

# ON THE VALUE OF INSPIRATIONS

## SERMON 4

### WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST

#### **The multiple ways by which one can know which inspirations are to be followed, why they are of value, and what is their value**

*Consider and answer me, O Lord my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death, and my enemy will say, 'I have prevailed'* [Ps 13:3-4]. This is a suitable petition, a humble request, a prayer worthy for acquiring grace and for submitting oneself to the high mercy of God. A devout mind should pray in this way to the Lord, asking not to be deceived by inspirations which come under the appearance of good; the mind should say: *Give light to my eyes*. One who prays in this way asks a triple grace from God: firstly, an illuminating grace; secondly, a sanctifying grace; thirdly, a conquering grace.

- Illuminating grace. Firstly, one asks for an illuminating grace, saying: *Give light to my eyes*, that is, you, Lord God, who enlightens everyone who comes into the world [1 Jn 1:9].

There are two eyes, namely, an interior and an exterior eye; and just as there are two exterior eyes, a left and a right eye, so also in the interior eye there is the eye of knowledge which is the left eye, and an eye of the affections which is the right eye. The eye of knowledge is blinded by ignorance,<sup>1</sup>

And so one cannot distinguish between good and evil inspirations. The eye of the affections is darkened by concupiscence, namely, because it does not know how to love, it prefers what is transitory to what is eternal. 'The eye of

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<sup>1</sup> From Hugo de S. Charo, *Postilla* in Ps 12 (II, f. 24d-25a), and the quotations immediately following come from here with some changes and additions.

knowledge is enlightened by knowledge’ and the discernment of inspirations; ‘and the eye’ of the affections is enlightened ‘by virtue’ and the love of virtue.

Sometimes the eye of knowledge is enlightened and the eye of the affections is darkened; hence there is written allegorically: *Baalam the son of Beor has said: The man has said, whose eye is stopped up* [Num 24:3].<sup>1</sup> Baalam means a vain people.<sup>2</sup> When anyone seeks the vanity of this world, the eye of their affections is darkened. Such a one makes a treaty with Nahash who gouges out his right eye. As an allegory of this Nahash said: *On this condition I will make a treaty with you, namely, that I gouge out everyone's right eye* [1 Sam 11:2]. Nahash means serpent or interpreting signs.<sup>3</sup> This is the crafty serpent who announced to Eve: *You will not die, but, you will be like God, knowing good and evil* [Gen 3:4-5].

It sometimes happens that the eye of the affections which is in darkness can be enlightened. As an allegory of this there is written: *Jonathan extended the staff that was in his hand, and dipped the tip of it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes brightened* [1 Sam 14:29]. Jonathan means ‘a gift of a dove’,<sup>4</sup> for he represents the gift of grace. The staff is the strictness of justice, its tip being Christ who clearly taught perfect justice when he said: *Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven* [Mt 5:20]. The honeycomb is the mercy of God which, in the two natures of Christ, is represented allegorically in wax and honey. To put the hand to the mouth means to teach others, something Christ did from the first. One draws up honey with the staff who merits the mercy of God by justice which one does in oneself. An example of this is the Prophet who could say of himself: *I have done what is just and right; do not leave me to my oppressors* [Ps 119:121]. And in another text he says: *Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other* [Ps 85:10]. The steadfast love is the love of God being merciful, and the faithfulness of humans is of those who judge themselves and act justly; these kiss each other in a kiss of peace. In this way the eyes of Jonathan are brightened,

that is, the eyes of a penitent soul.

- Sanctifying grace. Secondly, the one praying asks for sanctifying grace so as not to ‘sleep the sleep of death’, that is, mortal sin due to an error of discernment. ‘There is a

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<sup>1</sup> DRB.

<sup>2</sup> Jerome, *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* (CSEL 72, 79).

<sup>3</sup> Jerome, *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* (CSEL 72, 83).

<sup>4</sup> Jerome, *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* (CSEL 72, 100).

difference between being sleepy, sleeping, and falling asleep', and there is an order between them. One who is sleepy is midway between sleep and being awake; such drowsiness does not last and such a person is disturbed by whatever happens. To be asleep is to have full sleep; but to fall asleep is deep sleep as happens to lethargic people who are disturbed neither by calls or noises but who sleep on until they end their sleep in death. So allegorically:

One who sins often but does penance, falls asleep in death; one is asleep who daily puts off doing penance; one falls asleep who is so constrained by bad habits on which neither gentle nor harsh words have any effect.

Solomon says to such: *You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast. 'They struck me', you will say 'but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it'* [Prov 23:34-35].

These three are expressed allegorically in Sirach where is written: *The cold north wind blows, and the water is congealed into crystal* [43:22].<sup>1</sup> Water represents being sleepy, ice congealed represents sleep, and crystal represents falling asleep.

- Conquering grace. Thirdly, the one praying asks for a conquering grace, that is, victory over the enemies, saying: *and my enemy will say, rejoicing, I have prevailed*, namely, I achieved the final victory by means of false inspirations. How and in what ways the devil prevails over the soul is allegorically contained in Exodus: *The enemy said, 'I will pursue, and I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them. I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them'* [15:9]. This enemy is the one spoken of in Matthew: *An enemy has done this* [13:28].

The soul is overpowered by the devil through seven steps. This enemy gains victory over a sinner in a sevenfold process:

Firstly, he attacks through a suggestion; secondly, he struggles in pleasure; thirdly, he strikes in consent; fourthly, he plunders what is done; fifthly, he undermines customs; sixthly, he gladdens, namely, in boasting; seventhly, he prevails in death.

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<sup>1</sup> DRB; Sir 43:20 in NRSV.

