

## Chapter 6

### Christian Perfection and Mystical Experience

Most controversies on the mystical question arise from a lack of agreement on the terminology to be used. Therefore, the central problem is to come to an understanding concerning the definition of mysticism. And the surest way to arrive at a definition is by the application of theological principles. The data of experience and descriptions by mystics themselves have not proved to be satisfactory, nor will they ever solve the problem. The reason is that the data of mystical experience are vague and lack precision because the experience itself is indescribable.

In fact, the data from the mystics must be evaluated by theological principles and conclusions. Any statements that are at variance with these theological truths will have to be rejected *a priori*, regardless of their author, since it is impossible that one truth should contradict another and still proceed from the one source of eternal truth in whom there can be no contradiction. If one must choose between a certain theological conclusion and a contrary statement from mystical experience, one will have to choose the first, because the theological principle from which the conclusion follows has its ultimate basis in divine revelation. To do otherwise would be to run the risk of all types of illusions.

#### Mystical Experience

The question of mysticism or the mystical experience has been the source of controversy since the early days of the Church, when St. Paul and the Apostolic Fathers attempted to distinguish between Christian and pagan gnosis. ***With the passage of time and the deeper investigations of later theologians, the term mysticism became more refined, so that with Pseudo- Dionysius it signified the experience of the divine, passively received.*** This concept remained stable throughout the centuries but in modern times, because of more accurate methods of investigation and more precise distinctions, the mystical question has again become an occasion of discussion.

There is a great variety of definitions among modern authors, but through them all one can perceive a basis of common agreement concerning the constitutive element of Christian mysticism. They dispute at great length as to whether mysticism is necessary for Christian perfection, and they argue about many other questions related to this one, but as regards the nature of mysticism they are for the most part in agreement. Many identify mysticism with infused contemplation, which is not quite exact,<sup>(1)</sup> but all agree on one thing: as a psychological fact, ***mysticism is an awareness of the divine activity on the soul. Mysticism is a passive and not an active experience because -- and here also there is a general agreement among theologians -- only the Holy Spirit can produce this experience in us by the actuation of his gifts.***

#### *Mystical Experience and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit*

The constitutive element of mystical experience is the actuation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the divine or supernatural mode, which normally produces a passive experience of God or of his divine activity in the soul. ***We are not referring to any external characteristic or psychological***

***manifestation that may accompany the mystical experience. We are speaking of the essential note that intrinsically constitutes mysticism.***

The actuation of the gifts constitutes the very essence of mysticism. Whenever a gift of the Holy Spirit operates, there is a mystical act that is more or less intense. And when the actuation of the gifts is so frequent and repeated that it predominates over the exercise of the infused virtues, which operate in a human manner -- characteristic of the ascetical state -- the soul has entered into the mystical state. This is always relative, of course, since the gifts never operate, even in the great mystics, in a manner that is absolutely continuous and uninterrupted.

Since the actuation of the gifts is the primary and essential element of mysticism, it is never lacking in any of the mystical states or mystical acts. The experience of the divine is one of the most frequent and ordinary manifestations in the activity of the gifts, but it is not absolutely essential. It can be lacking; and, as a matter of fact, it is lacking during the dark nights of the soul or passive purifications that are nevertheless truly mystical.<sup>(2)</sup> What can never be lacking is the supernatural manner in which the soul operates as a result of being moved by the gifts of the Holy Spirit and its awareness that it is being acted upon by a divine power.

***On the other hand, in the midst of the sufferings of the passive purgations, which cause a feeling of the total absence of God,<sup>(3)</sup> the soul continues to practice the virtues to a heroic degree and in a manner that is more divine than ever. Its faith is most vivid, its hope is superior to all hope, and its charity is above all measure.***

The awareness of the divine action is also one of the basic differences between the mystical state and the ascetical state. The ascetical soul lives the Christian life in a purely human manner, though under the guidance of faith and charity. Its awareness of the divine is restricted to reflection and discursus. The mystics, on the other hand, experience in themselves, except in those cases mentioned, ***the ineffable reality of the life of grace. They are the witnesses of the loving presence of God in us.***

Passivity is another typical note. Mystics are fully aware that what they are experiencing is not produced by themselves. They did not cause the experience and cannot retain it for a second longer than is desired by the one who produces it.

