

BLACKFRIARS

SUPPLEMENT

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

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MAJESTAS DIVINA

BY

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III. SURRENDER.

2.

Plunge

into the depths of your sins
for you are a sinner from birth
"conceived a sinner"

born a sinner

sin to the very garment of your soul
who are a "son of Adam"

sin of his sin

that original sin

the fruitful seed

of a whole tree of sin

extending in all its manifold ramifications

throughout your body.

Is there not at the very least

"another law" in your members

"striving against the law of the spirit"

"Who will deliver me from the body of this death."

What am I

"child of wrath" from birth

"compared with all men

all men compared with all heaven's angels and saints

all that is created compared with GOD

I alone

what can I do

a body of corruption and putrescence

a soul like an ulcer or cancerous growth
 running with so many sins
 so much evil

such foul poison.

What is God

against whom I have sinned

His Omnipotence my strengthlessness

His Wisdom my witlessness

His Justice my wickedness

His Goodness my malice

all that is made

how could it let me live

may keep me alive

the angels

sword of Divine Righteousness

how could they tolerate me

protect me

intercede for me

the saints

begging and praying for me

the heavens

sun moon stars

elements fruits birds fishes beasts

ministering to me

instead of rising in arms against me

why has the earth not opened to swallow me

gaping in new hells

for my eternal torment.

Plunge in

to find in the hidden depth of you

the secret roots

ever fruitful of sinful tendencies

that you may "have an intimate knowledge
 of the perverse trend of your activities"

that you may recognise

how "naught that is good abides in my mortal flesh"

how every man is a liar

how the seeds of every sin

every form of wickedness

sleep within you

only chance it may be preventing their awakening

"If Thou O Lord shalt observe iniquities

Lord who shall abide."

Plunge in right in

into the depths which are the abyss

of your sinful self
 the fire
 towards which strains the fire of your lust
 the darkness
 the realisation of your blindness for God
 that you may sense the fire of Hell
 whenever the flame of your lust shoots up
 that you may be terrified by its darkness
 if ever you are turning aside from the light of the Lord.

“ that if ever through my faults
 I forget the love of the Eternal Lord
 at least the fear of punishment may keep me
 from sin ”
 that the regions of heaven and hell
 within you
 may be defined
 that you may rise up from yourself
 to God
 as from billowing flames to blissful light
 from oppressive darkness to shining day
 from fetters and prison to the freedom of the children of God
 from the depths of pride
 in your own will your self-assurance
 your own strength
 to the heights of the knowledge
 that “ it is by the grace of God that I am what I am.”

Plunge in
 and “ see ” the flickering flames
 souls imprisoned as though in bodies of fire ”
 your soul as it is of itself
 a blazing furnace of lust
 not the still white radiance of love
 “ hear the lamentations and blasphemies the howls and cries ”
 your soul
 as it is of itself
 storm of restless passion
 not rest in action action in rest
 “ smell the smoke sulphur pitch corruption ”
 your soul
 breathing forth of itself
 foulness of earth-bound inclination
 not the morning tears sadness the worm of conscience ”
 your soul
 even as it is of itself
 consumed by the despair of vain struggle
 not “ strong in its very weakness ”

feel how the fire touches and burns souls ”
 your soul as it is in itself
 stretching out its hands to greater anguish
 burning desire consuming disappointment
 not loving in reverence
 and so to possess
 in the spirit
 beyond space and time
 and death.

Plunge in
 till you lose the last traces
 of assurance insensibility ungenerous reserve
 all notion of “ mine ” and “ own ”
 that you may be ready for unconditional surrender
 to Him
 “ a giving up of yourself and all that is yours
 to God
 like a snowflake falling from the sky ”

Even as Mary the Virgin
 spoke
 “ behold the handmaiden of the Lord
 be it done unto me
 according to Thy Word ”
 nestle against her bosom
 from which Salvation sprang
 that you may be born again
 to newness of Spirit
 no longer to the restless ambition of the temper
 that *does* everything
 but to the spirit of virginal love
 that accepts *all*
 “ hail

Mary full of grace
 the Lord is with thee
 blessed art thou amongst women
 and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb.”

Even as her Son spoke
 “ My meat
 is to do the Will of Him that sent Me ”
 let the breath of His Life breathe through you
 that you may live by His Life
 no more a life of your own fears and desires
 but a life of the freedom of God’s Will freely-giving.

“ Soul of Christ be Thou my soul
 Body of Christ my body’s frame

Blood of Christ fire Thou my blood."
 Bow down before God's Spirit
 in the *Virgin's Fiat*
 in the *Fiat* of her Son
 let all that is not God decrease
 let Him increase all in all
 you
 are no longer capable of anything
 no longer pretending to stand on God's level
 bothering about how things are going
 He your Father
 giving you everything
 you
 His child
 taking everything.
 " Father
 in heaven
 hallowed Thy Name
 Thy Kingdom come
 Thy Will be done on earth as in heaven."

(*To be continued.*)

GOD'S CINDERELLA

Chesterion reflecting on the grotesque in nature wrote,
 " I knew there can be laughter
 On the secret face of God."

But certain gestures in God's providence even more than in His creation hint at whatever in the divine intellect is the prototype of a sense of humour in ours.

It seems, for instance, something like a heavenly jest that the canonisation of Margaret of Hungary should have been reserved for an age that passionately disapproves of almost everything she exemplifies. To begin with, was she not doomed by her parents, even before her birth, to a life of inhuman self-repression?

In 1241 Bela IV of Hungary and his queen had been hunted from one refuge to another by a Tartar invasion—that nightmare of eastern Europe in the 13th century. Tracked to their last resort, an island fortress in the Adriatic, they awaited inevitable capture and such gruesome death as might suit the horrid humour of their pursuers. At the queen's suggestion they promised to consecrate their unborn child to God if He should save their kingdom and lives. Thereupon the Tartars, their attention suddenly distracted by news recalling them to their own country, turned their backs on the prey within their reach and departed.

Margaret of Hungary belongs to the category of born saints.