tractatus XXXVI, 1.

**And the Word was with God and the Word was God<sup>6</sup>**

In the opening of St John's Gospel we read '*in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God*'. This is a logical progress because we begin with the Word who is *per se* revealed and then we proceed to him who is revealed by the Word, that is, the Father. But in the order of generation the Father precedes the Word. So these two orders proceed in the opposite direction to each other. As soon as one knows the Word one knows the Father, there is a logical precedence but not one of time. So Christ says to Philip, '*whoever has seen me has seen the Father*'.<sup>7</sup> It is the same with natural philosophy. It moves from the idea of being as from the first thing that it knows, i.e. ideal being *per se notum*. Ideal being proceeds from absolute being but the existence of absolute being is known by means of ideal being, which we come to realise could not be without the absolute.

Logical Order	Order of Generation
From the Word revealed to us we proceed to know the Father.	The Father precedes the Word.
In the natural order we proceed from our first knowledge, the idea of being, to know the existence of absolute being	But in fact ideal being proceeds from absolute Being, from the Word.

St John leads us from the Word to the Father when he says '*and the Word was with God*'. 'God' here signifies the 'Father'. We distinguish 'God' from 'Godhead'. The latter signifies the divinity in the abstract i.e. the nature of God, whereas 'God' signifies the person. In our case the word 'woman' signifies a human person whereas 'humanity' signifies human nature. We can say 'God from God' signifying that the Father generates the Word, but not 'Godhead from Godhead' because this would multiply the natures.

But the word 'God' does not signify which person. So in the above phrase 'the Word was with God' 'God' signifies the Father. It cannot refer to the Son who is the Word nor the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son since he would be *present with* the Father and the Son. 'God' is applied first and foremost to the Father since he is the principle of the Son and Holy Spirit, since he communicates his own divine nature. The Father is divine subsistence, subsistent being, who by his own proper act renders himself *per se* known and loved, which, of course is the procession of the other two persons. 'God' means the subsistence of absolute being appropriate to the person of the Father who does not receive subsistence. When we speak of the Son or Holy Spirit being God we normally express the relationship. Ancient writings

---

<sup>6</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXV, pp. 131–133.

<sup>7</sup> *Jn* 14: 9.



speak of the 'Word of God', but not the 'Word of the Father' so St John's phrase 'the Word was with God' is in conformity with these. Also the phrase expresses the fact of the Word being generated by the Father. The phrase 'the Word was with God' makes known the relationship of the Word with the divine subsistence that generates him.

### **The meaning of the word 'was'**<sup>8</sup>

The word 'was' indicates the eternity of the Word with the Father. The phrase '*In the beginning was the Word.*' signifies the eternity of the Word and now St John says he was with the Father, meaning that he was present eternally to God his Father. The book of Sirach says, '*All wisdom is from the Lord God and has always been with him, and is before all time.*'<sup>9</sup> He was with him always but this does not mean during the course of time and so the writer adds '*is before all time*' meaning eternity and IS, excluding all succession and modification. The Word was absolute and had a necessary existence and so was necessarily present to the Father with whom he *was*.

St John says that the word was *with* God. No created being can be with God because of the transcendence of God. That which of its nature is with God must have the divine nature, must be God because there is no bridge spanning the infinite and the finite and the finite is infinitely distant from the infinite, so St John having said that the Word was with God adds '*and the Word was God*'. The eternal Word cannot stand alone but must be with the one who pronounces him. The word '*with*' first signifies nearness of place, from which it was afterwards transferred to mean nearness or intimate relationship of nature because the Word was simple and had no need to be in a place like us.

Rosmini states that human language cannot explain with one expression how the Son is with the Father. He enumerates four expressions from Scripture denoting the connection of Christ with the Father: a) the Word was *with* the Father; b) '*I am in the Father and the Father is in me*';<sup>10</sup> c) '*...the only Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known*';<sup>11</sup> and d) '*he is seated on the right hand of the Father*'.<sup>12</sup> This last expression is used of the humanity of Christ who, by his hypostatic union with the Word, is placed at the right hand of God. So we shall deal with the first three expressions.

We use '*with*' to signify nearness because we have no example of two things with the same substance but diversity of persons in created things. The word '*in*' in created things is used in the union of accident and substance. We say the accidents are *in* the substance, for instance 'colour is *in* the body,' and not '*in* the presence of', whereas we say that one person is '*near*' or '*with*' another one and not '*in*' another one. There is no case in creation in which one body is in another so as to be identical with it, having

---

<sup>8</sup> IV/G, Reading XXVI 134–140.

<sup>9</sup> Sir 1: 1. (Douay).

<sup>10</sup> Jn 14: 10.

<sup>11</sup> Jn 1: 18. (RSV).

<sup>12</sup> Mk 16: 19. (Douay). NSRV says, 'at the right hand of God' which comes to the same thing.

identical substance. Clearly the word ‘in’ cannot be applied to God in the accidental fashion mentioned above. The third expression cannot be taken strictly because God has not got a bosom. But it is the best one because it best expresses the in-existence of the persons and we have a simile of a baby in its mother’s womb and the generation of the child. So all these expressions help each other provided we exclude everything which cannot be applied to the Divine Nature.

Now the two first expressions which use the words ‘with’ and ‘in’ correct and perfect each other taken together; because ‘with’ demonstrates that between the Word and God who pronounces him, we must not posit a union similar to that of accidents with substance, which is expressed by the word ‘in’ applied to corporeal things; and ‘in’ demonstrates that we must not even allow a nearness of two separate substances or natures, as we are accustomed to express with the word ‘with’ applied to finite substances. The unity of substance is kept by signifying that unity by the particle ‘in’; the multiplicity of persons which is expressed in this union is kept by using the particle ‘with’.

The word ‘in’ signifies the *unity of substance* of the three persons in God.  
The word ‘with’ expresses the fact that God is *triune*; there are three persons in God.

By the use of such words we understand that in God there must be unity of substance and at the same time plurality of persons and that such is the union of the Word with God that the latter pronounces him to himself consubstantial and at the same time personally distinct.

But if the word ‘in’ indicates the in-existence of one person in the other better than does the word ‘with’, yet the former does not make known the quality of union which the two persons have with each other, because we can say equally that ‘the Father is in the Son’ and that ‘the Son is in the Father.’ The word ‘with’ (*appo*) helps here. ‘And the Word was with God’; ‘God’ signifies the Father, and the distinction of the person of the Word from the person of the Father.

Some Fathers, namely Irenaeus, Athanasius, Augustine, Fulgentius, and Victorinus said that the expression *apud Deum* (with God) signified the same as *in Deo* [in God].<sup>13</sup> They wished to say that both expressions signified the in-existence of the persons and the unity of substance and this is correct. But from another point of view the expressions differ in value as the following Fathers observed: John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Theophylact, and Theodore of Mopsuestia. They note that of substances or persons we say ‘*with*’ but as regards accidents we say they are *in* the substance. So they concluded that the words of John ‘and the Word was *with* God’ proved the sub-

---

<sup>13</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses?*, lib. III, cap. VIII; Athanasius, *Ex Deo Deus est Verbum etc.*, *Oratio Quod Deus de Deo sit Verbum*; Augustine, *De Trinitate*, lib. VI, cap. II; Fulgentius, *Ad Monimum libri tres*, lib. III, cap. II; Victorinus (Marius), *Adversus Arium*, lib. II.

sistence of several persons countering the Sabellians who denied a plurality of persons in the Trinity.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore the word ‘with’ indirectly denotes *authority*, as St Thomas and the Fathers, John Chrysostom, and Hilary observe. For we would not say, strictly speaking, that the king was in the presence of his soldiers but that the soldiers were in the presence of their king. So we do not say the Father is present to the Son but the Son is present to the Father. But of course the three persons of the Blessed Trinity are equal in dignity. However, there is the relationship of origin through which the Father generates the Son. So it is suitable to say that the Son is present to the Father, whereas it would not equally be suitable to say that the Father is with the Son. Although ‘*apud*’ in created things denotes seniority or priority, in the case of the divine persons who are equal in everything except causality, it simply signifies the relationship with which the Father generates the Son. The Father and the Son are one.

Rosmini notes differences between human generation and divine generation. Unlike human generation where the generated person is separate from the generator, the Word remains continually in the Father. The Word is in the bosom of the Father. Secondly unlike our generation in time, divine generation simply *is*, nothing new happens in it. Thirdly with human generation there is a beginning, a middle and an end to the action. Divine generation is always in complete immanent act. ‘...hence we say at the same time that both the Word is always being conceived and is always conceived.’<sup>15</sup>

The expression<sup>16</sup> ‘*and the word was with God*’ shows how the Word was before the creation of the world and the Incarnation. The Word was present to God who pronounced him eternally. St John also says [we] ‘*declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us*’;<sup>17</sup> that is, his hidden state in the bosom of the Father as opposed to the revelation of the Word. Rosmini lists Fathers who support this opinion, namely Theophylact, Ambrose, Gregory of Nyssa, Rupert of Deutz and Cyril of Jerusalem.<sup>18</sup> Rosmini refers to Gregory the Great who recognises these words when commenting on the book of Job about Eliphaz ‘*and now a word came stealing to me...It stood still but I could not discern its appearance*’.<sup>19</sup> The person speaking remained unknown to him and he did not fully understand the word spoken to him. It remained hidden.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXVI, note 81, p. 138.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, Reading XXVI, pp. 134–140.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Reading XXVII, pp. 140–142.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Jn 1: 2.

<sup>18</sup> Theophylact, *In Ioannem enarratio*, cap. I; Ambrose, *De Incarnationis dominicae mysterio liber*, cap. III; Gregory of Nyssa, *De Fide ad Simplicium seu de Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto*; Rupert, *In Evangelium S. Joannis commentariorum libri XIV*, lib. 1; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis secunda*.

<sup>19</sup> St Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, lib. V, cap. XIX. Job 4: 12, 16.

<sup>20</sup> Job 4: 12, 16.

### **And the Word was God<sup>21</sup>**

In these words the Word is the subject and God is the predicate, as one sees it in the text. The Word from all eternity was present to God, was God. We are not dealing with a passing Word, but a permanent and necessary one, not an accidental one but a subsistent one *per se* and therefore a person. So this phrase means ‘and the Word was a Divine Person’.

We have also said that the ‘Word was with God’, that one divine person was with another divine person. If both persons are God they must have the same divine nature because there can be only one God. The divine Word indicates the Godhead both in the person and in the nature. So there are not two Gods but one God in two persons. Since several persons in one nature does not exist in created things we must show that this does not involve a contradiction. Now a person is defined as, ‘*an intelligent being in so far as it has a supreme and incommunicable principle*’.

With this definition it can be clearly deduced that a being can be the same and yet have several supreme and incommunicable principles, that is, inconfusable ones, in which case the identical being would subsist in several persons. Now God pronouncing the Word and the Word being pronounced are supreme and incommunicable principles, that is, not confusable with each other: therefore they are two persons in the same being, in the same nature. But the Word is present to him who pronounces him: God, then, who pronounces the Word is one person who has a causal priority of origin, in so far as he pronounces the Word eternally equal to himself.<sup>22</sup>

Rosmini indulges in a bit of philology at this point, stating that the phrase is not ‘the Word was *the* God’, because God is the predicate of the sentence and it means that the Word had the same nature as God. The Arians thought that by omitting the article the Word was not God in the same sense of God the Father. The omission is useful in so far as we do not confuse the person of the Word with the person of the Father. John is saying that the Word is present to the person of the Father. If he had said the Word was *the* God it would have seemed as if he was the same person as the Father

To summarise then: St John said that the Word was, and was from eternity; then he said where he was, that is, present to the Father; finally he says more explicitly that he was God.

---

<sup>21</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXVIII, pp. 142–145. *Jn* 1 1. The order of the Words in the Latin (Vulgate) is ‘God was the Word’. It is also the order of the words in Greek *Καὶ θεός ἦν ὁ λόγος*. The evangelist places the predicate before the subject (God is the Word) to preserve the continuity of the three clauses each of which begins with the last word of the preceding one. This is a mode of speaking used by the Jews and frequently in Scripture. Thus:

In principio erat **Verbum**,  
Et **Verbum** erat apud **Deum**,  
Et **Deus** erat **Verbum**.

<sup>22</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXVIII, p. 143.

Because of the omission of the article, Origen erred, thinking that the Word was the Word through essence but not God through essence. Origen asks the question why John said *what* the Word was after saying *when* and *where* he was. He replies that the Word being by his origin present to God, it was necessary first to demonstrate that he was in the Father or present to him instead of saying the Word was God. He was refuted by St John Chrysostom who cites places in Scripture where the Son is called God with the article and others where he is called God without the article. He gives as *his* reason: the article is omitted because the Evangelist has already mentioned 'God' with the article and so to make his meaning clearer he omits it here.

Rosmini says that the word 'God' is not sufficient to define the Word because, though the name expresses the divine subsistent nature and the suppositum or person it does not yet distinguish one person rather than another. It belongs to all three equally. So the sentence does not express what the person of the Word is but only his nature. The mere fact of using the term Word which John mentioned when he said 'In the beginning was the Word' explains that the Word is God *per se notum* the subsistent Truth. This cannot be fully understood except by the internal light of faith granted to those who are raised to the supernatural state.

Rosmini refers to S Thomas as stating that three clauses refute three errors, that of Ebion and Cerinthus, that of Sabellius and that of Eunomius

St Thomas on three clauses refuting three errors		
In the beginning was the Word.	Shows the eternity of the Word.	Refutes the error of Ebion and Cerinthus: Jesus just a man who began existence at his conception.
And the Word was with God.	Establishes the distinction of the persons of the Word and God who pronounces him.	Refutes the error of Sabellius. God was eternal but the persons of the Father and Son were the same The person of the Son was incarnate.
And the Word was God.	Both the Word and the Father were God.	Refutes Eunomius: The Son was completely different from the Father. (Arius said the Son was less than the Father.)

**He<sup>23</sup> was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him not one thing came into being (vv. 2–3)<sup>24</sup>**

So far St John has given us the doctrine of the eternal Word. Now he deals with that of his works.

St Thomas says, ‘Origen, then, very beautifully explaining this clause “He was in the beginning with God” says: ‘it is not in any way different from the first three but is an epilogue of those that have gone before. Since the Evangelist having explained the truth of the being of the Son and going on to explain his power, summarises with an epilogue in the fourth verse what he has already said in the first three. And before going further, by saying ‘he’ (‘this’) he means the third clause; by saying “he was in the beginning” he recalls the first; then by adding ‘with God’, he recalls the second: he does this so that you do not think there is one Word who was with God in the beginning and another who was different from the Word who was God; but that this same Word who was God was with God in the beginning.’<sup>25</sup>

This clause, then, is a link between what has been said and what will now follow and also shows that it is the same Word who was in the beginning, who was with God and who was God. St Cyril found this epilogue useful for combating the Eunomians and some Arians who believed that there was a Word in the beginning and another one through which all things were made.<sup>26</sup> St John Chrysostom found it useful because it takes away all doubt as to whether the Word who was with the Father, was with the Father in the beginning.<sup>27</sup> Theophylact says that the phrase ‘the Word was in the beginning with God’ demonstrates the perpetual harmony and consensus of will between the Word and God who pronounced him.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> The pronoun ‘this’ οὗτος (Hoc [Verbum]) refers clearly to the Word and not to God because otherwise it would not make sense. It would mean in such a case that ‘God was with God.’ We have seen (note 21 above) that John begins the following phrase with the same word as at the end of the preceding one, which was (the Word); here οὗτος (Hoc) refers to ὁ λόγος (the Word). This peculiarity as we have already said was a characteristic of the Jewish style of writing.

<sup>24</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXIX pp. 145–147.

<sup>25</sup> St Thomas, *In Evangelium beati Ioannis evangelistae expositio*, cap. I, lectio I. Cf. *IVG*, Reading XXIX, p. 146.

<sup>26</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, *Super Evangelium Ioannis*, lib. I, cap. IV.

<sup>27</sup> John Chrysostom, *Commentarii super Ioannis Evangelium*, hom III.

<sup>28</sup> Theophylact, *Enarratio in Evangelium Joannis*.

**He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made<sup>29</sup> — an analysis.**

οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν. πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς  
This one was in (the)beginning with God. All things through him became and without  
αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν ὃ γέγονεν.  
him became not one thing which..has become.

The Evangelist now contrasts the Word who was with God from the beginning with creatures that were created through him.

Rosmini begins Book 2 of his Commentary with an analysis of verse 2 of John's Gospel. This Reading is an excellent example of Rosmini's commentary in company with the Fathers. His main premise is that John teaches that the Word is not a creature. He was not one of the things which were made, but all things were made through him.

Saying '*and without him was not anything made that was made*' destroys one of the main arguments of the Arians, namely, that all things were made through the Word except the Word himself who was made by the Father; because if one of the things that were made was the Word, the words of the Evangelist '*that not one of the things made was made without the Word*', would not be true. Also if the Word was in the beginning with the Father, he cannot have been made because that which IS has no need of being made.<sup>30</sup> The same words refute the error of Origen who said that the Holy Spirit was made by the Word, through whom all things were made. St John Chrysostom and Theophylact recognised it as a mistake based on the bad understanding of the words *omnia per ipsum facta sunt* [all things were made through him] separating them from these others which limit them *et sine ipso factum est nihil quod factum est* [and without him was not made anything made that was made]. Hence St. Gregory Nazianzen says that these heretics had first to prove that the Holy Spirit was among the things made, which they do not prove, and only then would they be able to infer that he had to be made through the Word.

Rosmini examines the words of John at greater length. There are two renditions of the verses:

a) *Omnia, per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil, quod factum est; in ipso vita erat...*;

and.

b) *Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil. Quod factum est, in ipso vita erat....'*

Also the Latin uses the word *nihil* (nothing) whereas the Latin equivalent of the Greek is *nec unum* (not one).

<sup>29</sup> IVG, lib. II, Reading XXX, pp. 149–152.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Augustine, *In Evangelium Ioannis Expositio*, tract. I.

Commenting on these two different versions of John's words, Rosmini says that many Fathers joined the last words '*quod factum est*' to the words which follow i.e. *in ipso vita erat*, (*Quod factum est, in ipso vita erat* [What was made was life in him]) as in (b) above. Rosmini follows the common reading which joins '*quod factum est*' to the preceding verse, (*...factum est nihil, quod factum est.*) as in (a) because he believes that it is necessary to explain that 'all things' (*Omnia, πάντα*) does not just mean 'all things' but 'all things made.' This excludes the three divine persons who were not made. All things that were made, were made through the Word. Then he goes on to say that the Greek construction of the text seems more natural than the Latin, which uses the word *nihil*. The Greek words οὐδέν ἐν are translated as *neque unum* (not one).<sup>31</sup> This perfectly connects with '*quod factum est*' (ὁ γέγονεν) which follows. The Fathers say that the second version (*Quod factum est, in ipso vita erat*) has a very important and sublime sense, but, Rosmini says, this can be found in the preceding words.

Mostly it was the Latin Fathers who used the reading which joined *quod factum est* to the following verse, thus, *Quod factum est, in ipso vita erat*. The Greeks, on the whole, placed the full stop after *quod factum est*. Rosmini mentions John Chrysostom, Theophylact, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Leontius, Eutimes, and Elijah of Crete. Ambrose calls this the reading of the Egyptians and the Alexandrians.<sup>32</sup> St Thomas recognises the Greek reading and attributes it to John Chrysostom. The latter was so great an authority that all the Greeks followed his punctuation, namely *sine ipso factum est nihil quod factum est*.<sup>33</sup>

The Latin, *nihil quod factum est* is not so clear and free of ambiguity as in the Greek οὐδέν ἐν ὁ γέγονεν. Some Greek Fathers attribute the full stop before ὁ γέγονεν (*quod factum est*) to the Eunomian and Macedonian heretics. Origen, the precursor of these errors, followed it as well. He said that the Holy Spirit was made by the Word through whom all things were made and the Macedonians followed him saying that the Holy Spirit was a creature. The Manichaeans, using the Latin *nihil quod factum est*, take *nihil* as a thing made without the Word.<sup>34</sup> But the Greek excludes this error because it uses *nec unum* i.e. *not even one thing that was made*. Augustine interprets *nihil quod factum est sine ipso* for sin.<sup>35</sup> This teaching is true says Rosmini, but not sustained by the Greek *nec unum quod*.

The Evangelist<sup>36</sup> in saying that all things were made through the Word wishes to repeat that the Word was in the beginning with God. When he says '*all things were made through him*' he does not mean that the Word was an instrument separate from God,

---

<sup>31</sup> NSRV and NJB say 'not one thing'; RSV says 'not anything'; NIV says 'nothing'.

<sup>32</sup> Ambrose, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 36. Cf. *IVG*, lib. II, Reading XXX., note 2 (a), pp. 150.

<sup>33</sup> John Chrysostom, *Commentarij super Ioannis Evangelium*, cap. I. Lectio II. Cf. Reading XXX, note 2, pp. 150–151. See this note for detailed references.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Jerome, *in Manich.* c. 2. Augustine, *De nat. boni contra Manichaeos*, c. XXV. Cf. *IVG*, *ibid*.

<sup>35</sup> Augustine, *In Evangelium Ioannis Expositio. Tractatus*, I; Ep. CL., *contra Arianos*, and *Soliloquia*, c. 4 and 5. Cf. *IVG*, *ibid*.

<sup>36</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXXI, p. 153–155.



the Father, the Creator. He is consubstantial with the Father so the creative act must be identical with that of the Father.

Why then does the Evangelist prefer to say that ‘*all things were made through him*’ rather than ‘*he made all things*’? Why ‘*through*’? The reason is that although ‘he made all things’ is correct<sup>37</sup> it would have appeared that the Word created the world without the company of his Father, hence John adds ‘*and without him not one thing came into being*’; ‘without’ demonstrates that he was not alone but with the Father.

St Thomas says in his commentary of this passage of St. John: ‘Now according to Hilary, this phrase (without him) is introduced to show that the Word has its power of action from another. For the Evangelist had said “all things were made through him,” and this could be interpreted to mean that the Father is excluded from all causality. It is for this reason that he now goes on to say: “And without him nothing was made,” the meaning being, “all things were made through him” in the sense that the Father made all things with him. “Without him” is equivalent to saying “not by himself.” Hence the meaning is “he is not alone, through whom all things were made, but he is the other without whom nothing was made.” This means: “Nothing was made without him acting with another” i.e. with the Father. Cf. Prov. 8, 30: “*I was with him ordering all things.*”’<sup>38</sup>

‘Through’ does not always indicate ‘company of cause’ so the extra words added ‘and without him was not anything made that was made’, explain better the fact that the Word acted in company with his Father as St Hilary says. The words ‘was made’ with, the intransitive form of the verb ‘was made’, do not indicate another cause, whereas the active form and ‘through’ sometimes does.<sup>39</sup>

Others point out that it was customary among the Jews and Eastern peoples to say something in the affirmative and then repeat it in the negative. Rosmini gives two examples:

Prophet	Affirmative	Negative
Isaiah says:	They have seen all that is in my house;	there is nothing in my store-houses that I did not show them <sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands’ *Ps* 102: 25, cf. *Heb* 1: 10.

<sup>38</sup> St Thomas, *In Evangelium beati Ioannis evangelistae expositio*. cap. I, lectio II, n. 85. Cf. *IVG*, Reading XXI, pp.154.

<sup>39</sup> For example, ‘Per quem fecit et saecula’ [through whom he created the worlds (‘ages’ in Latin)], (*Heb* 1: 2). Cf. *IVG*, Reading XXXI, pp. 154.

<sup>40</sup> *Is.* 39: 4.

Jeremiah says	and whatever the Lord answers you I will tell you;	I will keep nothing back from you. <sup>41</sup>
---------------	--	--

But this does not exclude what we have said above; it simply gives another new meaning. The observation of St Hilary is equally valid. So all things have been made by the Father through the Word. When Jesus said, *My Father is still working, and I also am working*<sup>42</sup> this must not be understood as if they are different causes and different agents having different actions as in human things, but they must be understood in a divine way, namely, that the action of the Father and the Word is one and identical as their nature is one and identical.

### Creation and God's Wisdom appropriated to the Word<sup>43</sup>

Rosmini comments on the various different causes efficient, formal material etc. explaining how they are appropriate or not appropriate in our present context. I mention one here — instrumental cause, as being more apropos in the present discussion as it involves the use of the preposition 'through'. To take an example, the chisel wielded by an artisan is the means through which he produces his carving, for instance a statue. He works by means of (through) his chisel. Now, when we say 'all things were made through him' we are not saying that the Word is an instrumental cause of the Father because the Word is not subordinate to the Father. The Word has one nature and one operation with God who pronounces him, although there are two persons. The word is 'with God', that is to say, 'consubstantial with him. All three persons of the Blessed Trinity equally cause the universe to exist, though we appropriate this to the Word.

If we consider the wisdom of God in creating the world and consider the finite things which God has made, we say that because they are finite they can never exhaust his wisdom.<sup>44</sup> But this is imperfect reasoning. Because it implies that God has used some of his wisdom and we distinguish this part of his wisdom from his total wisdom and power which is his essence. We should say that God uses *all* his wisdom and power but not *totally* because creatures being finite are not capable of receiving a total communication of it. On the one hand there is the power and wisdom of God used in his action of creating, this being the simple and indivisible essence and on the other hand there is the wisdom communicated to creatures and this is a wisdom under different aspects, limited and distinct from the divine essence only to the creatures who conceive it and consider it abstractly, but in God it is rooted in the divine wisdom itself. It is like a ray of sunlight found in the sun.

<sup>41</sup> Jer 42: 4.

<sup>42</sup> Jn 5: 17.

<sup>43</sup> IVG, Reading XXXII, pp. 155–157.

<sup>44</sup> IVG, Reading XXXIII, pp. 157–158.

The essential wisdom of God is not the divine Word, it is an attribute which belongs to the three persons, who have the same identical nature and essence. When we say that ‘God created the world through his Word’ (through his essential wisdom) we are not speaking in a strict sense. We *attribute* wisdom to the Word because the Word proceeds by way of the intellect and therefore there is some affinity between wisdom and the Word.

#### **St Thomas, on Appropriation**

St. Thomas expressed it in this way, ‘We call Christ the power and wisdom of God. Hence it is by appropriation that we say that the Father works all things through the Son, that is, through his Wisdom. That is why St. Augustine says that *ex quo omnia* refers by appropriation to the Father, *per quem omnia* to the Son, and *in quo omnia* to the Holy Spirit.’<sup>45</sup>

‘And so when it says that All things were made through him, if the “through” denotes the efficient or moving cause, causing the Father to act, then in this sense the Father does nothing through the Son, but he does all things through himself, as has been said. But if the “through” denotes a formal cause, as when the Father operates through his wisdom, which is his essence, he operates through his wisdom as he operates through his essence. And because the wisdom and power of the Father are attributed to the Son, as when we say, “Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor 1:24), then by appropriation we say that the Father does all things through the Son, i.e., through his wisdom. And so Augustine says that the phrase “from whom all things,” is appropriated to the Father; “through whom all things,” is appropriated to the Son; and “in whom all things,” is appropriated to the Holy Spirit. But if the “through” denotes causality from the standpoint of the thing produced, then the statement, “The Father does all things through the Son,” is not [mere] appropriation but proper to the Word, because the fact that he is a cause of creatures is had from someone else, namely the Father, from whom he has being.’<sup>46</sup>

#### **The proper meaning of ‘all things were made through him’<sup>47</sup>**

The divine Word is the subsistence of being *per se notum*. It is object but not an ideal object as is ideal being and the essences of finite things. It is *subsistent* object and therefore object which is both subject or person in its objectivity in so far as it lives and feels as object and living object.

We can consider it under two aspects:

1. as object through its essence, as light,
2. as personal subsistence.

<sup>45</sup> St Thomas, *In Evangelium beati Ioannis evangelistae expositio*, cap I, lectio II, n. 76. Cf. J.A.D., *Our Light and Our Salvation*, chapter 3, Deiform and Triform Grace, especially p. 41.

<sup>46</sup> St Thomas, *ibid.*, Cf. *IVG*, Reading XXXIII.

<sup>47</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXXIV, pp. 159–163.

There is of course no personal distinction in the Word but only two aspects of our mind based on a two-fold relationship which we creatures have with him. In creatures we distinguish the object which is essence from the subsistence which is their reality. In so far as the essence of things comes from the Word we consider the Word as object or original light: in so far as subsistence comes from the Word as from a cause, we consider it as operative and producing subsistence.

If we consider the Word as subsistence and therefore also as creative power he has the same subsistence and the identical creative power of the Father who communicates it to him. So he is made cause of things through his Father, by reason of the Father who gives him all his being.

But if the Word is considered as object, that is, as being light, being *per se notum*, we can say that the Father makes all things through his Word as Augustine and Thomas teach. The latter says:

‘Now if the aforementioned words are correctly considered “All things were made through him” it clearly appears that the Evangelist has spoken in a most suitable manner. When someone makes something it is necessary that he first conceives it in his wisdom which is the form and reason of the thing which is to be made, as the preconceived form in the mind of the artificer is the reason for the chest which is to be made. So God does not make anything except through the concept of his intellect which is the Word of God and the Son of God; and for this reason it is impossible that he make anything except through the Son. Whence St. Augustine<sup>48</sup> says that “the Word is the full art of all living reasons and so it appears that all things which the Father does is done through him”.’<sup>49</sup>

Those authors who draw the reason why he is called λόγος from his being knowledge of the Father or from containing the definition, the reason, the concept, the ideal essence of all things consider the particular aspect of the Word being object *per se*.

The Platonists could consider the λόγος only under this one aspect, making him as a result less than the Father. They never knew the personality of the Word. The two aspects under which we must consider the Word give the reason for the two-fold title, that is λόγος (reason) and υἱός (son). The former expresses the objectivity and the latter the personality of the Word. This explains the different opinions of the Fathers. Some such as Cyril of Alexandria and Eusebius say that the Word has been known by the Platonists; others such as Jerome deny this. ‘This truth Plato with all his learning did not know, of this Demosthenes with all his eloquence was ignorant.’<sup>50</sup>

The Platonists knew him in some way as *object*, they did not know him as *person*; they knew that cognition could not be explained without sup-

---

<sup>48</sup> *De Trinitate*, lib. III, cap. I.

<sup>49</sup> St Thomas, *In Evangelium beati Ioannis evangelistae expositio*, cap. I, lectio II, n. 77.

<sup>50</sup> Jerome, *Epistula ad Paulinus*, LIII, n. 4.

posing that there was a first object, something known through itself, a light in which all things were seen. But they did not know that this first object, the term of all knowledge, had a personal existence and therefore was God. They did not know the Word simply speaking and hence the sentence of St. Jerome: '*Hoc doctus Plato nescivit, hoc Demosthenes eloquens ignoravi*' is absolutely true, especially because the Platonic word, the essential object accepted by them was an exemplar of the world. They had not reached the knowledge of him as God *per se* known. This was also a defect of the Platonists. On the contrary St. Paul expresses magnificently the two aspects in which it is necessary to regard the Word as follows: *cum sit splendor gloriae et figura substantiae ejus* [who being the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance]<sup>51</sup> in which *splendor gloriae* refers to the property of the object and the *figura substantiae* to personal subsistence. And he says *splendor gloriae* because God is wholly glorious and magnificent in himself and to those who know him. Hence it is sufficient that he is known to be glorified (when the free will does not oppose this by denying him this glory which shines in this concept of him) and therefore Jesus Christ said: '*And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*'<sup>52</sup> Jesus Christ simply wills to make his Father known because to know him truly is to glorify him. Paul says, then, *figura substantiae ejus* instead of saying simply *substantia ejus*, because the substance or as the Greek says ὑπόστασις, subsistence, is common to all three persons but in the Word it is the subsistence in the *figure*, the personal subsistence in the object which is proper to the Word, because the word *figura*, in Greek, *character* χαρακτήρ, expresses the knowability of things, that which makes things known. Hence although the *splendour of his glory* refers more to the property of being *object*, and the *character of divine subsistence* refers more to the property of being a subsistent person; nevertheless the expression of the Apostle keeps these two things undivided, their being undivided in the Word, and only undivided in this way can they give true knowledge of the Word himself. Nor is there anything lacking in the expression of the Apostle, although it does not say that the Word is also the exemplar of the world because this is already contained in its basic property of being divine subsistence in the form of object. Nor does the expression *figura substantiae ejus* give rise to the belief that it excludes substance, as if the figure is one thing and the substance is another.<sup>53</sup>

Rosmini has just pointed out that the author to the Hebrews does not mention the Word as being the exemplar of the world, because this is contained in the fact that the Word shares the divine subsistence in the form of object. But he does point out that it

---

<sup>51</sup> *Heb* 1: 3 (Douay). Cf. Losacco, *op. cit.*, p 18.

<sup>52</sup> *Jn* 17: 3.

<sup>53</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXXIV, pp. 161–162.

is not sufficient, in saying how the Father creates the world through the Word, to consider the latter simply as object and exemplar. He explains this by resorting again to his example of the sculptor and the statue. The statue is carved after the exemplar which the sculptor has in his mind, but the concept itself is not the sculptor. It is an idea standing before his mind as object of his thought. But the Word besides being *per se* object and therefore containing the idea of the world, besides being the idea of absolute being, is also subsistence, a subject, a person acting because he has the same nature as the Father and the Holy Spirit.

As mentioned earlier, the Word is *divine subsistence per se* known in itself, and in all the modes in which it can be imitated by finite being because Being includes this in its concept of being able to subsist in an absolute and infinite way and in a relative and finite way, so we can see that the Father does all that he does *per extra* through the Word, not just because he sees in the Word the essences of finite beings but also because these essences have the power of being realised as those which exist in the divine subsistence without distinction, provided that one adds the will of this same subsistence common to the three divine persons. Being is *per se* loveable also in so far as it subsists in a limited way, through the analogy which it has with unlimited subsistent being. Therefore this will cannot be lacking with regard to all limited possible being, logically and morally speaking. Being which is known in a limited way needs the divine will to be realised because it is a contingent being, not a necessary one.

The Father, then, creates finite being, that is, he makes it subsist by loving it, which is to say willing it<sup>54</sup> and he does not love it except where he knows it and he knows it where it is knowable, that is, in the Word and therefore he creates through the Word. But because the Word is the divine subsistence itself *per se* known and which has in itself finite things *per se* known, so this subsistence equally loves in itself and wills the things with the same love and will of the Father. And since the Holy Spirit equally has the same identical subsistence in so far as he is *per se* loved (and he is *per se* loved in so far as he is *per se* known) therefore also the Holy Spirit creates with the same creating will of the first two persons.<sup>55</sup>

We say that the Father creates through the Word rather than through the Holy Spirit through an analogy with finite things. A sculptor designs a statue after a concept he has in his mind. It is true that love moves him to create the statue but the means with which he makes it is a concept in his mind; it is this that directs his hands.

Analogically speaking, then, the Father is moved by essential love and sees in his concept, in his Word, finite being, and seeing it, he creates it. However we know that in the Father there is not a pure idea without a corresponding reality, as in the scul-

---

<sup>54</sup> In the Hebrew language the word *will* is equivalent to effective love. This way of speaking is preserved continually in the Vulgate as when it says of the just man: '*in lege Domini voluntas ejus*' [His will is in the law of the Lord] (Ps. 1: 2); trans. mine.

<sup>55</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXXIV, p. 163.

ptor. But it is a subsistent concept of divine subsistence identical to that of the Father. Hence, the divine creating subsistence creates things as it sees them in the object or the Word, which is the same subsistence in its objective form. So we can say that it is the same divine subsistence, common to all three divine persons, which creates through the Word, which is itself *per se* known.