The descriptions written by mystics reveal that a psychological passivity of love dominates their life. They have the impression, more or less sensible, of an intervention from outside themselves that rises from the depths of their being to unite them to God and to enjoy a certain fruition of God. We are referring, of course, to a relative passivity; that is, the principal agent is the Holy Spirit, but the soul reacts in a vital manner to his movement. As St. Teresa says, "the will consents" by cooperating with the divine action in a free and voluntary manner. And thus liberty and merit are preserved under the activity of the gifts.

But how do the gifts of the Holy Spirit produce this passive experience of the divine, and why do they cease to give this experience during the passive purgations? It is the constant teaching of St. Thomas and theologians of all schools that the union of the soul with God, begun essentially through sanctifying grace, is actuated and perfected by the acts of supernatural knowledge and

love, that is, by the exercise of faith and of charity.(4) But, although supernatural as regards their essence, faith and charity are not supernatural in their manner of operation.

The nature and function of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are far different, as we have already seen. The gifts are supernatural not only in their essence, but even in their manner or mode of operation. They are not subject to the movement and control of human reason as the infused virtues are, for the Holy Spirit himself directly and immediately moves the gifts to operation. In this respect they are superior to all the infused virtues.

***The intensity of the mystical experience will depend on the intensity with which the gift has been actuated.*** When mystical acts occur in the ascetical state, the gifts will usually be actuated with less intensity because the imperfect disposition of the subject will not permit more. The gift produces an experience of the divine, but it is so weak that the soul scarcely notices it. If it is a question of one of the intellectual gifts, there will be a transitory act of infused contemplation, but in a very incipient degree that is almost imperceptible. St. John of the Cross explains this as follows:

It is true, however, that when this condition first begins, the soul is hardly aware of this loving knowledge. The reason for this is twofold. First, this loving knowledge is apt at the beginning to be very subtle and delicate, so as to be almost imperceptible to the senses. Secondly, when the soul is used to the exercise of meditation, which is wholly perceptible, it is unaware and hardly conscious of this other new and imperceptible condition, which is purely spiritual; especially when, not understanding it, the soul does not allow itself to rest in it, but strives after the former, which is more readily perceptible. The result is that, however abundant the loving, interior peace may be, the soul has no opportunity of experiencing and enjoying it.(5)

Such is the nature of the mystical experience. At the beginning it is subtle and delicate and almost imperceptible because of the imperfect actuation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit; but the actuation is gradually intensified and becomes more frequent until the activity of the gifts predominates in the life of the soul. ***Then the soul has entered into the mystical state, whose essential characteristic is the predominance of the activity of the gifts in a divine mode over the simple exercise of the infused virtues in a human mode, as was proper to the ascetical state.***

***During the passive purgations, however, the divine motion of the gifts has as its purpose the purification of the soul from all its attachments. It not only deprives the soul of any delightful awareness of God but also gives the soul a contrary experience of absence and abandonment by God, which is of great purgative value.*** In these cases the gift is limited to its essential and primary effect, which is to provide a supernatural modality to the exercise of the virtues, but it lacks its secondary and accidental effect, the experience of the divine.

If to this difference on the part of the divine movement we add the dispositions of the soul during the passive purgation of the senses, it will be evident why the soul does not perceive the divine movement of the gifts during that period. As St. John of the Cross explains in the text that we have cited, when the first light of contemplation begins to dawn, the soul is not yet accustomed to that subtle, delicate, and almost insensible light that is communicated to it. And since, on the

other hand, the soul is incapacitated for the exercise of the discursive meditation to which it was accustomed, it is left apparently without the one or the other and in complete obscurity.

**During the passive purgation of the spirit, however, the suffering of the soul is much more intense and it is painfully aware of imperfections and miseries that it had been incapable of perceiving before the divine light illumined and purged the soul of its ignorance**. St. John of the Cross describes the passive purgation in terms of "dark contemplation":

God strips their faculties, affections and feelings, both spiritual and sensual, both outward and inward, leaving the intellect dark, the will dry, the memory empty and the affections in the deepest affliction, bitterness and straitness, taking from the soul the pleasure and experience of spiritual blessings which it had aforesaid .... All this the Lord works in the soul by means of a pure and dark contemplation ....