- Firstly, he attacks through a suggestion. So it was said: *The enemy said*, namely, by inspiring or tempting in various ways, as explained more fully above in sermon 2, section 1, chapter 4.<sup>1</sup> Such an attack is called the power of darkness. The Lord said to those who came to take him away: *But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!* [Lk 22:53].
- Secondly, he struggles in pleasure. So there is added: *I will pursue*, namely, to provoke pleasure. The Lord, to illustrate in an allegorical sense something to be mourned, as he came near and saw the city: *he wept over it, saying: 'If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes'* [Lk 19:41-42].
- Thirdly, he strikes in consent. So there is added: *and I will overtake*, as if to capture with iron claws and wound mortally. Of this is written: *The iniquities of the wicked ensnare them* [Prov 5:22], because a sinner can be taken by the devil only when consenting to mortal sin.
- Fourthly, he plunders what is done. So there is added: *I will divide the spoil*. According to Alexander of Hales,<sup>2</sup> to consent to mortal sin is to deprive oneself of sanctifying grace, which is the wedding garment. Mortal sin deprives one of graces freely given, which according to the blame involved are given by the divine judgment into the hands of the enemy to be divided up and dispersed.
- Fifthly, he undermines customs. So there is added: *my desire shall have its fill*. This satisfied desire can be called an abundant custom and a most choice offering to the devil, of which Habakkuk says: *his portion is lavish, and his food is rich* [1:16].
- Sixthly, he gladdens, namely, in boasting, because sinners *rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil* [Prov 2:14]. The Prophet says to such: *Why do you boast, O mighty one, of mischief done against the godly?* [Ps

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<sup>1</sup> Pages 11-15.

<sup>2</sup> *Summa*, II, II, n. 310 (3, 318) where Alexander refers to the question.

52:1]. And so there is added about the tongue of the devil: *I will draw my sword* [Ex 15:9]. The tongue of one who glories in such a way is the tongue of the devil, as the Prophet says: *Your tongue, that is, the tongues of sinners, is like a sharp razor* [Ps 52:1], namely, of the devil. The scabbard for this sword is their mouth, as the Prophet says: *A sword is in their lips* [Ps 58:8].<sup>1</sup> The devil draws this sword when a sinner boasts publicly of crimes.

- Seventhly, he prevails in the death of an impenitent sinner. So there is added: *but God will break you down forever* [Ps 52:5]. The Prophet says of such people: *Evil brings death to the wicked* [Ps 34:21]. In this way the devil prevails over the sinner in the struggle. Therefore, as above, the Prophet prays saying: *my enemy will say, 'I have prevailed'* [Ps 13:4].

God hears this triple petition. To one who asks humbly God responds most graciously to this triple request for grace. The Lord says: *I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you* [Ps 32:8].

- Firstly one should ask for an illuminating grace, saying: *Give light to my eyes* [Ps 13:3]; to which the Lord replies: *I will instruct you*, especially in the fourfold inspiration, namely, so that you will understand and know them: firstly, the present; secondly, the eternal, thirdly, punishments; fourthly, yourself. The first makes one free; the second, fervent; the third, timid; the fourth, anxious.

- The first makes a person free.

Whoever is aware of the present contemns and leaves it, according to the text of Nahum: *All who see you will shrink away from you* [3:7]; in this way is a person made free.<sup>2</sup>

- The second makes a person zealous: 'whoever experiences the eternal, desires it, and so becomes zealous' in acquiring it, as the Prophet says: *I run the way of your commandments*, namely, in affection and effort, *for you enlarge my*

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<sup>1</sup> DRB; in NRSV, Ps 59:7.

<sup>2</sup> From Hugo de S. Charo, *Postilla* in Ps 31 (II, 78c), and the three following quotations come from here.

*understanding* [Ps 119:32], namely, in knowledge of the eternal.

- The third makes a person timid. ‘Whoever is conscious of punishments, is in horror of them and becomes timid’, saying: *Fear and trembling come upon me and horror overwhelms me* [Ps 55:5].
- The fourth makes a person anxious.

Whoever is aware of self and one's own weakness becomes anxious, lacking confidence in one's own strength. An example of this can be seen in weak old people who become so anxious when they have to travel, that they eat as much as strong men and horsemen.

By these four inspirations the mind is enlightened; as the Prophet says: *all those who practise it have a good understanding* [Ps 111:10].

- Secondly, one asks for sanctifying grace, saying: *or I will sleep the sleep of death* [Ps 13:3]. The Lord replies to this request saying: *I will instruct you* [Ps 32:8], namely, how to get sanctifying grace, and how to persevere in it to the end.

The Lord gives understanding and instructs in three ways: firstly, by inspiration; secondly, by preaching; thirdly by adversity.

- Firstly, the Lord gives understanding and instructs by inspirations. Job says: *Now a word came stealing to me, my ear received the whisper of it* [4:12]. And John says: *you do not need anyone to teach you, but his anointing teaches you about all things* [1 Jn 2:27].
- Secondly, by preaching: hence, the Prophet says: *The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple* [Ps 119:130].
- Thirdly, by adversity: Isaiah says: *it will be sheer terror to understand the message* [28:19]; and Job says that the Lord teaches us by discipline [33:16].<sup>1</sup>
- Thirdly, one asks for a conquering grace, saying: *and my enemy will say, ‘I have prevailed’*. The Lord responds to such a request by saying: *I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you* [Ps 32:8]. In these words

one can note the care of the mercy of God and the protection against all that is dangerous to the soul. Not only does it say I keep my eye on you but adds: *I will counsel you*, that is, I will look and not turn my eyes away from you enlightened by my grace and mercy. In

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<sup>1</sup> From Hugo de S. Charo, *Postilla* in Ps 31 (II, 78c), and 78d for the following quotation in which there are some changes and additions.

Wisdom is written: *God's grace and mercy are with his elect, and he watches over his holy ones* [4:15].

But since it is said that the Holy Spirit *will flee from deceit* [Wis 1:5], each of us should ask and pray to God most insistently, saying with the Prophet: *Consider and answer me, O lord my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death, and my enemy will say, 'I have prevailed'* [Ps 13:3-4]. Then the faithful soul will merit to hear: *I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.*

We can be instructed on three things as if by a triple illumination from God concerning the question of inspirations: firstly, which inspirations are valuable; secondly, why are they valuable; thirdly, what makes them valuable? Or to put it another way: firstly, what are the things which are valuable; secondly, why are they valuable; thirdly, what is their value?