### **The creative act**<sup>56</sup>

We have some analogy with this act of creation in considering our imagination. Suppose a person imagines an object, and when he does so, it also subsists in itself, in this case he would have created it. Now with God such is the power of the divine will that when he, so to speak, imagines it subsisting, this imagination enables it to subsist not just relative to him but in itself and to other beings. If the divine imagination could represent an object only to himself this would be imperfect because to be a real object means subsisting in itself and in relation to other objects. Now this representation cannot be imperfect or deficient in God. Therefore the thing must truly subsist. No error can exist in God nor can there be any defect in his power or acts.

So when he wishes to represent to himself an object as realised, this object must exist as subject and person, or if it is not intellective it must exist relatively to persons who, according to their own nature, have the power of perceiving it, or of feeling the substantial effect of it, which is to create. Supposing then, that in God there were a perfect faculty of imagining things, or of representing them to himself as realised, it is necessary to admit in him the faculty or power of creating.<sup>57</sup>

The reality of a being is seen only in its essence, which is the objectivity of the thing, and the essence is contained in the Word which is being as object. Therefore creation is made in and through the Word.

#### **St Thomas — on created things**

For things can be considered in two ways: as they are in themselves, and as they are in the Word. If they are considered as they are in themselves, then it is not true that all things are life or even alive, but some lack life and some are alive. For example, the earth was made and metals were made, but none is life, none is living; animals and men were made, and these, considered in themselves, are not life, but merely living. Yet considered as they are in the Word, they are not merely living, but also life. For the archetypes which exist spiritually in the wisdom of God, and through which things were made by the Word, are life, just as a chest made by an artisan is in itself neither alive nor life, yet the exemplar of the chest in the artisan's mind prior to the existence of the chest is in some sense living, insofar as it has an

<sup>56</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXXV, pp. 163–165.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

intellectual existence in the mind of the artisan. Nevertheless it is not life, because it is neither in his essence nor is it his existence through the act of understanding of the artisan. But in God, his act of understanding is his life and his essence. And so whatever is in God is not only living, but is life itself, because whatever is in God is his essence. Hence the creature in God is the creating essence. Thus, if things are considered as they are in the Word, they are life.<sup>58</sup>

St Paul calls Christ '*the power of God and the wisdom of God*'.<sup>59</sup> In so far as the Word is subsistence he is called the power of God and in so far as he is object he calls him the wisdom of God.

Finally we should note that *wisdom* has two meanings, as also the word *knowledge*. We can consider it in a subjective sense, the person having knowledge and sometimes in the objective sense for the object of knowledge, that is, for the knowledge possessed by the person. Now in the subjective sense wisdom is common to all three persons of the Blessed Trinity and attributed to the Word only by *appropriation*. But in the objective sense it is proper to the Word himself, or rather *is* the Word. The Word is thus called Wisdom. Virtue or divine power is common to all three persons if taken in the subjective sense but if it is considered as the divine power with which God creates, it is the divine faculty of representing for himself the realised essence of finite things which essence is in the Word. This subjective faculty is still common to all three persons but since the essence and its realisation lies in the Word we may say that the Word is the power of God, because in him and through him God creates or sees things to subsist.

### More on the Word and creation<sup>60</sup>

The Hebrew word for 'verbum' means reality or truth. Rosmini argues from this that every word of God must be completely true and therefore every word pronounced by him must also be real. For instance, when he pronounces his own subsistence he pronounces a real object, moreover a person. He utters his Word and he who pronounces is called Father. When a finite person affirms things which are as he perceives them, he does not pronounce something new and if he pronounces something to exist which does not exist he pronounces a falsehood, because he cannot make it subsist. St Augustine says, 'And, therefore, the Father, as though uttering himself, begot the Word, equal in all things to himself and (also in being a person). For he would not have uttered himself completely and perfectly, if there were anything less or more in his Word than in himself.'<sup>61</sup> He goes on to explain the difference

---

<sup>58</sup> St Thomas, *In. Evangelium beati Ioannis expositio*, cap. I, lectio II, n. 91. Cf. *IVG*, Reading XXXV, p. 165.

<sup>59</sup> 1 *Cor* 1: 24. See comments of Losacco, pp. 18–19.

<sup>60</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXXVI, pp. 166–168.

<sup>61</sup> Augustine *De Trinitate*, lib. XV, cap. XIV and XV.



between the human, defective word and the divine, perfect and complete one. Man is only a limited sharer of relative being and he cannot go beyond these limits. In absolute being lie all possible modes of being, some of which are lacking only in that he does not pronounce them as happens with relative beings which are not created and which lie indistinct and without the individuality which makes them exist in themselves. Being loves being and therefore cannot lack being loved otherwise it would be limited. Being loves itself and wills itself, but it could not be loved unless it were known to itself. Being known has a logical priority to being loved; therefore the Word has a priority of origin (not of time or nature) to the Holy Spirit. Divine Being is *per se* known; it is *per se* generated as object *per se* known and as such is a subject, a person. In the Word there are known all possible limitations of being comprised in the concept of being. Since being *per se* known is also *per se* loved, all possible finite beings are also *per se* loved. But their limited subsistence excludes others although each can be realised, so they are not all realised together. The order of being is also 'being loved' because this order belongs to the essence of being in its ideal form. Augustine calls the Word *forma quaedam*. 'The Word of God is a *certain form*, not itself formed, but the form of all forms, form unchangeable without falling away, without defect, outside of time, without extension, surpassing all things, within all things, a foundation as it were, on which all things rest, a summit beneath which all things are'.<sup>62</sup> The moral good of being is also being belonging to its essence in moral form.

Given, then, that God loves and wills finite being, it follows that he wills it in its greatest quantity. But this demands that one takes into account its order, that is the connection of finite being and its moral and eudemonological good which is the perfect form of being to which physical being is ordered and the order and connection of it. Granted, then, that God, loving all being, loves finite being, morally speaking he could not do other than will the greatest amount of eudemonological moral good in the least quantity of finite physical being, connected among themselves in the best way for the obtaining of such an end and this is the created world.<sup>63</sup>

God loves finite being conceived and ordered in this way which is *per se* known. But it could not be such if it were not realised. The faculty of creating finite being is necessary for the perfection of infinite being because without it he would not be completely infinite because he would love something which he lacked. God creates with an act of understanding which is perfect and practical or operative, which has in itself what corresponds to man's will; he creates with his expression, with his Word.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> Augustine, *De verbis Domini in Evangelio secundum Ioannem*, Sermo 38.

<sup>63</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXXVI, pp. 167–168. This is in accordance with the Law of the Least Means which demands the maximum of good obtained from the least means.

<sup>64</sup> Rosmini points out that the act of the creative will corresponds to the acts of practical reason which consists in the adherence of the energy to the being known. The speculative

## Generation and creation<sup>65</sup>

One of the greatest differences between the generation of the Word and creation is that the Father generates the Word and then loves it, not that there is a 'now and then' but a *logical* order of relations. The Word is being *per se* known; the Father sees him as *per se* object and he must be known before being loved. And although it can be said to be a free act of the Father, it is a necessary one; he is not constrained to act by extraneous things. His act is not a *voluntary* one but *necessary* because of the divine nature; there is no end beforehand that might move the act of generation.

On the contrary in the Word generated and therefore subsisting as a Person, God sees the essence of finite being and loving it and willing it, pronounces it subsisting, and so creates it, seeing it in the Word. Hence creatures are produced by God with an act posterior in origin to generation and spiration through which the Holy Spirit proceeds and posterior to the divine love, therefore through an act of *free will*. God therefore creates things pronouncing them in his Word, where he knows them and this act by which he pronounces things is not posterior in time to the Word, because there is no time in God, but all is done in the eternity of the divine being and all is made. Hence what St. Anselm says is true that with the same pronouncement God says himself and external things. But it is necessary to understand with respect to the origin, that the pronouncement of exterior things is *logically* posterior to the constitution (if one can speak like this) of the three persons, and that this pronouncement is made by the divine nature common to all three persons, not by the Father alone, although the object of this pronouncement is in the Word, in which things are known *per se*, and therefore made in and through the Word.<sup>66</sup>

In Scripture it is frequently said that God creates in and through the Word. St Paul says, '*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created*'.<sup>67</sup> He calls him 'first-born' not because creatures are also generated in the proper sense of the word but because of the poverty of the Greek language which means both 'generated' and 'made'.

Another reason why St Paul calls Christ 'first-born' is that generation can be considered either in its principle or in its term. The divine generation in its *principle*, that is, in its act, is a pronouncement and with this pronouncement both the Word was generated and finite beings were created. With respect to its *term*, generation means that the generated one has the same nature as the generator, so he is called Son. We

---

reason which precedes it terminates in the ideal. Cf. A.R., *Principi* cap. VI, art. V, p. 144. [Cf. Durham 1988, p. 89; J.A.D., *Rosmini's Theory of Ethics*, Durham 2000, chapter 7, pp. 62 ff.]

<sup>65</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXXVII, pp. 168–71.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168–169.

<sup>67</sup> *Col* 1: 15–16.

distinguish generation, which is a communication of nature, from creation which is to produce from nothing something of a different nature. Thirdly, if one considers the words of Paul as applying to the Word Incarnate, Christ is the first-born not in the order of natural things but of supernatural things, because he is the end of the universe and the end is first in the mind of the operator; other created beings are supernaturally generated by God, being adopted as his children because Christ is given to them and his Spirit lives in them.

All things in heaven and earth, then, are 'rooted and founded in the Word' because the internal act of creation terminates in the Word and through this act things exist as subject and person relative to themselves or as related to creatures constituting their proper and external existence. So St Paul says, *'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.'*<sup>68</sup> The author of the letter to the Hebrews also says, *'He sustains all these created things by his all-powerful word'*<sup>69</sup> to indicate that the Word is also creator and that he makes them jointly with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Elsewhere Paul says, *'in him we live and move and have our being'*,<sup>70</sup> words which indicate existence and relative to us, but we are also in God because created in the Word. Subjectively speaking and relative to ourselves we are external to the Word, but taken objectively are in the Word. The book of Wisdom says, *'For your all-powerful hand, which created the formless world out of matter...'*<sup>71</sup> (those invisible things are contained in the Word) and St Paul says, *'By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.'*<sup>72</sup> In the Word, then, which is the subsistent object, things were made as subsistent objects and not just ideal things. But because these things have a subjectivity relative to themselves, therefore in their own existence, which is that of existing as subjects, or in subjects, they are outside the Word, and are not the Word, and are not mixed up with the Word, which *is* absolutely. Hence St. John in the Book of Revelation to indicate this twofold existence of contingent things, uses two words; *existed* which refers to their subsistence in the Word, where God seeing them and willing them makes them exist; the other is *were created* which refers to their proper and subjective subsistence wholly outside the Word.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 15–17.

<sup>69</sup> *Heb* 1: 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Acts* 17: 28.

<sup>71</sup> *Wis* 11: 17.

<sup>72</sup> *Heb* 11: 3.

<sup>73</sup> *'For you created all things and by your will they existed and were created.'* *Rev.* 4: 11.

### The Fathers and St Thomas comment on the Word as creator and principle<sup>74</sup>

Many Fathers see the Word as the creator and principle of all things in the first words of Genesis, ‘*in the beginning (in principio) [when] God created the heavens and the earth.*’<sup>75</sup> Jesus Christ expressly said when the Jews asked him who he was, ‘*The beginning who also speak unto you.*’<sup>76</sup> These words are repeated in the book of Revelation where John calls Jesus Christ, ‘*the faithful and true witness, the origin (beginning) of God’s creation.*’<sup>77</sup> ‘the faithful and true witness’ refers to the Word more as object, that is, that which makes things known, and ‘the beginning of God’s creation’ more to the Word as subsisting and effective agent. But these two properties are united because when we say ‘true and faithful witness’ we do not represent the Word as object *per se notum* and light in the abstract, but as personal object, and illuminator, as object person, a subsistent object. The Book of Psalms says, ‘*In the beginning [in principio] O Lord thou foundest the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.*’<sup>78</sup> Origen comments on this: ‘what is the principle of all things unless our Lord and Saviour of all things, Jesus Christ, the first born of all creation? In him, therefore our beginning, that is in his Word, God made heaven and earth.’<sup>79</sup> St. Basil also interprets the words of Genesis in the same way and calls the Word *artifex*.<sup>80</sup> Similarly St. Ambrose: ‘In this principle, therefore, that is, in Christ, God made heaven and earth.’<sup>81</sup> St. Augustine agrees: ‘In this principle, O God, you made heaven and earth, in your Word, in your Son, in your power, in your wisdom, in your truth,’<sup>82</sup> and St. Jerome himself in the book of the Jewish tradition of Genesis writes: ‘In the head of the book it was written of me, that is, in the beginning, Genesis.’<sup>83</sup> St Thomas discusses the meanings of ‘principle’. ‘For, (he says), since the word “principio” implies a certain order relative to other things, it is necessary to discover a principle in all those things in which there is an order’.<sup>84</sup> Then he

---

<sup>74</sup> Cf. *IVG*, Reading XXXVIII, pp. 171–175.

<sup>75</sup> *Gen* 1:1.

<sup>76</sup> *Jn* 8: 25. (Douay). Cf. Losacco’s comments, *op. cit.*, p 19.

<sup>77</sup> *Rev* 3:14. Cf. Losacco, *ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>78</sup> *Ps* 101 (102): 26. (Douay).

<sup>79</sup> Origen, *In Genesim homiliae*, hom. 1.

<sup>80</sup> Basil, *Homiliae ix in Hexaemeron*, homilia 1.1.

<sup>81</sup> Ambrose. *Hexaemeron in Sancti Ambrosi*, cap. IV.

<sup>82</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, lib. XI, cap. IX.

<sup>83</sup> Jerome, *Questiones sive traditiones hebraicae in Genesim*, N. 31.

<sup>84</sup> ‘We should note that this word can be taken in three ways. In one way so that *principium* is understood as the Person of the Son, who is the principle of creatures by reason of his active power acting with wisdom, which is the conception of the things that are brought into existence. Hence we read: “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 *Cor* 1: 24). And so the Lord said about himself: “I am the *principium* who also speaks to you” (below *Jn* 8: 25). Taking *principium* in this way, we should understand the statement, “In the beginning was the Word”, as though he were saying, “The Word was in the Son,” so that the sense would be: The Word himself is the *principium*, principle, in the sense in which life is said to be “in” God, when this life is not something other than God. And this is the explanation of Origen. And so the Evangelist says, ‘In the beginning’ here in order, as Chrysostom says, to show at the very

discusses how the term ‘principio’ applies to the Word. This term belongs to him in the most absolute way both in the ideal order and the real order, that is, both in the order of knowledge and in the production and conservation of created things. The Word is being *per se notum*, therefore intelligibility itself. It is the objective principle of knowing for all intelligences.

As far as human beings are concerned it is the principle of natural and supernatural knowledge. The objective principle of natural knowledge is the idea of being, which is not the Word but a pure idea, but it comes from the Word without the latter revealing himself. In the order of supernatural knowledge it is either internal, infused by grace by means of an immediate communication of the Word or his gifts, or it is external, revealed through external words and signs. Regarding the internal communication the Word it is the proximate principle as in the era of grace, in which he is communicated personally, or as in ancient times through the natural and written law, in which he is communicated with his gifts, but not personally.

With respect to revealed knowledge of the Old Testament the Word is the principle, but the remote one, hence the knowledge was imperfect; with respect to the perfect knowledge of the New Testament the Word is the immediate principle.

As regards the order of reality, that is, the production and conservation of created things. St Thomas teaches that the Word is the principle of things in two ways, because he contains their reason or the ideal essence, and effectively because he makes them subsistent.<sup>85</sup> These are the two aspects under which the Word must be considered, namely as *object* and *subsistent person*. Christ himself mentions these aspects when he says, ‘*The beginning who also speak unto you*’<sup>86</sup> i.e. ‘I, the person, am the principle through which and in which all things were made, and I am also the principle of knowledge which I now communicate to you by speaking to you.’<sup>87</sup> When the word

---

outset the divinity of the Word by asserting that he is a principle because, as determining all, a principle is most honored.

In a second way *principium* can be understood as the Person of the Father, who is the principle not only of creatures, but of every divine process. It is taken this way in, “Yours is princely power (*principium*) in the day of your birth” (Ps 110:3). In this second way one reads In the beginning was the Word as though it means, “The Son was in the Father.” This is Augustine’s understanding of it, as well as Origen’s. The Son, however, is said to be in the Father because both have the same essence. Since the Son is his own essence, then the Son is in whomsoever the Son’s essence is. Since, therefore, the essence of the Son is in the Father by consubstantiality, it is fitting that the Son be in the Father. Hence it says below (14:10): “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.”

In a third way, *principium* can be taken for the beginning of duration, so that the sense of ‘In the beginning was the Word’ is that the Word was before all things, as Augustine explains it. According to Basil and Hilary, this phrase shows the eternity of the Word.’ St Thomas, *In Evangelium beati Ioannis evangelistae expositio*, cap.I, lectio I, nn. 35–37.

<sup>85</sup> St Thomas, *ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Jn 8: 25 (Douay). See reference to Losacco above, note 75.

<sup>87</sup> IVG, *Reading XXXVIII*, p. 174.

‘principle’ was mentioned in Genesis we must remember that the Word had not revealed himself as person. Here the word ‘principle’ (beginning) is an idea or concept; not all principles are persons. Similarly when the Psalmist says ‘O Lord, *how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all*,’<sup>88</sup> ‘and that by his word all things hold together’<sup>89</sup> this certainly means that all things were made by the Word, but the Word is denoted by general and abstract words which do not as yet express the personality of the Word.

The Word (Principle) of Natural and Supernatural Knowledge	
The ideal Order of Knowledge	The Real Order of Creation
<p>On the <b>natural level</b>: the idea of being coming from the Word but not the Word.</p> <p>On the <b>supernatural level</b>:</p> <p>In the <b>Old Testament</b>: communicated in the natural and written law as his gifts but not personally. The remote principle of knowledge. Deiform grace</p> <p>The <b>New Testament</b>: <i>internally</i> — triform grace: by immediate personal communication of the Word the proximate principle.</p> <p><i>Externally</i> — by words and signs.</p>	<p>Word is the principle of things in two ways:</p> <p>Contains their reason or ideal essence and he effectively makes them subsistent.</p> <p>This to say that the Word must be considered as object and as subsistent person.</p>

### Everything was made in and through the Word<sup>90</sup>

In the Old Testament it is hinted that everything was created in and through the Word. So, in the story of creation God decreed heaven and earth with his word. For example: ‘*then God said “let there be light”; and there was light*’.<sup>91</sup> In the book of Psalms we read, ‘*By the word of the Lord the heavens were made and all their host by the breath of his mouth...For he spoke and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm*’.<sup>92</sup>

Rosmini mentions John Chrysostom as stating that St John says more with a single expression, ‘*all things were made through him*’ than Moses who said ‘many things’. The reason, he says, is that the author of Genesis only mentions sensible things (heaven and earth) but St John includes spiritual things as well. However it seems certain that the Jews gave the heavens a spiritual sense of which the material heavens were a symbol. The Psalmist attributes ‘the heavens’ to God and the ‘earth’ to man. ‘*The*

<sup>88</sup> Ps 104: 24

<sup>89</sup> Sir 43: 26.

<sup>90</sup> IVG, Reading XXXIX, pp. 175–179.

<sup>91</sup> Gen 1: 3.

<sup>92</sup> Ps 33: 6, 9.

*heavens are the Lord's heavens, but the earth he has given to human beings*.<sup>93</sup> Rosmini points out that the Jews distinguished three heavens, that of the birds, that of the clouds, and that of spirits, and that the first two symbolised the third. St Paul says that he was rapt to the third heaven, which was the heaven of spiritual and non-sensible things.<sup>94</sup> There he heard words that human beings cannot express because they haven't got the language. St Peter says that our Christian inheritance is, '*preserved for us in the heavens*'.<sup>95</sup> So when the sacred author says, '*God created the heavens and the earth*' he meant this in a universal sense, that is, spiritual; and corporeal things. He then leaves aside the spiritual things and goes on to tell how the earth was arranged. All of this, of course, was created in an instant, '*He who lives for ever created the whole universe*'.<sup>96</sup>

Now there is a difference in the account between the creation of heaven and earth and then the ordering of material things in the six days the author gives. The first is *in* the Word and the second is *through* the Word. Why is this? The Word is both object-person and person-object. As *person* the Word operates as subsistent subject with the same subsistence that is common to all three persons; as *object* he is *per se* intelligible containing the reason and ideal form of things.

As person the Word operates as a subsistent subject with the subsistence common to the three persons of the Blessed Trinity.  
As object he is *per se* intelligible and contains the reason and ideal form of things.

The subsistence of contingent things can only come about by a creating action, that is, through an act of the creating will but the idea still has to fix the form and order which it must have. When one deals with the determining of the form and order of subsistence one must have recourse to the idea which contains it as part of the thing which is objectively knowable. Of course there cannot be a limited subsistence without a form or order but here we are making an abstract distinction. To give those first forms and any order to the substance without which it could not exist belongs to creative power. Now, every other quality, the order, the determination etc., except subsistence, has an ideal mode of being and is comprised in the idea. For instance, an artist can work a pot from clay according to an idea in his mind, its shape and so on. Every subsistence has its source in the Word as in the principle in so far as the Word is object *per se notum*, *per se intuitabile*. God, then, creates the subsistence of contingent things *in* the Word immediately, as subsisting; he then creates the form and order of the subsistence *through* the Word, as object.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup> Ps 115:16.

<sup>94</sup> 2 Cor 12: 2.

<sup>95</sup> 1 Pet 1: 4.

<sup>96</sup> Sir 18:1, 'creavit omnia simul' (Douay).

<sup>97</sup> It seems here that Rosmini might be reflecting on the account in Genesis where it says, '*In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters*' (Gen 1: 1.). In the verses that

Hence it appears that when one deals with expressing creation being formed, it is more accurate to say that it was made *through the Word* as the sculptor makes the statue through his concept. So it seems one can conclude by stating that to say that all things were made *through the Word* means more than saying made *in the Word*, because this last way of speaking could be restricted to meaning unformed and substantial creation, whereas the first expression means formed and completed creation as when one reads, '*who have made all things by your Word and by your wisdom have formed humankind*',<sup>98</sup> or where the Psalmist says, '*By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth... For he spoke and it came to be: he commanded, and it stood firm*'<sup>99</sup> where we speak of the whole of creation, both the material and substantial part of it and the formal and accidental part of it, because the latter does not exist without the former of which it is the completion.<sup>100</sup>

Although John says 'all things were made through him', thus including every created being with its modes and forms, yet Origen or some other author says that John was not satisfied with this and adds, '*without him was made nothing that was made*'<sup>101</sup> and that according to the Greek, *χωρὶς αὐτοῦ*, he means also that all things were made *in the Word*. St Thomas praises this interpretation.

'In a homily attributed to Origen, there is found another fine enough explanation. Because in it he says that the Greek word is *χωρὶς* where in the Latin we have *sine*. Now *χωρὶς* is the same as *outside or apart* as if to say: 'all things were made such through him, that apart from him nothing was made:' and he says this in order to show that through the Word and in the Word all things are conserved according to the phrase 'carrying all things by the Word of his power.'<sup>102</sup> Because there are some things which have no need of the agent except for being made, because they are able to subsist after being made without the influence of the agent, as the thing which has need of the artisan to be made but then continues in its being without his influence. In order, then, that no one believes that all things were made through the Word in such a way that he is their cause solely in so far as he made them to be, and not in so far as he conserves them in being, the Evangelist adds: 'And without him was not

---

follow we have God putting form into his creation. On the other hand he comments on this as we shall see and states that the ordering of creation and the act of creation as separate acts are the result of human thinking, and that the act of creation is one only. Cf. Losacco, *op. cit.*, p. 20 for his comments on Genesis 1: 3.

<sup>98</sup> *Wis* 9: 1, 2.

<sup>99</sup> *Ps* 33: 6, 9.

<sup>100</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXXIX, p. 178.

<sup>101</sup> *Jn* 1: 3 (Douay), see reference to Losacco above.

<sup>102</sup> *Heb* 1: 3.



made anything that was made,' that is, nothing was made apart from him, because he includes (ambit) all things conserving them.<sup>103</sup>

So St John explains that all things were made and conserved through the Word and in the Word.

Creation in and through the Word	
Creation: producing the matter.	<i>In</i> the Word, as subsistence or divine power.
Ordering and form of creation — the form.	<i>Through</i> the Word as object, making known the order of being.

### **The co-operation of the Word in creation (1)**<sup>104</sup>

The Word cooperates in the creation in two ways 1) in producing the matter and the subsistence of things as power or divine *subsistence* and 2) in producing the form and in general the order of things as art, that is, as *object* which makes known the order of being, or being in intrinsic order.

In so far as it co-operates as divine subsistence the Word acts through and with the identical power which the Father and the Holy Spirit have. When the Father operates through the Son, the Son is not an instrument.<sup>105</sup> But the Arians said he was a lesser agent. Here are the words of St Thomas who rebuts this.

St Thomas
'When I say that someone operates through a power received from another, this can be understood in two ways. We can understand it in such a way that the power both of him who gives it and him who receives it is numerically the same, and in this manner he who operates through the power received from another is not less than he from whom he receives it. Now when the Father gives to the Son the identical power which he has and through which the Son operates, when we say that the Father operates through the Son, we must not mean by this that the Son is less than the Father nor his instrument. This only follows in those who do not receive from another the same power, but receive another and created sort. Hence it is clear that neither the Holy Spirit nor the Son is to the Father the cause through which he operates, nor the servant nor the instrument of the Father as Origen wildly asserts.' <sup>106</sup>

<sup>103</sup> St Thomas, *In Evangelium beati Ioannis evangelistae expositio* cap. 1, lectio 2, n. 86.

<sup>104</sup> *IVG*, Reading XL, pp. 179–183.

<sup>105</sup> In this Reading Rosmini deals with the first of these two ways.

<sup>106</sup> St Thomas, *In Evangelium beati Ioannis evangelistae expositio* cap. I, lectio II, n. 76.

Rosmini cites the teaching of the Fathers on this matter.<sup>107</sup> He also goes on to discuss the decision of the Council of Sirmia which interpreted the words '*Let us make man to our image and likeness*'<sup>108</sup> understanding these words to be spoken by the Father to the Son. The Council Fathers said that this did not mean that the Son was giving way to with the Father. The Council meant that the Son had from the Father the same creative power received from the Father and identical with it. St Cyril of Alexandria points out that these words are spoken to an equal otherwise the word would have been 'make' and not 'let us make'. There is no distinction between the three persons in the work they undertake. So this phrase would have to be interpreted as mutual assistance among the divine persons which is founded in the relationship in which they are distinct persons equal to one another.

So the Son knows that he has received everything from the Father, and the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. The Father knows that he has given everything to the Son and to the Holy Spirit through the Son and loves himself in the other persons. Now the recognition that everything is from the Father, is, in the Son, an act of justice and gratitude (if one can speak like this); and the recognition of having everything from the Father and the Son is an act of gratitude in the Holy Spirit. But more truly and more correctly we must say that such mutual acknowledgements between the divine Persons is contained in the Holy Spirit which is the divine subsistence per se loved, and therefore there is nothing else in the Trinity except the persons. But nothing prevents us from saying that in the Word, according to our limited intelligence, we distinguish several properties which, however, are none other than the most simple person of the Son; in the same way in the Holy Spirit we distinguish several moral roles, not really distinct from each other but constituting the sole most simple person of the Holy Spirit in a mode above our understanding.<sup>109</sup>

### **The cooperation of the Word in creation (2)<sup>110</sup>**

The second way the Word co-operates in creation, is as Art, as St Augustine says, and as absolute and infinite object.

St Thomas again says:

'Now if the above mentioned words "all things were made through him" are correctly considered, it is clearly evident that the evangelist speaks most correctly. Because when a person makes something it is necessary that he first conceives in his wisdom what is the form and reason of the thing which he is making, so the form in

<sup>107</sup> Cf. *IVG*, Reading XL, note, 59, pp. 180–181.

<sup>108</sup> *Gen* 1: 26. (Douay).

<sup>109</sup> *IVG*, Reading XL, p. 183.

<sup>110</sup> Reading XLI, pp. 183–185.

the mind of the craftsman is the reason of the chest that is to be made. In the same way God does nothing except through the concept of his intellect which is wisdom conceived from eternity, that is the Word of God, and the Son of God; and therefore it is impossible that he makes something unless through the Son. This is the reason for which St Augustine<sup>111</sup> says that the Word is the full Art of all living reasons and so it appears that all things which the Father makes he makes them through him.<sup>112</sup>

The concepts of things do not include the subsistence of contingent things; they do not provide the subsistence of created things, but determine the form, limits and order of it. This mode of creating pertains to the formal and directive creation of which the Word is the exemplar. Now these two types of creation, that is creation and the order of creation, of which the sacred author speaks, are not separate in fact because the subsistence of contingent things cannot be actuated without some form, limits and order. So the act of creation is one. It is our mind that makes a distinction between subsistence and matter and that of form.

Now although the Father and the Son create with equal power they do not create in the same way. The Word is the concept and art and provides the exemplar, and it is the Father who observes this exemplar and creates.

At the same time it goes without saying that, by reason of indwelling and circuminsession<sup>113</sup> the Word is in the Father and the Father has in himself the Word, that is subsistence *per se* notum. Therefore the Father borrows nothing from the Son in the sense that he has not got it himself; and therefore he has in himself even the exemplar of these same things, because he has in himself the Word since the persons are indivisible, although as persons they are really distinct; in such a way that there is only one God subsisting in three persons and if he did not subsist in three persons he would not be God. Hence if the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit were completely separated, they would cease to be God because there is not a God the Father separate from God the Word, nor is there a God the Word separated from a God the Holy Spirit; if this were so there would be three Gods which is absurd. So in creation of matter or subsistence all three persons co-operate with one identical power and in the same way. (All three persons possess the same nature). For this reason we attribute to the Father, divine subsistence in as much as it is communicated to the Son, united with whom he communicates it to the Holy Spirit. So in the creation of form all three co-operate with

---

<sup>111</sup> Augustine, *De Trinitate*, lib. IV, cap. I.

<sup>112</sup> St Thomas, *In evangelium beati Joannis evangelistae expositio*. cap. I, lect II, n. 77.

<sup>113</sup> The indwelling of the three persons in one another, i.e. the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father; the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit in the Father and the Son.

equal power to realise it, but do not determine it in the same mode, because it is the Word who contains the concept or exemplar of it. Finally to conclude, in the supernatural perfection of the universe which is sanctity, all three co-operate with equal power but not in the same mode because the Holy Spirit who is being *per se* loved, communicates supernatural love to human beings. Hence we see why in the Created Universe and its events we notice not only the omnipotence of one God but also the vestiges of a God who is one and three, a type of the most Holy Trinity.<sup>114</sup>

### **The two-fold existence of created things<sup>115</sup>**

Contingent things exist in the divine Word objectively and in themselves they exist subjectively. This explains how the creative act is eternal and fruitful *ab aeterno* and how at the same time things exist in time. Created things exist in the Word from all eternity in which the creative act issues forth. But in themselves they exist in time outside the Word. Time is a subjective relation of things among themselves. It is co-created with things and it occurs in the Word only as object, the subject Word is not subject to time at all.

#### **Augustine speaks of the creative act of God**

‘...for since it is said that “all things were made by him” it is clearly shown that light also was made by him since God said “Let there be light;” and similarly with regards to other things which if it be so, the saying of God “Let there be light,” is eternal because the Word of God, God with God, is co-eternal with the Father, although it is a temporal creature that was made. Though words are of time, since we say “when” and “sometimes,” yet it is eternal in the Word of God that something is to be made; and it then shall be, when it was decreed that it shall be in the Word, in which there is no “when” and “sometime,” since the Word is wholly eternal.’<sup>116</sup>

<sup>114</sup> *IVG*, Reading XLI, pp. 184–185.

<sup>115</sup> Reading XLII, pp. 185–187.

<sup>116</sup> Augustine, *Lib. de Genesi ad litteram*, this is not an accurate quote by Rosmini and was probably cited from memory. Tadini says it was more accurately a quote from chapter 2 book 1 as follows: ‘For when it is said of him (the Word), All things have been made through Him, it becomes quite clear that light also was made through Him when God said, “Let there be light”; and if this is so, then this utterance of God is eternal. For the Word of God, true God in the bosom of God and the only Son of God, is co-eternal with the Father; and yet through this utterance of God in the eternal Word, creation has been brought about in time. It is true that the words “when” and “at some time” refer to time, but the “when” of something that must be created is eternal in the Word of God; and it is created when in the Word there is an exigency for its creation. But in the Word Himself there is no “when” and no “at some time”, because the Word is in every way eternal.’ Cf. *IVG*, note 54, p. 186.

St Bede says, “because the Evangelist said that every creature was made by the Word, let none believe because of this that his will is mutable, as if he should now wish to make a creature which from eternity he had not made before. So he is solicitous to instruct us, that the creature was indeed made in time, but that when, and whom, he would create was ordered from the beginning in the eternal wisdom of the Maker.”<sup>117</sup> St Paul says, that God ‘*calls into existence the things that do not exist*.’<sup>118</sup> All things which he creates are in the Word from eternity even though they are not yet in themselves; they are in their foundation which is the Word.

---

<sup>117</sup> Bede, *In S. Joannis Evangelium expositio*, cap. 1. Rosmini cites this from S. Thomas’s *Catena aurea*.

<sup>118</sup> *Rom* 4: 17.

## Chapter 3

### In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of Men<sup>1</sup>

#### Light and Life

With the above words the Evangelist informs us that the Word is life and that this life is an intellectual life and light to us. Those familiar with Rosmini's teaching will know that the light of men on the natural level is the light of being which shines before the mind and constitutes us intelligent beings.

The Word is light and life	
The Word as life	The Word in so far as he is subsistence
The Word as light	The Word in so far as he is object, term of the living intellect.
The life of the Word is the light of men	

The above table simply shows that the Word is both life and light. As we have already seen the Word shares subsistence with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This is his nature. He is also object *per se notum*, and the exemplar of all things. And he could not be light to human beings, in fact to any intelligent creatures, if he were not light *per se*.

In the generation of the Word life and light are of a different order from what they have in the creation and formation of human beings. The generation of the Word is made through the intellective pronouncement of the Father; he pronounces his subsistence and so this becomes object or light. Because this is full and complete it has the power of making the object subsist as subject or person. The generator generates his subsistence in the generated Word. We see it, logically speaking, as first the Word as object or light then the Word as living subsistence, that is, a person living *per se*. But in the creation and formation of man there is this logical order, first the human being receives life, then the object or light renders him intelligent. Again note, we are not talking chronologically but simply logically.

St Thomas says, 'We find a fitting order in the above. For in the natural order of things, existence is first; and the Evangelist implies this in his first statement. "In

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *IVG*, Reading XLIII, pp. 187–188.

the beginning was the Word”. Secondly, comes life; and this is mentioned next, “In him was life”. Thirdly comes understanding; and that is mentioned next; “And that life was the light of men”. And, according to Origen, he fittingly attributes light to life because light can be attributed only to the living.<sup>2</sup>

### **Life in the Word<sup>3</sup>**

The living object is the person of the Word. The word ‘life’ expresses that act in an objective mode. If the Evangelist had said ‘the living Word’ he would have expressed simply the subjective act of living. Saying that the Word has life means object or living essence; the living subject is the object life or the essence dwelling in him. If the object remained only as object he would have been no more than an idea but by receiving life, the very life essential to God he becomes a person, the person of the Word. The Word declared his own eternal generation when he said, ‘*For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself* (in his own person).’<sup>4</sup>

Why does John say ‘in the Word was life’ rather than ‘the Word himself was life’? Well, ‘life’ is an abstract mode of being. The word ‘life’ in itself does not mean any subject or any person. Life expresses a property common to all subjects. It can exist in different degrees according to different subjects, a caterpillar, a tiger, a plant, a human being.<sup>5</sup> So to say that ‘life was the person’ would not be correct but rather that ‘the person had life in himself’ or ‘life was in the person’. Of course we must keep in mind that in the Word there is no real distinction between his life and his person but we have to make a logical distinction because of our limited speech.