But the question arises: Why is the divine light (which, as we say, illumines and purges the soul from its ignorances) here called by the soul a dark night? To this the answer is that for two reasons this divine wisdom is not only light and darkness for the soul, but is likewise affliction and torment. The first is because of the height of divine wisdom, which transcends the talent of the soul, and in this way is darkness to it; the second, because of the soul's vileness and impurity, in which respect it is painful and afflictive to it, and is also dark.<sup>(6)</sup>

St. John of the Cross dedicates approximately twenty pages of Book II of *The Dark Night* to a detailed explanation of the purgative contemplation that brings darkness and affliction to the soul in order to lead it into the light and dispose it for the divine inflowing. He states repeatedly that this purgation of the dark night of the spirit is the work of the Lord and that the soul is passive under the action of the dark ray of contemplation. The entire activity is therefore a mystical purification that will lead the soul eventually to the transforming union.

### *Mysticism and the Perfection of Charity*

**The mystical experience is not an extraordinary grace similar to charismatic graces but is the normal consequence of the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit**. We have already implied this in the previous explanation, but it is well to emphasize the fact that mysticism is the flowering of the life of grace and the crowning achievement of the perfection of charity. For many centuries there were theologians who maintained that all mysticism was an extraordinary grace and therefore should not be expected or desired.<sup>(7)</sup> **Thanks to the efforts of John Arintero<sup>(8)</sup> and Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange,<sup>(9)</sup> the traditional doctrine of mysticism has been restored.**

Today this thesis has been so firmly established that few spiritual theologians of any competence would consider mysticism an extraordinary grace reserved only for a few select souls. **Asceticism and mysticism do not constitute two distinct paths to Christian holiness; they are two stages on the same path to the perfection of charity.**

The normalcy of mystical experience in relation to the life of grace and the perfection of charity is readily admitted by all who admit that the actuation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit constitutes

the mystical act. But there is also another theological argument to substantiate the foregoing thesis; it is based on the fact that all Christians are called to the perfection of charity.

We have already discussed the vocation of all Christians to the perfection of charity, but it is well to recall the distinction between the ontological or objective degree of grace and charity to which the individuals are called, in accordance with God's will, and the subjective degree of radicalization of grace and charity in the soul, from which proceeds the perfection of charity in its affective and effective intensity. There are differences among individuals in regard to their objective degree of grace, willed for them by God, both on earth and in glory ("In my Father's house there are many dwelling places" -- John 14:2), but each individual is called to the full perfection of charity made operative by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the fruits, and the beatitudes. In other words, all are called to the subjective and intensive plenitude of charity in accordance with the objective degree or measure of grace that God has decreed for each one. But to exercise charity with such intensive perfection will necessarily require the actuation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which is a mystical act.

### *Mystical Activity and Contemplative Prayer*

Mystical activity does not necessarily include infused contemplative prayer.

It can readily be admitted that all infused contemplative prayer is a mystical operation since, as we shall see later, it necessarily involves the actuation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The question is whether mystical activity and contemplative prayer are so intimately connected that the two can be considered as concomitant elements of all mystical experience. Some authors, especially those who vigorously defend infused contemplation as the logical consequence of perfect charity actuated by the gifts, seem at times to imply that infused contemplation is a necessary component of all mystical activity. However, mystical activity and infused prayer are not only distinct but also separable. It is true ***that there can be no infused contemplative prayer without mystical activity, since infused prayer requires the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit; but there can be mystical activity without infused contemplation.***

The theological reason for making a distinction between infused contemplative prayer and mystical activity is readily grasped when we recall the nature of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and their division. Since the gifts operate in a supernatural mode and the soul is therefore passive or receptive under their movement, they constitute the essential element in mystical activity. Consequently, every operation of a gift is a mystical act, whether the gift operates in a cognitive faculty or in an appetitive faculty. But one of the affective gifts could be actuated and produce a mystical act without producing infused contemplative prayer, which is caused by the intellectual gifts of wisdom and understanding. Consequently, the mystical act and infused contemplative prayer are distinct and separable.

Moreover, there is an argument drawn from the experience and testimony of the mystics themselves. St. John of the Cross states that during the passive purgation the soul feels as if abandoned and rejected by God.<sup>(10)</sup> There is no experience whatever of God as present and united to the soul, and yet the passive purgations are mystical operations. It follows, therefore,

that infused contemplation is not a necessary component of all mystical activity but is only one type of mystical activity.

Finally, the same conclusion is reached if we consider that the Christian life, as lived by the individual, is both contemplative and active. There are virtues to perfect the individual in contemplative and active pursuits, and there are gifts of the Holy Spirit that can raise the contemplative and active operations to the mystical level. But we know from experience that contemplative pursuits are not only distinct from those of the active life but are also sometimes incompatible with them. So also, although the gifts, like the virtues, are in one sense interrelated, the operation of one gift, such as the gift of fortitude or piety, may impede the simultaneous operation of another gift, such as wisdom or understanding. Therefore, infused contemplation is not necessarily an element of each mystical activity.