## Section 1

### On inspirations which are valuable

The first illumination enlightens the mind to understand which inspirations are valuable and what is their value. In this question attention must be given to the three things necessary for an inspired work to be valuable, namely, firstly, that the work be done in charity; secondly, that it comes from charity; thirdly, that it be done for charity.

Firstly, I say, it is necessary for the inspired work to be done in charity because works done without charity are dead like dead charcoal.

Secondly, the work be done from charity, for many things are done in charity and remain without any value because they do not come from charity.

Thirdly, the work be done for charity, that is, it has to be concerned with good, because the intention alone cannot change evil into good, otherwise an absurdity would occur, namely, that the same action be both valuable and useless.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From Hugo Argentinensis, *Compendium theologiae veritatis*, V, c. 13 and the four texts quoted below are from this source.

More will be said on this in Section 3, chapter 1, towards the end.<sup>1</sup>

For the value of inspirations ‘three things are required of the person: a subject, which is the soul, free will, and intention or purpose. To these three things’, for value to be found in inspirations, ‘there must be three things from God, namely, grace, virtue, and charity. Grace makes a person pleasing to God’ when it is given. ‘Virtue assists the free will of the soul’ to consent to the holy inspirations; ‘charity directs the attention to the right purpose’. Having said this, note that of all the holy inspirations given in this world and which are worthy of being carried out, some are carried out in intention and deed; some in intention but not in deed; some in deed but not in intention.

## Chapter 1

### **On inspirations which are valuable when carried out in intention and deed**

Firstly, there are inspirations which are valuable and are to be carried out in intention and in deed. These are inspirations formed according to the twelve rules stated in the preceding sermon, and

which ought, as said already, be carried out in intention and deed, following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ of whom the Apostle says: *Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus* [Phil 2:5], who for us in both intention and deed took on the death on a cross.

Therefore, in inspirations which are in accord with the twelve rules stated above, the intention without an action, and an action without intention cannot please God; so the Prophet says: *With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you* [Ps 54:6].

He says a freewill offering, not one offered under constraint; services offered under constraint do not please God, as Augustine<sup>2</sup> says. The Lord speaking in an allegory said: *from all whose hearts prompt them to give, you shall receive the offering*, and then adds *to take for me an offering* [Ex 25:2], namely, the sacrifice of a good action. And

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<sup>1</sup> Pages 110-112.

<sup>2</sup> See *De vera religione*, c. 14, n. 27 (CSEL 32, 204).

in another text: *Then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings* [Ps 51:19]; and yet again: *Offer right sacrifices* [Ps 4:6], that is, a good action; and James says: *So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead* [2:17].

When then inspirations are responded to in love both in intention and action,

they have three values: firstly, for eternal life; secondly, for an increase of grace; thirdly, for the remission of punishment.

- The first reward of eternal life, that is of lasting glory, corresponds to the source of the action which is charity.
- The second reward which is accidental, corresponds to the type of action performed and the increase of grace; actions which are excellent and works of supererogation gain more merit than other actions.
- The third reward, namely, the remission of punishment, corresponds to the difficulty of the action; works which are more difficult are of more value for remitting punishment. The rule of theology is that difficulty lessens punishment.

Note however that, although the whole source for meriting eternal life and also the other good things consists in charity, all the merit gained is not due only to the greatness of charity, but also to the greatness of the action, as is clear in the value of the remission of punishment; it consists not only in charity but also in the actions which are difficult as is clear in Christ who merited for us the opening of the gates of paradise. Its value lay not only in the charity, but in the charity and the excellence of the difficult work, namely, the most sacred passion.<sup>1</sup>

According to Alexander of Hales, in II, quest. 33,<sup>2</sup> when one acts voluntarily and out of charity, according to the aforementioned inspirations, they are valuable for seven reasons.

- Firstly, for an increase of grace; so Augustine<sup>3</sup>: Charity ‘merits to increase, the increase merits to be perfected’.
- Secondly, for facilitating good works; *so that you may share abundantly in every good work* [2 Cor 9:8], that is, be enabled to work.

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<sup>1</sup> From Hugo Argentinensis, *Compendium theologiae veritatis*, V, c. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Summa*, II, II, n. 56 (3, 75).

<sup>3</sup> *Letter* 186 (FOTC 30, 198); also *Letter* 167, ch. 15 (FOTC 30, 44-45).

- Thirdly, for the remission of punishment due to one or imposed on one; Tobit: *For almsgiving saves from death and purges away every sin* [12:9]. The Lord says: *So give for alms those things that are within, and see, everything will be clean for you* [Lk 11:41].
- Fourthly, for a short, that is, a more rapid passage through purgatory; Solomon says: *Wealth is a ransom for a person's life* [Prov 13:8]. A *Gloss*<sup>1</sup>: ‘Whoever would wish to redeem their soul from the future anger, should gather together the riches of good actions’; the anger referred to is punishment in purgatory.
- Fifthly, for lessening of some punishment in hell, namely, the worm of conscience so as to make damnation more tolerable.
- Sixthly, for remembering sins in this present life because by their nature good actions are opposed to vices in a variety of ways.
- Seventhly, for accidental glory; just as evildoers who are guilty of many wrong doings are tormented all the more by the worm of conscience, so, on the other hand, an abundance of good works increases the joy of paradise. But this reward is not the glory itself but an accident, namely, an increase of the glory of the blessed.
- An eighth value can be added which concerns the benefits to one's neighbours. Bernard<sup>2</sup> says: ‘The intention is sufficient for merit, the deed for giving an example’. Others<sup>3</sup> list other values which are expressed in these lines:

It pleases, makes firm, increases, remits sins,  
weakens, removes, exercises and repels.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ordinaria*, on this text in Lyranus (II, f. 321c).

<sup>2</sup> *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, c. 14, n. 46 (PL 182, 1026).

<sup>3</sup> Among these is Hugo Argentinensis, *Compendium theologicæ veritatis*, V, c. 15, and the following quotation is from this source.