We might quote against this the fact that Jesus said, ‘*I am the way, and the truth, and the life*’.<sup>6</sup> But here he is not saying that he is life in itself but relatively to human beings for whom he is also the way leading to beatitude. The context bears this out because Jesus adds, ‘*No one comes to the Father except through me*’.<sup>7</sup> In the Greek text the article is placed before the word ‘life’ ἡ ζωῆ, whereas in the words of St John ‘in him was life’ the article is lacking ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν. So in the first passage we speak of a determinate life whereas in the quotation ‘in him was life’ we say simply that the Word has life. It is not to say that the Word has *the* life which might imply that the Father and the Holy Spirit do not have life. The omission of the article rather points to the communion of

---

<sup>2</sup> St Thomas, *In Evangelium beati Ioannis evangelistae expositio*, cap. I, lectio III, n. 100.

<sup>3</sup> *IVG*, Reading XLIV, pp. 188–190.

<sup>4</sup> *Jn* 5: 26.

<sup>5</sup> Rosmini discusses life attributed to plants which, he claims, have no life in the normal sense of the word. We say they live, even when we do not attribute feeling to them. He says plants are simply vegetation and do not feel. Pure vegetation which does not produce feeling is not life in the true sense of the word. However he theorises in the *Psychology* about universal animation.

<sup>6</sup> *Jn*, 14: 6.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

the three persons all who have the same subsistence. Whenever the scriptures speak of the life which the Word has in himself and not with respect to us, they omit the article as in the passage given above. *‘For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself’* and when they speak of life in relation to us they put the article in as in the statement, *‘I am the resurrection and the life’* (καὶ ἡ ζωὴ).<sup>8</sup>

So to sum up, when the Evangelist says that ‘in the Word was life’ he means that the Word of God is not a sterile word like a human being’s which does not subsist in itself, but that the Word has life in himself i.e., living subsistence and that he could communicate his life also to us.

### **Life and feeling<sup>9</sup>**

Life is feeling. Where there is no life there is no feeling. The incessant production of feeling is called life. Feeling is life in act; production of feeling is life in potency.

Feeling comes to us human beings from outside. Animal life is aroused by a corporeal term, in our case the body. The soul is the sentient principle and must have a term, something to feel, otherwise it would not exist. So we have no life in ourselves. In the intellectual order there is feeling and therefore a life. But we could never receive intelligence if we had not got animal feeling; light can be attributed only to a living being. We receive intelligence from ideal being presented to us as object which we intuit, which informs us and makes us intelligent. Hence we have not intelligent life in ourselves but it is given to us by something which is not us.

<b>The rational subject has a rational principle (Intellective and Sensitive)</b> Life is constituted by incessant feeling
Intellective principle intuits (feels) the object presented to it, ideal being (its term)
Sensitive principle feels the body (its term) and modifications of its term (sensations)
<b>Animals (and plants ?)</b>
Sensitive principle and term only

Why are we saying all this? Because this is not so with the divine Word. In the person of the divine Word there is life and there is feeling. But one cannot distinguish in such a person the principle of life from the term of life. This term is not given to

---

<sup>8</sup> *Jn* 11: 25.

<sup>9</sup> *IVG*, Reading XLV–VI, pp. 190–193.



the divine person from outside, a term of different nature from itself; it is not different from the living principle but it is life. The feeling is in the living principle itself.

Life is essential to the persons of the Blessed Trinity. The three persons are immortal and eternal because nothing can deprive them of life. But in the case of human beings the term of animal feeling (the body) can be withdrawn. How about the separated soul? Ideal being which is its informing object and term can be withdrawn by the one who gave it to us but in this case the soul would be annihilated because there would also cease to be an intelligent principle. But if the soul had no need of matter and the idea of being in order to live its two-fold sensible and intelligent life, it could neither die nor be annihilated; it would be master of its own life. St John tells us that this precisely happens in the case of the Word 'in him is life'. He does not depend on something extraneous to himself.

So the life of the Word must be unlimited, infinite and complete. Created things are limited beings. Their vital term does not depend on them, it is given to them. But in the divine Word this term is not given and therefore the Word is not limited by a term outside itself. It is not of a nature distinct or separate from it. In the Word there is pure life, without possibility of limitation, therefore infinite life, the essence of life realised and complete. The Evangelist says that 'the Word was God'. Therefore he must have infinite life. Life is in the Word and therefore in God. This divine life is the subsisting and divine nature. This divine subsistence is life and it is shared by the three persons. The Father communicates this life (this divine subsistence) to the Son in generating him. '*For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.*'<sup>10</sup> This essence is common to the three persons who, as subjects, realise it in different ways.

### **Life and feeling in the Trinity: the spiration of the Holy Spirit<sup>11</sup>**

As far as the natural order is concerned there are three species of life in human beings. We have seen in the table above that there is first of all animal feeling which gives life to the sentient (sensitive) principle. This is purely subjective; we are not considering intellectual life at this point. But in the second place there is intellective or rational life, consisting in the intellective feeling, this arises in the contemplation of truth and beauty and its discovery by investigation and in the possession of knowledge (which is what we are doing here and now!). This is objective life because it is satisfied by the object known. Finally there is moral life which consists in moral feeling, the abundance of those pleasant things which give rise to virtue.

We can reason about God by analogy and recognise in him something of the triple life that we experience. So, firstly we can recognise in God something analogous to *subjective feeling*, logically prior to the object. We can call it simple feeling since it has no object or material term; then there is something analogous to *objective feeling*, arising

---

<sup>10</sup> *Jn* 5: 26.

<sup>11</sup> *IVG*, Reading XLVII, pp. 193–196.

from the contemplation or sight of the object; thirdly *moral feeling* which arises from the perfect agreement of the subject, as will, with the whole object, that is with being completely known.

Now we can see from this what is proper to the divine nature in this threefold divine life and therefore identical to each of the three divine persons: how nevertheless through appropriation we attribute one rather than the other of these lives to each of the divine persons; and finally whether there is something proper to the persons individually. As we have seen, the three-fold feeling and the three-fold life belongs to the divine essence. Through appropriation the *simple feeling* or *real life* can be attributed to the Father; the *intellective feeling* or *intellective life* to the Son; and the *moral feeling* or *moral life* to the Holy Spirit: because each person co-operates in his own proper way to actualise such modes of life and feeling. It is necessary to consider carefully that the divine essence is not really distinct from each person and that it would not exist if the persons did not exist: and it is simply in the persons and in all three simultaneously and identically in such a way that it would be absurd to conceive it in one or two and not in the other or others. So, although we say that the persons co-operate in constituting under some respect the living essence, we do not mean by this that the essence depends on the persons, nor the persons on the essence; no dependence can occur in God; but only a logical priority and posteriority (subsequence), according to our limited way of thinking.

We must, then, see how each divine person co-operates on his part to constitute one of the three lives distinguished by us in divine Being and this co-operation is precisely that which is *proper* and not *appropriated* to the individual person.

Simple feeling primarily or real life is conceived by us prior to any object and to any intellective act and since we conceive it prior in the logical order to the generation of the Word, we conceive it as proper to the essence, an abstraction made from the persons. But this real and living essence of simple feeling is communicated to another person, that is the Word: and hence the two persons of Father and Son. The Father is the living essence, *in so far as* pronouncing himself, he makes himself object and subsisting and personal object: and the Son is the object himself, the subsistence itself which has instantly become object and person.<sup>12</sup>

Now, as regards this object-person, there must exist in the Father and the Son intellectual feeling, an infinite satisfaction in essential truth, essential beauty and essential wisdom, because object-being is essential truth and the intrinsic order of this object-being is essential beauty and the knowledge of this object is essential wisdom, so both the Father and the Son rejoice in this object person being generated by the

---

<sup>12</sup> *IVG*, Reading, XLVII, pp. 194–195.

Father and find satisfaction in him who constitutes the infinite intellectual feeling and this identical feeling in so far as it belongs to the Father has, its object in the Son and in so far as it belongs to the Son it has its object in himself, in such a way that this feeling is *appropriated* to the Son because it is *proper* to the Son to provide the object or term which is himself.

Intellective feeling, then, is a joyful contemplation of truth, beauty and wisdom and supposes an *object*, hence we call it objective feeling. In human beings there is a purely theoretical contemplation because, truth, beauty and wisdom are presented to him ideally. But the object of the divine intellectual feeling is also personal subsistence. The feeling in God then must be a practical one, of voluntary adherence and a satisfying affection in the person who is, at the same time, essentially object. This subsistence, *per se* intelligible, and hence object understood and person, is *per se* loveable in its intelligibility and therefore *per se* loved.

The Father who pronounces the Word, that is subsistence, and so generates the object-person, loves it also as essentially loveable and so it is essentially loved; and this subsistence in as much as it is essentially loved is the person spirated, who is called the Holy Spirit. Hence the object-person, in so far as he is loved with the spiration of the Father is another person who feels himself in the form of being loved. So the Father spirates the Holy Spirit through the Word, because in the Word he loves the subsistence where the cognoscitive and generative act terminate: because divine subsistence could not be loved if the Father did not love it, nor could the Father love it if he did not know it and pronounce it as object-person, the Word. But the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father through the Word but also from the Father and the Word with one spiration alone because it is the divine subsistence common to the Father and the Word and being in both, loving themselves, render it a loved person. To love, then, the divine subsistence is common to all three divine persons who possess it identically and this is the holiness proper to the divine essence and the moral feeling common to each person. But logically preceding the Holy Spirit is that love of the Father and of the Word, the divine subsistence known. As a result of this love, the loved subsistence is constituted a person who, as such, loves with the same love, because the divine subsistence which is understood and loved is communicated to him and this fully effective love is the one spiration, common to the Father and the Son, whose term is the subsistence loved as such, that subsisting person. Hence *love* is *appropriated* to the Holy Spirit because he is the term subsisting subjectively of such a love, that is the divine subsistence *per se* known and *per se* loved in consequence of the love of the same subsistence being identical in the Father and the Son and constituting these two persons: to be divine subsistence loved is *proper* to the third person, that is, to the Holy Spirit, who, therefore, is also the term of the feeling or of the *moral life* of God,

*In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of Men*

although this feeling and this life belongs to the divine essence, and so is identically common to all three divine persons.<sup>13</sup>

The Blessed Trinity- – Appropriations and Properties			
Person	Common to all Three persons	Appropriation	Property (Proper to)
Father	Essence i.e., Divine Subsistence.	Simple feeling or real life.	logically prior to generation of Son. The Generator.
Son		Intellectual feeling or intellectual life.	Object-person. Generated by the Father.
Holy Spirit		Love.	Spirated by the Father and the Son. Subsistence loved.

***In him was life, and that life was the light of men: its context in the Johannine Prologue***<sup>14</sup>

The Context
'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <i>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people</i> [men]. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.'

Why are the words at the head of this section a link between the previous words in the Johannine Prologue and the words which follow? They are linked with the preceding ones as John wants to show that the Word is not like human words which are without their own life, but that it is a subsistent and living word. They are joined with those which follow in which he explains the creation, institutions and eternal salvation of human beings through the work of the Word, because it is from the life in the Word that these three works are derived and completed. The Word is the cause of

<sup>13</sup> *IVG*, Reading XLVII, pp. 195–196.

<sup>14</sup> Reading, XLVIII, pp. 196–198.

human beings elevated to the new life of grace and ultimately beatified because humans share in the life of the Word in different degrees and our prerogatives and goods come from this sharing.

Now what are these different degrees? Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Theophylact and Eutimes<sup>15</sup> say that the words '*in him was life*' show that the Word not only creates things but conserves and governs them. They understand the word 'life' to be that force which the Word impresses on all things and with which it conserves and governs them. Saying that in the Word was life means, according to John Chrysostom, that because life always remains in him there is an inexhaustible causality, perpetual force which is never expended and never diminishes. Life in the Word is not just real but intellectual and moral. When the Evangelist says that the Word is life he means that the Word did not make or produce things through a blind necessity of nature but through his will and intellect, and so he guides things in wisdom and holiness.

St. Thomas says: 'there is a suitable order in the above mentioned words because in the natural order of things, first there is being (mere subsistence) and the Evangelist first mentions this saying: 'In the beginning was the Word,' then there is life and this is what follows 'in him was life,' in the third place there is understanding and consequently he adds 'and the life was the light of men.'<sup>16</sup>

So the Evangelist adds that in the Word are found all the grades of being which are found in creatures and which are effects of this cause.

### **The light of men<sup>17</sup>**

Rosmini begins this reading by referring to the error of the Manicheans' interpretation.<sup>18</sup> He then goes on to refer to John Chrysostom's opinion that all things are living because of the power which animates them.

He pointed out earlier that matter cannot be called life because matter is inert. It is not a principle but the term of a sensitive subject. So how do we explain the activity that is present in matter? He goes back to basic principles. A term must have a principle in which it exists, for example, our body is the term of our sensitive principle which feels it.<sup>19</sup> Rosmini says it is not contrary to philosophy or theology to suppose that God has joined with every atom of matter a sensitive principle through which they are animated. He is not supposing that these are animals since these demand a composition and an organism. He says it explains scientific phenomena. So, he says,

---

<sup>15</sup> John Chrysostom, *Commentarij super Ioannis Evangelium*, homilia 1.

<sup>16</sup> St Thomas, *In Evangelium beati Ioannis evangelistae expositio*, cap I. lectio. III. n. 100.

<sup>17</sup> *IVG*, Readings XLIX–L, pp. 198–202. The NRSV says 'the light of all people'.

<sup>18</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>19</sup> See pp. 91–92 above.

Chrysostom's opinion deserves consideration, because the life which is in the Word is the *power* by which things are conserved.<sup>20</sup>

Sensitive life is a blind and simple feeling, so when we consider its cause it is not necessary to recognise the objective form in the creating cause. Considering the divine essence, logically speaking, with a concept prior to that of the persons, sensitive life is attributed by us to the Father in which the divine essence subsists as in the originating principle of the Blessed Trinity. But if we consider rational life, this supposes a cause that is object and therefore we cannot conceive it unless we add the consideration of the Word who is *per se* object. The Evangelist says this when he adds '*and the life was the light of men*', that is, the object which illuminates and informs the spirit and makes it intelligent. If the writer had not been treating of human beings he would not have said '*in the Word there was life*'. He could equally have said, that 'there was life in the Father and the Holy Spirit' since all three persons share the same identical life. But he wished to speak of the life which is also light to the human understanding. The objective form of life is proper to the Word because the Word is being as object, although subjective wisdom and intelligence is common and identical in an equal way to all three divine persons as proper to their essence considering this posteriorly to their procession. In other words, if we wish to consider the intelligent principle as an effect and rise to conceive the cause, it is necessary to arrive not just at the essence of a creator God but the essence (posteriorly in the logical order) in the generated Word, which alone can become the light of created spirits and these too can share in its objective form.

The term of the human understanding, ideal being, is an *appurtenance* of the divine Word, but not the Word himself, because he is manifested to us as ideal object and not subsistent and real object.

But one can make an objection here: this appurtenance is either uncreated or created. If uncreated it is the Word himself; if created it cannot be an appurtenance of the Word because all that belongs to the Word is uncreated; it is eternal.

We find the answer in the Commentary of St Thomas Aquinas:

'Origen, commenting on John, gives another reading, thus: **That which was made in him; and then, was life.** Here we should note that some things are said of the Son of God as such; for example, that he is God, omnipotent, and the like. And some things are said of him in relation to ourselves; for example, we say he is Saviour and Redeemer. Some things are said in both ways, such as wisdom and justice. Now in all things said absolutely and of the Son as such, it is not said that he was "made", for example, we do not say that the Son was made God or omnipotent. But in things said in reference to us, or in both ways, the notion of being

---

<sup>20</sup> Rosmini brought up the theory of universal animation in his *Psicologia* (Psychology) which he published in 1850 a year after he left unfinished the present work. See J.A.D., *A Vision for Challenging Times*, chapter 4, The Human Soul, pp. 74–76, with references to the *Psicologia* [Psychology].

made can be used, as in, “God made him [Jesus Christ] our wisdom, our justice, our sanctification and redemption” (1 Cor 1:30). And so, although he was always wisdom and justice in himself, yet it can be said that he was newly made justice and wisdom for us.

And so Origen, explaining it along these lines, says that although in himself the Son is life, yet he was made life for us by the fact that he gave us life, as is said, “Just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will come to life” (1 Cor 15:22). And so he says “the Word that was made” life for us **in himself was life**, so that after a time he could become life for us; and so he immediately adds, **and that life was the light of men.**<sup>21</sup>

Now appurtenances of the Word such as truth which naturally shines before us, ideal being, are such with respect to us, therefore we can say that they are created, or co-created with us, but considered in the Word himself without distinction, they are not made or co-created, but they subsist eternally because they are the Word himself. They are only distinct from the latter with respect to us.

### **How the life of the Word, is the light of men<sup>22</sup>**

Rosmini first considers how the life in the Word has the form of object. He summarises what he has already said on the subject.

From the form of object which life takes (and the essence of God is wholly life, there is nothing of death in him, nothing which the concept of bare subsistence has, or of pure term which we conceive matter to be) communicated from the Father to the Son, comes *intellective life* which is common and identical to the three divine persons. Furthermore the vital essence of God, object *per se* notum, *per se* understood is also *per se* loved; and therefore life *per se* understood, *per se* loved is raised up by the one spiration of the Father and the Son to a personal existence, that is, it is at the same time the person of the Holy Spirit, whence it is life, feeling, moral joy completely identical in the three most holy persons. Therefore this life is one and most simple in the Word, nevertheless according to our way of conceiving, it is three-fold: of *simple feeling* which is appropriated to the Father who communicates it with everything else; *intellective life* which is appropriated to the Son, not because it is not of divine essence but because it has the condition of object and the objective form of being which is proper to the Son or Word; *moral life* which is also of the divine essence but through appropriation is attributed to the Holy Spirit, because it has, as its condition, object *per se* loved and the form of loveableness of being is proper to the Holy Spirit.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> St Thomas, *In Evangelium beati Ioannis evangelistae expositio*, cap. I, lectio II, n. 92.

<sup>22</sup> *IVG*, Readings LI–LII, pp. 202–205.

<sup>23</sup> Reading LI, p. 202.

This Word being the object of the human spirit is not just life but light. It is vital and subsisting object *per se* loveable and *per se* understood.

The words of John '*and the life was the light of men*' excludes the creation of mere sensitive beings, such as animals. These do not require the communication of the life of the Word as light because they are not intelligent. It is sufficient that simple life is communicated by the essence of God the creator.

Augustine says, 'Cattle are not illuminated, because cattle have not rational minds cap-able of seeing wisdom. But man was made in the image of God, and has a rational mind, by which he can perceive wisdom. That life, then, by which all things were made, is itself the light; yet not the light of every animal, but of men.'<sup>24</sup>

But the light which comes from the Word is not just an object but life-light, that is, reality. It is not therefore a mere idea of which St John is speaking. Also that life which is light in the Word is not simply life, feeling, it is not simply light-object hence intellectual life, it is also life-light *per se* loved in the Holy Spirit, hence it is moral life. John is therefore speaking of a complete light sanctifying human beings and giving them supernatural perfection. We are talking here about grace and not merely natural life in which the intellect intuitively merely ideal being.

Jesus said, '*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life*'.<sup>25</sup> Note the words 'light of life'. Jesus unites these two and makes light derive from life. The preposition 'of' here means in oriental speech, 'caused by' of 'having the nature of'. So these words of Jesus correspond with those of the prologue 'the life was the light of men'. In his first letter John calls Jesus 'the Word of life'. '*We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word<sup>26</sup> of life—this life has revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us— This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you.*'<sup>27</sup> Here 'Word of life' unites light to life, περί τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς, [concerning the word of life] the 'word' means object pronounced and the object, if it is *per se* object, is the light of the mind, a Word that has life in it, which has the nature of life.

Earlier in the passage John had said, '*and the Word was with God*'. John begins by saying that the Word was with God from all eternity; even then, he was essentially life, but not yet life for us. But he has now been revealed to human beings. After all God has life in himself even prescindingly from a consideration of the Word. In the Scripture he is called 'the living God' and not a dead one like idols; Peter uses the phrase '*the living and enduring w(W)ord of God*', attributing life to God the Father from whom the Word proceeds.<sup>28</sup> But when we deal with the life-light of man we consider God as subsisting and vital object, and so there is an initial cognition of the Word. Of course

---

<sup>24</sup> Augustine, *In Evangelium Ioannis Expositio tractatus*. I, 18.

<sup>25</sup> *Jn* 8: 12.

<sup>26</sup> W (upper case), mine.

<sup>27</sup> 1 *Jn* 1: 1-2, 5.

<sup>28</sup> 1 *Pet* 1: 23. W (upper case). mine.



all three persons co-operate in the communication to us of life and light, so St Paul says *‘He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God.’*<sup>29</sup> Here, the sending of the Son is attributed to the Father because he is generated from him and also sent, yet the term of this vital illumination of man is the Word who is also the term of the Incarnation. The principle of this belongs to the Holy Trinity, yet proper to the Father as generator. The Word then diffuses in us the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the person of the Holy Spirit himself who, proceeds from the Father and the Son, provided there is no obstacle of sin in us.

### **This life was given to Adam when he was formed by God<sup>30</sup>**

St John says that in the Word was life and that this was the light of human beings. But if we are dealing solely with the light of being this would not be life. The simple idea of being does not give a real feeling but pure intuition. The life of human beings applies only to those partaking in the life of grace.

Rosmini sees this life of grace as being necessary to the institution of the human race. It was given to Adam when he was formed by God. The book of Genesis recounts this saying, *‘then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being’.*<sup>31</sup> This ‘breath of life’ means the life which is light and which is in the Word. So our first parent was constituted not simply in the natural order with the idea of being but also in the supernatural order, namely that this ‘being’ given to intuit be also real, so that he has in himself life. *Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’*<sup>32</sup> This means that in human beings the three forms of being are found which are analogous to the three persons of the Blessed Trinity, namely, the subjective form, real being, the ideal form of being which we intuit and the moral form, which is the harmony between the subject and the being we intuit and therefore three forms of life, real, intellectual and moral, the last of which unites the first two. Note that the words say ‘in our image’ not just ‘image’ because the objective form of being does not form part of us, otherwise we would be God. The Fathers say that man was not made the ‘image of God’ but made ‘to the image of ‘God’. The image of God is what man intuited in his first creation. The Word is the image of God, so St Paul says, *‘...Christ, who is the image of God’*<sup>33</sup> and *‘He is the image of the invisible God.’*<sup>34</sup> This latter quotation shows that God is known through the Word and that the Word was with the invisible God before he

---

<sup>29</sup> 1 Cor 1: 30.

<sup>30</sup> IVG, Reading LIII, pp. 205–208.

<sup>31</sup> Gen 2: 7.

<sup>32</sup> Gen: 1: 26.

<sup>33</sup> 2 Cor 4: 4.

<sup>34</sup> Col 1: 15.

is revealed. St Paul says, '*but everything exposed to the light becomes visible*'<sup>35</sup> because he cannot be revealed in anything but light. Anything that becomes visible is light which is *per se* visible and other things on which it shines. It is also called figure χαρακτήρ. This corresponds to the idea and not mere subsistence. For this reason St Paul calls Christ 'figure' or character in Greek as in the quotation from the letter to the Hebrews, '*who being the brightness of his glory and the figure of his substance*'.<sup>36</sup> The book of Wisdom refers to this, '*For she is the breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the almighty; therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her. For she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God and an image of his goodness*'.<sup>37</sup> In this passage Wisdom is called amongst other things, the '*glory of the almighty*' and '*eternal light*'; the communication is a reflection of it. In so far as it is loveable, which is the Holy Spirit, it is called his 'goodness' and this is communicated by the Word which is '*the image of his goodness*'. The expressions in Scripture, 'the face of God', 'the countenance of God' express the knowableness of God, that is, the Word, and many Fathers interpret these ways of speaking of the divine Word who is light or life shining *per se*.

Our first parents, therefore, were made in the image of God, with the perception of the divine Word; they were placed in a supernatural state and endowed with divine grace. This was not part of their nature but a gift over and above their natural endowments. It was fitting for God to do this and a moral necessity because the Word was the light of men and this light gave them also life because '*the life was the light of men*'.

### **Was the character impressed on our first parents as well as habitual grace?**<sup>38</sup>

In the book of Sirach we read, '*God created man of the earth, and made him after his own image. And he turned him into it again, and clothed him with strength according to himself. He gave him the number of his days and time, and gave him power over all things that are upon the earth. He put the fear of him upon all flesh, and he had dominion over beasts and fowls. He created of him a helpmate like to himself, he gave them counsel, and a tongue, and eyes, and ears, and a heart to devise: and he filled them with the knowledge of understanding*'.<sup>39</sup> This passage shows that our first parents were endowed not simply with the idea of being but with the incipient vision of the Word in whom is the life which is the light of all people.

Now did our first parents have the *character* impressed on them accompanied by grace? If so, was this character the same as Christians receive through the sacrament of baptism? Taking the 'character' in a general sense, that is, the habitual manifestation of the Word to the human spirit, intelligent creatures could not lack the Word which is, as we said, their life-light. But compared to the character bestowed through the

---

<sup>35</sup> Eph 5: 13.

<sup>36</sup> Heb 1: 3 (Douay). NRSV says 'exact imprint'.

<sup>37</sup> Wis 7: 25–26..

<sup>38</sup> IVG, Reading LIV, pp. 210–214.

<sup>39</sup> Sir, 17: 1–5. Bold print mine. See Losacco, *Op. cit.*, p. 15 where he says that according to the Greek, the 'it' of 'he turned *it* into himself again' refers to 'earth' and not to 'image'. So, he concludes, the reference is not a valid one.

sacrament of baptism this character of our first parents was only potential and therefore not indelible, unlike that of the New Covenant. So the Scriptures do not mention the character in the Old Testament. In the quotation from Sirach given above, we can interpret the words '*made him after his own image*' as referring to the character, and the words '*and he turned him into it again and clothed him with the strength according to himself*' as referring to habitual and sanctifying grace i.e., the inclination of his will to love and adhere to the image of God. They don't refer to the conversion of Adam the sinner as Adam hadn't sinned at the time.<sup>40</sup>

But Christ renewed human beings by taking away the original sin which had come into the world through Adam. '*You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*'<sup>41</sup> And '*you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.*'<sup>42</sup> Rosmini believes that the words, 'which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator' refer to the first creation of man which has been rejuvenated. The image of God is the Word which means the character impressed on the soul.

### **Adam, Christ and the Christian<sup>43</sup>**

With regard to this renewal in Christ, Rosmini interprets a passage from St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. '*So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven. What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.*'<sup>44</sup> This passage is not spoken of Adam the sinner because before he sinned he was innocent. So the intention of the Apostle in this passage is to extol the gifts and graces bestowed upon us by Christ over and above those which Adam had when he was created. God created man, a living soul, bestowing on him animal and intellectual life, the true life which was in the Word, but he was not a living spirit as was the Word, who is life itself. St

---

<sup>40</sup> But see note 38 above. Cf. J.A.D., *Our Light and Our Salvation*, chapter 15, The Sacramental Character of the New Covenant, pp. 204 ff.

<sup>41</sup> *Eph* 4: 22–24.

<sup>42</sup> *Col* 3: 9–10.

<sup>43</sup> *IVG*, Reading LV, pp. 210–214.

<sup>44</sup> 1 *Cor* 15: 42–50.

Peter puts it another way, he was 'the author of life'.<sup>45</sup> Because Adam was not moral life itself he could lose it and did so when he sinned. He was not *per se* incorruptible and immortal, as he was not impeccable.

The new man on the other hand is not able to sin because he is God, he is comprehensor and wayfarer at the same time, he is confirmed in grace as he is the author of grace<sup>46</sup> and he was anointed by the Father as man and sent into the world as God.<sup>47</sup> Adam could not give grace to his descendants but the new Adam gives them grace. Adam could not give them immortality but Christ gives it to them: in both senses he is spirit-life giver, hence the difference between the grace given by God to Adam and the grace which is in Christ and which Christ imparts to his followers. St. Augustine says that the grace given to Adam was a help *without which* man could not do supernatural good, but the grace of Christ given to the Christian by means of his spirit is a help *with which* he can do supernatural good.<sup>48</sup> It was man who worked in Adam, not however without grace: and the grace of Christ is Christ himself<sup>49</sup> who works in the Christian in all the supernatural good which he does, not however without the Christian's co-operation. '...Not I (says St. Paul) *but the grace of God which is with me*.'<sup>50</sup> 'It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.'<sup>51</sup> Man can resist grace; he can will evil. But when the Christian does good then it is Christ, then it is the grace of Christ that works in him and with him. Hence when St. Paul exhorts the Ephesians and Colossians to put on the new man and get rid of the old, by the new man he means Christ; these words mean the same as '*but put on the Lord Jesus Christ ...*'.<sup>52</sup>

This means a certain physical union of the Christian not only with the Word but with the Word Incarnate, our Lord Jesus Christ; a union taught by Christ himself when he said that he was the vine and his disciples were the branches which draw from the vine the life-giving sap on which they are nourished and live.<sup>53</sup> In other words all that the branches do is only done because of their union with the vine, the principal agent. It is Christ who performs the supernatural works of the Christian, '*not I, but the grace of God with me*'. Innocent Adam worked with the grace of God; in the case of the Christian it is the grace of God with man. Adam could do nothing without

---

<sup>45</sup> Acts 3: 15. Also '*I am the way, and the truth, and the life*' (Jn 14: 6); '*I am the resurrection and the life*' (Jn 11: 26).

<sup>46</sup> '*Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*' (Jn 1: 17). 'Comprehensor' signifies he who has attained his end. 'Wayfarer' (viator) signifies the person on his journey, the pilgrim. [JAD].

<sup>47</sup> Jn 10: 36.

<sup>48</sup> Augustine, *De Correptione et Gratia*, cap. XII, n. 34.

<sup>49</sup> Christ himself is called the grace of God by author of the letter to the Hebrews. (Heb 2: 9).

<sup>50</sup> 1 Cor 15: 10.

<sup>51</sup> Gal 2: 20.

<sup>52</sup> Rom 13: 14. IVG, Reading LV, p. 213.

<sup>53</sup> Jn 15: 1-17.

grace. In the Christian it is the grace of God, but without man it would be of no avail. St Paul compares the Church with the human body. Life and actions come from the head united to the members who receive everything from the head but act in union with him. Another simile is that all form one building but Christ is the foundation.<sup>54</sup>

### **The Christians' feeling of their own nothingness<sup>55</sup>**

Since Christ, then, does all supernatural good in the body of the faithful of which he is the head, faithful souls experience deeply the truth which Christ himself taught when he said: *'apart from me you can do nothing'* and they feel at the same time that in Christ they can do everything: *'I can do all things through him who strengthens me.'*<sup>56</sup> *'I am the vine, you are the branches, those who abide in me and I in them, bear much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me, is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and become my disciples.'*<sup>57</sup> From these words we gather:

1. That without Christ human beings can do nothing.
2. Second that abiding in Christ, they can bear much fruit, moreover the greatest fruit, and become disciples of Christ, a most profound word that comprises everything. They can bear all the fruit they wish because whatever they wish, they also ask for, prayer being the sign of the true will of the Christian and when they ask, their prayer is granted.<sup>58</sup>

But not all who abide in Christ acquire the same degree of holiness and not all wish for the same things; not all will them and ask for them to the same extent. But taken as a whole the Mystical Body bears the greatest fruit and each member according to his or her capacity depending on the degree of will given to each, and our own co-operation with the will of Christ. St John calls this union of our wills with the will of Christ 'fellowship', *'we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.'*<sup>59</sup>

Christians therefore are aware of their own nothingness (that of themselves they can do nothing) on the one hand and on the other their greatness, dignity and power (because of the power of Christ who does and can do everything in them). Their feeling of humility springs from this feeling and the enlightenment which Christ gives them. It impels Christians to strive for holiness and imparts to them a reverential fear of the almighty and powerful God who dwells within them and a fear of their own fragility lest they cut themselves off from God through their own free will succumbing

---

<sup>54</sup> *Rom* 12: 4–5; *Eph* 4: 15–16; 1 *Cor* 3: 9–17.

<sup>55</sup> *IVG*, Reading LVI, pp. 214–219.

<sup>56</sup> *Phil* 4: 13.

<sup>57</sup> *Jn* 15: 5–8.

<sup>58</sup> *IVG*, Reading LVI, p. 215.

<sup>59</sup> 1 *Jn* 1: 3.

to evil. Rosmini gives as an example that we are like a puppy in the same den as a lion; the lion in this case being the Lion of Judah, with whom he whimsically says there is a closer rapport than the puppy with the lion! Though he does imply that the puppy would be devoured as Christ 'devours' us, that is to say absorbs us into himself in our humility.

Rosmini reminds us that the great saints, for instance St Teresa of Avila, though they were recipients of great graces, were not tempted to vanity and pride as they were only too well aware of their fragility and were impelled to glorify God.<sup>60</sup> In fact they considered themselves the greatest of sinners.

It is interesting to compare Adam before his fall from grace and the Christian. St Paul says, '*So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ*'.<sup>61</sup> In the case of Adam it was he himself who acted with the help of the grace he had been given; but Christians act with the life of Christ which they cherish as their own.

In this reading Rosmini also pictures Adam in paradise and his relation with God. He says that man was made in the image and likeness of God and he was given dominion over his nature, nourishment and work. But there was a limit on what he was allowed to eat. '*You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die*'.<sup>62</sup>

The distinction between Adam and the Christian can best be shown in tabular form.

Adam	The Christian
Felt his full and perfect nature ennobled with supernatural gifts. He was created to enjoy natural happiness which would gradually give way to supernatural happiness and he could always avail himself of grace. He had free will either to choose his God or his upright nature. The <i>character</i> in him was potential rather than actual in so far as Adam could turn to the Word, rather than having the character impressed on his soul.	The Christian is a new creation through the grace of God and the <i>character</i> was impressed on the soul through baptism. The reaction of Christians should be one of boundless gratitude for the redemption wrought in them by Christ, an acknowledgement that this is a free gift given to them; ' <i>But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us</i> ' (Rom 5: 8). So unlike Adam the nature of the Christian has no value for the attainment of eternal life, it is destined for destruction and death. It is the perfect nature of Christ that acts in him, through grace.

<sup>60</sup> Our Blessed Lady, when greeted by Elizabeth ('*Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb*'), responded with the Magnificat (Lk 1: 42).

<sup>61</sup> 2 Cor 5: 17.

<sup>62</sup> Gen 2: 17.