It should be noted that the distinction we are making is between the *mystical act* and infused contemplative prayer, and not between infused contemplation and the mystical state. That is another question entirely, and we shall treat it in the following section. For the moment it suffices to say that **the life of any individual Christian will be predominantly either contemplative or active**, and if he reaches the degree of perfection in which the gifts become operative, he will be characterized by the mystical acts of the contemplative or the active life. Thus, the saints, who were canonized not only for their perfection in charity but also for the heroic degree of other virtues, provide a beautiful variety of the ways in which the gifts of the Holy Spirit operate in the Christian life.

### *Mystical Experience, Grace, and Charity*

**Mystical activity is a normal concomitant of the perfection of grace and charity.**

Sanctifying grace by its very nature demands an increase and a growth. This is so clear that it is admitted by all the different schools of Christian spirituality. If grace were infused in the soul already perfectly developed, the obligation to strive for perfection would be meaningless and absurd. Mystical activity is the actuation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in a divine mode, usually producing a passive experience of the divine. This point is also admitted by all theologians -- with certain differences, to be sure, but these do not affect the substance of the matter. There is also perfect agreement concerning the meaning of the normal development of sanctifying grace. Whatever falls within the exigencies of grace evidently falls within the normal and ordinary development. And whatever is outside the exigencies of grace will be extraordinary in its development. On this all theologians are in agreement.

**All the schools of Christian spirituality recognize that the simple actuation of a gift of the Holy Spirit cannot be classified among the extraordinary phenomena (as one would classify, for example, the charismatic graces -- *gratiae gratis datae*), but that it is something perfectly normal and ordinary in the life of grace.** We have already demonstrated that the gifts of the Holy Spirit do not and cannot act in a human mode; this human manner of operation is absolutely incompatible with the nature of the gifts. Consequently, either the gifts do not operate, or they necessarily operate in a divine manner - and then we are in the domain of the mystical because that actuation in a divine mode, necessarily produces a mystical act.

### *The Mystical State and Christian Perfection*

The mystical experience is distinct and separable from the mystical state. The mystical experience is produced by the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in their divine modality. Consequently, there is a mystical act, more or less intense, as often as any gift of the Holy Spirit operates in the soul. The actuation of a gift will give to the soul, if nothing prevents it, a passive experience of the divine that is more or less intense; from a psychological point of view it is an ordinary phenomenon in mysticism.

***But an isolated actuation of a gift of the Holy Spirit does not suffice to constitute the mystical state. A state is something fixed, stable, permanent, and habitual.*** Consequently there is no mystical state until the actuation of the gifts is so intense and frequent that this operation habitually predominates over the simple exercise of the infused virtues in a human mode.

However, the expression *mystical state* must be understood correctly. The mystical state consists in the predominance of the rule of the gifts, but this does not signify a psychological state that is habitual in the proper sense of the word. ***The gifts of the Holy Spirit do not act continuously and uninterruptedly in any mystic; to be sure, they operate in the soul of the mystic in a manner that is increasingly intense and more frequent, but never in a permanent and uninterrupted manner.***

The reason is evident: for the operation of the gifts a special motion of the Holy Spirit is required in each case, because he alone can actuate them directly and immediately. This motion corresponds to the movement of the actual graces that are of themselves transitory. Therefore, when theologians and mystics speak of the mystical state, they use the words in a wide sense, meaning that the soul is habitually so attentive and responsive to the Holy Spirit that ordinarily the acts of the gifts will replace the personal initiative that is exercised through the infused virtues.

Reducing this distinction to precise formulas, we would offer the following definitions: ***The mystical act is the simple actuation, more or less intense, of a gift of the Holy Spirit operating in a divine manner. The mystical state is the manifest predominance of the activity of the gifts, operating in a divine manner, over the simple exercise of the infused virtues, operating in a human manner.***

#### *Ascetical and Mystical Activity*

Asceticism is not confined to the ascetical state, nor is mysticism reserved to the mystical state. ***What determines either state is the habitual predominance of ascetical or mystical activity.***