These say: it pleases the mind; makes virtues firm; increases the merit of the accidental glory; remits the punishment due to sins when the guilt has already been remitted by grace; weakens the heat of passion; removes spiritual torpor; exercises a person in pursuing good, and repels the temptations of the devil.

## CHAPTER 2

### **When inspirations are to be heeded in intention but not in action, and on the value and causes of these**

Secondly there are some inspirations ‘which are to be heeded in intention but not in action’,<sup>1</sup> as, for example, what is referred to in the second, third, fourth, ninth and twelfth rules spoken about in the preceding sermon.<sup>2</sup> This happens from a double cause: either on account of a weakness in the person, or on account of a lack of suitable circumstances.

- Firstly, on account of a weakness in the person. For example, someone has a fervent desire to suffer martyrdom for Christ or to live a solitary life in the desert, to fast on bread and water, to suffer nudity and hunger, and in general to lead a most austere life; but fearing a lack of perseverance, the cunning of the devil, inexperience and weakness, abstains from these actions, but retains, if possible, the strong intention to do such things.
- Secondly, on account of a lack of suitable circumstances, as, for example, when one might wish to speak frequently with a certain woman because of her expertise in the spiritual life, but does not do this to avoid any scandal which might arise; and so on in similar cases. God accepts this intention as if the action itself were done; in 1 Samuel is written: *Surely to obey is better than to sacrifice* [15:22], that is, it is better to have the intention of obeying than to be a victim in what is done.

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<sup>1</sup> From Hugo Pantiera, *Tractati*, VIII (f. 51r).

<sup>2</sup> Pages 35-39, 40-44, 44-48, 69-80, 86-89.

Note, however, according to Alexander of Hales, in II, quest. 33,<sup>1</sup> that, as stated by

Augustine, in the *Confessions*,<sup>2</sup> there is a twofold will, namely, a full and a half full. A full will is so called when a person intending to do something lacks nothing except the ability to do it; in such a person the intention to do something is judged as being meritorious or not. If the person is able to do the action, the will or intention as the source of the action is principally imputed to the person as meritorious, not whether the action itself is done for merit or demerit,

as explained in the preceding chapter.

This is stated in a *Gloss*<sup>3</sup> on the text of the Psalm: *You forgave the guilt of my sin* [Ps 32:5]: ‘The intention is taken for the deed’. And also in a *Gloss*<sup>4</sup> on the text of the Psalm: *Your hands deal out* [Ps 58:2]: ‘Whatever you intend but cannot do, the Lord takes as done’; and on the text<sup>5</sup>: *who greatly delight in your commandments* [Ps 112:1]: ‘The intention is sufficient in one unable to complete the task’.

Many statements of the Saints refer to a full intention which is unable to complete the action; but where there is the ability to complete the action, the action must be done for merit or demerit.

If, however, the intention is half full, then of itself it is not for merit or demerit, except perhaps venially.

In this matter one may ask whether a person who had a full intention to do something but was not capable of doing it and another person who had a full intention but also did the action, will be judged by the same standards for reward or punishment? I would reply that good and evil are somewhat similar and somewhat different.

- Firstly, for good actions there is a substantial reward, namely, the vision of God, and there is an added or accidental reward which consists in the joy over some good thing done in the past or added at the present moment. In the substantial reward the full will which is unable to perform an action is equivalent to the full will which is able to do the action provided that in both there is equal love and sanctifying grace. But in the added or accidental reward the full will which carries out the action merits more than the full will unable to act; this applies not only to obtaining good but also to the dismissal of the punishment for evil.
- Secondly, for people who do evil, punishment is due both because of the full intention and the action. On account of this,

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<sup>1</sup> *Summa*, II, II, n. 53 (3, 72ff.), and the two following quotations with some changes and additions.

<sup>2</sup> See book 8, chs. 9-10, n. 21-24 (FOTC 21, 217-221).

<sup>3</sup> P. Lombard, in Ps 31:6 (PL 191, 321).

<sup>4</sup> P. Lombard, in Ps 57:2 (PL 191, 535).

<sup>5</sup> *Glossa Lombardi*, in Ps 111:1 (PL 191, 1012).

the person who does something with full intention is punished more in actual affliction than one who has full intention but does not do any action. However, as far as being deprived of the vision of God both are equal in punishment.

From this one can judge the case of one who wanted to undergo martyrdom but did not endure it, and another who wanted to undergo martyrdom and did endure it. The one wanting but not being able to act is worthy of a golden, that is, a substantial glory; but to the one who adds the action is due a golden crown. So they are judged in the same way as regards the first but differently in regard to the second.

### CHAPTER 3

#### **On inspirations which are to be acted on but not intended, their causes and value**

Thirdly, there are some inspirations ‘which are to be acted on but not intended’,<sup>1</sup> provided none of the aforementioned twelve rules are contradicted.

Two things make it valid to do some action without intention: ‘the first is the necessity of obedience’; the second, excessive love.

- Firstly, I say, the necessity of obedience,

As when someone in obedience must share a house with women, with crowds, with those whose interest is in sumptuous meals, or to fulfill the marriage act solely from obedience with all honesty, as is possible, and as the Prophets did. This occurred in the gracious actions of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

So John says: *I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me* [6:38]; in this way Christ taught us always to prefer to do the will of another rather than our own, if this is possible without sin.<sup>3</sup>

- Secondly, the excess and necessity of love. There are indeed many things which are difficult

from external circumstances, as it is more difficult to abstain when fine food is put before one, it is more difficult to despise

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<sup>1</sup> From Hugo Pantiera, *Tractati*, VIII (f. 51v), and also the following quotation.

<sup>2</sup> From Olivi, *In Matthaeum*, c. 5 (f. 31d).

