

of a voice which was known to you; you will put an end to all these discourses. Instead of deploring the death of others, great prince, I wish henceforward to learn from you how to make my own holy; happy, if warned by these white hairs of the account which I must soon render of my stewardship, I reserve for the flock which I am bound to feed with the Word of Life, the remains of a voice which will soon be hushed, and of an ardor that is growing cold.

BOSSUET.

JAMES BENIGNE BOSSUET, Bishop of Meaux, one of the most powerful writers and celebrated preachers of France, was born at Dijon, Sept. 27, 1627, and died in Paris, April 12, 1704. In 1670 Louis XIV. entrusted him with the education of the dauphin, for whose special instruction he wrote his celebrated "Discourse on Universal History," which still ranks as a masterpiece. His most important controversial work was his "History of the Variations of Protestantism." As an orator he particularly excelled in funeral addresses, his panegyrics on Henrietta of England, the great Condé, and on the Duchess of Orleans being still quoted as examples of pure eloquence.

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## SECTION XIII.

## I.

## 52. GOD.

- O** THOU eternal One! whose presence bright  
 All space doth occupy, all motion guide:  
 Unchanged through time's all dev'astating flight;  
 Thou only God! There is no God beside!  
 Being above all beings! Mighty One!  
 Whom none can comprehend and none explore;  
 Who fill'st existence with Thyself alone:  
 Embracing all—supporting—ruling o'er—  
 Being whom we call God—and know no more!
2. In its sublime research, philosophy  
 May measure out the ocean-deep—may count  
 The sands or the sun's rays—but God! for Thee  
 There is no weight nor measure; none can mount

- Up to Thy mysteries. Reason's brightest spark,  
 Though kindled by Thy light, in vain would try  
 To trace Thy counsels, infinite and dark;  
 And thought is lost, ere thought can soar so high,  
 Even like past moments in eternity.
3. Thou from primeval<sup>1</sup> nothingness didst call,  
 First chaos,<sup>2</sup> then existence: Lord! on Thee  
 Eternity had its foundation: all  
 Sprung forth from Thee: of light, joy, harmony,  
 Sole origin: all life, all beauty Thine.  
 Thy word created all, and doth create;  
 Thy splendor fills all space with rays divine.  
 Thou art, and wert, and shalt be! glorious! great!  
 Light-giving, life-sustaining Potentate!<sup>3</sup>
4. Thy chains the unmeasured universe surround,  
 Upheld by Thee, by Thee inspired with breath!  
 Thou the beginning with the end hast bound,  
 And beautifully mingled life and death!  
 As sparks mount upwards from the fiery blaze,  
 So suns are born, so worlds spring forth from Thee;  
 And as the spangles in the sunny rays  
 Shine round the silver snow, the pageantry  
 Of heaven's bright army glitters in Thy praise.
5. A million torches, lighted by Thy hand,  
 Wander unwearied through the blue abyss:  
 They own Thy power, accomplish Thy command,  
 All gay with life, all eloquent with bliss.  
 What shall we call them? Piles of crystal light—  
 A glorious company of golden streams—  
 Lamps of celestial ether burning bright—  
 Suns lighting systems with their joyous beams?  
 But Thou to these art as the noon to night.
6. Yes, as a drop of water in the sea,  
 All this magnificence in Thee is lost.

<sup>1</sup> Pri me'val, original; the first.      <sup>3</sup> Po'tent ate, one who possesses  
<sup>2</sup> Cha'os, an empty, infinite space;      very great power or sway; an em-  
 a yawning chasm.                              peror, king, or sovereign.

What are ten thousand worlds compared to Thee?  
 And what am *I* then? Heaven's unnumbered host,  
 Though multiplied by myriads, and arrayed  
 In all the glory of sublimest thought,  
 Is but an atom in the balance; weighed  
 Against Thy greatness, is a cipher brought  
 Against infinity! Oh, what am *I* then? Naught!