Rosmini concludes this section with the following,

The glorious humanity of Christ is in a real communication and permanent union with all those who have been baptised and received the other sacraments, so they live with Christ's life; from this life come their actions and all the supernatural good that they do, both of form and of object, nor is there anything else worth having.<sup>63</sup>

**Rosmini's commentary on St Paul's letter to the Romans with regard to the new life in Christ<sup>64</sup>**

Rosmini begins this section with the following words, which, to me, spring from his profound knowledge of and union with God:

The Christian, then, who abides in Christ feels that another and most powerful Person acts in him and with him, and has a certain awareness of being excluded and of no account in acts pertaining to eternal life; he experiences his own nothingness in this sense that he is no longer the supreme principle from which these acts come, but they proceed from another principle of which he is, as it were, an active instrument. Hence the profound basis of Christian humility.<sup>65</sup>

St Paul cries out, *'Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!'*<sup>66</sup>

As natural children of Adam our natural life is precarious. Our mortal and weak fallen nature experiences a strong distaste for reaching for the infinite and letting go of ourselves in order to let the life of Christ rule us and be the principle of our activity. Hence the warfare between the flesh and the spirit expressed by Paul. However Jesus is the principle of grace through which the Christian becomes a new person.

*'Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned...'*<sup>67</sup>

Adam and Eve sinned and their offspring became the slaves of sin. All sinned in so far as they were in Adam. Adam's human nature would be found in their descendants. Original sin in Adam's descendants is therefore called 'sin of nature' and we have sinned in so far as we have received a sinful nature.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> IVG, Reading LVI, p. 219.

<sup>64</sup> Reading, LVII, pp. 219–224.

<sup>65</sup> Reading, LVII, pp. 219–220.

<sup>66</sup> Rom 7: 24–25.

<sup>67</sup> Rom 5: 12.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. J.A.D., *Our Light and Our Salvation*, chapter 8, Our Sorry State, pp. 117 ff.

*'For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do'.<sup>69</sup>*

Our nature is not just physical and intellectual but moral, as we have a will which is moral by nature. This can be made defective by a disordered agent who disorders it. In our case this is the body whose concupiscence is no longer totally under the power of the free will, but acts partly without it and in spite of it, in so far as the will adheres to it and is bound up with it in such a way that it is withdrawn from the dominion of man, or to put it better, from the freedom of acting for good. The force of liberty is so feeble that either the will does not rise to combat this concupiscence or has not the impulse to follow the virtue which the intellect shows it. The existence of original sin is the principle of the evil acts which prevail

*'Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members'.<sup>70</sup>*

This law of sin, concupiscence, resides in the members of Adam's children, which not being overcome by the grace of Christ imprisons us and deprives us of our freedom for doing good. This is original sin. It is habitual sin, *but the notion of fault is not attributed to us* because it is in us without our being able to avoid it.

*'When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience also bears witness; and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all'.<sup>71</sup>*

The free will can do some natural good. But Paul primarily accuses the Gentiles of not having done the little natural good they could have done with the moral strength which they had. They are therefore inexcusable because with the light of reason they knew God and did not acknowledge him with their will. The first reason he gives is:

*'For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse; for though they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened'.<sup>72</sup>*

If they had preserved an integral concept of the divinity, God would have come to their aid.

---

<sup>69</sup> Rom., 7: 18–19.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 20–23.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 14–16.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 19–21.



However not being willing to do this their moral condition became even worse. Their hearts were darkened; they gave themselves to evil they could easily avoid and fell into idolatry.

*‘Claiming to be wise, they became fools; and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles’.*<sup>73</sup>

So God abandoned them to their evil sense which became worse and deprived of the one guide which could have helped them, namely, a clear concept of God in the natural order.

*‘Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgement on another you condemn yourself’.*<sup>74</sup>

The second reason they were inexcusable is that instead of humiliating themselves and acknowledging their state they became proud. They took on the role of teachers and also judged their fellowmen.

*‘What then? Are we any better off? No, not at all; for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, as it is written: “There is no one who is righteous, not even one”.*<sup>75</sup>

The Jews fell into this error when they condemned the Gentiles and boasted of having the Law of Moses which they did not observe.

St. Paul concludes that all Gentiles and Jews were blameworthy, that is not only were they defective originally through the sin inherited from their first parents but also by their own sins, and chiefly pride, which prevented God from helping them, not realising that they were incapable of doing any good and boasting and judging others instead of humiliating and judging themselves according to the truth.<sup>76</sup>

However, although they could have done some natural good, this would not have saved them, because they could not observe the natural law completely.

*‘For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.’*<sup>77</sup> *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God’.*<sup>78</sup>

So the Gentiles did not have the power because they did not know how to observe the natural law completely. The Jews did not have the power because they did not know how to observe completely the Mosaic Law.

The second reason, then, for humility is that we descendants from Adam cannot by our own powers obtain true moral good either in the natural or the supernatural order. But Adam prior to his fall had a perfect intellectual nature with the integrity of

---

<sup>73</sup> *Rom* 1: 23.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 1.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 3: 9–10.

<sup>76</sup> *IVG*, Reading LVII, p. 223.

<sup>77</sup> *Jas* 2: 10.

<sup>78</sup> *Rom* 3: 23.

free will and also he was raised to the supernatural order. So his humility lay in acknowledging the limits of his own nature and his entire dependence on God. His shortcoming was that he did not acknowledge his complete dependence on God. He listened to the devil and thought he could become God by eating the forbidden fruit. He was probably deceived by the magnificence of the angelic nature. He aspired to physical and intellectual ennoblement but neglected moral greatness which could come only through his dependence on God.

### **The Christian's feeling of magnanimity<sup>79</sup>**

We have just dealt with the first feeling springing from our incorporation with Christ which is *humility*. We must now consider the second feeling which is *magnanimity*. As we have just seen, Adam was endowed with a perfect human nature and had to progress from physical to intellectual and thence to moral perfection. Unfortunately he stopped at the first two which were well-ordered, and in spite of the gift of grace he did not manifest the obedience to his Creator which would have led to moral perfection. But the life of the Christian is completely different. Even though we recoil from moral perfection owing to our corrupt nature we possess a new principle of spiritual life, namely Jesus Christ. We start with moral perfection; the first two do not enter the equation because they have been ruined through original sin. But a new moral life can be supernaturally regained and brings with it a restoration of the first two. This moral life comes to Christians through their union with Christ. The feeling of *magnanimity* springs from Christians sharing in the moral and supernatural life of Christ.

<b>The Four Effects of Magnanimity</b>
1. The new feeling of moral power over death.
2. The experience of the riches and power that come from the possession of Christ.
3. The Christian's disdain for worldly riches and worldly things.
4. The tranquillity which Christians experience.

The *first effect* of this new life is the feeling of moral power with which the Christian feels superior over death. Paul expresses it thus, '*Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."*'<sup>80</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am

<sup>79</sup> *IVG*, Reading LVIII, pp. 224–231.

<sup>80</sup> *Ps* 44: 22.

*convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*<sup>81</sup> St Paul expresses his disdain for mere physical life and human things in his letter to the Philippians, *'More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ...'*<sup>82</sup> He also expresses contempt for intellectual life divorced from moral life in his letter to the Corinthians, *'When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.'*<sup>83</sup> We see this effect in the lives of the martyrs who manifested heroic virtue in choosing death rather than life when their fidelity to Christ and the Church were threatened.

The *second feeling* included in this magnanimity is that Christians experience the riches and the power which come to them because they possess Christ who is Lord of nature. This includes the working of miracles. Indeed, Christ said, *'And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.'*<sup>84</sup> And, *'For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there", and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.'*<sup>85</sup>

Everything is promised to those who pray with faith. However it rarely happens that the faithful seek miracles for themselves. Those who already believe do not need them; and they are content with the ordinary providence of God on which they rely. Their one desire is to obtain holiness for which they do not need external miracles. So not desiring them nor wanting them they cannot even have that faith to obtain them and which produces them. This is why miracles occurred more frequently in the beginning when the Gospel was being spread, and again they occurred more frequently when apostolic men felt the need for them to spread the truth of the Gospel to the heathen nations.<sup>86</sup>

For the rest it can happen that miracles are desired for the increase of holiness or the glorification of the saints; and if the Christian has this desire and faith accompanies it and therefore a miracle is asked, it will

---

<sup>81</sup> *Rom* 8: 35–39.

<sup>82</sup> *Phil* 3: 8.

<sup>83</sup> *1 Cor* 2: 1–5.

<sup>84</sup> *Mk* 16: 17–18.

<sup>85</sup> *Mt* 17: 20–21.

<sup>86</sup> However, Rosmini might wish to modify his opinion in the light of the movement of the Spirit in modern times. This has resulted in the manifestation of charisms including miracles of healing and deliverance through expectant faith in the power of Christ.

undoubtedly follow, as also happens when a holy desire arises in the soul for any honest reason whatsoever and the desire is simple and gives rise to an absolute wish to obtain a miracle, a holy will which merges with unhesitating prayer. This simple, absolute and holy desire of wanting something miraculous and therefore asking for it unhesitatingly, if it does not come about through a special inspiration of God or from the motives already mentioned, of spreading the Gospel or the glorification of the saints, is accustomed to be found in holy, simple souls rather than learned people though the latter are also holy because more enlightened with regard to God's ordinary providence. They trust in it more, are more certain of it, and await its development with patience and so they do not see any absolute need of willing and demanding the miracle and so they do not ask it absolutely from God without condition. Yet these men are no less rich and have no less power over events than the former. All holy people are conscious of possessing all things in Christ and together with him all things over which he is Lord, hence St. Paul's words: *'What, then, shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?'*<sup>87</sup>

God's providence ensures that everything in the universe works together for the good and perfection of his holy ones. *'We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose'*.<sup>88</sup> All these things are possessed in Christ. *'For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all belong to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God'*.<sup>89</sup> Holy people incorporated into Christ are co-heirs with him and share all things with him.

The *third effect* of magnanimity is the disdain Christians have for riches and worldly things, because holy people do not wish to possess a few uncertain human things with the cares and worries they bring, when they possess all things in Christ. Jesus says, *'Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.'*<sup>90</sup> *'And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life.'*<sup>91</sup> *'Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'*<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> *IVG*, Reading, LVIII, p. 227.

<sup>88</sup> *Rom* 8: 28.

<sup>89</sup> *1 Cor* 3: 22–23.

<sup>90</sup> *Mt* 6: 31–33.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 19: 29.

<sup>92</sup> *Lk* 12: 33.

The *fourth effect* of magnanimity is the tranquillity Christians experience in the duties of their state when they are not called to extraordinary works and on the other hand the courage and fearlessness they show in meeting and completing extraordinary works which God may demand of them, feeling the power of God as St Paul says, '*I can do all things through him who strengthens me*'.<sup>93</sup>

But St Paul also says, '*Let each of you remain in the condition in which you were called. Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. Even if you can gain your freedom, make use of your present condition now more than ever. For whoever was called in the Lord as a slave is a freed person belonging to the Lord, just as whoever was free when called is a slave of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of human masters. In whatever condition you were called, brothers and sisters, there remain with God.*'<sup>94</sup> And '*I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short (the time is short for those who, in Christ, are aware of eternity); from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.*'<sup>95</sup> Those, then, who are aware of possessing Christ will remain serene and tranquil in life.

They prefer to remain in a state of tranquillity and not leave it for special works unless and until the will of God is made known to him. This is out of humility because they know that of themselves they can do nothing and need to know that Jesus Christ will work through them. Again, they do not know whether a work which is made known to them is a true good with respect to the whole pattern of God's plan for the universe. Finally no matter how they act everything is directed by the Father to the greatest glorification of his Son; all things are in the Son's hands so what they desire is already obtained either with his help, if that is God's will, or without it if it is not.

However if it is God's will, Christians endeavour to carry out God's plan with fearlessness and courage, knowing that the power of Christ will aid them. '*I can do all things through him who strengthens me*'.<sup>96</sup> '*Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong*'.<sup>97</sup>

Hence in this awareness of this own nothingness false humility is excluded, and there is room for the acknowledgement of the gifts of Christ and the glory of which the Apostle speaks: '*Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.*' This has several meanings: 1. It means to be glorified in the Lord who does everything that is good in us attributing to him alone the glory which he allows us to share. 2. It means to glory not in our own nothingness and trivial and blameworthy things but to see our glory

---

<sup>93</sup> *Phil* 4: 13.

<sup>94</sup> *1 Cor* 7: 20–24.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 29–31.

<sup>96</sup> *Phil* 4: 13.

<sup>97</sup> *2 Cor* 12: 10.

in being united with God. 3. It means to expect that the Lord Jesus Christ who is already glorified in us by his heavenly Father will give us his glory without our attributing it to ourselves, for we cannot judge our own merits or other people's.

Now not even Christian magnanimity, that most noble feeling arising from several others, can be in the first man because he was not humbled sufficiently to give place to Christ. Adam lived his own life, though he had the perception of the Word and he acted in accordance with that human and limited life and could if he had wished both acted uprightly and continually shared in the intellective life and grace of the Word.<sup>98</sup>

### **The Christian's Life in Christ<sup>99</sup>**

The scriptures speak of the Christian's physical, intellectual and moral union with Christ who is the head and the one who receives life from him. One of these expressions is '*to be in Christ*', that is, to be united with him as the branch is with the vine. '*He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus*',<sup>100</sup> says St Paul, where 'he' refers to the Blessed Trinity and where this incorporation is attributed to God the Father. The Word proceeds from him and it can be said that the faithful who are one with Christ also proceed from the Father as adopted children with his Son. St Paul says, '*Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel*',<sup>101</sup> because he has incorporated them into Christ, who becomes the supreme principal of their activity. The Christian is a new creature, that is, created anew. '*For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything*'<sup>102</sup> '*So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new*'<sup>103</sup> This was the eternal plan of God which allowed the fall of the first man.

In the letter to the Ephesians we read, '*With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*'<sup>104</sup>

Rosmini sees the things in heaven as spiritual things such as the understanding or the will by the right use of which we pass from perfection to perfection and eventually come to the vision of God. By earthly things he understands the human body, animality and those things which belong to animal life which will eventually be renewed. Paul says, '*in him*' because all are incorporated into Christ. Christ is not only God but he is man and the humanity of Christ being composed of body and soul, he is the head and life of the bodies and souls of human beings, in a certain way here on earth

---

<sup>98</sup> *IVG*, Reading LVIII, pp. 149–150.

<sup>99</sup> Reading LIX, pp. 231–234.

<sup>100</sup> 1 *Cor* 1: 30.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 4: 15.

<sup>102</sup> *Gal* 4: 15.

<sup>103</sup> 2 *Cor* 5: 17.

<sup>104</sup> *Eph* 1: 9–10.

and in a perfect way in the future life. St Paul calls the bodies of Christians members of Christ, saying to the Corinthians when speaking about the sin of fornication, ‘*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, “The two shall be one flesh.” But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.*’<sup>105</sup> The body in this life is not fully renewed and made worthy of the life of Christ, but united with the spirit which is incorporated into Christ and through the influence of the humanity of Christ, it becomes sanctified and shares in some way in the spiritual life itself. So St Paul says, ‘*But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him*’. It shares in a certain spiritualisation. It will therefore be renewed at the resurrection.

Rosmini gives a list of examples of the use of the words ‘in Christ’ in the Scriptures. For instance ‘Created in Christ’. ‘*For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.*’<sup>106</sup>

Expression	Place	Expression	Place
Sanctified in Christ Jesus	1 Cor 1: 2	Grow up...into Christ	Eph 4: 15
Rooted and built up in him (Christ)	Co 2: 7	Rejoice in the Lord (Christ)	Phil 3: 1.
Died in Christ	1 Cor 15: 18	Boast in Christ Jesus	Phil 3: 3
To be made alive in Christ	1 Cor 15: 22	Mature in Christ	Co 1: 28
And the dead who are in Christ (Douai)	1 Thess 4: 15	A godly life in Christ Jesus	2 Tim 3: 12
Your good conduct in Christ	1 Pet 3: 16	Patience in Christ Jesus	Rev 1: 9 (Douai)
The will of God in Christ	1 Thess 5: 17	Grace that is in Christ	2 Tim 2: 1
Love...in Christ Jesus	1 Tim 1: 14		

All that the Christian is or does is in Christ Jesus. The words ‘in Christ’ occur in the first writers of the Church, on tombstones, in churches and on monuments.

### ***The ascetical life of the Christian***<sup>107</sup>

The ascetical life of the Christian springs from the realisation of this incorporation into Christ’. This comprises two parts: 1. The work of God alone; the spiritual generation of the Christian and the permanent union with Christ, the birth of the new man. 2. The development of this which is effected both by Christ and the Christian. For this to take place Christians must not hinder the work of Christ in them.

---

<sup>105</sup> 1 Cor 6: 15–17.

<sup>106</sup> Eph 2: 10.

<sup>107</sup> *IVG*, Reading LX, pp. 234–238.

The first part takes place with the impression of the character, the incarnate Word. The second is the diffusion in the Christian of habitual and sanctifying grace which comes from the character, provided the Christian does not place an obstacle in the way. This obviously cannot happen in the case of a baby, but if an adult does not intend to receive the sacrament and goes through the ceremony simply in a material manner, the character would not be impressed. In the case of an adult, then, there must be an intention of receiving the character and of being open to the experience of Christ. In the case of a baby it suffices that there is a will in potency to receive the habit of faith. The character is impressed on the essence of the soul in so far as it is intelligent; it is grace that informs the will, that is the essence of the soul in so far as it is volitive, so the whole person is clothed with Christ.<sup>108</sup> All the moral precepts and Christian perfection come from this union.

The purely natural life of the Christian was corrupted by original sin and was considered as dead, whereas the new life of Christ containing the seed of immortality, is *per se* immortal and eternal and gives rise to hope. So St Paul says, '*But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*'<sup>109</sup>

'Flesh' and 'body' indicate the natural life of Adam, whereas 'good' and 'salvation' rest in immortality. '*So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.*'<sup>110</sup>

Here St Paul is contrasting two lives, the natural, mortal, corruptible life received from Adam by natural generation and the life of Christ communicated to us through supernatural generation.

Romans 8: 12–14	
Natural life received from Adam.	Walking according to the flesh according to the desires of natural life infected by sin.
Supernatural life received from Christ.	Walking in the spirit according to the instincts of the new life in Christ.
Those who are in Christ Jesus.	These Christians are incorporated into Christ.

---

<sup>108</sup> Cf. *Gal* 3: 27.

<sup>109</sup> *Rom* 8: 9–10.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 12–14.



And who do not walk according to the flesh.	They co-operate according to this new union with Christ.
---	--

However we all walk in the flesh to some extent because it wars against the spirit. *‘Indeed, we live as human beings, but we do not wage war according to human standards; for the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds.’*<sup>111</sup> Living as human beings means our state in this world is hindered by corrupt animal life, which rebels against the spirit but the latter fights it by using spiritual weapons.

Phrase	Meaning
Being perfectly united with Christ. <i>‘Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him’.</i> <sup>112</sup>	Being in the spirit opposed to being in the flesh. <sup>113</sup>
<i>‘For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death’.</i> <sup>114</sup> This spirit of life is immortal.	The spirit of the life in Christ.
<i>‘Even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way’.</i> <sup>115</sup>	It is necessary that Christ diffuses the Holy Spirit in us otherwise we do not perceive Christ according to the Spirit, but only according to the flesh which is death. We need not just the character but also grace.
<i>‘For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God’.</i> <sup>116</sup>	St Paul attributes our relationship with God not just to the character but also to the grace which follows. Thus God’s children are moved by the Spirit of Christ.

<sup>111</sup> 2 Cor 10: 3–4. The Douay quotation appropriate to Rosmini’s interpretation reads, ‘For though we *walk in the flesh*, we do not war according to the flesh....’ (Italics, mine).

<sup>112</sup> Rom: 8: 9.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Rom 8: 9–10 above.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 2.

<sup>115</sup> 2 Cor 5: 6.

<sup>116</sup> Rom 8: 14.

## **Our spiritual combat<sup>117</sup>**

For us wayfarers, the life of Adam, that of the flesh, constantly wars against the life of Christ, that of the spirit. There are two parts to this, a) to strengthen the ‘new man’, and b) to weaken the ‘old man’<sup>118</sup> by depriving him/her of the aggressive power to do harm.

### **First part of the spiritual combat**

St Paul says, *‘For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want’*.<sup>119</sup>

These last words indicate the freedom of doing without hindrance the good which is limited by reason of the instincts of the life of Adam corrupted in us by sin.

The contrary instincts of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit are mentioned by Paul who goes on:

*‘Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control’*.<sup>120</sup>

Our spiritual combat is made all the more difficult because the devil and his angels have entered human nature through Adam welcoming the devil’s suggestion and eating the forbidden fruit. St Paul says:

*‘Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places’*.<sup>121</sup>

The heavenly places.	The superior part of the Christian i.e. his will. Sin depends on its consent.
The cosmic powers of this present darkness.	The rulers of this world of darkness through original sin.

But the new man, Christ, being immune from sin cannot come under the devil’s power and communicates immortal life to human beings, creating in them a new humanity and a new eternal life. So St Peter says,

---

<sup>117</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXI, pp. 238-240.

<sup>118</sup> It seems best to retain these expressions as common to both sexes as is understood in ascetical writing.

<sup>119</sup> *Gal* 5: 17.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, vv. 19–23.

<sup>121</sup> *Eph* 6: 11-12.

*'You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. For "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls but the word of the Lord endures for ever".'*<sup>122</sup>

He goes on to inculcate watchfulness and self-restraint with which the flesh can be kept under control because, *'Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour'*.<sup>123</sup>

Christ teaches that the devil carries off the good grain sown by the Father and fallen by the wayside:

The wayside.	The heart of those who do not grasp the word preached to them.
The enemy (the devil).	Sows weeds in the field where the farmer had sown good seed.
The 'Jews' were of their father the devil. <sup>124</sup>	As they shared the desire of the devil to kill Christ.
One of you is a devil. <sup>125</sup>	Judas is in union with the devil rather than Christ.

But the devil has no power over Christ, *'the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me.'*<sup>126</sup>

Most holy Mary was certainly immune from any onslaught of the devil through the unique grace which she received from her Son whose Mother she was. But generally speaking in the Saints them-selves, in whom there was nothing condemnatory, some part of their lower nature was attacked and in some way under the power of the devil, hence the conflict which increases their merits, the source of venial sins and the need of purification by fire and death. So long as the devil does not take over the superior part of man, his supreme will, man is imperfect but saved through Christ and only the inflammable material

---

<sup>122</sup> 1 *Pet* 1: 23–25.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 5: 8.

<sup>124</sup> *Jn* 8: 44. It is the teaching of the Church that the Jewish nation cannot be held accountable for the death of Christ but rather only some of them who felt threatened by him. Modern Scripture scholarship sees the strong words about the Jews in St John as reflecting the problems of the Johannine community which was expelled from the synagogue because of their high Christology.

<sup>125</sup> *Jn* 6: 71.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 14: 30.

which has been built up on the foundation of Christ in him will be destroyed by fire.<sup>127</sup>

*For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw — the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. If the work is burned, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.*<sup>128</sup>

### **The weapons to be used in the spiritual combat<sup>129</sup>**

In the letter to the Ephesians we read about the spiritual weapons we must use in our spiritual combat. Rosmini comments on the passage and enumerates these. *‘Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel’.*<sup>130</sup>

The spiritual arms	
1. Chastity <i>‘gird up your minds, be sober’.</i>	Expressed by ‘loins girt’. Peter says: <i>‘Therefore gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ’.</i> <sup>131</sup> Chastity resides in a serene mind. Sobriety assists this state of mind which looks forward in hope to the grace given at the point of death and on the last day. Paul says, <i>‘having girded your loins with truth’</i> External and internal chastity.
2. Justice.	The breastplate; the uprightness of soul which gives everyone their due.
3. The love of, and a good attitude to the	Readiness to travel for the sake of the Gospel or even suffer exile, or be called to announce the Gospel to other nations, or be called by God to the next life. Paul is stressing meekness and peace.

<sup>127</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXI, p. 240.

<sup>128</sup> 1 *Cor* 3: 11–15.

<sup>129</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXII, pp. 240–242.

<sup>130</sup> *Eph* 6: 13–19 (RSV).

<sup>131</sup> 1 *Pet* 1: 13 (RSV).

Gospel of peace.	
4. Faith.	The shield which protects the Christian against fallacies and false arguments of apparently wise and worldly people, suggested by the evil one.
5. Hope.	The helmet of salvation or the saviour (τοῦ σωτηρίου) who is Jesus Christ because hope is supported by his promises. <sup>132</sup> It is a helmet because it protects the head because hope proceeds from the mind.
6. The knowledge and the word of God.	The word of God is based on his authority. The Scriptures are the inspired word. Christians find in them sound guidelines and maxims to repel the sophisms and temptations of the devil. Jesus used the Scriptures when he was tempted.
7. Prayer and continual supplication.	In the spirit and with perseverance. Christians should pray earnestly for themselves and for all the faithful, especially for ministers of the Gospel that they have the gift and confidence to preach the Gospel and break open the word.
8. Christian watchfulness.	In prayer — through which they are ready to receive divine communications and care not to offend God.. <sup>133</sup>

### **Second part of the spiritual combat<sup>134</sup>**

Rosmini has reiterated many times that human beings are composed of an intellectual part (the mind) and an animal part (the body). The body presents sensations to the intellect by means of which it thinks of them. The union of these two parts constitutes the human being's rationality in which lies human nature. The human person resides in the intellect which is endowed with activity called the will which is the supreme active principle. Christ tries to save the person by uniting it to his own life. The devil tries to destroy the person by acting on the animality and playing tricks on the imagination, making him think of evil and willing it.

---

<sup>132</sup> See also 1 Thess 5: 8–9. *'But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ'...*

<sup>133</sup> *'So then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober';* 1 Thess, 5: 6. *'Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial';* Mt 26: 41.

<sup>134</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXIII, pp. 243–245.

<b>The two enemies of the Christian</b>	<b>The two remedies</b>
1. The devil instils sophisms, taking away mental images which could influence the person for good and the truth and troubling him with disorderly and confusing ones causing the mind to think evilly and to come to false and evil conclusions.	1. The Christian should use the eight means recommended by St Paul as suitable means for fighting the evil powers. We are fighting not just our fallen human nature but the evil powers as well.
2. The second enemy is the Christians' animal nature which incites them to pleasures which induce a distaste for spiritual delights.	2. We fight this by weakening the strength of the natural person. Mortification can neutralise the attempts of the enemy to strengthen it; this is helped by use of the eight means mentioned.

The natural 'man' is called the flesh, not because he or she is composed simply of flesh or animal life but because in the natural order of things the whole person lives an animal life. It is animality alone which provides the person with the subjective feeling in which life consists. This is made rational through the intuition of being with which we reason about sensible or abstract things. The new 'man', however has a new subjective feeling in which life consists and this feeling is a sharing in the life of Christ.<sup>135</sup>

As a result of original sin man had to die as he had become useless for the great end for which he had been created, namely sharing the holiness and blessedness of God. He had become, as we say nowadays, 'not fit for purpose'. It is not consistent with the divine wisdom and perfection that a thing should subsist without a reason for doing so. Thus God said to Adam, '*but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die*'.<sup>136</sup>

Rosmini depicts the Fall in rather colourful language according to the teaching of the Church of his time. However we must not lose sight of the underlying moral truths which the author of the book of Genesis, inspired by the Holy Spirit, was teaching.

The cause of the death of man, then, was the devil when he challenged God. Because God had tested the submission and faith of the angels by creating man mortal and frail, as he is by nature, and had promised to make him immortal and holy, and even deifying him (by uniting him hypostatically to the Word) and so making him the object of the adoration of the very angels, who, of their nature, are so much more superior to man. The good angels believed in God's plan and were confirmed in grace, but the evil ones, proud of their angelic excellence,

---

<sup>135</sup> See J.A.D., '*Our Light and Our Salvation*', chapter 3, Deiform and Triform Grace, pp. 39–40.

<sup>136</sup> *Gen* 2: 17.

did not believe in the mystery of the divine Word, and the thought of having to adore a creature so much inferior to themselves seemed to them an intolerable humiliation. They flattered themselves that they would be able to destroy a being so fragile as they saw man to be. So, having taken possession of the fruit, they thought they would enter into man when he plucked it and ate it; since the food would be converted into the living body of man they could enter his animal nature or his subjective life without hindrance and rule him as they wished. God therefore put man on his guard by commanding him not to eat the fruit, with the warning that if he ate it, he would die. This loving precept of God was also timed to give man an opportunity of looking to his Creator in faith and obedience; this was an advantage that God drew from the malice of the rebellious angels. The latter, being bent on inducing man to eat the fruit, were confronted with the divine command, but they quickly deceived the woman by promising her that if she ate it she and her husband would be deified. This was a great goad to man who felt in himself all the vigour of his life and the desire of an intelligent nature to be raised to an infinite and divine excellence. The woman realised on the one hand the grandeur of the angelic nature that spoke to her which, apparently, she knew to be immeasurably greater than her own, and beyond man's power to gauge; therefore indefinitely great. On the other hand she was enthralled by the grandeur of the promise and by the fullness of human life which she enjoyed, and was over confident in the future. The mortification and humiliation of obedience was distasteful to her, and she was attracted by the appearance of the fruit which was really beautiful and appetising; and curious to taste it she falsely concluded that it would be better to become equal to God through natural greatness, that is physical and intellectual, as the angel promised her at the time. She favoured her natural inclination which opposed the acquiring of moral perfection by obeying the divine command given her in the past which obliged her constantly to be subject to God. Overcome by this false reasoning she believed her seducer and refused to believe in eternal truths and so first she fell into sin and then her husband, and having eaten the fruit they became united with the devil who had led them to expect such a great prize.<sup>137</sup>

### **But God had other plans<sup>138</sup>**

*‘And the Lord God said to the serpent: Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all cattle, and beasts of the earth: upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat all the*

---

<sup>137</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXIII, pp. 244–245.

<sup>138</sup> Reading LXIV, 246–248.

*days of thy life. I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.*<sup>139</sup>

The virgin Mary was conceived without sin, the Word became incarnate from her by the action of the Holy Spirit and the man born of her was not just man but God also. This man had a perfect human nature and death had no power over him.

All other humans in dying paid the penalty of sin; through it they were destroyed, losing their subjective life. Nor was there any possible return from death. The Man-God was born subject to suffering and death as the other sons and daughters of Adam, though, being God, if he had wished he could have been immortal and free from pain and could have escaped death and suffering completely. So to do this was an act of great virtue because it was to renounce generously what belonged to him. It was an act of virtue because in the state of being Man-God he had the opportunity to exercise to a greater extent all the virtues towards God and men; it was an act of humility and subjection to God from whom alone he expected all exaltation and glory. It was an act of love towards human beings, whom he wished to resemble and share in all evils except sin, and so be able to mix with them more easily and to instruct them by word and example about the depths into which they had fallen and the necessity of being converted to God. Now if this were morally excellent it was necessary that the Man-God, who was to gather to himself all moral greatness which is true and complete greatness (a thing that first man did not understand) choose this sublime path.<sup>140</sup>

Rosmini goes on to illustrate the enmity shown towards Jesus, foreshadowed in the Old Testament and then exemplified during his public ministry and ultimately his death.<sup>141</sup>

He concludes,

This is the conflict between natural man and the new; the same conflict which is shown in regenerated man between him and the remains of the old man, between the spirit and the flesh. Except that the new man who lives with Christ's life and acts according to the instincts of this life, has no longer within himself another man as adversary but simply enemy forces which are concupiscence and the devil who more or less uses it. On the other hand in the conflict between Christ and the world, that is wicked men (and the same is said of the conflict between Christians who are in Christ and the wicked who persecute them) the combat is not of the human person and the enemy forces which belong to the nature of man but not of his person, but between person and person, between

---

<sup>139</sup> *Gen* 3: 14–15 (Douay).

<sup>140</sup> *IVG.*, Reading LXIV, pp. 246–247.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. *Wis* 2: 12–20; *Jn* 7: 7; 8: 38 ff; 15: 18–25; *Mt* 1: 24; 24: 9; 2 *Tim* 3: 12.



man and man. However the cause and nature of the strife is the same: except that in the first case such a conflict is within an individual and in the second it is a phenomenon which is manifested in several individuals, the persecutors or attackers, and the persecuted or attacked.<sup>142</sup>

### **The sufferings of Christ<sup>143</sup>**

Moral greatness consists in doing God's will and being forgetful of our own subjective interests by living only for objective morality. In order to effect this we pursue God's honour and glory and ask for his protection at all times. Eudemonological good (happiness) should be desired as an effect of moral good and certainly not preferred to moral good. It should always be united with moral good.

Now Christ was destined to be the type and realisation of all perfection and therefore did not make use of his divinity to make himself free from suffering. *'Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.'*<sup>144</sup> Because our heavenly Father loved the Word Incarnate with an eternal and infinite love he had to will this greatness and moral perfection. Christ said, *'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work'*,<sup>145</sup> and *'I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me'*.<sup>146</sup>

Rosmini poses a question here. Did the Father will all this because it was good? Or was it good because he willed it? The latter implies that the Father's will was an arbitrary one without a reason, and a cruel one, too, because he would have willed the suffering of Christ without necessity.

Rosmini seeks the answer by considering the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. The first thing to note is that the reasoning above implies *priority* on the part of the Father, good *then* willed, or willed *therefore* good. But there is no priority in God, not as far as the Most Holy Trinity is concerned because 'Being' is God, not in the order of being, because there is none in being, nor in the moral form of being which is the completion of the order of being. This absolute moral form of being is the person of the Holy Spirit, being-object-person loved or willed, spirated by Father and Son, who proceeds *per modum voluntatis*, [by means of the will] since to love and will is the same. The Holy Spirit is absolute moral love, and personal holiness. Since there is no priority of time, there is no moral good prior to any morality. When Jesus Christ refers to doing the will of the one who sent him he refers to the one who generated him *ab aeterno* and from whom he received the nature to *spirate* the Holy Spirit, of willing *per se* willed, *per se* loved. This being in so far as it is infinitely loved, is the object of the will

---

<sup>142</sup> *IV/G*, Reading LXIV, pp. 248–249.

<sup>143</sup> *IV/G*, Reading LXV, pp. 249–253.

<sup>144</sup> *Phil* 2: 5–8.

<sup>145</sup> *Jn* 4: 34.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* 5: 30.

of the Father and the Son and the rule of Christ's activity. He had therefore to show the uttermost love towards being itself whether in God or in his contingent beings who share in this love.

So Jesus says, *'For I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me.'*<sup>147</sup> 'He says that this commandment of the Father is eternal life in contrast to temporal life; because this commandment being essentially moral, containing the Spiration of the Holy Spirit who is moral personally, subsistent, good, must contain necessarily moral life, which of its nature is eternal.'<sup>148</sup> For Christ, the commandment of his Father was of more value than temporal life. He underwent his passion in which lay the utmost degree of moral excellence. He said to his disciples, *'I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me; but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.'*<sup>149</sup> He was not compelled to die as the devil had no power of him, but he did so out of the love of his Father. On the other hand this was a moral necessity because the Father willed moral excellence in him and wished for the supreme proof of his love. It was a command or precept of his Father. These two qualities, spontaneous love and the obedience to a precept are shown by Christ when he said, *'For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.'*<sup>150</sup>

Now the love which the Father has for his Word, as essentially loveable, and loved, is the Spiration of the Holy Spirit; the Word in so far as he is object loved and not in so far as he is the Word that is subsistent object per se known, is the person of the Holy Spirit; loveableness loved is the moral essence. So it is necessary that the Word Incarnate, Man-God, was loved by the Father, in so far as he realised the greatest moral virtue, the greatest love of which the sacrifice of his temporal life was the greatest act, the greatest proof: so that the command given to Christ by the Father is an act of the greatest love of the Father of the Son, it is the love itself of the Father and the Son forming the rule which the humanity assumed by the Son had to follow.<sup>151</sup>

Moreover, as we see from the above quotation, it is the Father's will that he take his life up again. He did not simply give up his life for its own sake but in order to re-assume it. The commandment of the Father extends not just to the death but also to

---

<sup>147</sup> *Jn* 12: 49–50.