<sup>3</sup> From Hugo Pantiera, *Tractati*, VIII (f. 51v).

temporal goods when they are offered, it is more difficult to be continent in the company of women, and so on. Such things by accident are sometimes meritorious, but directly, of themselves, they can be a highway to ruin; therefore, a prudent person ought to flee such things, unless one wishes to bear them for a time because of a significant and most evident benefit to the salvation of others.<sup>1</sup>

## SECTION 2

### **Twelve reasons why it is valuable to act on holy inspirations**

The second illumination enlightens the mind to know why inspirations are valuable and why they are merited. Since Isaiah says: *all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth* [64:6]; and the Apostle asserts: *I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us* [Rom 8:18], how can we possibly gain, especially eternal glory, from holy inspirations?

To understand what has been said, it is to be noted

that there is a triple merit, namely, congruous, worthy and condign.

- Congruous merit disposes a person to be able to accept grace in accord with the workings of God's justice.
- Worthy merit refers to the ability of a person to attain what is merited.
- Condign merit refers to the equality of the merit to the reward itself. I say equality, not of quantity but of proportion. This is clear, because God always rewards on the basis of merit, just as God punishes less than what is condign; so there is not an equality of quantity but of proportion between merit and reward; because there is in God a commutative justice, since God is in debt to no one, but only distributive justice.
  - Commutative justice is justice of the market place, by which one coin buys one piece of bread or a loaf of bread for more coins.
  - Distributive justice is the principle, by which gifts are given in proportion to merit and this is God's doing. So the Apostle says:

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<sup>1</sup> From Ubertinus, *Arbor vitae*, III, c. 13 (f. 115bc), with some changes and additions.

*each shall receive wages according to the labour of each* [1 Cor 3:8];<sup>1</sup>

and the Lord says: *See, I am coming soon, my reward is with me to repay according to everyone's work* [Rev 22:12]. These could well be themes in this present section.

Having said this, it can be affirmed that a person who carries out holy inspirations merits condignly eternal glory. Twelve reasons which can be divided into three groups of four can be given for this.

## CHAPTER 1

### **The first four reasons why holy inspirations which are carried out are meritorious**

The first four reasons why a person merits from responding to inspirations, are listed first. A person merits: firstly, on account of being made pleasing; secondly, on account of conformity; thirdly, on account of opposition; fourthly on account of enlightenment.

- Firstly, I say, a person merits on account of being made pleasing or election;

because God deigns to regard a person as pleasing or worthy to accept or to choose a person, as it was said to the Apostles and to all the elect: *I have chosen you out of the world, you did not choose me* [Jn 15:16-19].<sup>2</sup>

Therefore,

if we turn from ourselves to Christ we must have first chosen him; but this cannot be done without the grace of Christ, that is, for us to love him, so he through grace first chose us, so that we then might choose God through love, and serve him most willingly.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From Hugo Argentinensis, *Compendium theologiae veritatis*, V, c. 11 (34, 161), with some changes and additions.

<sup>2</sup> From Hugo Pantiera, *Tractati*, VIII (f. 51v) with some changes and additions.

<sup>3</sup> From Matthew de Svetia, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, Prologus (f. 11a).

- Secondly, a person merits on account of conformity, namely, to the will of God, which is seen

in the divine precepts or counsels or in other signs of the divine will. The Prophet says of such a person: *their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night* [Ps 1:2],<sup>1</sup>

in good times and in bad.

- Thirdly, a person merits on account of opposition;

it is indeed wearisome because our will and nature corrupt from sin always tend to what is lower; therefore, the Lord inviting us to what is difficult, that is, to things above, says: *Whoever serves me must follow me, namely to what is above; and where I am there will my servant be also* [Jn 12:26],

namely, in eternal glory.

- Fourthly, ‘a person merits on account of the enlightenment which results from responding to a true and virtuous inspiration’. For example, the Lord says of an action done from inspired faith: *Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God* [Jn 7:17]; because, on the word of Augustine,<sup>2</sup> ‘understanding is the reward of faith’; Isaiah says: *If you do not stand firm in faith you will not understand* [7:9].<sup>3</sup> Therefore do not try to understand so as to believe, but rather believe so as to understand. And the Lord repeats: *The Spirit of truth*, that is, the Holy Spirit who is essential and effective truth, because the soul in which is the Holy Spirit loves truth with the heart, mouth and actions; and it goes on: *will guide you into all truth* [Jn 16:13], that is, will enlighten you about every truth necessary for eternal salvation.

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<sup>1</sup> From Hugo Pantiera, *Tractati*, VIII (f. 51v), and also the next two quotations with many changes and additions.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermo* 126, c. 1, n. 1 (PL 38, 698).

<sup>3</sup> This is the text of the Septuagint. See Augustine, *Sermo* 126, c. 1, n. 1 (PL 38, 698).

## CHAPTER 2

### The second group of four reasons why holy inspirations which are carried out are meritorious

Secondly, we list another four reasons. A person merits from inspirations which are accepted: firstly, on account of subjugation; secondly, by serving as a model; thirdly, by affectionate love; fourthly, through mercy.

- Firstly, I say, on account of subjugation, for the accepting of good inspirations ‘is contrary to our freedom and will’.<sup>1</sup> When the soul chooses to submit itself to the divine will and through this inspiration to join the human will to the divine will, the soul holds within itself the divine will. The Lord says to such a soul: *you shall be called My Delight Is in Her* [Isa 62:4].
- Secondly, by serving as a model, for actions done under holy inspirations  
give a good example to all who see them and induce and incite souls to salvation so that to all who watch, a person can say the words used by the Lord: *I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you* [Jn 13:15].
- Thirdly, by affectionate love; there is a difference between affection and love, for love and charity belong to the desires of the mind, while affection is a stirring of love affecting the body and the senses of the flesh. ‘Holy inspirations lead one to both; and to the extent that they are stronger in a person, so much the more does the soul merit, as it is written<sup>2</sup>: “Where there is charity and love, God is there”’, namely, accepting and co-operating to make these gifts effective for merit.
- Fourthly, through mercy; such is the imperfection of each person, there is no one who can remove from themselves every stain of sin and every inclination to sin, so that the heart is completely free to go to God. But according to Anselm, in

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<sup>1</sup> From Hugo Pantiera, *Tractati*, VIII (f. 51v), and also the next three quotations with many changes and additions.