7. Naught! yet the effluence of Thy light divine,  
 Pervading worlds, hath reached my bosom too.  
 Yes! in my spirit doth Thy spirit shine,  
 As shines the sunbeam in a drop of dew.  
 Naught! Yet *I* live, and on hope's pinions fly  
 Eager toward Thy presence; for in Thee  
*I* live, and breathe, and dwell; aspiring high,  
 Even to the throne of Thy divinity.  
*I* am, O God! and surely Thou must be!
8. Thou art! directing, guiding all, Thou art!  
 Direct my understanding, then, to Thee;  
 Control my spirit, guide my wandering heart:  
 Though but an atom midst immensity,  
 Still *I* am something, fashioned by Thy hand!  
*I* hold a middle rank 'twixt heaven and earth,  
 On the last verge of mortal being stand,  
 Close to the realms where angels have their birth,  
 Just on the boundaries of the spirit-land.
9. The chain of being is complete in me;  
 In me is matter's last gradation lost,  
 And the next step is spirit—Deity!  
*I* can command the lightning, and am dust!  
 A monarch, and a slave; a worm, a god!  
 Whence came *I* here? and how so marvelously  
 Constructed and conceived? Unknown! this clod  
 Lives surely through some higher energy;  
 For from itself alone it could not be!
10. Creator, yes! Thy wisdom and Thy word  
 Created *me*! Thou source of life and good!  
 Thou spirit of my spirit and my Lord!

Thy light, Thy love, in their bright plenitude,  
 Filled me with an immortal soul, to spring  
 Over the abyss of death, and bade it wear  
 The garments of eternal day, and wing  
 Its heavenly flight beyond this little sphere,  
 Even to its source—to Thee, its Author, there.

11. O thoughts ineffable! O visions blest!  
 Though worthless our conceptions all of Thee,  
 Yet shall Thy shadowed image fill our breast,  
 And waft its homage to Thy Deity.  
 God! thus alone my lonely thoughts can soar,  
 Thus seek Thy presence, Being wise and good!  
 Midst Thy vast works admire, obey, adore;  
 And when the tongue is eloquent no more,  
 The soul shall speak in tears of gratitude.

DERZHAVIN.

## II.

## 53. ANSWERING LOVE.

'TIS not Thy promised heavenly reward  
 Attracts me, O my God! to love of Thee;  
 Nor am *I* moved from sin's reproach to flee  
 By fear of its eternal fierce award.  
 'Tis Thou who drawest me, my loving Lord:  
 Mangled and nailed to a disgraceful tree,  
 Thy wounded Body steals my heart from me;  
 Thy death 'mid scoffings strikes its deepest chord.

2. Yes; Thy love lifts me to such lofty scope,  
 That *I* would love Thee were no heaven above,  
 And, were no hell beneath, would fear to sin.  
 Naught dost Thou owe me, my poor love to win;  
 For, if *I* hoped not for what now *I* hope,  
 Still, as *I* love Thee now, *I* then would love.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

## III.

## 54. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS.

TOWARD the end of 1244, or the beginning of 1245, John the Teutonic, fourth master-general of the Order of Preachers, came to Cologne, accompanied by a young Neapolitan, whom he presented to Brother Albert as a future disciple. In those days Europe was a land of liberty, and nations held out the hand to each other in the universities. You might go for instruction where you thought proper. The young man whom John the Teutonic had just brought to the school of Albertus Magnus<sup>1</sup> was, on the father's side, great grandson of the Emperor Frederick I., cousin of the Emperor Henry VI., second cousin of the reigning Emperor Frederick II., and by his mother he was descended from the Norman princes who had expelled the Arabs and Greeks from Italy and conquered the two Sicilies.

2. He was only seventeen years of age. It was told of him that his parents carried him away and placed him in a strong castle, in order to make him abandon his devotion, but without success. He pursued, it was said, with a brand from the fire a woman who had been introduced into his apartment, and had gained his two sisters to the religious life during the very conversation by which they had hoped to dissuade him from it; and Pope Innocent IV., who had been asked to break the bonds which held him to the Order of St. Dominic, had listened to him with admiration, and offered him the Abbey of Mount Cassino.