<sup>148</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXV, p. 251.

<sup>149</sup> *Jn* 14: 30–31.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 10: 17–18.

<sup>151</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXV, p. 252.

the resurrection of his Son. The evil and the good are both the object of love and the love of the Father who wills is the love of the Son who obeys him.<sup>152</sup>

**‘By his wounds you have been healed’<sup>153</sup>**

The Father allowed his Son to be put to death to show clearly to the world the destiny of humanity ruined by original sin and in the power of the devil, Simeon prophesied to Mary, *‘This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed — and a sword will pierce your own soul too.’*<sup>154</sup> When Jesus asked the crowd, *‘why are you looking for an opportunity to kill me?’* The crowd answered, *“You have a demon! Who is trying to kill you?”* Jesus answered them, *“I performed one work, and all of you are astonished. Moses gave you circumcision (it is, of course, not from Moses, but from the patriarchs), and you circumcise a man on the sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath in order that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because I healed a man’s whole body on the sabbath? Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgement”.*<sup>155</sup> Maybe the crowd didn’t realise what the chiefs of the synagogue were planning yet Jesus rebuked them, because though they had not the actual intention of doing so, they had a virtual intention because of original sin. Jesus gave his life for truth and justice and thus was the first of the martyrs.

Jesus was both God and man. The Word constituted his personality. As man without sin he was innocent, the new Adam. In so far as he received suffering flesh from Adam, subject to every infirmity and pain coming from sin which he did not share, he was *Son of Man* — a title by which he loved to be called and which indicated his association with fallen humanity destined for death. He was thus able to exercise the greatest virtue, giving us the most perfect example and to die calumniated and persecuted for justice sake which is the greatest act and sign of moral perfection.

The death of all other people was simple justice. It was a payment of a debt. But the death of Christ was not an act of justice because it was not just that he should die. He always abandoned himself into the hands of his Father. He simply wished to give himself to God and his fellow men and women. But the Father seemed to abandon him and the angel who appeared in the garden strengthened him so that he might be able to endure his physical sufferings and death. He died twice, suffering first the torture of the internal sense of the imagination in Gethsemane and afterwards of external senses on Calvary. All this was undeserved.

---

<sup>152</sup> *IVG* Reading LXV, p. 253.

<sup>153</sup> 1 *Pet* 2: 24. *IVG*, Reading LXVI, pp. 253–255.

<sup>154</sup> *Lk* 2: 34–35.

<sup>155</sup> *Jn* 7: 20–24.

**Christ is compensated for his death and suffering<sup>156</sup>**

But the Father is essential justice and his Son had appealed to him saying, '*Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them*'<sup>157</sup> and so it was right that the Son should be compensated. Indeed his merits had an infinite value because united hypostatically with the divine nature. So we can truly say that God suffered and died.

It was fitting that 1. The humanity of Christ should be renewed with immortal life, granted divine honour and placed at the right hand of the Father; 2. That all the desires of his humanity should be satisfied, including overcoming his enemies and being granted sovereignty over the whole world. These were promised and foretold in the Old Testament.

1The Lord says to my lord,

'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.'

2The Lord sends out from Zion your mighty sceptre.

Rule in the midst of your foes.

3Your people will offer themselves willingly

on the day you lead your forces on the holy mountains.

From the womb of the morning, like dew, your youth will come to you.

4The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind,

'You are a priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek.'

5The Lord is at your right hand;

he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.

6He will execute judgement among the nations, filling them with corpses;

he will shatter heads over the wide earth.

7He will drink from the stream by the path;

therefore he will lift up his head.<sup>158</sup>

In this magnificent and sublime psalm the Father tells the Son who has consummated his sacrifice and who had drunk from the torrent of poverty and suffering: '*Sit at my right hand.*' Here is the first part of the reward owed to the Son; the raising to immortality and divine glory of his divine humanity. Christ had said, regarding this, '*I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.*'<sup>159</sup> These words recall the words of St. John, '*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and Word was God*' and this means: 'before I revealed myself to men, before there were men or a world, that is from eternity, I

---

<sup>156</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXVI continued, pp. 255–256.

<sup>157</sup> *Jn* 17: 25–26.

<sup>158</sup> *Ps* 110.

<sup>159</sup> *Jn* 17: 4–5.

was God: I was generated before the morning star in the splendour of holiness from your substance; ex utero as the psalm says.<sup>160</sup> Now therefore ennoble my humanity with this same divine and infinite glory, which as God I have never lost, as already before the creation of the world, you in your most profound and wise knowledge, predestined me to be seated glorious with you on your right hand.' We see that the expression used by St. John at the beginning of his Gospel *apud Deum* [with God] belongs, though with a different meaning, just as much to the humanity as to the divinity of Jesus Christ, in as much as the former is inseparable from the divine person. The human nature began to enjoy in time this glory through participation, whereas the Word had enjoyed it essentially from eternity.<sup>161</sup>

The second part<sup>162</sup> of the compensation which the Father would make concerns the satisfying of every desire of his humanity with men and women with whom he had in common a human nature. The natural desire of man is to be the Lord and ruler of the world and the power to make his enemies subject to himself. This natural desire is basic to human nature and therefore is not blameworthy unless it is exercised without justice or unlawfully.<sup>163</sup> But God has given Christ complete power over the world as we saw in the psalm quoted above. Christ speaks about the power given him, '*you have given him authority over all people*'.<sup>164</sup> And '*Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me*'.<sup>165</sup>

Christ loved the human nature in himself and in his fellow men and women, so with the resurrection of all people he had to restore the whole of human nature destroyed by death. He destroyed the plans of the devil to ruin human nature, the handiwork of God. Moreover, he abolished original sin and obtained for us a remission of our sins. At the general resurrection those free from sin will rise with a new body. St Paul says, '*But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ*'.<sup>166</sup> and the author of the letter to the Hebrews says, '*When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*'.<sup>167</sup> Thus the remission of sins is attributed to the glory of Christ.

As John Donne said, 'No man is an island'. Human nature demands union with other fellow men and women. The most intimate bond of human natures is perhaps that of marriage and Scripture uses this image to portray the union of Christ with the

---

<sup>160</sup> The Douay version says '*from the womb before the day star I begot you*'.

<sup>161</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXVI, p. 256.

<sup>162</sup> Reading LXVII, pp. 256–258.

<sup>163</sup> '*Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth*' Gen 1: 28.

<sup>164</sup> *Jn* 17: 2.

<sup>165</sup> *Mt* 28: 18.

<sup>166</sup> 1 *Cor* 15: 20–22.

<sup>167</sup> *Heb* 1: 3.

saints in heaven. In the book of Revelation we read, *‘Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. It has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal.’*<sup>168</sup> This mystical union of Christ and the Church is also the exemplar of the Christian man and woman in matrimony, so St Paul says, *‘Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish.’*<sup>169</sup> In compensation for and as a reward for his sufferings Christ is empowered to form the Church from among men and women. Commenting on the passage from the book of Psalms Paul says, *‘You ascended the high mount, leading captives in your train and receiving gifts from people.’*<sup>170</sup> *‘But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore it is said, “When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.” (When it says, “He ascended”, what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.)’*<sup>171</sup>

### **The priesthood of Christ**<sup>172</sup>

Christ, then, has redeemed us from original sin and death and from all actual sins. He is the author of heavenly glory, therefore he possesses not only the dignity of king but also of mediator and priest. As the psalm quoted above says, *‘The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, “You are a priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek”’*. The author of the letter to the Hebrews explains the doctrine of the priesthood of Christ. He explains how Christ acquired the dignity of the priesthood and merited it by his sufferings and exercised it through his own sufferings by which he sacrificed himself. *‘Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.’*<sup>173</sup> In other words, since Christ was tempted and suffered when there was nothing to punish him for, it was only right that he should be recompensed for these sufferings undergone and not deserved. Consequently he was empowered to rise again free from such sufferings and temptations. *‘For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.’*<sup>174</sup>

---

<sup>168</sup> Rev 21: 9–11.

<sup>169</sup> Eph 5: 25–27.

<sup>170</sup> Ps 68: 18.

<sup>171</sup> Eph 4: 7–10.

<sup>172</sup> IVG, Reading LXVII, pp. 259–261.

<sup>173</sup> Heb 2: 17–18.

<sup>174</sup> Heb 4: 15.

The fact that we remember our own experience of suffering helps us to be compassionate and merciful to others who suffer. It was the same with the human nature of Christ, moreover he wished to be like us and have the glory and life owed him obtained rather by prayer than from justice or at least by both. So the letter to the Hebrews says, *‘Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.’*<sup>175</sup> The sacrifice of Christ had therefore the power of remitting sins. St Paul says, *‘For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God’.*<sup>176</sup> Now he has risen from the dead and entered into glory, he exercises an eternal priesthood, *‘not through a legal requirement concerning physical descent, but through the power of an indestructible life’.*<sup>177</sup> *‘Furthermore, the former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever. Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.’*<sup>178</sup> *‘For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgement, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.’*<sup>179</sup>

The priests of the New Law share in the one priesthood of Christ and make the same oblation, that is, the body and blood of Christ. Christ acts in them. He is the true priest and sacrificial victim. No one can be a priest of the New Law unless he is baptized and thus incorporated into Christ and Christ into man.

---

<sup>175</sup> *Heb* 5: 8–10.

<sup>176</sup> *2 Cor* 5: 21.

<sup>177</sup> *Heb* 7: 16.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 23–25.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 24–28.

## Chapter 4

### The Resurrection and the Eucharistic Life

#### The return of Christ<sup>1</sup>

The salvation of the world is attributed to the resurrection of Christ. He told his apostles, *'In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also?'*<sup>2</sup> It was necessary that he be glorified so that he could share this glory with his disciples. He will return and take them to be with him, this is the sharing in his glory and refers primarily to the second coming, that is the general resurrection. He is speaking of the entire person, not just of the soul, 'I will take you'. But there is another return prior to this, namely our death when he takes our soul, giving them his life and admitting us to the vision of God.

A third return of Christ is the mission of the Holy Spirit who gives souls the pledge of immortality and the resurrection. Christ says, *'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.'*<sup>3</sup> He prays that the gifts of the Holy Spirit will be given us (this prayer could not go unheard) and that he will not leave us orphans because he dwells in us and will make his presence known by the light of the Holy Spirit. We are conscious of possessing him and being truly God's children sharing in the sonship of the Word incarnate. *'For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.'*<sup>4</sup> *'Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.'*<sup>5</sup>

His disciples will see him through the light of the Holy Spirit even when he has departed from this world because we share in the life of Christ *'because I live you also will live'* they (and we) will know the Holy Spirit *'because he abides with you, and he will be in you'*. (The world cannot see him because of the obstacle of sin). *'But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your*

---

<sup>1</sup> IVG, Reading LXVIII, p. 261–263.

<sup>2</sup> Jn 14: 2–3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 15–19.

<sup>4</sup> Rom 8: 15–16.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Jn 3: 2.



*advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you?'*<sup>6</sup>

**St Paul attributes our justification to the resurrection of Christ.**

'Who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.'<sup>7</sup>

If Christ did not rise he could not communicate his glorified life and we would remain under condemnation of sin. *'If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins'*<sup>8</sup> St Peter says, *'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.'*<sup>9</sup> Baptism has the power of placing in us this glorious life of Christ through the resurrection. *'And Baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.'*<sup>10</sup> St Paul teaches the same when he says in the letter to the Colossians, *'when you were buried with him in Baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.'*<sup>11</sup> The 'old man' is thus destroyed and the 'new man' lives with the new life of Christ which was given to him when he was raised from the dead.

**The resurrection from the dead and some problems to be solved<sup>12</sup>**

Firstly we must comment on St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians chapter 15 where he speaks of the resurrection of the dead.

'Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if he Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ — whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not

<sup>6</sup> *Jn* 16: 6–7.

<sup>7</sup> *Rom* 4: 25.

<sup>8</sup> *1 Cor* 15: 17.

<sup>9</sup> *1 Pet* 1: 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 3: 21–22.

<sup>11</sup> *Col* 2: 12–15.

<sup>12</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXIX pp. 264–268.

raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.<sup>13</sup>

Carrying on from the previous Reading:

1. St Paul argues to the resurrection of the dead from the resurrection of Christ. We could not rise again from the dead unless the risen Christ has acquired the power to do this for those who share his human nature.
2. He argues from the resurrection of Christ to the resurrection of those who die in Christ, who are united and form one body with him and who must live with the same life.
3. Without this resurrection and life we would still be in our sins. The good news would have been in vain and the faith we put in it would have been in vain.
4. Without the resurrection there would be no hope of future life. We would have had to hope for the ephemeral things in this life only.

Rosmini points out that this teaching is in harmony with the teaching of the Old Testament and he cites the following texts, in the books of Wisdom and 2 Maccabees:

1. (But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God) 'their hope is full of immortality'.<sup>14</sup>

2. 'In the time of their visitation they will shine forth'.<sup>15</sup>

3. 'She will have fruit when God examines souls'.<sup>16</sup>

4. 'But the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his law'.<sup>17</sup>

5. 'For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he was looking to the

---

<sup>13</sup> 1 *Cor* 15: 14–19.

<sup>14</sup> *Wis* 3: 1 and 4.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 7 (NJB). This verse varies according to the version of the Bible used.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 13 The Knox version says 'offspring she will not lack when holy souls have their reward'.

<sup>17</sup> 2 *Macc* 7: 9.

splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought'.<sup>18</sup>

Commenting on these texts, he says that the book of Wisdom is speaking of the just who have died. The author does not praise them for the good things they enjoyed in this life, but their hope for the future. As for the book of Maccabees, the Maccabean youth, being tortured, placed his hope in the resurrection and Judas Maccabaeus collected two thousand drachmas of silver in order that sacrifice might be offered for those who had died in battle. The text explicitly says that if there were no resurrection it would be useless to pray for the dead for remission of their sins.

Rosmini sees this teaching as presenting a difficulty for Christians whose hope of eternal happiness is made to depend on the resurrection as also the remission of sins. Now it is Catholic teaching that those dying in a state of grace and *separated from the body* will be admitted to the beatific vision either immediately or after a period of purification in purgatory. How then does this square with the passage which says that it would be superfluous and vain to pray for the dead that they might be loosed from their sins if they were not to rise again, whereas we believe that it is profitable to pray that the souls in purgatory might pass swiftly into God's presence? Again why should we be the most unfortunate of people if there had been no resurrection when we believe that our souls, *even before the resurrection of the body*, enjoy the beatific vision?

Rosmini proposes two questions to be answered:

1. What state would the separated soul left on its own be like? This would mean that no external action would be added to it.
2. What do we understand by the resurrection, the work of Jesus Christ, and the just who rise again?

Firstly, then, the soul without the body would have no external action done in it, since all external actions come either from the body itself or modifications of the fundamental feeling via sensations. Therefore it can no longer reason nor think of any real beings nor abstractions. All that remains is the intuition of being which renders it intelligent and habits which give it an individual character. But these habits never pass into act because there is nothing to draw them into it. It would have no corporeal feeling and have no life in the true sense of the word. It would not be able to reflect on itself nor have any consciousness, it would simply exist and not live. This is why some of the ancient philosophers denied the immortality of the soul. They believed that it would be annihilated on death. Rosmini says that the Sadducees fell into this error through denying the resurrection. In the Acts of Apostles we read that when Paul was brought before the council he said he was on trial because of the hope of resurrection and this set off a dispute between the Pharisees who believed in it and the Sadducees who didn't.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> 2 Macc 12: 43–45.

<sup>19</sup> Acts 23: 6.

In Luke we have the ridiculous question posed by the Sadducees envisaging a situation in which six brothers in turn married the same widow who had been married to their brother and asking to whom she should be married at the resurrection. Jesus replies, *‘Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. Indeed they cannot die any more, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection.’*<sup>20</sup> In these words Jesus says nothing about the soul considered on its own nor about the wicked who will rise to the resurrection of condemnation.<sup>21</sup> But from this we *do* learn that the resurrection gives immortality to the just, and also because of the resurrection the just are ‘children of God’ and released from all punishment and made like the angels and spiritualised without the bond of a material body.

Then Jesus proves the truth of the resurrection of the just, *‘And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive.’*<sup>22</sup>

Christ argues like this: ‘Moses said that the Lord is the God of Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob. Now if these patriarchs were dead we could not say that the Lord was their God, because the Lord is God of the living and not of the dead. Therefore these patriarchs are living. But they could not be said to be living unless they would rise again one day. Therefore we must say that the dead will rise again.’ This reasoning makes the life of these patriarchs depend on their future resurrection. Why are they living? Because they will rise. Therefore they would not live if they were not to rise again. Therefore the separated soul if it were not destined to rise again, if there were not in it a reason or germ of its future rebirth, would be in a condition and state of death. He adds therefore that ‘to him all of them are alive’ to show that God has the power of restoring life to all those he wishes. This seems to allude to the general resurrection of both the good and the bad, but when he says ‘for to him all of them are alive’ he speaks of a life relative to God, not a life relative to itself, not of a subjective life; and hence he shows that all souls continue to exist even separated from the body and therefore all can be restored to life by God in relation to whom they all live.

Coming to the second question, ‘what do we understand by the resurrection which Jesus Christ effects in the just?’<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Lk 20: 34–36. Cf. Mt 22: 23–33; Mk 12: 28–37.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.’ Jn 5: 28–29.

<sup>22</sup> Lk 20: 37–38.

<sup>23</sup> IVG, Reading LXX, pp. 268–273.

Now here we understand not just the final resurrection and the rising with a glorious body which will no longer perish. We also mean that seed of life placed in us by Christ and we will manifest itself more and more in our lives until death and which unfolds itself until the end of the world in the final resurrection. We are talking here of the new person within each of us and whose life is eternal. It is rather like a snake who sloughs off its old skin to reveal another new skin beneath it. We can sum this up by quoting the words of Jesus to Martha, *‘Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”’*<sup>24</sup> And in his great priestly prayer he prays that, *‘they be one as we are one, I in them and you in me.’*<sup>25</sup> So we can never lose this life except by breaking off our relationship with Christ through our own fault. Eternal life remains within us, Christ says that, *‘everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.’*<sup>26</sup> Christ is not only life but also the resurrection, so his discourse is referring to two kinds of life. The first is proper to us individuals and this, as we know, consists of a vital union of soul and body and the other is the life which Christ communicates to us when we are incorporated to him through grace. With regard to the latter Christ tells us that he is the *life*; with regard to the former he says he is the *resurrection*. The *life* which the holy people of the New Testament enjoy is also their resurrection. This life can never fail: St Paul tells us, *‘We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death has no longer any dominion over him.’*<sup>27</sup>

The Life and the Resurrection	
Human Beings	Christ
Individual Life.	‘I am the resurrection’.
Our supernatural life through grace.	‘I am the Life’.

However, as we know, Christ died in his human nature and lay in the tomb for three days. Did this effect the union of the disciples with their Lord through grace? Yes, as regards this union in Christ, they too died with him. They had within them the dead Christ during this time. But we must emphasise that we are speaking of the human nature of Christ. Of course, the divinity never abandoned the body and soul of Christ and Christ being alive to God could re-assume his human life. His body did not suffer corruption, nor disorganisation, apart from the shedding of his most precious blood. His soul could, too, live with his eucharistic life. The disciples continued to live united with the divine life of Christ.

---

<sup>24</sup> *Jn* 11: 25.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 17: 22–23.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 11: 26.

<sup>27</sup> *Rom* 6: 9.

## **The Eucharistic Life**

As said above, the soul separated from the body is unable to function, as it needs a real term for its activity, united with which it forms one subject. It can then, under suitable conditions, perform the vital activities of feeling and thinking with regard to something real. God can certainly supply for this lack by giving the separated soul some term though not its natural one. Rosmini believes that separated souls can have as their term the eucharistic life of Christ, that is, his sacramental body, '*the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh*' in other words, this flesh under the form of bread will take the place of the life of the world. This in turn leads to the novel opinion that those who have not received the Eucharist in this life must receive it in the life to come, though not of course in the form that it is received in this life.

Rosmini enumerates four different lives of Christ:

1. *Natural life*, that is, of the soul with its natural body.
2. *The eucharistic divine life*, which remained during the three days Christ was in the tomb united to his soul.
3. *The spiritual life* of Christ before his death, consisting in the sanctification and divinisation of the human Christ as a natural living person; the hypostatic union. This immortal and glorious life was normally hidden but could and did manifest itself, as on Mount Tabor at the transfiguration and, of course, at the resurrection.
4. *His glorious life* after the resurrection and ascension into heaven.

The first life was lost when Christ died in his human nature. But the second was never lacking and sustained him and his disciples during these three days. As he said, '*Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life which the son of man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.*'<sup>28</sup>

In this way the subjective life in him endured eternally and he could give it to his followers, giving himself to them under the form of bread. A little later he adds, '*It was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven: my father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world.*' This bread from heaven is Jesus Christ himself, but not in his natural life, but in his eucharistic life.<sup>29</sup>

The Fathers of the Church who interpreted chapter 6 of John's Gospel, constantly understood that the bread from heaven was the Eucharist, that is to say, not his natural life but his eucharistic life and it is this that gives life to the world. It is this life which replaces the life lost by Adam, and which persists even when our natural life has ceased to exist. '*But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.*'<sup>30</sup> Adam and Eve could eat the fruit of the Tree of Life which would have rendered them immortal, but they lost this nourishment through sin and with it

---

<sup>28</sup> Jn 6: 27.

<sup>29</sup> IVG, Reading LXX, p. 272.

<sup>30</sup> Jn 1: 12–13.

immortality for them and their descendants. Now Christ has restored this everlasting life through the gift of himself.

We can suitably call this food, 'fruit' because it was obtained by the prayer of Christ to his Father and merited by his passion and death, for which also it is a living memorial, because it endures and lives even when Christ is dead in his human nature. The words of the Apostle are relevant to the fact that this hidden, eucharistic life does not fail: *'In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.'*<sup>31</sup>

Now in one sense Jesus was not heard, since he died a natural death on the cross, but in another sense he was heard since he continued to live with another life, his eucharistic life. It also presupposes that his followers who receive the Eucharist already live through the vivifying effect of Baptism.

### **Eternal life**<sup>32</sup>

Rosmini quotes Jesus' words, *'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'*<sup>33</sup> This leads him to consider the part water plays in the Eucharist and he comments on Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman in St John's Gospel.<sup>34</sup> *'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.'*<sup>35</sup> And again referring to this living water he says, *'Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life".'*<sup>36</sup> 'The gift of God', he says, appears to refer to the Eucharist because 'eucaristia' according to Greek authorities can mean 'gift'. He says that gift refers to water, and water, the symbol of faith, refers to the Eucharist.<sup>37</sup> Rosmini now reverts to his treatment of St John Chapter 6.

Jesus says, *'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'*<sup>38</sup> Rosmini paraphrases this text saying that Jesus is saying that

---

<sup>31</sup> Heb 5: 7.

<sup>32</sup> IVG, Reading LXXI, pp. 273–277.

<sup>33</sup> Jn 6: 35.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 4: 10.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 13–14.

<sup>37</sup> It seems to me that this diversion sits uneasily in the context of the Eucharist. Water is not normally taken as symbol of the Eucharist but rather of Baptism. Modern interpretations suggest that it is symbolic of the gift of God or the gift of the Spirit or both. Cf. Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., *Sacra Pagina, The Gospel of John*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville 1998, *Jesus and the Samaritan Woman*, pp. 121–124.

<sup>38</sup> Jn 6: 35.

the faith of those who believe in his words will bear fruit and they will receive his life under the form of bread and whoever believes will never be thirsty, because he will give himself as drink under the appearance of wine mixed with water.<sup>39</sup> He says that such persons will not hunger after other food or drink but they will not be satiated by the food he gives as is clear from the book of Sirach, '*Those who eat of me will hunger for more, and those who drink of me will thirst for more*'.<sup>40</sup> This quotation, says Rosmini, speaks of hungering for wisdom and the former quotation refers to those who are filled with the life of wisdom of Christ. He says Christ made this plain when speaking to the Samaritan woman that whoever drinks from the water which he will give will never be thirsty again. The reason he gives is that, '*the water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life*'.<sup>41</sup>

This must not be understood in the sense that they will never be thirsty again because they no longer want to drink this water; but they will no longer be thirsty for lack of water; there will no longer be any danger that this water will fail, so that they must suffer a troublesome thirst because not satisfied by the water they desire: because the water, that is the faith, which I will give them, will become in them, an abundant and perennial source of living water from which they will continually drink and this water will spring up into life everlasting; since from faith spring other graces and the life which the sacraments give and preserve, of which, in the fullest sense is the Eucharist.<sup>42</sup>

A little further on Jesus says, '*And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day*'.<sup>43</sup> Rosmini notes that the will of the Father is mentioned twice. He says this is not mere repetition but show the two ways that Christ gives us life.

1. Christ will restore to all people the natural life they lost through original sin.
2. Eternal life will be given to those who have merited it and he will raise them up on the last day.

---

<sup>39</sup> Presumably Rosmini has in mind the drop of water mixed with the wine at the Eucharist.

<sup>40</sup> *Sir* 24: 21.

<sup>41</sup> *Jn* 4: 14. Modern exegesis sees vv. 35–51a as referring to Jesus as the Bread of Life 'in the sense that his revelation constitutes teaching by God (6: 45), so that one must believe in the Son to have eternal life.' Raymond Brown, the author of this quotation, goes on to refer to Sirach 24: 21 (20). 'Second, in John 5: 51b–58 Jesus is nourishment in another sense, for one must feed on his flesh and blood to have eternal life.' Raymond E. Brown, S.S., *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Doubleday 1996, chapter 11, The Gospel according to John, p.346. In the light of this, both quotations of Rosmini from John chapter 6 refer to the Bread of Life as teaching which comes from God.

<sup>42</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXI, pp. 275–276.

<sup>43</sup> *Jn* 6: 39–40.



Analysing this further Rosmini says, it is true that the Father wills that he lose nothing given to him and that he has '*power over all flesh*',<sup>44</sup> but speaking of all who will be raised on the last day he uses the neuter 'it'. However, speaking of those who inherit eternal life he says, '*all who see the Son of God and believe in him*'. Rosmini says the former refers to the flesh, the latter to the spirit. Christ saves those who have been incorporated into him. In other words besides regaining the natural life they lost, they will also have another mysterious life which, as has been said above, lies in the perception of the living Christ under the form of bread.

To see the Son is to perceive him, to have the perception of him which results when the indelible character is impressed on the soul: to believe in the Son is to give voluntary assent to him; and if it is a living faith it means also to give practical recognition and allegiance to the Son. Such people, says Christ, have eternal life. But if such a person has eternal life, what need has he to be raised on the last day? For someone to be raised up, he must be dead: but whoever has eternal life is not dead. We must say, then, that man can be dead according to one type of life, that is, according to his natural life, and yet can live with another better and eternal life which the person possesses who sees and believes in the Son of God.<sup>45</sup>

Rosmini has spoken of the state of a departed Christian soul which is deprived of its body but nevertheless is united to the sacramental glorious body of Christ.<sup>46</sup> In this present life it is united by the sacramental life of grace. The natural and glorious body of Christ is hidden so that it is an object of faith for us. <sup>47</sup> '*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe*'.<sup>48</sup> We give greater honour to God than in believing after having seen.

That act implies complete confidence in God who reveals, an entire abandonment to him who is truth, and an act of the mind which is stronger and more free, mastering the senses and appearances which are accustomed to draw and hold fast our assent. So in faith there is a value and a moral dignity greater than in simple vision and the whole divine purpose is to lead us to the greatest moral perfection possible because this is the complete perfection of being.<sup>49</sup>

This is the faith of those already incorporated into Christ through grace. This faith is produced by the perception of Christ as the good.

---

<sup>44</sup> *Jn* 17: 2.

<sup>45</sup> *IVG*, Reading, LXXI, p. 277.

<sup>46</sup> Reading LXXII, pp. 277–281. Cf. p. 137 above.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. J. A. D., *Our Light and Our Salvation*, chapter 2, Grace.

<sup>48</sup> *Jn* 21: 29.

<sup>49</sup> Reading LXX, p. 278.

About this faith Jesus says, *'This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.'*<sup>50</sup>

Firstly he says: 'sees the Son' and then 'and believes in him' because faith transcends this vision of the Son. Faith does not take away this vision, rather it is its foundation, since faith is *'the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen'*; this definition is particularly applicable to the faith of those already incorporated into Christ and in whom Christ, perceived in a hidden manner, and not in his natural and glorious body, is the subsistence of things to be hoped for, that is the revealing of Christ in his glorious life, and is the unshakeable evidence of this glorious life of Christ which does not appear in this present life.

**'No one can come to the Son unless the Father draws them'**

Christ also said in speaking with the Jews, *'No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God."'*<sup>51</sup> *Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life.'*<sup>52</sup> In these words Christ describes the whole progress through which we human beings come to that faith in him from which we gain life eternal.

First of all he alludes in a general way to it, saying that: no one can come to him unless the Father, who has sent Christ, draws that person to Christ and promises that if the Father draws him, no matter how he draws him, he will raise him up on the last day. This attraction to Christ can also be understood in a certain way of all things, as Christ elsewhere said, *'and I when I am lifted up from the earth will draw all people to myself'*,<sup>53</sup> and in this sense the words which follow (and I will raise them up on the last day) can be understood of the general resurrection in the same way as we have explained the preceding words 'that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up at the last day'. But the expression of 'being drawn by the Father' means more. In the most general sense it includes every type of attraction and especially of those who are drawn by Christ, in order that they be not solely in Christ's power but saved by Christ with respect to whom the promise of Christ 'and I will raise them up on the last day' must be understood of the blessed and glorious resurrection.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> *Jn* 6: 40.

<sup>51</sup> *Is* 54: 13.

<sup>52</sup> *Jn* 6: 43–47.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 12: 32.

<sup>54</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXII, pp. 278–279.

Now the person who comes to Christ in this sense is not yet incorporated in him, he is not yet in Christ but he is on the way to this happy union. This attraction is comprised of the graces and gifts which *dispose* such a person to believe. St Paul speaks of this attraction when he explains that the Gentiles have a law written on their hearts, which will excuse them, *'on the day, when, according to my Gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all.'*<sup>55</sup> This disposition is also attributed to the Father as the generator of the Son and all the appurtenances of the Word, among which is the light of reason, that is, the idea of being.

For the Gentiles to accept Christ, the immediate and effective dispositions were the ancient oral traditions of early revelations to Adam and the patriarchs before the human race separated into nations, and the chosen people received the special revelations, oral traditions and writings given to the family of Israel.<sup>56</sup> Both of these revelations and divine traditions were means of giving both the Gentiles and the Jews some obscure notion of the future Redeemer, on which their faith might be based. These revealed truths are attributed to the Father since they are supernatural appurtenances of the Word, and though they are not the Word himself, they belong to him, and the Father who generates him and sends him into the world produces every-thing which belongs to the Word.

Jesus goes on to say, *'Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father.'*<sup>57</sup> The Father is not known and perceived except through and in the Son. He is the Word who comprehends all things and is therefore their intelligibility. We can approach the Father only through the Son in faith and hope and love. But we can hear the Father through the supernatural revelations and instructions which are appurtenances of the Word as we have said above. These were given to lead people on to accept Christ remotely in the Old Testament, as the person of the Word had not been given to them nor revealed to them in the person of the incarnate Christ and proximately when Christ came upon earth. In this respect the words of Christ to the Jews are very significant. *'Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was for three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgement with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here! The queen of the South will rise up at the judgement with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!"'*<sup>58</sup> So Jesus says *'Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.'*<sup>59</sup> Having heard these revelations and seen the signs

---

<sup>55</sup> Rom 2: 16.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. IVG, Reading XIX, pp. 107–113 especially 109–110.

<sup>57</sup> Jn 6: 46.

<sup>58</sup> Mt 12: 38–42.

<sup>59</sup> Jn 6: 45.

they must co-operate with them and learn what the Father teaches in order to come to Christ. This coming to Christ appears to be a predisposition for faith. When people have achieved this, the desire arises to look for the fulfilment they have not got and which they do not yet know, so if Christ reveals himself they believe and act in conformity with that faith.

Stages of Faith
1. They hear the Father through supernatural revelations and signs.
2. Co-operating with these signs, these lead them to Christ. They are predisposed to receive the gift of faith.
3. The desire arises in them to fulfil this yearning to know Christ.
4. If Christ reveals himself they believe and act accordingly.

### **The necessity of the Eucharist for eternal life<sup>60</sup>**

Jesus goes on to say, *‘Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh’.*<sup>61</sup>

Jesus has said previously that whoever believes in him has eternal life. This is an absolute and unconditional statement. Now he says he is the bread of life and those who eat of it will live forever. Now why does he make receiving the bread of life a condition for eternal life? If a person has faith and yet has not received the bread of life, will that person enjoy eternal life? The answer seems to be that a person who has faith will be drawn to Baptism and the sacraments and when this desire cannot be satisfied it is sufficient for eternal salvation (Baptism of desire). Yet Christ **does** say, *‘Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you’.*<sup>62</sup>

Is there any way in which we can unravel this seeming contradiction? Christ tells us that it is his flesh that he will give for the life of the world, this same flesh that he will give up to death. This will be the bread of life, that is, a type of life that will never fail and which will give us life even when our natural life is at an end. It follows that there must be some action, an effect of the Eucharist beyond our natural life, so that even in their separated state our souls will live with a life which the flesh of Christ gives

---

<sup>60</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXIII, pp. 281–283. Cf. J.A.D., *Our Light and Our Salvation*, Chapter 18, The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist (1), especially pp. 246–249.

<sup>61</sup> *Jn* 6: 49–51.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

under the form of bread of life, in a different way, of course, from the way in which we receive the sacrament here below. After instituting the Eucharist Jesus tells his disciples, *'I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom'*.<sup>63</sup> He calls this 'new wine' because his body would be in a glorious state and he will drink it with them because they will share in his eucharistic life. The wine, of course, presupposes the eucharistic bread.

Hence these words were to be a source of comfort and, at the same time, a source of strength to his sorrowing disciples who firstly had to see their Lord and Master barbarously crucified.

The eucharistic being of Christ, then, who lives under the form of bread and wine, acts beyond this present life and gives to the separated soul, as to the soul united with its body, a mysterious life in Christ which can never fail, because, of its nature, it is eternal. *'This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that whoever eats it will not die.'* This bread is always living: *'I am the living bread,'* this bread is living in such a way that it gives life to others: *'I am the bread of life.'* Christ, then, can be dead with his natural life, but not with his eucharistic life. This living bread had come down from heaven: *'I am the living bread which has come down from heaven'* and therefore does not die because it is not born of earth. Heaven is a place of life and not of death. That which is from heaven is not subject to the laws of earth, and therefore does not die because neither earth nor the powers of earth, nor those of hell have any power over the things of heaven. The natural body of Christ has come from earth because formed of the blood of the Virgin and therefore it could be given up to death; but the eucharistic body has a supernatural existence which comes only from heaven and therefore is living and life-giving; nothing can destroy it.<sup>64</sup>

### **The eucharistic food in the next life<sup>65</sup>**

Rosmini carries on with his commentary on John chapter 6. The Jews who did not understand this teaching asked, *'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'*<sup>66</sup> But Christ reiterates his teaching, *'So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever."*'<sup>67</sup> But if feeding on Christ's body and

---

<sup>63</sup> Mt 26:29, cf. Mk 14: 25.

<sup>64</sup> IVG, Reading LXXIII, p. 283.

<sup>65</sup> Reading LXXIV, pp. 284–288.