<sup>2</sup> Roman Missal, Holy Thursday, antiphon for the washing of feet.

the book *Cur Deus homo*,<sup>1</sup> the least sin which can be committed, is of such weight, that a person should first allow the whole world to perish rather than be guilty of the least sin or desire against the will of God.<sup>2</sup> It follows from this that no one's personal justice can satisfy for sin; but the most holy mercy of God not only does this but also ensures that inspirations which are accepted become meritorious. Accordingly, the mercy of God is so much the more necessary for a person to whom is due merits from inspirations which led to the person doing many and important actions.

From this it is evident that in any person inspirations accepted are meritorious only because of the mercy of God. Gregory, in *Moralia*,<sup>3</sup> says: If we discuss our work, leaving aside the question of mercy, then it is worthy of punishment while we expect to receive rewards.

It is to be noted that

the mercy of God is the essential cause of our justice, otherwise it would be simply injustice. Therefore, unless our mind is relying on divine mercy it cannot have in itself a true habit of charity or grace or true justice; therefore, if a person relies on their own justice, thinking and presuming that in no way should they be denied an eternal reward, believing and feeling no need for the grace and mercy of God, such justice is pure injustice and the highest pride. The Apostle says of such: *For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they have not submitted to God's righteousness* [Rom 10:3]; and again he says: *For, 'no human being will be justified in his sight' by deeds prescribed by the law* [3:20]; and: *Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded* [3:27]. This is not surprising because our justice and charity come from the mercy of God, and are its likeness; so one must regard the mercy of God as one's effective principle, main object, rule and goal.

Moreover it is not fitting to make the liberality of God's mercy seem slight.

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<sup>1</sup> Book 1, ch. 21, p. 229.

<sup>2</sup> From Olivi, *Super Iob*, c. 9 (f. 20d) and also the following quotation with some changes and additions.

<sup>3</sup> V, c. 7, n. 12 (CSEL 143, 226).

## CHAPTER 3

### **The third group of four reasons why holy inspirations which are carried out are meritorious**

Thirdly, there are four more reasons. A person may merit by accepting inspirations: firstly, because of a divine decree; secondly, because of a divine promise; thirdly, because of the divine will or desire; fourthly, because of divine affection or love.

- Firstly, I say, a person may merit because of a divine decree. Since God and the glory of God are the rewards for inspirations heeded, who would say that any action of ours is completely sufficient to oblige God to give us himself in eternal glory?

Hence, our merit is regarded in the same way as a mercenary is promised a wage, so that the glory of God is never earned by merit; because there the proportion is one of a certain dependence, but here one infinitely exceeds the other.<sup>1</sup>

However, this is mercifully granted by a divine decree.

- Secondly, a person may merit from a divine promise; the liberality of God rewarding is clear in this, for it is not proper for God to give small gifts. That inspirations heeded are meritorious 'is a certain right from a divine pact or divine promise even though the promise be made freely and from favour'. Therefore, the Apostle says to Titus:

*Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that is in accordance with godliness, in the hope of eternal life that God, who never lies, promised before the ages began [Titus 1:1-2];*

and as is written:

*God is not a human being, that he should lie, or a mortal, that he should change his mind. Has he promised, and will he not do it? Has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it? [Num 23:19].*

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<sup>1</sup> From Olivi, *Super Iob*, c. 9 (f. 20d), and also the following three quotations with a few changes.

- Thirdly, a person merits because of the divine will or pleasure;

the law of the divine will and causality demand this. Therefore, it is right that what God wants to happen, does happen; God wants to save us through inspirations heeded and through grace, and so lead us effectively

to eternal glory. For, as the Prophet says: *Whatever the Lord pleases he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps* [Ps 135:6]; and the Lord says: *My purpose shall stand, and I will fulfill my intention, calling by inspirations, a bird of prey, that is contemplatives, from a far country, that is, from the state of sin, the man for my purpose* [Isa 46:10-11], namely, in active life. In Romans is said: *This is the will of God, concerning freely given grace, acceptable, as sanctifying grace, and perfect* [12:2], as conquering grace; God gives all these as recompense for inspirations heeded according to the law of God's will.

- Fourthly, a person merits because of divine affection or love.

The law of the friendship of God demands this. It is indeed right that a person brought into friendship with God and made a friend of God who loves the person as a friend, even as a child or spouse, should in reality become the friend of God. The Apostle, moved by this law and proportion, says: *From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day* [2 Tim 4:8].

In the end of this section it should be carefully noted that all virtues, whether mental or bodily, tormenting or pleasurable, active or passive, are as meritorious for salvation, as is the perfection of these twelve reasons spoken of in this section and which are the origin and basis from which merit comes.

### SECTION 3

#### **What can be merited from any inspiration be it good or bad**

The third illumination enlightens the mind to know from what source inspirations are meritorious, or what they merit. As shown above in sermon 2, section 1,<sup>1</sup> there are seven kinds of inspirations. The first three are rewarded with good, the next two are rewarded with evil, while the last two are rewarded in different ways.

### CHAPTER 1

#### **What are the inspirations rewarded with good and with what good**

Firstly, I will speak of the three kinds of inspirations, namely divine, angelic and those which are meritorious by reason of their origin, all of which are rewarded with good. For

they are due for rewards from a triple good: they merit temporal good, or temporal and spiritual good, or they merit good which is temporal, spiritual and eternal.<sup>2</sup>

- Firstly, sometimes they merit temporal good, that is, temporal goods which can consist of three things.
  - Firstly, in creatures as in homes, fields, money, children, servants, flocks of animals, country homes, castles, and such things.
  - Secondly, in honours or church offices and dignities and the office of magistrate in the present life.
  - Thirdly, in a good name for goodness and holiness.

God sometimes rewards even evil people with these temporal goods because they responded to good inspirations. Augustine<sup>3</sup> says that no good is left without a reward, for God seeing that an inspiration heeded by a sinner ought not to be rewarded with eternal life, rewards the person with temporal goods. The remission of punishment corresponds to the difficulty of the action, because we must make efforts in work. Therefore,

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<sup>1</sup> Pages 3-18.