This statement follows from what we have already stated regarding mystical activity in general. An isolated mystical act and mystical experience do not constitute the mystical state. On the other hand, persons in the ascetical state may be moved by the Holy Spirit through his gifts, while those who are already in the mystical state may sometimes need to proceed in the manner of ascetics. Such is the teaching of St. Teresa when she tells her nuns that souls that have reached

the sublime heights of the seventh mansions must sometimes return to the human mode of operation.[\(11\)](#)

John Arintero explains this doctrine as follows:

***All souls in the state of grace, possessing as they do the gifts of the Holy Spirit, ... already possess the seeds and rudiments of the mystical life and can develop and manifest them little by little*** .... Therefore the true ascetic, ***even the lowliest Christian***, who takes seriously the *unum necessarium* which is the work of sanctification, ... will frequently work under the divine impulses, although he may not clearly advert to it .... So the soul which as yet proceeds along the ascetical way sometimes produces truly mystical acts, just as the mystic on many occasions produces ascetical acts .... The mystics, however elevated they may be, when the Holy Spirit withdraws his action for some time ... must proceed and do proceed after the manner of ascetics ....

When the soul habitually produces acts of virtue and, denying itself, ordinarily permits itself to be moved without resistance by the touchings and breathings of the sanctifying Spirit,... then we can say that the soul is now in the full mystical state, although from time to time it will still have to return to the ascetical state.[\(12\)](#)

At this point a question naturally arises: when does the soul enter definitively into the mystical state? The best reply to this question is a tentative one, an estimation. The reason is that the transition from the ascetical state to the mystical state is not like passing through a door from one room to another; it is a gradual process wherein the virtue of charity develops to the point of total abandonment of self to the movements of the Holy Spirit. Absolutely speaking, however, God could place,,a soul in the mystical state at the very beginning of the spiritual life.

But in order to give at least a tentative reply to the question, we would say that the mystical state begins when the soul habitually (though not exclusively) acts under the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. If we judge from the active and passive purgations, the mystical state begins during the passive night of the senses; if we use the grades of prayer as a measure, the mystical state begins in the prayer of union. However, as Father Arintero points out, the mystical state may actually begin much earlier:

The habitual mystical state begins fully with the prayer of union, although there are still great interruptions until the soul reaches full and stable union. But the mystical state is initiated in the stage of affective prayer and then, in the night of the senses, however much the soul is able to recognize the fact, it is accentuated more and more.[\(13\)](#)

We can conclude, therefore, that the mystical life is in some way already present in the ascetical life. It embraces the whole development of the Christian life and the whole path to union with God, but is clearly and habitually manifested in the unitive way.



## *Complete Perfection and the Mystical State*

***Complete Christian perfection is found only in the mystical state.*** This is another conclusion that follows from the theological principles we have already established. Christian perfection consists in the full development of the sanctifying grace received at baptism as a seed. This development is verified by the increase of the infused theological and moral virtues, and especially that of charity, the virtue whose perfection coincides with the perfection of the Christian life.

But the infused virtues cannot attain their full perfection except under the influence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, for without the gifts they cannot go beyond the human modality under the rule of reason to which they are restricted in the ascetical state. Only the divine modality of the gifts gives the infused virtues the atmosphere that they need for their perfection. It is this predominance of the activity of the gifts of the Spirit operating in a divine mode that characterizes the mystical state. Therefore it follows that complete Christian perfection necessarily requires the mystical state.

Let us review the teaching of two authorities in experimental mysticism: St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila, whose doctrines are in complete accord with the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas.

The teaching of St. John of the Cross is orientated to the transforming union, and this union constitutes complete Christian perfection. But the transforming union is attained through the passive purgations that enable the love of God to become perfect. The following two texts clearly indicate his thought:

However assiduously the beginner practices the mortification in himself of all these actions and passions, he can never completely succeed-very far from it-until God works it in him passively by means of the purgation of the said night . . . .

But neither from these imperfections nor from those others can the soul be perfectly purified until God brings it into the passive purgation of that dark night of which we shall presently speak .... For however greatly the soul itself labors, it cannot actively purify itself so as to be prepared in the least degree for the divine union of perfection of love if God does not take its hand and purge it in that dark fire, in the way and manner that we have yet to describe.[\(14\)](#)

***The teaching of St. Teresa of Avila is in conformity with that of St. John of the Cross, although she traces the path to perfection along the grades of prayer rather than that of the active and passive purgations.*** Not only does she describe the various degrees of prayer of union that are proper to the mystical state, but she also states expressly that she is wilting for those souls desirous of attaining the heights of the mystical life.