<sup>66</sup> Jn 6: 52.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 54–59.

blood is necessary for salvation, how do we reconcile this with the Council of Trent which laid down that the reception of the Eucharist was *not* necessary for salvation.<sup>68</sup> Rosmini argues from the fact that Baptism *is* necessary, ‘*Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.*’<sup>69</sup> Now if the person who does not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood has not life in himself and yet whoever dies with Baptism of water and blood or desire is certain to obtain eternal life, we must conclude that this nourishment of the flesh and blood of Christ will be given to him in the next life at the point of death; the Eucharist has effects beyond this present life. Rosmini opines that this could have happened when Christ descended to the dead at the time of his resurrection. They earned this by their faith and the same could be said of all those Gentiles who had faith in the future Saviour and were in a state of grace, and the many babies who die without having received the Eucharist.

### **The Liturgy of the Eucharist**

Rosmini’s teaching ties in with the words of Eucharistic Prayer I after the consecration, where the priest prays ‘that your angel may take this sacrifice to your altar in heaven. Then as we receive from this altar the sacred body and blood of your Son, let us be filled with every grace and blessing.’<sup>70</sup> This is our fellowship and communication with the saints in heaven.

Rosmini quotes Innocent III, ‘We see in these words the mystery and we dare not, as it were from reverence, unveil it; we dare not investigate it because of its sublimity; because it is truly one of the most mysterious doctrines of the Catholic Church. If we dare to treat of it, it is only because we are convinced that God wishes it at this time.’ The Holy Pontiff, nevertheless, does mention it by quoting two texts of St. Gregory the Great as follows: ‘For holy Gregory, a worthy interpreter of so great a sacrament, speaking in that passage about those (words) in a sublime way about such a sublime matter, says: “Who among the faithful can doubt that at the hour of immolation at the voice of the priest the heavens are opened to the mystery of Jesus Christ; choirs of angels are present; the most lowly things are combined with the highest; earth with heaven; the invisible and visible beings are made one?” Elsewhere he says: “At one and the same moment they are united to the body of Christ received joyfully through the ministry of Angels and seen before the eyes of the priest on the altar.”’<sup>71</sup> When he comments on the altar mentioned in the prayer, he speaks of various meanings of this word in Scripture and says that the altar mentioned in the Mass indicates the Church triumphant, which is made a sharer in the same divine mysteries that the believer on

---

<sup>68</sup> ‘If any one says, that the communion of the Eucharist is necessary for little children, before they have arrived at years of discretion; let him be anathema.’ De Conc. Trid. sess. 21 cap. IV, can. 4.

<sup>69</sup> *Jn* 3: 5.

<sup>70</sup> Eucharistic prayer I (2010).

<sup>71</sup> Innocent III, *De sacro altaris mysterio libri sex*, lib. V, cap. V.

earth shares, both living with the same food and enjoying the same life of Jesus Christ. This depicts for Rosmini a sublime fellowship, a close union of heaven with earth, a divine bond between visible and invisible things, an admirable union between the present and the future! Finally, a unity of the whole body of Christ, who descends with his glorious body and who gives himself to those who now share his glory as well as those who still live hoping in faith.

Now in the Holy Mass, after the priest begs God that he command his angel to carry the bread and wine of life which is on the earthly altar also to the heavenly one, that is, that he carry it to the blessed, he prays for the souls of the departed who have not yet arrived at their final end and who must be purified from the slight stains which they have taken with them into the next life. Because if this living food is given to those faithful departed they will be freed from their dark prison so much the sooner, obtaining the life of Christ with which they will be fit in the next life to see the face of God. Since this food remits venial sin and entirely cleanses the soul 'it is the remedy by which we are freed from our daily faults' as the Holy Council of Trent said.<sup>72</sup>

Rosmini now mentions the commemoration of the souls in purgatory and the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* [For ourselves we ask some share]<sup>73</sup> with which the priest prays for himself, for all those present and for all the faithful of the Church militant, praying that we have some share with the martyrs and other blessed in heaven.<sup>74</sup> He explains that these three parts of the Church (the Church triumphant, the Church militant and the Church suffering) live with the same life of Christ though in different modes. He goes on to point out that this concept of sacrifice was always the same from the beginning of time. The victim was immolated and eaten partly by the gods and partly by those offering it so that they would share in the life of the gods. As for the God of the Hebrews there are instances where it is recorded that fire came down from heaven and devoured the sacrifice.<sup>75</sup> Christ fulfils these symbols.

If then, it was in ancient tradition and in the instinct of human nature that a victim ought to be food common to God and man, it was fitting that God became man, and, having been glorified, shared this sacred food which men and women could also share; and this food was the bread and wine changed into his flesh and blood. And if the glorified Christ shared in it, it was necessary that the whole of glorious humanity which forms one sole body with him share in it also. This, then, is that supersubstantial bread of all the saints who put on Christ and form his most sacred body.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXIV, p. 287. De Conc Trid. sess. 13 cap. II.

<sup>73</sup> 2010 text.

<sup>74</sup> The other Eucharistic prayers follow the same format.

<sup>75</sup> 2 *Macc* 2: 10; 2 *Chr* 7: 1.

<sup>76</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXIV, p. 288.

## **The Son of Man**<sup>77</sup>

Rosmini comments on the fact that when Jesus speak of the Eucharist he calls himself ‘the Son of man’, ‘*unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man*’. This leads him to expand on this theme. He says that this was the most humble title he could give himself and by it he associates himself with fallen humanity which inherits its sinful condition from Adam, though Jesus, conceived through the Holy Spirit was immune from it. He wished to share his sublime dignity with us and restore humanity from its degradation. He said to his disciples, ‘*Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*’<sup>78</sup>

Some examples of the use of the expression ‘Son of Man’		
‘But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’.	Healing of the Paralytic.	Mt 9: 6
‘For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath’.	Plucking grains on the Sabbath.	Mt 12: 8
‘So for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth’.	The Sign of Jonah.	Mt 12: 40
‘The Son of Man will send his angels and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evil-doers’.	The Parable of the Weeds.	Mt 13: 41
For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father...’	The Cross and Self-Denial.	Mt 16: 27

He does not say, ‘if you do not eat of my flesh’ or, ‘if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of God’. He says ‘Son of Man’ as if indicating that the ‘son of man was corrupted by sin and now the Son of Man will remedy this.

The eucharistic life is supernatural and divine. Jesus says, ‘*Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me.*’<sup>79</sup>

<sup>77</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXV, pp. 288–293.

<sup>78</sup> *Mt* 19: 28.

<sup>79</sup> *Jn* 6: 57.



The Father gives the mission to the Word to become flesh in generating him, and the Word Incarnate lives, wholly God and man, with the life of the Father: because as Word he has this life in common with the Father and as man he shares in it through the hypostatic union. This is not his natural life but the divine life in which he shares, the essential life of which St. John says: '*In him was life.*' This life is the subsistence living in the Father, known essentially in the Son and loved essentially in the Holy Spirit. This life of the divine person of Christ ruled his human nature as supreme principle and he hid this human nature living with the divine life and ruled by it under the form of food in order to communicate it to others. For we do not obtain the real term of our feeling through which we live except by generation and nutrition. In these two modes our spirit is united with our corporeal substance as the other term of our feeling.<sup>80</sup>

Generation by which our natural life is propagated was ruined by the work of the devil.<sup>81</sup> The second, nutrition, remained unscathed since Rosmini says, adhering literally to the words of Genesis, the tree of life was unable to be spoilt either by the devil or by man. God substituted for the tree of life whose fruit would have rendered man immortal, food taken from man himself, namely the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. As we have seen:

this mysterious and hidden life is the eucharistic life with which the Father provides the Word incarnate when he destined his natural life to be given over to the hands of his crucifiers; that life with which the Father heard the Son according to the words of the Apostle, '*In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission*';<sup>82</sup> these cries and tears could not but be fully heard; this life for which Christ gave thanks when he instituted the Most Blessed Sacrament, '*The Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks, broke it...*'<sup>83</sup>

When Christ concluded his eucharistic discourse he said, '*It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life*'.<sup>84</sup> In these words he points out firstly, that the life in his flesh and blood are divine life and secondly, that this cannot be received except through the action of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ.

---

<sup>80</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXV, p. 290.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. J.A.D., *Our Light and Our Salvation*, chapter 9, The Transfusion of Original Sin, p. 131 ff.

<sup>82</sup> *Heb* 5: 7.

<sup>83</sup> 1 *Cor* 11: 23. *IVG*, Reading LXXV, pp. 290–291.

<sup>84</sup> *Jn* 6: 63. See also below, note 182, p. 167.

### **Rosmini on St Augustine's words**

Hence St. Augustine, explaining the words of Christ, says that he who receives the eucharistic food does not die because he receives, 'what belongs to the virtue of the Sacrament not to the visible sacrament: he who eats within and not without: he who eats in the heart, not he who chews with his teeth.'<sup>85</sup> And again he says: 'The sacrament of this, that is, of the unity of the body and blood of Christ, is prepared on the Lord's table, in some places every day, in others at certain intervals. And from the Lord's table, it is taken by some to life, by some to destruction, but the reality of which it is the sacrament is for every man to life, for none to destruction whoever shall be partaker thereof.'<sup>86</sup> Hence Christ who promises that those who eat his flesh and drink his blood will not die but will have eternal life, makes it plain that he is speaking of an eating with which man receives the *res sacramenti*<sup>87</sup> and not simply the *sacramentum*. The latter is not the eating of which Christ speaks because 'it is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail.' Hence again St. Augustine, speaking of the sacrament says: 'Will you live by the Spirit of Christ? Abide in the body of Christ. Does my body live by your spirit? My spirit animates my body, and your spirit animates your body. The body of Christ can only live by the Spirit of Christ. Hence it is that the Apostle Paul says, explaining this bread to us, "we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."<sup>88</sup> O Sacrament of piety! O symbol of union! O bond of charity! He who would live has where to live. Let him draw near, let him be incorporated in Christ that so he may receive life.'<sup>89</sup>

In order, then, to eat truly the body and blood of Christ in the sense that Christ intends by the word 'eat', it is necessary to be a member of the body of Christ and a living member. It is not sufficient to have received the indelible character in Baptism or in the other sacraments that confer it, that is, in Confirmation or Holy Orders; it is necessary moreover to have the grace which makes us a living member of that body. Because Christ said: '*He who eats my body and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him.*' Now if there is the obstacle of sin, what of its nature would occur through the power of the Sacrament cannot occur because '*what agreement does Christ have with Beliar.*'<sup>90</sup> Christ, then, in those words expresses the effect of the Most Holy Eucharist, which it produces of its own power, leaving out of consideration the accidental impediment placed by man. This is why St. Augustine says that the words of Christ explain 'what is meant by eating his flesh and drinking his blood ...' He adds 'to eat this bread and drink this cup is to abide in Christ and to have Christ

<sup>85</sup> Augustine, *In Evangelium Ioannis expositio*, tractatus XXVI, 12.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 15.

<sup>87</sup> The *res sacramenti* indicates the inner grace of the sacrament.

<sup>88</sup> 1 Cor 10: 17.

<sup>89</sup> Augustine *op. cit.*, 26, 13.

<sup>90</sup> 2 Cor 6: 15.

<sup>91</sup> Augustine, *op. cit.*, tractatus XXVI, 18. *IVG*, Reading LXXV, pp. 291–292.

abiding in us. For which reason, he who does not abide in Christ and in whom Christ does not abide, without a doubt does not eat his flesh nor drink his blood, but instead eats and drinks judgement to himself.<sup>91</sup>

Rosmini adds a caveat to the above words, namely that those who have received Baptism and the grace which it confers are already living members of the body of Christ and therefore they are in Christ and Christ is in them, but the Eucharist preserves this unity and indwelling just as food preserves the life of the person who already has it. 'To abide' denotes permanence and stability. Just as food restores what the living body loses by daily wear and tear, so the Eucharist removes venial sins, pouring into it new life. Thirdly food enables us to grow and the Eucharist enables us to grow in Christ. Lastly bread gives strength and wine stimulates, in the same way the Eucharist gives us fullness of life, of feeling and of activity, because Christ gives himself to us fully and completely in the Eucharist. Whereas in Baptism we are united to the living body of Christ, the whole and entire Christ is not given to us.

<b>Baptism</b>	<b>Holy Eucharist</b>
Creates spiritual life in us.	Preserves this union in Christ.
The body loses material in daily life. Likewise our spiritual union with Christ suffers through our daily faults.	The Eucharist forgives venial faults, giving us new life.
Food enables our body to grow. Baptism provides for our initial spiritual life and growth.	The Eucharist increases our spiritual growth and union with Christ.
Bread and wine give the body strength, We are united with Christ in Baptism.	The Eucharist gives us fullness of life through the complete gift of himself.

## **Life and Resurrection<sup>92</sup>**

Rosmini recalls the four types of life in which the Christian shares.

<b>The four types of life</b>	<b>Consist in</b>
1. <i>Natural life</i> of Christ.	Union of soul and body and in which we share.
2. <i>The Eucharistic Life</i> of Christ.	In which we share by feeding on his body and blood.
3. <i>The Spiritual Life</i> of Christ.	The theandric union of man and God: for us, the sharing in the grace of Christ through which we perceive the Word and adhere to him through the assent of our will, while still living with a natural life.
4.. <i>The glorious life</i> of Christ.	After his resurrection and ascension and which will begin for us after our bodily resurrection.
The third and fourth lives are supernatural enoblements of the first. St Paul tells us that the soul elevated by grace is a new creation. The eucharistic life is a 'miraculous and mysterious' life.	

Rosmini now resumes his analysis of the resurrection. There is really nothing here which he has not said before and he once again shows the connection of the four types of life with the resurrection.

<b>The Four Types of Resurrection</b>
1. The effect produced by faith and Baptism in which we can say that soul is raised from death.
2. The promise of eternal life to those who eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood. Jesus says that this has already begun ' <i>Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life and I will raise them up on the last day</i> '. <sup>93</sup>
3. The life of the separated soul sustained by the Christ's eucharistic life
4. The glorious resurrection at the end of time when we shall rise with a glorified body.

<sup>92</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXVI, pp. 293–295.

<sup>93</sup> *Jn* 6: 54.

## **Our new life of grace through Baptism**

Rosmini comments on the four meanings of the resurrection in turn.

Firstly, then, as we said earlier, it can mean the effect produced by faith and Baptism. We recall that immortal life was lost through original sin and humanity was deprived of God's supernatural life. We inherit these effects and although our natural life here on earth ends with death, nevertheless those who become Christians and accept the Good News that Jesus has brought us reckon our natural lives to be of no avail, and place all our hope and confidence in the new life which we gain by being incorporated into Christ and living with his life, the life of grace. Rosmini quotes from St Paul's letter to the Romans, *'Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by Baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.'*<sup>94</sup>

The immersion in the water of Baptism represents according to the Apostles, the death of natural corrupted man, the death of sin, for Jesus Christ, with the death of his natural innocent body acquired, as we have seen, the right to justify other men, for the sins of which divine justice was more than fully satisfied. He acquired the right of uniting them to himself, as he so much desired to do by reason of his generous charity, and therefore of enabling man who was dead to supernatural life to rise to this life forming one body with him. This resurrection is symbolised by coming up out of the water in which man had been immersed as in the tomb.<sup>95</sup>

We must therefore act according to the standards of the new life we lead. We have been buried with him in death so that we might walk in newness of life.<sup>96</sup> In the letter to the Colossians we read, *'...when you were buried with him in Baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead.'*<sup>97</sup> And St Paul ends this section by

---

<sup>94</sup> *Rom* 6: 3–11.

<sup>95</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXVI, pp. 294–295.

<sup>96</sup> 'You made the confession that brings salvation and submerged yourselves three times in the water and emerged: by this symbolic action you were secretly re-enacting the burial of Christ three days in the tomb....In one and the same action you died and were born: that water of salvation became both tomb and mother for you.' (*From Instructions to the newly baptised at Jerusalem*: Reading from Thursday of the Easter Octave. The Divine Office. vol. III, Collins 1975).

<sup>97</sup> *Col* 2: 12.

encouraging us to renounce sinful ways. This spiritual life is the pledge of our resurrection. Just as Christ has risen, so we too shall also rise with a natural glorified life. *'For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.... So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus'*. St Peter also tells us that an effect of our Lord's resurrection from the dead is our rising to a life of grace, and that Baptism which was prefigured when those in the ark were saved through the water which, *'now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.'*<sup>98</sup>

### **Our eucharistic nourishment**<sup>99</sup>

In Baptism we receive an initial perception of the Word, an indelible character from which flows sanctifying grace; a type of life communicated to us by the humanity of Christ through his hidden contact with the water when the words are uttered. But in the case of the eucharistic life, we are already incorporated into Christ and we receive into ourselves the complete Christ, body, blood, soul and divinity in the form of food. Just as natural nourishment becomes our flesh and blood, so, too, the body and blood of Christ under the appearances of bread and wine. Both we and Christ have the same term of feeling and corporeal life.<sup>100</sup> As Rosmini says 'from the source of life and grace we derive all life and grace'. Again, persons who are nourished by the Eucharist are not those living with purely natural life, but with a supernatural life with the power of Christ which issues from it, and it is through this that we can be nourished with Christ,

that is, we can make the flesh and blood of Christ the term of our own vital principle. Because, in ordinary nutrition, if there were not in the soul, that is, in the sentient principle, in the subjective principle, the nutritive power, we could not make the food taken in through the mouth our own living flesh and blood, and could not be said to be really eating and truly feeding.<sup>101</sup>

If an unbaptised person or one not in a state of grace receives the Eucharist, such a person will not be nourished by the Eucharist but only by the accidents of bread and wine. In a strict sense he is not 'eating the flesh and drinking the blood' of the Lord. He is not receiving spiritual life from the Eucharist nor the eternal life promised to souls in a state of grace. Baptism on the other hand does not presuppose supernatural life but gives it to the person who has not got it; it comes to the person from without, through an act of God prior to the new human being which it produces.

---

<sup>98</sup> 1 *Pet* 3: 21–22.

<sup>99</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXVII, pp. 295–298.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Reading LXXXVII, pp. 325–328.

<sup>101</sup> Reading LXXVII, p. 296.

Although the reception of the Eucharist is not ‘a rising again’. Yet it has its own resurrection, in that when we die our soul is separated from our body and in order to have life, receive it from the Eucharist in being united with the glorious Christ who said to the Jews, ‘*Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day*’. We enjoy eternal life *now* and we will be raised up to eternal life. But why do we need to be raised if we now already enjoy eternal life? The answer is that here we live with a hidden life. We live, with, as it were, a veil owing to our fallen nature, but when the latter is removed at death we shall see this life most brightly. Rosmini likens our present state to that of the Jews who could not see the Holy of Holies because of the veil. When Jesus Christ died ‘*the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom*’.<sup>102</sup> This symbolised the end of the Old Covenant and the beginning of the New. Here it symbolises our present inability to see beyond the signs we have been given

He lives, but in this world he lives with a hidden life, which shows itself most brightly only at death when the veil of corrupt flesh is taken away from the eyes of the soul; the veil which was signified in ancient times by the veil preventing the people from seeing and entering the ‘Holy of Holies.’ So when Jesus Christ died this veil was rent asunder because when the new and eternal high priest according to the order of Melchizedek, had entered once for all into the Holy of Holies, all who formed one body with him could and necessarily had to enter, according to his loving plan, ‘*I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.*’<sup>103</sup>

Those who, though separated from the body, are one with Christ and the Father, must surely also see God face to face with Christ sharing his glorious life. Rosmini, here does not specify whether this applies to the souls in Purgatory or those who have entered into glory. It would seem logical that the above words apply to those souls who either have gone straight to heaven or who have been purified in Purgatory and now enter into glory.

Rosmini concludes saying that this a true resurrection and that the words of Christ to Martha are fulfilled, ‘*I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live*’.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> Mt 27: 51; Mk 15: 38; Lk 23: 45.

<sup>103</sup> Jn 17: 20–24.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 11: 25.

### **Faith in God's promise**<sup>105</sup>

Faith is indispensable for receiving the Eucharist. When Jesus was speaking to his Jewish listeners he said, *'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent'*.<sup>106</sup> A few verses on he says, *'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty'*.<sup>107</sup> Later he says, *'This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day'*.<sup>108</sup> He thus promises eternal life to those who believe in his Son, but Jesus also promises eternal life to those who eat his body and drink his blood. In fact the two are linked together, the first being the necessary disposition for receiving his body and blood effectively.

But what about those who have faith and yet have not had, nor get, the opportunity to receive the flesh and blood of Jesus which is essential for eternal life. Many people have faith but are not drawn to the Eucharist, not through their own fault but owing to the circumstances of life. What about those who died before the institution of the Blessed Eucharist? Many believers in Christ did not receive the Eucharist. Rosmini says that we are necessarily drawn to the conclusion that those who have not received in this life will do so in the next, obviously not in the same mode as we do here below, as those who have died have no body. We return to the fact that those good people of the Old Covenant had faith in Christ who was to come. Barring some extraordinary revelation, such people would not have known Christ, as Christ had not yet been revealed, but they hoped for a Messiah who would restore all things. Rosmini quotes the Letter to the Hebrews, *'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible'*.<sup>109</sup> that is, Rosmini says, that the things unseen (which are the object of faith, the promised reward and the glory to come) should be made clear and fulfilled and no longer be an object of faith but sight and experience. He again quotes the Letter to the Hebrews, *'All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them'*.<sup>110</sup>

Hence the saints of the Old Testament had good reason to place their faith and hope not in the natural immortality of the soul separated from

---

<sup>105</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXVIII.

<sup>106</sup> *Jn* 6: 29.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>109</sup> *Heb* 11: 3.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 13–16.



the body, which would not give them either light or action, but in the resurrection which God would give them through Jesus Christ, that is, in the restoration of life and a subjective activity by giving a new term to their sensitive and subjective principle, since without a real term there is not strictly speaking an actual life.<sup>111</sup>

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews places their hope in the resurrection of the soul. '*By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac...He considered the fact that God is able even to raise someone from the dead—and figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.*'<sup>112</sup> '*Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection.*'<sup>113</sup>

Those in the Old Testament whose lives had gained them eternal life with God had to wait in Sheol till Christ had come and instituted the Holy Eucharist and had entered into his kingdom. '*Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, without us, be made perfect.*'<sup>114</sup> What God had predestined through the life, death and resurrection of his incarnate Son was that those who die without stain of sin will rise with a eucharistic life and will be admitted to the vision of God without having to wait for the coming of Christ, as those who died during the Old Covenant. Even in this life we enjoy a eucharistic union with Christ and have within us eternal life. This is why receiving Holy Viaticum is so important and receiving the Eucharist frequently.

Rosmini quotes the Council of Trent which speaks of the 'heavenly banquet' of the separated souls and appears to recommend to the faithful devotion to and reception of the Eucharist or alludes to it. 'Finally this Holy Synod with true fatherly affection admonishes, exhorts, begs and beseeches through the profound mercy of our God, that all and each of those who bear the name of Christians would now at length agree and be of one mind in this sign of unity, in this bond of charity, in this symbol of concord: and that, mindful of the great majesty and exceeding love of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave his own beloved soul as the price of our redemption, and gave us his own flesh to eat, they would believe and venerate these sacred mysteries of his body and blood with such constancy and firmness of faith, with such devotion of soul, with

---

<sup>111</sup> Rosmini's description of the departed soul without the sustenance of eucharistic life resembles the Jews' concept of Sheol which was identified with death and finality, and 'utter inactivity; it is less a positive conception of survival than a picturesque denial of all that is meant by life and activity...there is no work, no thought, no knowledge, no wisdom in Sheol' (*Ez.* 9: 10). John L. McKenzie, S. J., *Dictionary of the Bible*, Geoffrey Chapman 1965, *Sheol*, p. 800. McKenzie goes on to refer to *Isa* 14: 9–11 where the kings of the past are depicted motionless on their thrones in Sheol. Yahweh alone can rescue people from Sheol but chooses not to do so. But there is mention in *1 Sam* 2: 6 of this actually happening, '*The Lord kills and brings life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up*'. In the intertestamental period of Judaism, says, McKenzie, Sheol is depicted as a place only for the wicked, the righteous are taken to Paradise. (See pp. 800–801).

<sup>112</sup> *Heb* 11: 17–19.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 39–40.

such piety and worship, as to be able frequently to receive that super-substantial bread, that it may be to them truly the life of the soul, and the perpetual health of their mind; that being invigorated with its strength, they may, after the journeying of this miserable pilgrimage, be able to arrive at their heavenly country, there to eat without any veil, that same bread of angels, which they now eat under the sacred veils.<sup>115</sup>

### **The heavenly banquet**<sup>116</sup>

Reflecting on the words above, we note that both in this world and the next they speak of eating the body of Christ. We shall be united to Christ in the next life in a similar way that food is assimilated and united to our souls in this life. The Council of Trent does not say just that we shall enjoy our life with Christ in next life but that we shall eat him and that it will be the same eucharistic bread as here below but without any veil such as we experience here on earth.<sup>117</sup> This bread is called 'heavenly' in Scripture and Rosmini understands the 'heavenly gift' mentioned in the letter to the Hebrews as referring to the holy Eucharist.<sup>118</sup> The book of Psalms mentions the Manna which prefigured the holy Eucharist, '*Yet he commanded the skies above, and opened the doors of heaven; he rained down on them manna to eat, and gave them the grain of heaven. Mortals ate of the bread of angels; he sent them food in abundance.*'<sup>119</sup> 'And the book of Wisdom says, '*Instead of these things you gave your people food of angels and without their toil you supplied them from heaven with bread ready to eat, providing every pleasure and suited to every taste. For your sustenance manifested your sweetness toward your children; and the bread, ministering to the desire of the one who took it, was changed to suit everyone's liking.*'<sup>120</sup> Rosmini mentions other instances where the manna prefigures the Eucharist.<sup>121</sup>

Christ speaks of those faithful servants who will be found waiting for their Lord when he comes, '*Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them.*'<sup>122</sup> The Fathers understood this eating to be at the hour of our death. This, Rosmini says, is the banquet for those souls who die without stain of sin or for those who have emerged purified from purgatory. He believes that this means the resurrection which occurs in the purified soul to whom Christ reveals and manifests himself and is eaten 'without any veil' as the Council puts it.

---

<sup>115</sup> De Conc. Trid., sess XIII, cap. VIII.

<sup>116</sup> IV<sup>G</sup>, Reading LXXIX, pp. 301–303.

<sup>117</sup> In one of our hymns we sing 'O Bread of heaven beneath this veil, thou does my very God conceal'. St Alphonsus, Hymn 84, Westminster Hymnal, London Burns and Oates Ltd, 1961.

<sup>118</sup> '*For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift...*' Heb 6: 4.

<sup>119</sup> Ps 78: 23–25.

<sup>120</sup> Wis 16: 20–21.

<sup>121</sup> Ps 105: 40; Jdt 5: 15 (Douay); Ex 16: 4.

<sup>122</sup> Lk 12: 37. Rosmini quotes the Latin '*et transiens, ministrabit illis*'. The Douay version of the Bible reads, '*and passing will minister unto them*'.

The resurrection of the soul which Christ speaks about and which passes from death to life, corresponds to this transition of Christ as food, from a concealed state to a revealed state. *'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgement, but has passed from death to life.'*<sup>123</sup> And the two resurrections, that is, this one and the final one are clearly stated by Christ in this passage because, after having said that he who believes in the Father who has sent him has eternal life and passes from death to life, he immediately adds the final resurrection, *'Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.'*<sup>124</sup> And he says that even the dead hear the voice of the Son of God, 'and is now here,' but he does not say that they have already risen, but that they will live, 'those who hear will live,' because salvation and the grace of Christ was given gradually to the departed saints, just as they were communicated little by little to man living on earth in the days of the earthly life of the Saviour. Hence the preaching of Christ which brought light to those on earth must also have brought light to those who were in limbo.<sup>125</sup>

Just as the Pasch indicates a passing of the Angel over the houses and spared those whose door-posts were smeared by the blood of the paschal lamb, so those who are united to Christ are spared absolute death, but pass from death to life, so the the Pasch of the Jews prefigured the Eucharist.

---

<sup>123</sup> *Jn* 5: 24.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>125</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXIX, p. 303. It is interesting that Rosmini makes a distinction here between those who die and go straight to heaven and those who go first to purgatory which the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains as follows:

'1030 All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.

'1031 The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire: 'As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come.' *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. St Pauls, Pocket Edition 1995, Homebush, NSW, pp. 268–269.

The question is, does Rosmini accept that the soul in Purgatory (separated from its earthly body) is nourished by the Eucharist, or must it wait for its purification first? We really know little about purgatory. We must remember that time does not exist for the souls who have passed from this life.

### **The bread of angels**<sup>126</sup>

We must next examine what the expression 'bread of angels' given to the Eucharist means. The angels do not eat and are not nourished on food like human beings; after all they have no body to nourish! They cannot be nourished by the Holy Eucharist in the manner that we are. So how does the Eucharist become food for pure spirits? We are looking for the relationship which Angels have with the eucharistic body and blood of Christ.

As regards ourselves, our soul feels our body by means of the action which the body exerts on it and also any modifications of the body which it experiences (sensations) by external bodies. Our soul is passive with regard to these actions. We experience this phenomenon very easily if we suffer from tinnitus in old age. We are quite powerless to stop this noise. More generally, though, we are constantly stimulated by sounds and sight etc., coming through the senses. We may enjoy listening to music and going to concerts where we not only hear it but also see it being made.

'Angels cannot be stimulated actively by bodies but, on the contrary, they pass on to bodies their power of stimulation, hence they too are actively connected to bodies by means of what they do to them. Angels, therefore, can be said to have a relation with the Body and Blood of Christ in a manner which is appropriate to their angelic nature. Given that the Bible speaks of "bread from heaven" or "bread of Angels" these expressions must have a real meaning and it can only be that Angels do have a special contact/relation/closeness to bodies (and the Body of Christ) which by means of analogy has a real truth behind it.'<sup>127</sup> We can speak only analogically because we have no experience of pure substances.

The Jews called the manna, 'the food of angels' this is simply a reverent expression, but the true bread from heaven is a reality and we could say that the manna foreshadowed the reality which would come later. *'So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat".' Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty".'*<sup>128</sup>

### **Holy Viaticum**

Why does the Church recommend us to receive the Body of Christ at the hour of death if all the just will receive it after death, even those who did not receive the Eucharist at all before death?

---

<sup>126</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXX, p. 304–306.

<sup>127</sup> Antonio Belsito, Unpublished quote.

<sup>128</sup> *Jn* 6: 30–35.

The Council of Trent, above quoted, distinctly explains it in the following words: 'that it may be to them truly the life of the soul and the perpetual health of their mind, that strengthened by its efficacy they may be able, after this miserable pilgrimage, to reach the heavenly country. The passage from this life to the next, which man undergoes at death, is as perilous as it is momentous, because on it depends the eternal state of the soul, so no means must be neglected by man of obtaining help and comfort at this time. The help and comfort that the eucharistic food gives is the most powerful of all. The bread and water given by the angel to the prophet Elijah on his flight from Ahab was a symbol of this, about which is written, *'He got up and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.'*<sup>129</sup>

We recall the teaching of the Church that the Eucharist cleanses us from venial sin, strengthens our charity and enables us to break our disordered attachment to creatures and root us in Christ.

Note that the Council calls it the 'life of the soul' and this reminds us of what was said earlier, that there is a natural death of the soul when it is separated from the body so that, unless it is nourished by the eucharistic life, it will remain in a state of limbo, like the holy ones of the Old Covenant waiting for the resurrection of the Lord and the imparting to them of eucharistic life.

But Rosmini believes that there is a difference between those receiving Viaticum<sup>130</sup> at the point of death and those who do not receive it. He distinguishes those who die simply with a Baptism of desire, those who are baptised and die in a state of grace without receiving viaticum; those who have received Baptism, die in a state of grace and receive viaticum.

All three types are saved.	
Those who die simply with a Baptism of desire. They have a right to life but have not got it in fact.	They pass through the natural 'death' of the soul, like the good people of the Old Covenant but unlike them who spent years in limbo, are immediately raised by Christ.
Those who are baptised, die in a state of grace but do not receive Viaticum. They possess the life of the soul in right and in fact.	They share only initially in the life of Christ. They do not pass through the 'death' of the soul but pass through the initial state of life immediately to full life with Christ.

<sup>129</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXX, p. 305. 1 Kings 19: 8. (See quote pp. 156–7).-

<sup>130</sup> 'Food for the journey' and therefore the nourishment of the Eucharist at the point of death.

Those who are baptised and dying in a state of grace receive Viaticum.	They suffer only death of the body and in the next life have that fullness of life which demands to be revealed, without them passing through any lower degree.
--	---

### **The state of the wayfarer and the blessed in heaven<sup>131</sup>**

Whereas we wayfarers feed on the body and blood of the Lord who remains hidden, the blessed in heaven are nourished by the same divine food without any veil obscuring their vision as the Council of Trent explains.<sup>132</sup>

When Jesus Christ had laid down his mortal life and his divine body was buried, and afterwards was raised to life, he was taken away from the eyes of human beings at his ascension into heaven. Man incorporated into Christ shares all the vicissitudes of Christ and therefore has died, has been buried, has risen and ascended to heaven in spirit with Christ, as a member of Christ. He does this with his interior new life acquired by him being prevented from doing so fully and bodily by the obstacle of the natural man, so long as he lives with the life of Adam, and has not laid aside his mortal flesh. He has not yet received his new and glorious body with the final resurrection. Hence, for the time being he must do all this by means of the faith by which he lives and through which he does all these things without having full knowledge and a clear vision. So the Christian life which is in Christ is called by St. Paul the 'hidden life.' This life will be revealed, it will be animated by most intense feeling, it will shine with an ineffable light, firstly at the death of the body when the first resurrection, which is that of the soul, takes place; afterwards with the resurrection of our own glorious body at the end of time, which will be the second resurrection. So St. Paul says, '*So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.*'<sup>133</sup>

Rosmini explains this passage of St Paul as follows: Our senses, corruptible and material as they are, are not fit for seeing or perceiving Christ, nor are they suitable for seeing God in whom Christ is, and the soul is not yet ready to see God, therefore Christ our true life is hidden in God, '*in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*'.<sup>134</sup> One day what is now hidden from us and possessed, as it were, in germ

<sup>131</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXXI, pp. 306–309.

<sup>132</sup> See above pp. 156–7.

<sup>133</sup> *Col* 3:1–4. Reading LXXXI, pp. 306–307. See also Augustine on *Ps* 61: 2–3, regarding our association with Christ, cf. The Divine Office, Readings, Sunday Lent Week 1.

<sup>134</sup> *Col* 2: 3.

will one day be revealed in us. In the meantime we must renounce whatever is not of God in our lives and rather relish heavenly things. *‘For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet “in a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay; but my righteous one will live by faith. My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back.” But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved.’*<sup>135</sup> And we can say with St Paul, *‘So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal’.*<sup>136</sup>

Rosmini comments on another passage in the Letter to the Hebrew where we are exhorted to have faith that we shall eventually enter the Holy of Holies, which we are prevented from doing at present because of the veil which prevents us seeing inside. This has been opened by the blood of Christ through his death and we too can enter, if we lay down our flesh as Christ has done. *‘Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful’.*<sup>137</sup>

Rosmini concludes this reflection by seeing Christ as leading us wayfarers along this path which leads to the innermost part of the sanctuary. St Peter says, *‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope (here is the living way of St. Paul) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (since man is made new by the resurrection) and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time’.*<sup>138</sup>

By last time is understood not only the last day of each individual which is the day of their death, but that which is the last day of the world which is the final resurrection. There is therefore an ‘imperishable inheritance’ in heaven for us (ἐν οὐρανοῖς εἰς ἡμᾶς) revealed up there but at present hidden from us. This inheritance is Christ, invisible to us as wayfarers on earth, but visible and resplendent to the saints, so that when he appears like this to us we shall truly have reached heaven.<sup>139</sup>

---

<sup>135</sup> Heb 10: 36–39.