<sup>2</sup> From Hugo Pantiera, *Tractati*, VIII (f. 49v).

<sup>3</sup> See *The Literal Interpretation of Genesis*, book 8, ch. 23, n. 44 (ACW 42, 64).

works which are more difficult are more meritorious for the remission of punishment. The rule, as said above,<sup>1</sup> is theological, namely, that difficulty remits punishment both in the present and in the future. God rewards people, even those in mortal sin, in the present for good works; as if Matthew's words were to be applied to such people: *Take what belongs to you and go* [20:14]; to any just people who may wonder at this it is also said: *Truly I tell you, they have received their reward* [Mt 6:5].

- Secondly, there are some who merit both temporal and spiritual good. Spiritual good consists in three things:
  - Firstly, in a divine infusion and increase of grace: *Glorious are you, more majestic than the everlasting mountains* [Ps 76:4].
  - Secondly, in fervent affection: *When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart* [Ps 73:21].
  - Thirdly, in spiritual sentiments: *Think of the Lord in goodness* [Wis 1:1].

With such spiritual goods, besides the temporal goods already mentioned, God rewards both with some good and bad for inspirations heeded.

- Thirdly, there are some who for inspirations heeded are rewarded with a triple good, namely, temporal, spiritual and eternal. The greater good which inspired good works in this present life is that God exercises the soul in virtues for which the merit is salvation. Eternal good consists in a triple glory, namely, substantial which is in the glory of the soul, consubstantial which is in the glory of the body, and accidental which consists in crowns and in the company of the blessed. Of this triple glory the Prophet says: *How very good, substantial glory, and pleasant, consubstantial glory, when kindred live together in unity* [Ps 133:1], accidental glory.

Besides what has been said it must be noted that a fourth kind of inspiration, namely, one which comes from the demons, is sometimes rewarded with all the rewards mentioned above for the first three kinds of inspiration, that is, the divine, angelic and

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<sup>1</sup> See Section 1, Chapter 1, p. 97.

those arising from meritorious virtue. This happens ‘when the inspirations from the devil are similar to the other three in good works, but this rarely proves to be the case’.<sup>1</sup> For the angel of darkness disguising himself *as an angel of light* [2 Cor 11:14], cunningly inspires good so as to lead a person towards evil. For example, he will often inspire fasts, vigils, austere penance, entering a religious Order, prayer and other such good things, for the purpose of leading a person to fall into some harm. But seeing the pure intention of such a soul and the harmful deception of the devil, the merciful God enlightens the mind so that the good begun under the deception of the devil can be continued and completed by God’s most merciful gift. In this way the soul merits to be rewarded with the same rewards as for the first three kinds of inspirations. But this rarely happens.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Which inspirations merit punishment and what punishments are merited**

The two last kinds of inspirations, namely, those which come from the devil and from one’s own malice, once they are complete in malice ‘are rewarded in a triple way: with temporal evil, or temporal and spiritual evil, or temporal, spiritual and infernal’.<sup>2</sup>

- Firstly, they are rewarded sometimes with temporal evil, because, according to Augustine,<sup>3</sup> no evil is left unpunished. The Prophet also says: *Many are the torments of the wicked* [Ps 32:10], such as enmities and wars, hunger and barren earth, plagues and other sicknesses and harmful, cruel and wild beasts, such as wolves, lions and bears. Therefore, in the opening of the fourth seal, it is written of this triple punishment and of the punishing demon:

*power was given to him over the four parts of the earth, to kill with sword, with famine, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth*

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<sup>1</sup> From Hugo Pantiera, *Tractati*, VIII (f. 49v).

<sup>2</sup> From Hugo Pantiera, *Tractati*, VIII (f. 49v).

<sup>3</sup> *Sermo* 19, n. 2 (CSEL 38, 133).

[Rev 6:8].<sup>1</sup> An earthly person, that is, a person whose spirit is completely absorbed in earthly things, is fittingly called earth, just as it was said to Adam: *you are dust, and to dust you shall return* [Gen 3:19]. This earth has *four parts* since the conscience of a sinner considers that earthly things are to be preferred, and their will chooses these earthly things, the body follows and the soul, infatuated with sin, does not prevent this.<sup>2</sup>

These are *the four parts of the earth* over which God allows the devil to have power. Or *over the four parts of the earth*, that is, over all the reprobates living in the east, west, south and north, over whom, as the text says, God allows the devil, because of sins, to have the power to inflict these four plagues, namely, *to kill with sword, with famine, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth*.

- Secondly, sinners are sometimes rewarded with temporal and spiritual evil. Enough has been said of temporal evil; concerning spiritual evil by which the wicked are punished, the same allegory applies in a spiritual sense.

For a sword which pierces and tears is the remorse of conscience, piercing and tearing, because from a wrong attraction the soul was provoked to act perversely. Therefore it is written: *There is that promiseth, and is pricked as it were with a sword of conscience* [Prov 12:18].<sup>3</sup> The conscience makes an evil promise when it enters into an unlawful pact with the desire to sin which should be subject to it; quite rightly then is it wounded allegorically by a sword, because the punishment comes precisely from where there was promised a false assurance of pleasure. Hunger of divine grace is the defect by which neither reason, knowledge, nor the will are refreshed with divine sweetness; so it is written: *The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry* [Prov 10:3]. This hunger torments the understanding of the sinner, because divine sweetness abandons a person allied to sin. Death can signify the destruction of nature and its energies, just as the Lord killed the first born of the Egyptians [Ex 11:4-5 and 12:29], to signify allegorically that the energies of nature perish in the service of sin. Therefore, a body serving sin is destroyed by death since in sinning there is a total destruction of nature. The beasts of the earth are the devils, who lacerate and torment a soul which was absorbed in sin and consented to the suggestions of the devils. The Prophet prays for faithful souls to be freed when he says: *Do not*

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<sup>1</sup> DRB.