I seem to have been contradicting what I had previously said, since, in consoling those who had not reached the contemplative state, I told them that ***the Lord had different roads by which they might come to him***, just as he also had many mansions. I now repeat this: his Majesty, being who he is and understanding our weakness, has provided for us. But he did not say: "Some must

come by this way and others by that." His mercy is so great that he has forbidden none to strive to come and drink of this fountain of love.(15)

Remember, the Lord invites us all; and since he is Truth itself, we cannot doubt him. If his invitation were not a general one, he would not have said: "I will give you to drink." He might have said: "Come, all of you, for after all you will lose nothing by coming; and I will give drink to those whom I think fit for it." But since he said that we were all to come, without making this condition, I feel sure that none will fail to receive this living water unless they cannot keep to the path.(16)

This concludes our examination of the theological principles that constitute the systematic part of spiritual theology. We now focus our attention on the application of the theological conclusions, which comprises the practical part of spiritual theology.

Most manuals of spiritual theology treat the practical questions within the framework of the three stages: purgative, illuminative, and unitive. This method is closer to the experience and evolution of the spiritual life, but it has the disadvantage of making separate and isolated categories of the three stages. ***A person does not definitively leave the lower stages as he passes to the higher ones; the spiritual life is normally a complex pattern of purgation, illumination and union, a blending of ascetical and mystical elements.***

Since spiritual theology relates to all the parts of theology and since the spiritual life is a combination of many diverse elements, perhaps there is no method of procedure that eliminates all the disadvantages. Nevertheless, it is necessary to adopt one or another method, if only because we cannot study everything at once. Keeping in mind that the primary agent in the spiritual life is the Holy Spirit, who is not in any way restricted to our theological conclusions and directives, we shall use a topical method, dividing the material into homogeneous parts but following at least in general the stages of development from conversion to the perfection of charity.

Accordingly, we shall now treat of conversion and progressive purgation, positive growth in holiness, the practice of prayer and, finally, mystical phenomena and the discernment of spirits.

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## CHAPTER NOTES

1. Jacques Maritain was one of the first theologians to explain the distinction between infused contemplation and mystical experience. See "Une question sur la vie mystique," in *La Vie Spirituelle*, Paris, VII (1923), pp. 636-50.
2. To say that the passive purgations are mystical activity only to the extent that the soul is passive under their influence and they dispose the soul for infused contemplation, is an attempt to save the opinion that considers the experience of the divine to be an essential element of mystical activity. But this is contrary to the teaching of St. John of the Cross and the traditional doctrine.

3. "What the sorrowful soul feels most in this condition is its clear perception that God has abandoned it and, abhorring it, has cast it into darkness, and this is for the soul a serious and pitiful suffering for it to believe that God has abandoned it" (St. John of the Cross, *The Dark Night*, trans. E. Allison Peers (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1957), Book II, Chap. 6.
4. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 6, a. 6, ad 1; *De Caritate*, q. 2, ad 7.
5. St. John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, trans. E. Allison Peers (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1957) Book II, Chap. 17.
6. See St. John of the Cross, *The Dark Night*, Book II, Chap. 3-5, *passim*.
7. The Italian Jesuit John Baptist Scaramelli (1688-1752) was one of the first to break away from the traditional doctrine: Basically the difficulty stems from the inability to see the distinction between the remote call to Christian perfection and the fact that relatively few persons seem to reach the mystical state. Another difficulty arises when all mystical phenomena are classified as extraordinary graces.
8. See John G. Arintero, *The Mystical Evolution in the Development and Vitality of the Church*, trans. Jordan Aumann (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1949), 2 vols.
9. See Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, trans. Timothea Doyle (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1947), 2 vols.; *Christian Perfection and Contemplation*, trans. Timothea Doyle (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1944).
10. St. John of the Cross, *The Dark Night*, Book II, Chap. 6.
11. St. Teresa of Avila, *The Life*, Chap. 13; *The Interior Castle*, Seventh Mansions, Chap. 4, trans. E. Allison Peers (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1946).
12. John Arintero, *Cuestiones Místicas* (Madrid: B.A.C., 1956), pp. 502, 663.
13. Arintero, *The Mystical Evolution*, Vol. 2, p. 427.r
14. St. John of the Cross, *The Dark Night*, Chap. 3, n. 3; Chap. 7, n. 5.
15. St. Teresa of Avila, *The Way of Perfection*, Chap. 20, n. 1.
16. St. Teresa, *op. cit.*, Chap. 19, n. 15.

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