3. Preceded by such reports, the young Count of Aquinas—now simply Brother Thomas—was in great consideration with his fellow-students. But nothing in him met their expectations. He was a plain young man, who spoke little, and whose very eyes seemed dull. At length they came to believe he had nothing exalted about him but his birth, and he was called in mockery "the great dull ox of Sicily." His master, Albert

<sup>1</sup> Albertus Magnus, or Albert the Great, a learned Dominican of the thirteenth century, and the master of St. Thomas. He was a native of Swabia, and died in a German convent of his order in 1280.

himself, not knowing what to think of him, took occasion one day to question him upon some knotty points. The disciple answered with an apprehension and judgment so marvelous, that Albert felt the joy which a superior man alone can feel when he meets another man destined to equal or, perhaps, surpass himself. He turned with emotion to the assembled youth, and said: "We call Brother Thomas a dull ox, but the world will one day re-echo to the bellowing of his doctrine."

4. The fulfilment of this prophecy was not long delayed; Thomas Aquinas became in a short time the most illustrious doctor of the Catholic Church, and his birth itself, royal as it was, disappears in the magnificence of his personal renown.

5. At the age of forty-one years, and when he had nine more to live, St. Thomas thought of the design which was the goal, as yet unknown, of his destiny. He proposed to himself to bring together the scattered materials of theology; and out of what you might expect to find a mere compilation he constructed a masterpiece of which every body speaks, even those who have not read it, as every one speaks of the pyramids, which scarcely any one has seen.

6. Theology is, as we have said, the science of the divine affirmations. When man simply accepts these affirmations, he is in the state of faith. When he establishes the connection of these affirmations with each other, and with all the internal and external facts of the universe, his faith is of the theological or scientific kind. Consequently, theology results from the combination of the human with a divine element; but if this combination enlightens faith, it is, nevertheless, subject to great danger. For, give yourself a little scope in the order of visible things, and you will soon have reached the extreme limit of certainty belonging to them. And if you go a little farther, the mind brings back from these ill-explored regions little else than opinions, calculated, in some instances, to damage the purity and solidity of its faith.

7. One of the prime qualities, therefore, in a Catholic doctor, is discernment in the use of the human element. Now this tact was found in St. Thomas to an eminent degree. Up to his time, all human science was confined to the writings of Aristotle—logic, metaphysics, morality, physics, politics, nat-

ural history. Aristotle taught every thing, and was looked upon as having pronounced the final decree of nature upon every subject. Nevertheless, it was enough to run through one or two of his works to remark how little he had in common with the genius of Christianity. Already the reading of his works had begun to bear fruits of bitterness. In 1277, Stephen II., Archbishop of Paris, found it necessary to censure two hundred and twenty-two articles for errors contained in the writings of Aristotle.

8. Such were the scientific elements with which St. Thomas had to deal; but from these he had to create a psychology,<sup>1</sup> an ontology,<sup>2</sup> a political and moral system, worthy of entering into combination with the dogmas of the faith. St. Thomas did all this. Putting aside the chimeras<sup>3</sup> and aberrations<sup>4</sup> of the Stagyrice, he drew from his writings all the truth it was possible to glean, he transformed and sublimed his materials, and without either prostrating or adoring the idol of his age, he opened up a philosophy which had still the blood of Aristotle in its veins, but mingled with and purified by his own and that of his great predecessors in doctrine.

9. To this discernment in the use of the human finite element St. Thomas united a penetrating insight into the divine. In contemplating the mysteries of God, he had the steadfast gaze we see in the eagle of St. John; that expression of eye so difficult to define, but which you understand so well when, after having meditated on some truth of Christianity, you meet with a man who has gone deeper than you, or better understood the voice of infinitude. A great theologian has many things in common with a great artist. Both of them see what escapes the vulgar eye; both of them hear what escapes the vulgar ear; and when, with the feeble organs on which men have to rely, they catch a reflection or a sound of what they

<sup>1</sup> *Psý chöl' o gy*, a systematic discourse or treatise on the powers and functions of the human soul as they are made known by consciousness.

<sup>2</sup> *On töl' o gy*, that part of the science of metaphysics which investigates and explains the nature and

essential properties and relations of all beings, as such.

<sup>3</sup> *Chí mē'ra*, a vain or foolish fancy; an absurd or fantastic idea.

<sup>4</sup> *Ab'er rā'tion*, the act of wandering, especially from truth or moral rectitude.

have seen or heard, they give it to the world with a life and truthfulness that bespeak superior genius.