<sup>2</sup> From Matthew de Svetia, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, c. 6 (f. 56b); the following quotation comes from here with some changes and additions.

<sup>3</sup> DRB.

*deliver the soul of your dove to the wild animals; do not forget the life of your poor forever [Ps 74:9].*

- Thirdly, sinners are sometimes rewarded with temporal, spiritual and eternal evil. I have already spoken of temporal and spiritual evil, but the same allegorical meaning can be applied to eternal evil, because the plagues referred to also apply to the punishment of eternal damnation. The sword piercing is the worm of conscience gnawing away; *Their worm shall not die* [Isa 66:24]. Famine is divine desolation; Psalm: *They shall hunger like dogs* [Ps 58:7].<sup>1</sup> Death is eternal punishment, *Whoever conquers will not be harmed by the second death* [Rev 2:11]. The first death is the separation of the soul from God by mortal sin, while the second death is the departure of the soul from God into eternal punishment;<sup>2</sup> ‘the herds of animals are the demons’. So the Lord says through the Prophet: *The teeth of beasts I will send against them, with venom of things crawling in the dust* [Deut 32:24].

### Chapter 3

#### **On the merit of inspirations which happen naturally, and the kinds of inspirations which come from the constellations or nature**

The last two kinds of inspirations can be heeded in two ways: firstly, in oneself; secondly, in a neighbour.

- Firstly indeed ‘if they are heeded in oneself, in no way are they meritorious’,<sup>3</sup> because they are natural phenomena; for, according to the Philosopher,<sup>4</sup> by nature we are neither good nor bad.
- Secondly, ‘if they are heeded in another, they merit service from the neighbour in return’, as, for example, if you love

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<sup>1</sup> DRB; Ps 59:6 in NRSV.

<sup>2</sup> From Matthew de Svetia, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, c. 6 (f. 51c) and the following quotation is from f. 56c.

<sup>3</sup> From Hugo Pantiera, *Tractati*, VIII (f. 49v), and also the next quotation.

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, book 2, ch. 1, n. 1 (9, 1103<sup>a</sup>).

someone naturally, you will naturally be loved by that person; if you greet someone out of custom, you will be greeted out of custom, and so on. Matthew says: *For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?* [5:46]. As if to say: none. According to a *Gloss*<sup>1</sup>: ‘to love a lover is natural’.

The author does not mean by this that it is not meritorious to love friends for the sake of God; he only intends to deny this when friends are loved only because they love, so that if they were not loved they would not love.<sup>2</sup>

The Gospel continues: *Do not even the tax collectors do the same?*, namely, by a natural affection, not from a free giving of love. Even the dogs and many other animals love those who love them and show signs of affection by a certain natural instinct and love. According to Rabanus<sup>3</sup>: ‘tax collectors [publicans] get their name from Publius, a Roman king, who was the first to appoint them’.

The Gospel goes on to say: *And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others*, something which people ordinarily do from custom and nature. *Do not even the Gentiles do the same?* According to Rabanus:

Gentile is a Latin word, in Greek ethnos, and it refers to people born subject to concupiscence, sin, ignorance of God and the divine law. To give a greeting indicates a certain extrinsic sign of love, as it is the first communication and demonstration of human and common courtesy and society.

From what has been said it is clear that the last two kinds of inspiration, because they are natural, of themselves are not meritorious, except as explained above.

Note also that many things incite and seem to inspire the human mind but they are natural phenomena. For example, in the natural passions, a natural fear often pushes the mind to think of what is feared, as to lack food for oneself, to suffer much from opponents, to be abandoned in illness, and so on for the other passions.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ordinaria*, on Mt 7:12, in W. Strabo, *Glossa ordinaria* (PL 114, 98).

<sup>2</sup> From Olivi, *In Matthaeum*, c. 5 (f. 35a).

<sup>3</sup> Rather *Glossa ordinaria*, on Mt 5:46, in M. Strabo (PL 114, 98). The quotation has a play on words which is lost in translation.

The same applies to an excess of any mood or of a good or bad natural disposition, such as a melancholic or other temperament or animal feelings. People are suddenly moved by these in a certain hidden way toward one or other object, because the disposition and habit of such moods make spiritual changes in the interior powers of feeling.

Sometimes a certain compulsion to one or other object occurs in a person from the disposition and movement of the heavenly planets.

Sometimes also from a number and variety of fantasies, or images of animals retained for a long time by some melancholic people with tenacious and lively memory, who, compelled by a fantasy and after daily thinking and careful investigation of a topic, there arise and occur to them many and wonderful things which seem to be imparted by a certain spirit in some unseen process. This can be with parables, history, or some passages of Sacred Scripture on which their fantasy has worked. I have known such people whose memory in these areas I have seen and experienced, so that if I were to write of them I would hardly be believed. These things are wonderful but they are natural.

Nor is credence to be given easily to some spiritual persons who, affected by a strong fantasy in contemplation, think that all the impulses or feelings which they experience, or which occur to them unexpectedly, are caused supernaturally by an angel or evil spirit. There are many who come by such a light judgment or credulity to believe and assert that the devil causes every noise or disturbance which affects them or others when in fact they are caused accidentally by dormice<sup>1</sup> or cats or some such cause. It is hardly likely that the evil spirit, a most cunning deceiver, would easily and spontaneously show himself to be present by prompting a person by external noises when in fact the demon is most cunningly working to destroy the person. However, some believe not irrationally that sometimes the devil appears to the person he is tempting in some shape, or shows himself by some noise or other noticeable means, and is compelled to do this by

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<sup>1</sup> A small hibernating rodent of the family Gliridae, resembling a mouse or squirrel.

God or a good angel lest a person believing the enemy to be far away is insidiously deceived.

I am aware that I have spoken of inspirations in a completely inadequate way; but may the one who is the source, increase and completion of the truths stated and of all good things, make up in the minds of others what is found to be inadequate from my fault. And may this little, given by God, be to the glory and honour of the triune God, one, true and glorious, who reigns for the everlasting eternities of the infinite and eternal ages. Amen.