<sup>136</sup> 2 Cor 4: 16–18.

<sup>137</sup> Heb 10: 19–23.

<sup>138</sup> 1 Pet 3: 5.

<sup>139</sup> IVG, Reading LXXXI, pp. 308–309.

## **Our life of faith**<sup>140</sup>

Rosmini digresses for a moment to consider what he calls ‘the progressive growth of the divine and eternal life of human beings’. He explains that in the life of faith the darkness is mitigated by some light even in this life which will give way to a full and clear vision in the next. Meantime we can have a faith ‘mixed with greater or lesser light of divine feeling’.<sup>141</sup> In the letter to the Romans St Paul says, ‘*For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, “The one who is righteous will live by faith”*’<sup>142</sup>; as if to say from a less enlightened to a more enlightened faith. Thus his converts would progress from a more obscure faith to a more enlightened one. Moreover he calls it light, clarity or glory as when he says, ‘*And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.*’<sup>143</sup> Rosmini quotes the Protestant reformer, Johannes Deodatus who translates the word ‘*speculantes*’ as ‘contemplating in a mirror’ which, he says, best corresponds to the Latin ‘*videmus nunc per speculum*’. He goes on to compare the greater light of the Christian faith with that of those who lived before the Incarnation.

The greater light which Christians receive consists in the contact of the divine humanity with our humanity. Christ gives us part of his own life and revives our subjective life by a ‘physical though invisible and ineffable union with us’: Adam lacked this.<sup>144</sup> The so-called *character* that Adam received was an objective and initial perception of the divine Word but the character bestowed on the Christian is subjective as well because it is the perception of Christ the object as Word and Christ the subject as *man*. It is true, of course that the Word is person but as such the Word can be given to us only in the mind in an objective way. But in the Incarnation the Word took to himself a human nature and

the humanity of Christ through the divine power which informs it, could act physically and in a subjective mode on our humanity, as a friend acts on a friend, and a husband towards his wife; and the life of Christ as man assumed by the divinity could act on our subjective life and impart to it something of his power and vitality; because life is communicated, as we see, in generation, in nutrition and less obviously in yet other phenomena particularly in those of love.<sup>145</sup>

Rosmini believes that not only are our objective powers uplifted, strengthened and divinised, but also our subjective ones. All this is a notable difference between the life of grace of Adam in the state of innocence and the life of the Christian born again in

---

<sup>140</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXXII, pp.309–312.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 309.

<sup>142</sup> *Rom* 1: 17.

<sup>143</sup> 2 *Cor* 3: 18.

<sup>144</sup> Reading LXXXII, p. 310.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.



Christ. This is what St Paul means in the quotation given above where he says that we are ‘transformed into the same image’ and in his letter to the Galatians, ‘it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me’,<sup>146</sup> and to the Philippians, ‘For to me, living is Christ’.<sup>147</sup> In the Letter to the Hebrews the author says, ‘For we are made partakers of Christ: yet so, if we hold the beginning of his substance firm unto the end’.<sup>148</sup> Using this text from ‘the Vulgate Rosmini argues that with the words ‘his substance’ the author is speaking of the subsistence or substance of Christ in us from the first words, ‘For we are made partakers of Christ’. By partaking of the human-divine life of Christ we are transformed into his very image, in a certain sense we are many Christs living in him, from the force of the word ‘image’.<sup>149</sup>

We feel as Christ feels, we share his likes and dislikes, will as he will, and thus we become loveable to the Father who loves in us those same things which are in Christ and us; and he loves Christ in us. Hence the Saviour said to his disciples when he promised them the personal coming of the Holy Spirit, ‘I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but will tell you plainly of the Father. On that day you will ask in my name. I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.’<sup>150</sup>

### **Comments on the above text<sup>151</sup>**

Rosmini now makes some comments on Christ’s words with regard to those who lived before the Incarnation and those who still adhere to the Old Covenant. As will be seen much of what he says has already been said earlier.

1. What Jesus says, namely that he will speak openly and clearly of the Father, shows that the faith of the Christians is much more illuminated, since they share in the subjective life of Christ. As St Paul says in that wonderful passage in 2 Corinthians chapter 3 ‘we are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another’.<sup>152</sup> This glory did not belong to the Jews of the Old Covenant because Christ had not come into the world. So his humanity could not act on their humanity as it

---

<sup>146</sup> *Gal* 2: 20.

<sup>147</sup> *Phil* 1: 21.

<sup>148</sup> *Heb* 3: 14 (Douay). This translation does not appear in modern versions of the Bible. The NRSV says, ‘For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end.’ So this text hardly supports Rosmini’s reasoning. This does not mean that his actual reasoning is wrong, merely that in modern times he couldn’t cite this text in support of it.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Chapter 3, p. 12. *IVG*, Reading LIII, p. 207, note 97. Again, Rosmini has quoted from the Douay version. But some modern versions e.g., NJB and NIV use the word ‘being’ which Rosmini might well have interpreted as God’s subsistence.

<sup>150</sup> *Jn* 16: 25–27. *IVG*, Reading LXXXII, p. 312.

<sup>151</sup> Reading LXXXIII, pp. 312–315.

<sup>152</sup> 2 *Cor* 3: 18 (RSV).

does with us. St Paul says that by coming into the world Christ has ‘illuminated life’ and this grace has now been manifested. ‘*It has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*’<sup>153</sup> As explained earlier, the life of the Old Covenant was not illuminated because it was obscure and objective. The new supernatural feeling which is effected through the perception of the Word was lacking. But under the New Covenant those subjects who were granted the perception of the Word were given that immortal feeling which he had in his humanity. ‘He destroyed death and restored life’.<sup>154</sup> The state of the separated soul before the coming of Christ was, as we pointed out earlier, dead in so far as it could perform no acts without its bodily term.<sup>155</sup> Christ destroyed death so that those who now lived in Christ would on the last day be raised with a glorious body. The Jews were told many things about Christ and therefore had supernatural faith through an interior communication of the Word which was more or less clear but also obscure.<sup>156</sup> Christ said when he came into the world, ‘*I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world.*’<sup>157</sup> As he said to his disciples he was like, ‘*the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.*’<sup>158</sup> Rosmini points out that if the truths proclaimed to the Jews had been external words only without being accompanied by an interior light of faith their state could not have been a supernatural one, even though the revelations had issued from a supernatural source. 2. He again points out no matter how many prayers and sacrifices were offered by the Jews, this would not have saved them from the everlasting death of the soul. Christ had first to conquer death and lead them out of the prison of Hades. But Christ prayed for them and was heard, ‘*saying to the prisoners, “Come out”, to those who are in darkness, “Show yourselves.”*’<sup>159</sup> The law of the Old Covenant, no matter how perfectly observed, could not save those who obeyed it, but only the merits of Jesus Christ through faith; they had not yet the subjective life of Christ. But for those who had put on the new life of Christ through contact with his divine humanity, the Father loved them with the same love as he loves his Son, ‘*because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.*’<sup>160</sup> The interior man is likened by St Paul to a garment and the lack of this life to nakedness. This is very suitable for soul separated from the body which is deprived of its natural term, if God does not give it some other real term in a supernatural way (the eucharistic life), thus clothing it with the life of Christ. The interior

---

<sup>153</sup> 2 *Tim* 1: 10.

<sup>154</sup> Eucharistic Prayer 4 (2010).

<sup>155</sup> However, it was not deprived of intelligence and had objective life because of its intuition of ideal being.

<sup>156</sup> Cf. *IVG*, Reading XXXVII, p. 168 ff; Reading LXXXVIII, 171 ff; Reading XLII 185 ff.

<sup>157</sup> *Mt* 13: 35. Jesus also said to his disciples, ‘*But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.*’ *Ibid.* 16–17.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.* 52.

<sup>159</sup> *Isa* 49: 9.

<sup>160</sup> *Jn* 16: 27.

and spiritual life is also likened to a house which persists when this earthly dwelling of our body is laid down in death. *‘For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling— if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.’*<sup>161</sup>

3. The words from John chapter 16 mentioned above, are spoken in the context of his sending the Holy Spirit and refer to him. He enables those who do not oppose him to become children of God. As we said earlier, such people *‘are transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another’*. We can understand these words as the rising from virtue to virtue in this present life and of passing from the internal glory of the just Christians in this life to the complete splendour and glory which they will have in the next.

4. And since the Holy Spirit is essential divine love and therefore diffuses in us that charity which renews and sanctifies our will according to these words, *‘God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us’*,<sup>162</sup> and again, *‘it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God’*,<sup>163</sup> therefore Jesus Christ says that the Father loves us, because we love him. *‘The Father himself loves you, because you have loved me’*,<sup>164</sup> since there is no subjective life where there is not at least habitual charity, as the Holy Spirit who unites Christ with our souls in this subjective life would not be present. Charity then (far more than a simple, natural and accidental effect because the Holy Spirit is subsistent love) has Christ incarnate as the object of its faith. Hence the Lord adds to *‘because you loved me’* these other words *‘and you have believed that I came from God’*. The word ‘came’ does not simply mean the procession of the Word from the Father, but also his visible mission in the world and his Incarnation, as the words which follow state, *‘I came from the Father and have come into the world’*,<sup>165</sup> which correspond to the words of St. John *‘and the Word was with God’*.<sup>166</sup>

### **The Glory that is to be revealed**<sup>167</sup>

Rosmini comments again on the words of St Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians, *‘For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as*

---

<sup>161</sup> 2 Cor 5: 1–5.

<sup>162</sup> Rom 5: 5.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. 8: 16.

<sup>164</sup> Jn 16: 27.

<sup>165</sup> Jn 16: 28.

<sup>166</sup> IVG, Reading LXXXIII, p. 315.

<sup>167</sup> Reading LXXXIV, 315–319.

*your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness", who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*<sup>168</sup> The spirit of the Gospel adds great light to the ancient faith and on the spiritual life and knowledge. St Paul says '*in the face of Jesus Christ*' because the Holy Spirit makes us understand and feel and therefore love Jesus Christ, God and man who has been sent into the world by the Father. But this light, ineffable though it is, is veiled in this present life in comparison with what will be seen when the veil of our bodies will be torn aside, '*because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal*'.<sup>169</sup>

The faith of the New Covenant is more splendid than that of the Old because unlike the ancient faith it had to be revealed in the Gospel. St Paul says, '*Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed*'.<sup>170</sup> He also points out that he was set apart to proclaim the Christ that had been revealed to him, '*God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles*'.<sup>171</sup> St Peter speaks about the glory which is to be revealed.<sup>172</sup> In the letter to the Colossians we read, '*I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ*'.<sup>173</sup> This mystery of Christ has been proclaimed, believed and partly revealed according to the mode of which we are capable so long as we are confined to this body of ours. St Paul says that this message has been revealed to the saints, that is, to people who are open to it, but not to others. It is clear that he speaks of a supernatural cognition and revelation which those who believe can understand and penetrate but unbelievers only understand the letter of the message.

In his first letter to the Corinthians St Paul makes it even more explicit, 'But, as it is written, "*What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him*"—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual. Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are discerned spiritually. Those who are spiritual

---

<sup>168</sup> 2 Cor 4: 6.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.* 18.

<sup>170</sup> Gal 3: 23.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.* 1: 15.

<sup>172</sup> 1 Pet 5: 1.

<sup>173</sup> Col 1: 25–28.

*discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.*<sup>174</sup> The wonderful thing is that the cognition which Christians have in this world comprises everything that they will have in the next with greater clarity because as St Paul says, they possess the Spirit of God *'who searches everything, even the depths of God'*.

The passing from this life to the next is called a revelation. St Luke, Rosmini observes, describes two states, the present one with Christ's words, *'Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, "The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you"'*<sup>175</sup> Then he goes on to speak of the end time. People will be carrying on with their daily life, *'and it will be like that when the Son of Man is revealed'*.<sup>176</sup> The reason why the Scriptures make more mention of the revelation of Christ at the end of the world than what occurs at our own death is perhaps that it is more solemn; our private glory is an individual matter, whereas the general resurrection affects us all, the whole Christian body, the whole Church.

In the famous well-known passage from St Paul's letter to the Romans we read about our passage from our present condition to the state of glory or own revelation, as sons and daughters of God, the revelation of glory in us as in his words, *'I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God...in hope because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God...but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.'*<sup>177</sup> In these last words namely that *'we await for our adoption as children, the redemption of our bodies'*, St Paul speaks of the final completion of our glory, when we shall rise again with our glorified bodies.

Rosmini adds that we say we are free in Christ now, but also at the end of time. For instance St Paul says, *'So then, friends, we are children, not of the slave but of the free woman. For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.'*<sup>178</sup> This refers to our freedom now, in Christ. But as above he speaks of creation being set free, obtaining the glorious liberty of the children of God, this is the freedom we shall acquire at our rising in glory. Our freedom at the present time is complete freedom of spirit but joined to the bondage of our earthly corruptible bodies. And there is that inner conflict resulting from original sin, the effects of which are still with us. Similarly we have already been adopted as children of God as regards our spirit, *'For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!"'*<sup>179</sup>

---

<sup>174</sup> 1 Cor 2: 9–15.

<sup>175</sup> Lk 17: 20–21.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>177</sup> Rom 8: 18–23 (RSV).

<sup>178</sup> Gal 4: 31–5: 1.

<sup>179</sup> Rom 8: 14–15.

The Christian, therefore, possesses all. All is contained in faith and in spiritual knowledge of the man who is in Christ, according to the spirit of holiness; but everything is veiled and in a mode of feeling which we do not reach; or we arrive at it in a weak manner through the generating reflection of knowledge. When we lay the body aside, and, more completely, when it will be restored to us and glorified, all will be unveiled, manifest and shining with glory for us.<sup>180</sup>

### **The Word became flesh**<sup>181</sup>

The veil which hides the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist is, as we know, the accidents of bread and wine which persist after transubstantiation. The substance of the body and blood of Christ does not fall under the senses but the accidents still affect us as if the bread and wine had not been consecrated. E.g., the body of Christ still looks and feels and tastes like a bread wafer and the blood of Christ still smells, looks, and tastes like wine. These are not eucharistic effects. The body and blood of Christ do not naturally through physical laws produce any effect on our body. But when Jesus lived on earth his human body was a sensible one and acted on people in the same way as any other body according to ordinary physical laws. This is not the case with the eucharistic body of Christ in which such laws are suspended. The eucharistic effects depend solely on the will and power of Christ according to moral laws. So those who are not baptised or who are not in a state of grace will not receive any effects from the Eucharist apart from accidental ones as mentioned above. The eucharistic effects produced in those who receive the Eucharist will depend on their dispositions, so that the better disposed we are the more beneficial will be the nourishment we receive. The effects are primarily the work of the Holy Spirit. *'It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.'*<sup>182</sup>

In explaining how Christ with his Spirit, produces these effects in us, we must first digress and consider the hypostatic union of the two natures subsisting in the one person of Christ.

The supreme agent in Christ is not simply the divine Word, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, but the person of Christ, that is, the divine person made incarnate, since the person of the intelligent individual is the supreme operative principle who is in it. Now we have to ask how the divine person of the Word unites to himself a

---

<sup>180</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXXIV, p. 319.

<sup>181</sup> Reading LXXXV, pp. 319–322.

<sup>182</sup> *Jn* 6: 63. Rosmini writes *S*piritus with the 's' in upper case as shown above. But this does not appear in some English texts. In the above rendering (NSRV) it is spelt with an 's' in lower case, thus '*spirit*', also in RSV and NJB. But it is spelt '*S*piritus' in NIV, and both the New Jerome Biblical Commentary on John's Gospel (Pheme Perkins) and Francis Maloney in his commentary on John's Gospel interpret '*spirit*' as referring to the Holy Spirit. Cf. *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Edited by Raymond E. Brown S.S. et al, Geoffrey Chapman, 1997, John 61, 102, p. 963 and Maloney *Op. cit.*, p. 228.

human nature? The divine Word does not experience any change through this union because he is immutable and there are no accidents in him of any sort. Firstly as we have said above<sup>183</sup> all things exist in the Word not only *ideally* but also *really* in an objective mode, and among these things is the humanity of Christ. Of course there is not as yet any hypostatic union otherwise the Word would be united with all things which would be absurd. The objective existence is always divine. Created things have only a subjective existence. Therefore things in their objective existence are not things which exist simply in themselves which would make them real creatures. Their objective existence is absolutely real in the Word but not in themselves. In the creatures themselves their proper existence is subjective so they are able to be in the Word without their actually existing.

So creatures in their objective existence alone do not exist in themselves and when they subjectively exist they do not necessarily apprehend the Word, although the Word has them in himself objectively; and objective and subjective existence are two modes of the same being.

In order that the Word assume to himself and be united with an intelligent creature in so far as this exists in itself, it is not enough that he possess it objectively, in himself, but it is necessary that he unite that creature subjectively to himself. So the Word united to himself a human nature in an individual hypostatically. The human nature which the Word assumed was moved and governed, as by its own supreme principle, by the person of the Word. The subjective communication of God to humanity is the work of the Holy Spirit: the Word became flesh through the action of the Holy Spirit, The angel said to her, *'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.'*<sup>184</sup> Christ also calls himself *'the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world'*.<sup>185</sup> Logically speaking the consecration of his humanity came at the same time as he sent into it the Word who unites it hypostatically to himself. Rosmini cites scripture. St Paul says that Christ, *'was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness'*.<sup>186</sup> *'The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent to bring good news to the oppressed.'*<sup>187</sup> *'Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness.'*<sup>188</sup> *And in the Acts of the Apostles we read, 'Jesus, whom you anointed.'*<sup>189</sup> *'How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit.'*<sup>190</sup>

Rosmini believes that in the humanity of Christ, the human will was so overtaken by the Holy Spirit to adhere to objective Being, that is, to the Word, that it surrendered the direction of the man entirely to it and the Word made flesh took over its direction.

---

<sup>183</sup> *IVG*, Reading XXXV, p. 163ff.

<sup>184</sup> *Lk* 1: 35.

<sup>185</sup> *Jn* 10: 36.

<sup>186</sup> *Rom* 1: 4.

<sup>187</sup> *Isa* 61: 1. Cf. *Lk* 4: 18.

<sup>188</sup> *Ps* 45: 7. Cf. *Heb* 1: 9.

<sup>189</sup> *Acts* 4: 27.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 10: 38.

The human will and the other powers were subordinate to the will of the Word which as first principle did everything or through the other powers with its consent. So the human will ceased to be personal in the man and what is person in other human beings remained the nature in Christ. All these operations of the Spirit were contemporaneous, complete in an instant, in the instant of the Incarnation.

In conclusion Rosmini says,

The Word then, made flesh through the work of the Holy Spirit extended its union to all the powers and the flesh itself, so that St. John could say: 'the Word made flesh.' So he sent his Holy Spirit into them and into other men, first the gifts, and afterwards the very person that he might suggest to them practically what he had said to them, as it were, theoretically. And the mission of the Holy Spirit, the sanctifier of Christ's humanity always proceeds from the Word, whether as that which is conceived logically as preliminary to the Incarnation or that which is conceived logically after it; the first coming from the Word on his own, the second (identical with the first) from the same Word united to humanity.<sup>191</sup>

### **Justification and Baptism<sup>192</sup>**

Rosmini discusses the work of the Holy Spirit in our regeneration from original sin. In the case of adults the work of the Holy Spirit precedes our regeneration.

The Council of Trent speaks of those gifts and graces which dispose adults for justification in which the divine calling firstly consists.

<b>The Council of Trent on Justification</b>
<p>'The Synod furthermore declares that, in adults, the beginnings of the said Justification is to be derived from the prevenient grace of God, through Jesus Christ, that is to say, from his vocation, whereby, without any merits existing on their part, they are called; in order that those who by their sins were alienated from God, may be disposed through his quickening and assisting grace, to convert themselves to their own justification, by freely assenting to and co-operating with that said grace; in such a way that, God touches the heart of man by illumination of the Holy Spirit, nor does man do absolutely nothing, while he receives that inspiration; but he is not able by his own free will without the grace of God to move himself unto justice in his sight.'<sup>193</sup> The next stage is faith. 'Now they (adults) are disposed towards this justice when excited and assisted</p>

---

<sup>191</sup> *IV/G*, Reading LXXXV, p. 322.

<sup>192</sup> Reading LXXXVI, p. 323–325.

<sup>193</sup> De Conc. Trid., sess. VI, cap. V. Prevenient grace is grace given gratuitously by God as the human will, due to original sin, is too weak to co-operate with God without being disposed by him to do so.



by divine grace, conceiving faith by hearing, they are freely moved towards God, believing those things to be true which God has revealed and promised, and this especially, that God justifies the impious by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; and when understanding themselves to be sinners, they, by turning themselves, from fear of divine justice, whereby they are profitably aroused, to consider the mercy of God, are raised to hope, confiding that God will be merciful to them for Christ's sake; and they begin to love him as the fountain of all justice; and are therefore moved against sins by a certain hatred and detestation, namely, by that penance which must be performed before Baptism; lastly when they intend to receive Baptism, to begin a new life, and to keep the commandments of God.<sup>194</sup>

These actions of the Holy Spirit by which the adult is disposed to justification through Baptism occur also in babies so that at the instant that they are baptised they also receive these graces. The Word then through Baptism unites himself as *real object* to the mind of the baptised and if the person is disposed to acknowledge him and no obstacle is placed in the way the person is sanctified and adopted as a child of God and made a co-heir with Christ.<sup>195</sup> The Council of Trent thus mentions that the justification which follows Baptism, 'is not merely the remission of sins but also the sanctification and renewal of the inner man through the voluntary reception of the grace and of the gifts'.<sup>196</sup> We are made just through the merits of the passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ when the charity of God is poured into us by the Holy Spirit.<sup>197</sup> The divine Word is impressed on the intellect not as subject, as an Incarnation, but as object. It is a *real union* of the human person with the incarnate Word. We are members of the Mystical Body with Christ our head. The will is sanctified and acquires a new supernatural activity, so the person is renewed and regenerated. St James says, '*In fulfilment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.*'<sup>198</sup> And St Peter says, '*You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.*'<sup>199</sup>

Now as we have said before, we believe it probable enough that the vital power of Christ is communicated to the Baptismal water through a hidden contact with his glorious body in virtue of, and at the same time as, the words which are the form of the sacrament, are pronounced; that the water, touching the body of him who is baptised, through his own faith or that of the Church, communicates the power of Christ, which,

---

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, cap. VI.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. J.A.D., *Our Light and Our Salvation*, chapter 15, 'The Sacramental Character of the New Covenant', pp. 204 ff.

<sup>196</sup> De Conc. Trid., sess. VII, cap. VI.

<sup>197</sup> Cf. *Rom* 5: 5.

<sup>198</sup> *Jas* 1: 18.

<sup>199</sup> *1 Pet* 1: 23.

passing from the body to the soul and the spirit, ultimately renews the superior part of man, impressing on his mind, the Word.<sup>200</sup>

Now in Baptism the water touches the body momentarily and is the vehicle of the power of Christ but the water remains water. But in the holy Eucharist the bread and wine are not just touched by the body but assumed and transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ. They remain some time within us though we are touched only by the accidents which remain after transubstantiation. These are digested and assimilated into our bodily substance. But the body and blood of Christ which exist under these accidents produce their spiritual effects in the soul and the spirit of those who are well-disposed. They make a spiritual and corporeal insensible contact and the life of Christ is communicated to our life through this spiritual contact.

### **Our reception of the Eucharist<sup>201</sup>**

When we receive the Eucharist we receive the effects of the Holy Spirit who is subsistent love dwelling within through grace. Now how do these effects occur? Rosmini gives us his theory as to what happens. We have already said that we are nourished on the Eucharist because we can make the flesh and blood of Christ the term of our own vital (or the same thing here, sentient) principle.

The flesh and blood of Christ, into which the substance of the bread and wine are changed is the term of the sentient principle of Christ. Now this flesh and this blood in the way that they exist in the Eucharist can become also the term of the sentient principle of man who receives them. The substance of the bread and wine have ceased entirely to be the substance of bread and wine and have become the true flesh and the true blood of Christ, when Christ makes it the term of his sentient principle and so enlivens it with his life after the manner that occurs in nutrition. Here the bread which we eat and the wine which we drink in its nutritive part when assimilated into our flesh and our blood, is truly transubstantiated and is no longer as it was at first, bread and wine, but is really our flesh and our blood, because it has become the term of our sensitive principle. Understanding transubstantiation in this way we can more easily perceive and determine what the Eucharistic Body of Christ is. Because although Christ has only one body and now a glorious one, yet when transubstantiation occurs one can understand how there is united and incorporated into the glorious Body some part which is both indivisible and equally glorious. And this added part is the transubstantiated substance of the bread and wine which forms one thing only with the

---

<sup>200</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXXVI, p. 325. Baptism impresses the indelible character placing us in communication with the Word by our understanding. Through the grace given to us we are placed in communication with the Holy Spirit by means of our will. (*IVG*, Reading LXXXVII, pp. 325–326).

<sup>201</sup> *IVG*, Reading LXXXVII, pp. 325–328.

glorious body of Christ, just as a portion of our flesh and blood forms one thing only with our body. And it can be understood what it is that becomes the common term of the sentient principle of man who receives the eucharistic food in the grace of God.

There is, of course the whole body of Christ in the Eucharist because the body of Christ is one and indivisible. Where there is a part there is also the whole. We receive the whole body of Christ. But only the part which corresponds to the portion of the bread and wine transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ becomes the term of our sentient principle. The substance of bread and wine is transubstantiated into the body and blood of the Lord but the remainder would be united through concomitance. Rosmini does not think this is contrary to Catholic Doctrine which states that it is of faith that the *whole* of the substance of bread and wine is transubstantiated into the body and blood, but not that it is transubstantiated into the whole glorious body and blood of Christ. The Council of Trent says, 'It has therefore always been held in the Church of God and this holy Synod now declares anew that through consecration of the bread and wine there comes about a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood.'<sup>202</sup>

Transubstantiation
The substance of the bread and wine is made the term of Christ's sensitive principle and becomes the body and blood of Christ.
This body and blood becomes the term of our sensitive principle when we receive the body and blood in Holy Communion, being assimilated by us after the manner of nutrition.

Our communion with the body and blood of Christ is a communion with his eucharistic life which as we said earlier does not cease even at the time of his death.<sup>203</sup> The Eucharist is, therefore, called the living bread. The Eucharist, the 'new and eternal covenant' in our eucharistic prayers, is the object of a priesthood, '*through the power of an indestructible life. For it is attested of him "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek"*'.<sup>204</sup> This, of course, applies to the resurrected Christ but is more suitably applied to him prior to his death, bearing in mind that he offered bread and wine at the Last Supper as St Ignatius says, 'breaking one and the same bread, which is the *medicine*

---

<sup>202</sup> De Conc.Trident. sess. XIII, cap. IV. It might be objected that on this theory that the sensitive principle of Christ and that of the recipient have the same term, therefore they become one sensitive principle. This is absurd and would be contrary to the faith. The fact is that the two sentient terms are not identical because the sensitive animating principle of Christ has as its term his whole body but that of the recipient has as its term only that part corresponding to the transubstantiated substance of bread and wine i.e., the part corresponding to the accidents of bread and wine taking part in the nutrition of the recipient.

<sup>203</sup> Cf. *IVG*, Reading LXIX, p. 137 above.

<sup>204</sup> *Heb* 7: 16–17.

of immortality, and the antidote to prevent us from dying, but [which causes] us to live for ever in Jesus Christ.<sup>205</sup> And the Council of Trent calls it, ‘an ineffable and divine benefit whereby the victory and triumph of his death are represented’.<sup>206</sup>

### **The Eucharist as the sign of unity of the faithful with Christ<sup>207</sup>**

The Fathers and Councils call the Eucharist the ‘sign of unity’ and it is an effective one; it is an agent of the unity it signifies. This unity is twofold, that of the faithful with Christ and that of the faithful with one another.

The union of the recipient of the Eucharist with Christ is a sublime one, because, although Christ is not identified with the person, a portion of the sensitive life of Christ is identified in a certain way with a portion of the life of the recipient, because these two lives have a portion of their bodily term identical. ‘Christ and the recipient feel as a portion of their body the same eucharistic body’.<sup>208</sup> Those who have not received Baptism would feel only the accidents, and the body and blood of Christ remain ineffective. The communication of the two lives and the partial identification of the two feelings do not occur. The sensitive life of Christ is united to his intellectual life and the person of the Word is united to both, in other words the entire humanity of Christ is united to the person of the Word so those who share in the sensitive life of Christ as explained above, share also in the power and divinity of the whole Christ who sends his Spirit of love into the just. The Eucharist is also called the bond of charity.

And as love has several degrees, but the greatest is that in which the lovers are united substantially in the strictest way in which nature grants them, and both rejoice in this union, as if with an undivided feeling; so it is clear that the union of the faithful with Christ by means of the Eucharist being substantial and real, even so far as having partly the same term of life, is the greatest union which could be conceived according to human nature and the condition of this present life. Therefore this Sacrament, as it is the greatest pledge of the love of Christ towards human beings, so it contains the most intimate act of love between the just and Christ. And that love is not simply ideal and spiritual but real, substantial, super-natural and vitally corporeal.<sup>209</sup>

The non-baptised who receive the Eucharist do not receive either the Sacrament nor the inner grace of the Sacrament (*res sacramenti*). They communicate only with the accidents in a natural way. The baptised receive the sacrament and in a state of grace

<sup>205</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistola ad Ephesios*, cap. XX.

<sup>206</sup> De Conc. Trid., sess. XIII, ch. V.

<sup>207</sup> *IV/G*, Reading LXXXVIII, pp. 328–322.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 330–331.

the inner grace of the sacrament. If they are not in a state of grace they receive the sacrament only. They have the Word intellectually in their mind but they are not sanctified by it as the Word does not send the Holy Spirit or his grace into their will which constitutes their person. The Word impressed in their mind is completed with the flesh and blood which they receive, that is, the humanity of Christ which was not yet given in baptism, but those who are not in a state of grace are not sanctified, on the contrary if they have sinful will, *'they will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord...they eat and drink judgment against themselves.'*<sup>210</sup>

But for persons in a state of grace the Word sends the Holy Spirit to them to make their wills and therefore their personalities, holy. In receiving the holy Eucharist the Word incarnate is completed in them. The Holy Spirit is sent as light, the immediate operation of the Word but also feeling and bodily joy. In so doing the feeling and instinct of man is drawn away from evil and directed towards good, thus making him pure. All parts of Christ act on all the parts of man: the Word not only illuminating the supreme part of the will, but the feeling and sensitive instinct acts on the feeling and animal instinct of man, the flesh and blood of Christ on the flesh and blood of man. All this is in accord with the great prayer of Christ before he suffered, *'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.'*<sup>211</sup> And the words of St Paul to the Philippians are fully verified, *'And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'*<sup>212</sup> The special effects of the Eucharist are chastity and humility in imitation of the Lord, *'who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited but emptied himself taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.'*<sup>213</sup>

### **Spiritual Communion**<sup>214</sup>

The Holy Spirit is communicated to our will and the other powers which are inferior to it, so there is an open channel of communication between those in a state of grace and the Holy Spirit through which, by acts of the will, a person may receive greater or less fruit from the Holy Spirit and the amount of grace they receive will depend on their dispositions and co-operation.

As we know, after the bread and wine have been consecrated, the body and blood of Christ remain under the accidents of bread and wine. Hence the practice of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at Benediction or Holy Hour etc. We can receive spiritual graces from Christ even without receiving him, (when he sends the gifts of the Holy Spirit to us) simply by adoring his presence with the desire and promise of receiving him sacramentally. This type of participation is called spiritual communion.

---

<sup>210</sup> 1 Cor 11: 27, 29.

<sup>211</sup> Jn 17 1–2.

<sup>212</sup> Phil 4: 7.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 2: 6–7.

<sup>214</sup> IVG, Reading LXXXIX, pp. 333–335.

<sup>215</sup> The Council of Trent says, 'Now as to the use of this holy Sacrament our Fathers have rightly and wisely distinguished three ways of receiving it. For they taught that some receive it sacramentally only, namely sinners; others spiritually only, those namely who eating in desire that heavenly bread which is set before them, are by a lively faith working through love, conscious of the fruit and usefulness thereof; whereas the third class receive it both sacramentally and spiritually, and these are they who so prove and prepare themselves beforehand as to approach this divine table clothed with the wedding garment.'<sup>216</sup> In spiritual communion we do not receive the body of Christ really or sacramentally, but we derive from it the graces of the Holy Spirit, we obtain fruit from it and experience its benefits. In sacramental communion Christ acts in us *ex opere operato* as we say and meets the soul with his divine action, the effect of which would be felt even if the person were not able to make acts of voluntary affection due to fatigue or sickness; whereas in spiritual communion the soul obtains the graces of the Sacrament through voluntary acts.

### **Temples of the Holy Spirit**

In St Paul's letter to the Romans he has been speaking of the '*depth of the riches, and wisdom and knowledge of the Lord*', concluding with the words, '*For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory for ever. Amen*'.<sup>217</sup> It is in this context that in the next chapter Paul begins, '*I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship*'.<sup>218</sup> It is holy and acceptable because the body also receives a sanctifying effect from the sacraments, especially its union with the glorious body of the Lord in the holy Eucharist. St Paul calls our bodies as well as our spirits members of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit and from this argues to the fact those who fornicate insult Christ, because this sin violates his members and his temple. '*The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, "The two shall be one flesh." But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.*'<sup>219</sup>

---

<sup>215</sup> It was especially valued in former days and, of course, in Rosmini's time when receiving the holy Eucharist was not as frequent as it is today because of the strict laws of fasting from mid-night and Mass being confined to the morning. St Pius X (1903–1914) encouraged frequent Holy Communion.

<sup>216</sup> De Conc. Trid. sess. XIII, cap. VIII.

<sup>217</sup> Rom 11: 33, 36.

<sup>218</sup> Rom 12: 1.

<sup>219</sup> 1 Cor 6: 13–20.

From his same teaching St Paul teaches his converts not to contract marriage with pagans because of the respect they should have for their own bodies. *'Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness? What agreement does Christ have with Beliar? Or what does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty".'*<sup>220</sup>

He also deduces that husbands should show love and respect towards their wives, *'Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body... This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church.'*<sup>221</sup>

Finally he deduces the obligation which Christians have of abstaining from victims offered to idols, saying that, *'The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar? What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.'*<sup>222</sup>

Although our bodies have been ruined by the consequences of original sin, yet they are influenced somewhat by the grace of Christ and some part of the body of Christ through the Eucharist, nevertheless our animal body is marked out for death and cannot exist without being completely renewed. The hidden element of life which we receive from the Eucharist is the object of faith as long as we are in this world, rather than a complete and revealed experience. It is a test and pledge of our future resurrection, so St Paul says, *'and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me'*.<sup>223</sup> And in the prayer of St Thomas Aquinas on the Eucharist, 'we are given an assurance of the glory that will one day be ours'.<sup>224</sup>

---

<sup>220</sup> 2 Cor 6: 14–18.

<sup>221</sup> Eph 5: 25, 28–30, 32.

<sup>222</sup> 1 Cor 10: 16–21.

<sup>223</sup> Gal 2: 20.

<sup>224</sup> St Thomas Aquinas, *O Sacrum Convivium*.

### **The Eucharist as the sign of unity of the faithful among themselves**<sup>225</sup>

We have seen that the union of the recipient of the Eucharist has two modes, one immediately through Christ and the other through the Holy Spirit who diffuses into the soul the love which proceeds from Christ. In the same way there is a twofold union of the faithful among themselves. This union depends on two causes, 1) that all receive the same Christ whole and entire; 2) that each converts into their own life that quantity of the flesh and blood of Christ which corresponds to the quantity of the substance of bread and wine which was there before transubstantiation.

The union which occurs by means of the Holy Spirit, arises from the sending of the Spirit and his gifts which Christ gives to the faithful in the measure he wishes and in proportion to the disposition and co-operation of the faithful. St Paul says, *‘There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling.’*<sup>226</sup>

Baptism inaugurates us into the Mystical Body of Christ but the nourishment which each member receives from the same body of Christ results in a greater unity, because each member is united with the same body of Christ and a portion of his body is placed in each one of them, so there is a more complete continuity of them with Christ. If their will places no obstacle to the Spirit, he is diffused in them and helps them to be one body with Christ. This eucharistic union, then, arises from that portion of the flesh and blood of Christ which corresponds to the substance of bread and wine before the consecration becoming the flesh and blood of the faithful. This occurs in a hidden manner because the flesh and blood of Christ is hidden under the accidents just as the whole real body of Christ, undivided from that small part, remains hidden. So the body of Christ with regard to the faithful acts only spiritually, but he is placed in the faithful with his own real body, in that mode of eucharistic being and one day he will be revealed.

Christ keeps the faithful who communicate united to his own body by many different bonds. Scripture speaks often of his blessing and breaking bread. *‘While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”’*<sup>227</sup> *‘While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it, he broke it, gave it to them and said, “Take; this is my body.”’*<sup>228</sup> *‘For I received from the Lord what I handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and said, “This my body that is for you.”’*<sup>229</sup> And in the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, a figure of the Eucharist, *‘Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves.’*<sup>230</sup> In the same way with the second multiplication of the loaves, *‘He took the seven loaves and the fish; and after giving thanks he broke them, and gave them to the disciples,*

---

<sup>225</sup> *IVG*, Reading XC, 335–338.

<sup>226</sup> *Eph* 4: 4.

<sup>227</sup> *Mt* 26: 26.

<sup>228</sup> *Mk* 14: 22.

<sup>229</sup> *1 Cor* 11: 23–24.

<sup>230</sup> *Mt* 14: 19.



*and the disciples gave them to the crowds?*<sup>231</sup> The same expression is in Mark and Luke,<sup>232</sup> Also the Acts of Apostles makes use of the same expression, *'they broke bread at home'*.<sup>233</sup>

The body of Christ cannot be divided, but this does not prevent Christ uniting himself more closely to one communicant than to another one and the part which is more closely united with one member is different from that united less so with another member, but these different parts which are united to the recipients are indivisible from the complete body of Christ. They correspond to that quantity of substance of bread that was within each host before the con-secration. They are symbolised by the grains of corn in the parable of the sower which fell on the public footpath, others on stony ground, others among thorns and others finally on good ground.<sup>234</sup> In St John's Gospel Christ calls himself a grain of wheat, *'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat fall into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit'*.<sup>235</sup>

All the faithful, then, by means of the Eucharist are connected with the body of Christ and form one mystical, and nevertheless, real body with him. Therefore they are also closely united among themselves as members of one body, which although distinct are not divided: *'For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another'*.<sup>236</sup> Hence the opinion laid down is correct that the diversity of the members of the Mystical Body of Christ would be found in the diversity of that eucharistic portion which they receive and that bears fruit differently in each according to the ground or according to the quality of the plant on to which it is grafted. The union, then, of the faithful among themselves, the union which I would call mystically corporeal results from all sharing food and nourishment of one part belonging to the same body and of receiving from this said part the whole and identical body of Christ in themselves, which cannot be separated from that part which each receives in a more special mode appropriate to themselves.<sup>237</sup>

### **Our union with one another in Christ<sup>238</sup>**

The Holy Spirit unites not only the *nature* of the faithful soul with Christ but also his/her *person* and also unites in one spirit all persons of the faithful with one another. *'But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him'*.<sup>239</sup>

---

<sup>231</sup> Mt 15: 36.

<sup>232</sup> Mk 8: 6; Lk 9: 16.

<sup>233</sup> Acts 2: 46.

<sup>234</sup> Mt 13 : 3–25. Each communicant receives the identical body of Christ in the way explained above. The diversity Rosmini talks about is not that of the dimensions of the accidents!

<sup>235</sup> Jn 12: 24–25.

<sup>236</sup> Rom 12: 4–5.

<sup>237</sup> IVG, Reading XC, p. 338.

<sup>238</sup> Reading XCI, pp. 338–341.

<sup>239</sup> 1 Cor 6: 17.

This spiritual union which proceeds from the bodily union, just as the Spirit of Christ proceeds from Christ, was that which he asked from his Father in the great farewell prayer in the gospel of St John. *‘And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one...I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.’*<sup>240</sup>

The identical Christ is equally whole in everyone and all the parts of Christ communicate their power to all the parts of the person. The way the prophet Elisha raised the child of the Shunammite woman is a figure of this. *‘When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. So he went in and closed the door on the two of them, and prayed to the Lord. Then he got up on the bed and lay upon the child, putting his mouth upon his mouth, his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and while he lay bent over him, the flesh of the child became warm. He got down, walked once to and fro in the room, then got up again and bent over him; the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.’*<sup>241</sup>

All the faithful have the one identical, infinite good and the one immortal life which they share from this infinite good, that is from Christ. All have one love and one will as we read in the Acts of Apostles, *‘Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul.’*<sup>242</sup> Not only this but they wished to share their goods in common as well, *‘no one claimed private ownership of any possessions,... but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.’*<sup>243</sup> The Acts also mentions the Eucharist which was source and most effective cause of all this sharing. *‘All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.’*<sup>244</sup>

The exemplar of this union is that of Christ with his Father and he asks that *‘they may be one, as we are one’*. Just as the divine Word is united with the Father in the one nature but distinct regards personality, so the faithful share each other’s nature but are distinct persons. In the natural order all human beings have the same nature, therefore

---

<sup>240</sup> Jn 17: 11–23.

<sup>241</sup> 2 Kings 4: 32–35.

<sup>242</sup> Acts 4: 32.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 4: 2, 34–35.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 2: 42–47.

their likeness belongs to the ideal and objective order only. Now since they are subjective beings, it does not follow that they are truly unified either in nature or as person.

The divine Word, is not only ideal but real object. So his action which tends to perfect the order of nature, is always complete and tends to realise the object even with subjective natures. Now in all beings the principle is determined by the immanent term with which it is united. For instance the sensitive principle is determined by the body which acts on it. So here in the supernatural order the term of the intellectual principle (the idea of being) receives a real perception of the Word through the action of grace. The intelligent principle which constitutes beings subjectively is determined and actuated in the same way in all of them and is identified not totally but in so far as it has that real common object. As the Word is revealed differently and with different degrees of light to finite intelligences they are distinguished among themselves. This partial identification is given in Baptism.

Now, the personality of Christ lay in the Word of God, so the Word of God ruled his humanity as an inferior power. So his humanity also received from the Word the divine instinct of unifying human beings in a real way in which he loved the likeness of their nature. And this was obtained by the institution of the Eucharist in which human beings acquired for the term of their sensitive life a portion of the body of Christ indivisible from the whole body. And therefore also the sensitive principle founded in human nature has a partial identification of nature, the persons remaining distinct.

The result of being united with Christ, in Christ, as the branch is united with the vine, is that we are united also with the Father, *'I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.'*<sup>245</sup> And St Paul says, *'One God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.'*<sup>246</sup> Our fellowship with Christ ordained by God our Father according to the words of St Paul, *'God is faithful by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,'*<sup>247</sup> is also fellowship with the Father, *'we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.'*<sup>248</sup> 'Fellowship' is a suitable term, for the good in common which the faithful have with one another and with Christ and his body and the Holy Spirit.

---

<sup>245</sup> *Jn* 17: 20–23.

<sup>246</sup> *Eph* 4: 6.

<sup>247</sup> *1 Cor* 1: 9.

<sup>248</sup> *1 Jn* 1: 3.

### **The work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the faithful<sup>249</sup>**

The Spirit whom Christ sends is the Spirit of *subjective* life. In a sentient and intelligent subject which is what we are, we distinguish as we have seen the *principle* (which is the *subject*) and the *term*. Although the principle is not without its own term to which it is passive, nevertheless it has an activity of its own with which it can adhere to its term. This is seen in our ability to love a known object. We, the subject, can love with greater or less intensity. In the supernatural order the immediate object is Christ. Now this subjective act with which we love Christ, as known, is inspired by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit is sent by Christ.

Christ is the immediate author of *objective* life which is the source of *subjective* life. Christ says, about this objective life, '*And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent*'.<sup>250</sup> This life is said to be objective<sup>251</sup> because it is determined by a perception of the object, Christ, who has the Holy Spirit in him.

Of the *subjective* life which is the special work of the Holy Spirit, Christ said, '*I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them*'.<sup>252</sup>

The Holy Spirit acts in both lives and is called the Spirit of life in so far as both lives are subjective, that is, the act of the subject, '*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death*'.<sup>253</sup> But in the first way the Spirit is revealed in an initial way, not as a person but in his gifts and not distinct from Christ.

The effect of the Holy Spirit is to add force to the subjective supernatural activity so that we know Christ and his words in a more lively and perfect way and love him more greatly and effectively.

The Word is distinct from the human subject as object is categorically distinct from subject. The Holy Spirit remains distinct only from the point of view of the creating and the creation, the moving and the moved. The subject moved, in our case, feels the motion, feels that he has in himself what he did not have at first, feels charity, possesses holy acts; but does not notice any new object, because the Spirit has not the objective form proper to the Word. Hence Christ said, '*The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit*.' And St. Paul distinguishes the mind of man who has the object for its form from the spirit which is like an instinct without any new and proper object. Hence he says, '*For those who speak in a tongue do not speak to other people but to God; for nobody understands them, since they are speaking mysteries in the Spirit.... For if I pray in a*

<sup>249</sup> *IVG*, Reading XCII, pp. 341–343.

<sup>250</sup> *Jn* 17: 3.

<sup>251</sup> This is not excluding subjective life. It is also an act of the subject so in this sense all life is subjective.

<sup>252</sup> *Jn* 17: 26.

<sup>253</sup> *Rom* 8: 3.

*tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unproductive. What should I do then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also.*<sup>254</sup> Again we have the well known passage in the letter to the Romans in which St Paul tells us that when we pray the Spirit prays with us, *‘Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.’*<sup>255</sup> Rosmini says that the Spirit sanctifies and is mixed with the subject in a certain way acting on the person in such a way that the subject acts at the same time. Jesus tells Nicodemus, *‘Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.”’*<sup>256</sup> The person is said to become one spirit with God. *‘But anyone united to the Spirit becomes one spirit with him.’*<sup>257</sup>

Finally, Rosmini quotes St Paul again, *‘Each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift.’*<sup>258</sup> By this he understands that the divine knowledge of the Spirit always remains distinct from that of the recipient, just as the justice of God *‘by which he himself is just’* is distinct from that by which he makes us just.<sup>259</sup> Justice and holiness are identical but the subjects who share it and possess the knowledge of it, are different.

---

<sup>254</sup> 1 Cor 14: 2, 14–15.

<sup>255</sup> Rom 8: 26–27.

<sup>256</sup> Jn 3: 5–6.

<sup>257</sup> 1 Cor 6: 17.

<sup>258</sup> Eph. 4: 7.

<sup>259</sup> De Conc. Trid. sess. VI, cap. VII.

# Bibliography

## Works of Rosmini

### EDIZIONE CRITICA

*Antropologia soprannaturale* 39–40, Città Nuova, Roma 1983.  
*Delle cinque piaghe della Santa Chiesa* 56, Città Nuova, Roma 1998.  
*Introduzione alla filosofia* 2, Città Nuova, Roma 1979.  
*L'introduzione del Vangelo secondo Giovanni commentata* 41, Città Nuova, Roma 2009.  
*Principi della scienza morale* 23, Città Nuova, Roma 1990.

### ROSMINI HOUSE, DURHAM

*Introduction to Philosophy*, vol 1, *About the Author's Studies* 2004.  
*Principles of Ethics* 1988.  
*The Five Wounds of the Church* 1987.

### ST MARY'S DERRYS WOOD

*The Diaries of Blessed Antonio Rosmini*

### LETTERS

*Epistolario completo* (13 vols.) Casale Monferrato, Tipografia Giovanni Pane 1887–1894.  
*A Selection from the Ascetical Letters of Antonio Rosmini*, 7 volumes, Loughborough 1993–2010.

### OTHER WORKS

**Aquinas**, St Thomas, *Summa Theologica*.  
**Aquinas**, St. Thomas, *In Evangelium beati Ioannis evangelistae expositio*.  
**Augustine**, St., *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick, Oxford 1998.  
**Augustine**, St., *In Evangelium Ioannis Expositio*.  
**Bessero Belti**, Remo, *Preface, L'introduzione del Vangelo secondo Giovanni commentata*, Edizione Nazionale, vol. XXXIII, Padova 1966.  
**Brown**, Raymond E. S.S., *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Doubleday 1996.  
**Catechism of the Catholic Church**, St Pauls 1995.  
**Chrysostom**, St. John, *Commentarij super Ioannis Evangelium*.  
**Cleary**, Denis, *Antonio Rosmini, Introduction to His Life and Teaching*, Durham 1992.  
**Dewhirst**, J. Anthony, *Rosmini's Theory of Ethics*, Rosmini House, Durham 2000.  
**Dewhirst**, J. Anthony, *A Vision for Challenging Times*, Short Run Press 2009.  
**Dewhirst**, J. Anthony, *Our Light and Our Salvation*, Short Run Press 2010.

### *Bibliography*

- Elson**, George, *Our Life in Christ*, Stresa 1984.
- Leetham**, Claude, *Rosmini, Priest, Philosopher and Patriot*, London, Longmans, Green and Co. 1957.
- Losacco**, Luigi, *La lettura biblica di Rosmini, ne "L'introduzione del Vangelo secondo Giovanni commentata"*, Libreria Editoriale Sodalitas, Stresa 1986.
- Menestrina**, Eduino, *Rosmini l'uomo e il santo*, vol. 2, Fede e Cultura 2010.
- Moloney**, Francis J., S.D.B., *Sacra Pagina*, Michael Glazier, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota 1998.
- Tadini**, Samuele Francesco, *Presentazione dell'edizione critica de "L'introduzione Vangelo secondo Giovanni commentata di Rosmini"*, Rivista Rosminiana, April-September 2010. Edizioni Rosminiane Sodalitas, Stresa.
- The New Jerome Biblical Commentary**, Ed. Brown, Fitzmyer, Murphy, Geoffrey Chapman 1997.

### **Holy Bibles**

- Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgata Clementinam, ed. R.P. Alberto Colunga, O.P. et Dr Laurentio Turrado, Biblioteca de Auctores Cristianos Matriti MCMXLVI.
- New International Version of the Bible, Hodder and Stoughton, London 1999.
- The Holy Bible, Catholic Edition RSV, Nelson 1966.
- The Holy Bible, trans. Ronald Knox, London, Burns and Oates, MacMillan and Co., 1957.
- The Holy Bible, Douay-Rheims Version 1955.
- The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville 1989.
- The Jerusalem Bible, Darton, Longman and Todd 1974.
- The New Jerusalem Bible, Doubleday 1985.
- Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine, Ed. Augustus Merk S. J., Roma, Sumptibus Pontificii Instituti Biblici 1944.

## Index of Biblical References

*Bible references from NRSV unless otherwise noted. Where the Vulgate is concerned the Douay version is used. References are separated by semicolons. Chapters in bold. Page numbers in italics.*

### Genesis

**1:** 1, 24, 25, 79, 82; 3, 81, 83; 26 (Douay), 85; 26, 100, 28, 128.  
**2:** 7, 100; 17, 105, 121.  
**3:** 14–15 (Douay), 123.

### Exodus

**16:** 4, 157.

### Deuteronomy

**30:** 14, 54.

### 1 Samuel

**2** 6, 156

### 1 Kings

**19:** 8, 160.

### 2 Kings

**4:** 32–35, 181.

### 2 Chronicles

**7:** 1, 146.

### 2 Maccabees

**2:** 10, 146.  
**7:** 9, 133.  
**12:** 43–45, 174.

### Judith

**5:** 15 (Douay), 157.

### Psalms

**1:** 2, 73.  
**9:** 21 (Douay, NSRV) 65.  
**33:** 6, 9, 81, 83.  
**44:** 22, 109.  
**45:** 7, 170.  
**68:** 18, 129.  
**78:** 23–25, 157.  
**101:** 26 (Douay), 79.  
**102:** 25, 68.  
**104:** 24, 81.  
**105:** 40, 157.  
**110:** 127; 1, 53; 3, 79.  
**115:** 16, 82.  
**117:** 47.

### Proverbs

**8:** 22–23, 24; 23–31, 27.

### Wisdom

**2:** 12–20, 128  
**3:** 1, 4, 7, 13, 133;  
**7:** 25–26, 26.  
**9:** 1, 2, 83.  
**11:** 17, 78.  
**16:** 20–21, 157.

### Sirach

**1:** 5, 49; 1 (Douay) 60.  
**18:** 1 (Douay) 82.  
**24:** 21, 139.  
**43:** 26, 81.

### Isaiah

**8:** 14–15, 47.  
**14:** 9–11, 156.

**28:** 16, 47.

**39:** 4, 68.

**49:** 9, 165.

**54:** 13, 141.

**61:** 1, 170.

### Jeremiah

**42:** 4, 69.

### Ezekiel

**9:** 10, 156.

### Matthew

**6:** 31–33, 111.  
**12:** 38–42, 142.  
**13:** 16–17, 35, 52, 165.  
**14:** 19, 179.  
**15:** 36, 180.  
**16:** 16–17, 47.  
**17:** 20–21, 110.  
**19:** 28, 147; 29, 111.  
**21:** 42–44, 47.  
**22:** 23–33, 135.  
**26:** 26, 179; 29, 144; 41, 120.  
**27:** 51, 154.  
**28:** 18, 128.

### Mark

**8:** 6, 180.  
**12:** 25–37, 135.  
**14:** 11, 179; 25, 144.  
**15:** 38, 154.  
**16:** 19 (Douay NSRV) 60. 17–18, 110.



## **Luke**

**1:** 35, 46, 170; 42, 105.  
**2:** 34, 47; 34–35, 126.  
**4:** 18, 170,  
**9:** 16, 180.  
**12:** 33, 111; 37, 157.  
**17:** 20–21, 30, 168.  
**20:** 34–36, 37–38, 135.  
**23:** 45, 154.  
**24:** 25–27, 56.

## **John**

**1:** 1, 63; 1–2, 76; 3, (Douay), 83; 9, 27; 12–13, 137; 17, 103; 18, 55, (RSV), 60.  
**3:** 5, 145; 5–6, 184.  
**4:** 34, 124; 10, 13–14, 138; 14, 139.  
**5:** 39, 56; 26, 90, 92; 17, 69; 30, 124; 24, 25, 158.  
**6:** 4, 138; 27, 137; 29, 35, 40, 155; 30–35, 159; 9–40, 139; 40, 43–47, 141; 45, 46, 142; 49–51, 53, 143; 44, 49; 52, 144; 54, 151; 57, 147; 63, 148, 169; 71, 118.  
**7:** 20–24, 126.  
**8:** 12, 99; 25 (Douay), 79, 80, 81; 44, 118; 56, 49, 53.  
**10:** 17–18, 125; 36, 103, 170.  
**11:** 11–23, 181; 25, 91, 136, 154; 26, 103, 136.  
**12:** 24–25, 180; 49–50, 125.  
**14:** 2–3, 15–19, 131; 6, 90; 9, 59; 10, 60, 80; 30, 118; 30–31, 125.  
**15:** 1–7, 103; 5–8, 104, 18, 123.  
**16:** 6–7, 132; 25–27, 164; 27, 165, 166; 28, 166.

**17:** 2, 128, 140; 3, 26, 52, 72, 183; 4–5, 127; 6, 49; 20–23, 182; 20–24, 154; 22–23, 136; 24, 24; 25–26, 127.  
**21:** 29, 140.

## **Acts**

**2:** 42–47, 181; 46, 180.  
**3:** 15, 103.  
**4:** 2, 34–35, 32, 181; 11, 47; 27, 170.  
**10:** 38, 170.  
**17:** 28, 78,

## **Romans**

**1:** 4, 170; 17, 163; 19–21, 107; 23, 108.  
**2:** 1, 108; 14–16, 107; 16, 141.  
**3:** 9–10, 23, 108.  
**4:** 17, 88; 25, 132.  
**5:** 5, 166, 172; 12, 106.  
**6:** 3–11, 152; 9, 136.  
**7:** 18–19, 20–23, 107; 24–25, 106.  
**8:** 2, 9, 116; 3, 183; 9–10, 12–14, 115; 14, 116; 14–15, 18–23, 168; 15–16, 131; 16, 166; 26–27, 184; 28, 111; 35–39, 110.  
**9:** 33, 47.  
**10:** 6–8, 8, 54.  
**11:** 33, 36, 177.  
**12:** 1, 177; 3, 50; 4–5, 104, 180.  
**13:** 14, 103.

## **1 Corinthians**

**1:** 9, 182; 13, 51; 24, 75, 79; 30, 113.  
**2:** 1–5, 110; 2, 55; 9–15, 168.  
**3:** 9–17, 104; 11–15, 123. 22–23, 111.

**4:** 15, 113.  
**6:** 13–20, 177; 15–17, 114; 17, 180, 184.  
**7:** 17, 50; 20–24, 29–31, 112.  
**10:** 16–21, 178; 17, 149.  
**11:** 23, 148; 23–24, 179; 27, 29, 176.  
**12:** 4, 50; 4–6, 52; 11–15, 119.  
**14:** 2, 14–15, 184.  
**15:** 10, 103; 14–19, 133; 17, 132; 20–22, 128; 42–50, 102.

## **2 Corinthians**

**3:** 6, 47; 18, 163, 164.  
**4:** 4, 100; 6, 18, 167; 16–18, 162.  
**5:** 1–5, 166; 6, 115; 17, 105, 113; 21, 130.  
**6:** 14–18, 178; 15, 18, 148.  
**10:** 3–4, 116; 13, 50.  
**12:** 2, 82; 10, 112.

## **Galatians**

**2:** 20, 103, 164, 178.  
**3:** 23, 167; 27, 115.  
**4:** 15, 113; 31–5, 1, 168.  
**5:** 17, 19–23, 117.

## **Ephesians**

**1:** 9–10, 113.  
**2:** 10, 114.  
**4:** 4, 179; 6, 182; 7, 50, 184; 7–10, 129; 15–16, 104; 22–24, 102.  
**5:** 25, 2830, 32, 178; 25–27, 129.  
**6:** 11–12, 117; 17, 58; 13–19, (RSV), 119.

**Philippians**

**1:** 21, 164; 15, 167.  
**2:** 5–8, 124; 6–7, 176.  
**3:** 8, 110.  
(Philippians)  
**4:** 7, 176, 13, 104, 112.

**Colossians**

**1:** 15, 100; 15–16, 77; 15–17, 78; 25–28, 167.  
**2:** 3, 161; 12, 152; 12–15, 132.  
**3:** 1–4, 161.

**1 Thessalonians**

**5:** 6, , 8–9, 120; 7, 138.

**2 Timothy**

**1:** 10, 165.

**Hebrews**

**1:** 1, 50; 2, 68; 3, 42, 128, 78; 83; 3 (Douay), 72; 9, 170; 10, 68.  
**2:** 2, 49; 9, 103; 17–18, 129.  
**4:** 15, 130.  
**5:** 7, 148; 8–10, 130.  
**6:** 4, 157.  
**7:** 16, 23–25, 24–28, 130; 16–17, 174.  
**10:** 19–23, 36–39, 162.  
**11:** 3, 78, 155; 13–16, 155; 17–19, 35, 39–40, 156.

**James**

**1:** 18, 172.  
**2:** 10, 108.

**1 Peter**

**1:** 3, 132; 4, 82; 12, 46; 13 (RSV), 119; 23, 99, 172; 23–25, 117.  
**2:** 4–8, 47; 24, 126.  
**3:** 5, 162; 21–22, 132, 153  
**5:** 1, 167; 8, 118.

**2 Peter**

**1:** 19, 47; 21, 46.

**1 John**

**1:** 1–2, 5, 99; 2, 62; 3, 104, 182.  
**3:** 2, 131.  
**5:** 7, 55.

**Revelation**

**1:** 5, 55.  
**3:** 14, 79.  
**4:** 11, 78.  
**19:** 11, 13, 55.  
**21:** 9–11, 129.

## Index of Persons

*Where the name is already in the main text it is not repeated if in a footnote on the same page. Footnote references are given in italics. Fathers of the Church in bold type.*

- Abraham, 53, 135, 156.  
Adam, 100, 102, 103, 105, 106, 107,  
108, 109, 113, 114, 115, 117, 121,  
123, 126, 137, 142, 147, 161, 163.  
Ahab, 160.  
Alphonsus, St., 157.  
**Ambrose**, St., 39, 55, 62, 67, 79.  
Anselm, St., 38, 55.  
**Antonelli**, Cardinal Giacomo, 10, 11,  
18.  
Apollo, 111.  
Aquinas, St. Thomas, 28, 32, 47, 49,  
62, 64, 65, 67, 70, 71, 75, 78, 79, 80,  
83, 84, 85, 86, 88, 89, 96, 97, 98, 178.  
Aristobolus, 49.  
**Athanasius**, St., 38, 61.  
**Augustine**, St., 29, 32, 38, 44, 48, 49,  
58, 61, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 75, 76, 79,  
80, 85, 86, 87, 97, 99, 103, 149, 161.  
Aurelius, 29.  
  
Badia, Mgr., 20.  
**Basil**, St., 39, 79, 80.  
Bede, St., 88.  
Brignole, Cardinal, 17,  
Brown, Raymond E, S.S., 139, 169.  
  
Candela, Silvestro, 23.  
Capuzzi, A, 22.  
Carli, Antonio, 20.  
Cephas 111.  
Cerinthus, 64.  
Ciampoli, Antonio, 10.  
Cleary Denis, 56.  
  
Corboli, Mgr., 13.  
**Cyprian**, St., 55.  
**Cyril of Alexandria**, St., 29, 38, 61,  
65, 71, 85, 96,  
**Cyril of Jerusalem**, 62.  
  
**Damascene, St. John**, 38.  
David, 53.  
De Gaudenti, 12.  
D' Harcourt, Duke, 19.  
Della Motta, Count Avogadro, 11.  
Demosthenes, 71.  
Deodatus, Joannes, 163.  
Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, 38.  
Donne, John, 128.  
  
Ebion, 64.  
Elijah, 160.  
Elijah of Crete, 67.  
Eliphas, 62.  
Elisha, 181.  
Elizabeth, St., 105.  
**Epiphanius of Salamis**, St., 55.  
Esau, 45.  
Eusebius, 29, 38, 71.  
Eunomius, 64.  
Eutimius, 39, 67, 96.  
Eve, 106, 137.  
  
Ferdinand II, King of Naples, 12.  
Ferretti, Count Gabriello Mastai, 10.  
Fornari, Vito, 11.  
**Fulgentius of Ruspe**, St., 38, 61.

*Index of Persons*

- Galletti, Giuseppe, 10.  
Gianotti, Mgr., 17.  
**Gregory Nazianzen**, St., 39, 66.  
**Gregory of Nyssa**, St., 62.  
**Gregory the Great**, Pope, St., 62, 145.
- Hohenloe, Gustavus, 13.  
Hilarion, 38.  
**Hilary of Poitiers**, St., 47, 55, 62, 68, 69, 80, 86.
- Innocent III, Pope, 145.  
**Irenaeus of Lyons**, St., 29, 55, 61.  
Isaac, 135, 156.  
Isaiah, 68.
- Jacob, 45, 135.  
James, St., 172.  
Jeremiah, 69.  
Jerome, 22, 29, 38, 55, 67, 71, 72, 79.  
John. St., 27, 28, 29, 38, 49, 53, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 68, 74, 78, 79, 81, 83, 84, 90, 92, 99, 100, 104, 118, 127, 128, 138, 139, 144, 148, 171, 181.  
**John Chrysostom**, St., 28, 39, 49, 61, 62, 64, 65, 66, 67, 79, 81, 96, 97.  
Jonah, 142, 147.
- Koerneritz, Baronessa, Maria, 11.
- Lactantius**, 55.  
Leontius, 67.  
Liberatore, Matteo, 11.  
Loreti, Raffaele, 10, 11.  
Losacco, Luigi, 22, 27, 55, 72, 79, 80, 83, 101.  
Lovatelli, Count, 11, 14.  
Luke, St., 58, 135, 168.
- Mai, Cardinal, 13, 14, 15.  
Manzi, Giovanni Battista, 12, 13.  
Martha, St., 136, 154.  
Mary, 118, 123, 126.
- Mark, St., 58.  
Montanari, Antonio, 10, 11, 15.  
McKenzie, John L. S.J., 156.  
Melchizedek, 29, 130, 154.  
Melia, Father, 13.  
Moloney, Francis J. S.D.B., 138, 169.  
Moses, 54, 56, 81, 108, 126, 135, 137, 159.
- Nicodemus, 184.  
Novatian, 22.
- Ogera, Canon Francesco, 11, 17.  
**Origen**, 64, 66, 67, 79, 83, 84, 90, 98.  
Ostini, Cardinal Pietro, 13.
- Palmieri Luigi (?), 11.  
Patrizi, Cardinal 13.  
Paul St., 8, 47, 50, 54, 55, 58, 72, 75, 77, 78, 82, 88, 100, 101, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 120, 128, 129, 130, 132, 133, 136, 142, 149, 152, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 170, 176, 177, 178, 180, 182, 183, 184.  
Perkins, Phoebe, 169.  
Peter St., 46, 47, 82, 103, 111, 119, 132, 153, 162, 167, 172.  
Philip, St., 59.  
Philo, 29, 71.  
Pius VIII, Pope, 12.  
Pius IX, Pope, Blessed, 9, 11, 16, 17.  
Pius X, Pope, St., 177.  
Plato, 71.  
Prudentius, 55.  
Puecher, Francesco, 16.  
Puecher, Mgr. Luigi Passavalli, 16.
- Remigius of Auxerre, 55.  
Raschini, Maria Adelaide, 22.  
Rosmini-Serbati, Baronessa Adelaide, 10.

*Index of Persons*

- Rossi, Count Pellegrino, 10.  
Rufinus of Aquileia.  
Rupert of Deutz, 38, 62.
- Sabellius, 64.  
Signani, Bishop, 16.  
Soglia, Cardinal Ceroni, 10.  
Solomon, 142.  
Spaccapietra, Signor, 14.  
Spina, Stefano, 12.  
Stella, Mgr. Giuseppe, 11, 14, 19.
- Tadini, Samuele Francesco, 9, 21, 22,  
23, 87.
- Teresa of Avila, St., 105.  
**Tertullian**, 22, 29, 55.  
Theiner, Agostino, 12.  
**Theodore of Mopsuestia**, 61, 67.  
Theophylact, 28, 39, 61, 62, 65, 66, 67,  
96  
Toscani, Giuseppe, 10, 11.  
Tosti, Cardinal Antonio, 20.  
Troya, Carlo, 11.
- Victorinus Marius, 61.
- Watson, Terence, 56.
- Yong, Major, 18, 19.

## General Index

<b>Introduction</b>	9
Rosmini's mission to Rome	9
At Gaeta and Naples	11
At Sant' Efreml Nuovo	13
Rosmini returns to Gaeta	16
Rosmini returns to Stresa	19
The editions of the Work	21
 <b>Chapter 1 The Eternal Word</b>	 24
What is this beginning?	24
God acts in eternity but not in time	25
The Word is the exemplar of the world	26
In the beginning was the Word	28
The human word and the divine Word	30
Ideas, affirmations, and intellectual feelings: the intelligibility of God	31
Unlimited and limited being: the Word and contingent things	32
The Word as Exemplar	33
Consequences	34
Absolute subsistence is simple and does not admit any multiplicity or real distinctions	34
God created an orderly universe, manifesting his infinite wisdom	35
God created the universe out of love for himself	36
Consequences	36
The divine plan of creation is not different from the act of creation	37
The expression <i>λόγος</i> and its meanings	38
The nine differences between the human word and the divine Word	40
Profane and divine knowledge	44
Conclusions	48
The knowledge of the Word under the Old Covenant	49
The actual person of the Word was not communicated in the Old Testament but only his gifts	50
The special truths are many even though the Word is one	51
All special truths are reduced to a unity	52
Summary of the knowledge given to people before the coming of Christ	53
The moral order	56

*General Index*

<b>Chapter 2 Commentary on the First Three Verses of John</b>	<b>58</b>
Introduction	58
And the Word was with God and the Word was God	59
The meaning of the word ‘was’	60
And the Word was God	63
He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him not one thing came into being (vv. 2–3)	65
He was in the beginning with God: all things were made through Him and without him was not any thing made that was made — an analysis	66
Creation and God’s Wisdom appropriated to the Word	69
The proper meaning of ‘all things were made through him’	70
The creative act	74
More on the Word and creation	75
Generation and creation	77
The Fathers and St Thomas comment on the Word as creator and principle	79
Everything was made in and through the Word	81
The co-operation of the Word in creation (1)	84
The co-operation of the Word in creation (2)	85
The twofold existence of created things	87
<b>Chapter 3 In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of Men</b>	<b>89</b>
Light and Life`	89
Life in the Word	90
Life and feeling	91
Life and feeling in the Trinity: the spiration of the Holy Spirit	92
In him was life, and that life was the light of men: its context in the Johannine Prologue	95
The light of men	96
How the life of the Word is the light of men	98
This life was given to Adam when he was formed by God	100
Was the character impressed on our first parents as well as habitual grace?	101
Adam, Christ and the Christian	102
The Christians’ feeling of their own nothingness	104
Rosmini’s commentary on St Paul’s letter to the Romans with regard to the new life in Christ	106
The Christian’s feeling of magnanimity	109
The Christian’s life in Christ	113
The ascetical life of the Christian	114
Our spiritual combat	117
First part of the spiritual combat	117

### *General Index*

The weapons to be used in the spiritual combat	119
Second part of the spiritual combat	120
But God had other plans	122
The sufferings of Christ	124
‘By his wounds you have been healed’	126
Christ is compensated for his death and suffering	127
The priesthood of Christ	129
 <b>Chapter 4 The Resurrection and the Eucharistic Life</b>	 131
The return of Christ	131
The resurrection from the dead and some problems to be solved	132
The Eucharistic Life	137
Eternal life	138
‘No one can come to the Son unless the Father draws them’	141
The necessity of the Eucharist for eternal life	143
The eucharistic food in the next life	144
The Liturgy of the Eucharist	145
The Son of Man	147
Rosmini on St Augustine’s words	149
Life and Resurrection	151
Our new life of grace through Baptism	152
Our eucharistic nourishment	153
Faith in God’s promise	155
The heavenly banquet	157
The bread of angels	159
Holy Viaticum	159
The state of the wayfarer and the blessed in heaven	161
Our life of faith	163
Comments on the above text	164
The glory that is to be revealed	166
The Word became flesh	169
Justification and Baptism	171
Our reception of the Eucharist	173
The Eucharist as a sign of the unity of the faithful with Christ	175
Spiritual Communion	176
Temples of the Holy Spirit	177
The Eucharist as the sign of unity of the faithful among themselves	179
Our union with one another in Christ	180
The work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the faithful	183
 Bibliography	 185
 Indices	 187