10. This faculty of exploring the infinite will astonish those who believe a mystery to be an affirmation<sup>1</sup> of which even the terms are not clearly understood; but those who know the incomprehensible to be boundless light, which, even on the day of our seeing God face to face, we shall not be able fully to penetrate, will easily conceive that the more immense the horizon, the greater is the scope for the excursive gaze. Theology<sup>2</sup> has this rare advantage, that the divine affirmations which disclose infinitude from time to time are at once a compass and a sea. The Word of God forms in infinitude lines that may be traced, that circumscribe the intellect without confining it, and bear you along with them even while they fly before you. Never shall man, entangled in the meshes and immersed in the darkness of the finite, understand the happiness of the theologian, swimming in the boundless space of truth, and finding in the bounds which keep him in, the immensity by which he is ravished.

11. This union, at one and the same moment, of the most perfect security and the boldest flight, causes the soul an inexpressible joy, which makes him who has once felt it despise all else. To no one are you more often indebted for this feeling than to St. Thomas. After having studied a question, even in the works of great men, recur to him, and you feel that you have traversed worlds in a bound, and thought is no longer a burden.

12. We ought to speak of the force that bound together the divine and the human element in those writings, always keeping the second in subordination to the first. We ought to speak of that powerful spirit of unity which, in the course of so enormous a work, never once fails, but catches up, right and left, all waters of earth and heaven, and drives them onward by a movement as of a mighty spring, increasing their current without changing it. We ought, in fine, to give some idea of a style which makes truth perceptible in her profoundest depths,

<sup>1</sup> *Af'fir mā'tion*, positive, dogmatic assertion of what is true; the act of affirming or asserting as true.

<sup>2</sup> *The öl' o gy*, the science which

treats of God, His existence, character, and attributes, His laws, the doctrines we are to believe and the duties we are to practice.

as you see the fish beneath the waters of a limpid lake, or the stars in a pure sky; a style as calm as it is transparent, in which imagination is as little seen as passion, and which, notwithstanding, charms the understanding.

13. But time passes; and, besides, St. Thomas has no need of praise. Sovereign Pontiffs, councils, religious orders, universities, a thousand writers, in a word, have exalted him beyond the reach of praise from us. When the ambassadors of Naples came to solicit his canonization<sup>1</sup> from John XXII., the Pope, who received them in full consistory,<sup>2</sup> said, "St. Thomas has enlightened the Church more than all the other doctors put together, and you will derive more advantage from his books in one year than from the works of others in a lifetime." And when some one, during the process of the canonization, observed that he never wrought a miracle, the Sovereign Pontiff replied, "He has wrought as many miracles as he has written articles." During the Council of Trent, a table was placed in the middle of the hall, where the Fathers of the Council were in session, and on it lay the Holy Scriptures, the Decrees of the Popes, and the Summa of St. Thomas. After that, God alone could praise this great man in the Council of His Saints.

14. St. Thomas died at Fossa Nuova, a monastery of the order of Citeaux, almost half-way between Naples and Rome, the cities of his natural and his spiritual nativity, not far from the Castle of Rocca-Secca, where it is probable he was born, and near Monte Cassino, where he passed a portion of his infancy. Death overtook him there on his road to the second general Council of Lyons, in which the reconciliation of the Greek and Latin Churches was to be negotiated. He had been summoned thither by Gregory X. The religious, crowding around his bed, besought him to give them a short exposition of the Canticle of Canticles, and it was on that song of love he gave his last lesson.

15. He in his turn begged the religious to lay him on the

<sup>1</sup> Cān'on i zā'tion, the act of enrolling the name of one of the faithful departed in the catalogue of saints.

<sup>2</sup> Con sist'o ry, an assembly of prelates; the College of Cardinals at Rome.

ashes, that he might there receive the holy Viaticum,<sup>1</sup> and when he saw the Host in the hands of the priest, he said, with tears, "I firmly believe that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, only Son of the Eternal Father and of the Virgin Mother, is present in this august sacrament. I receive Thee, O price of the redemption of my soul; I receive Thee, viaticum of her pilgrimage—Thee for whose love I have studied, watched, labored, preached, and taught. Never have I knowingly said anything against Thee; but if ever I have done so without knowing it, I uphold no such opinion, but leave every thing to the correction of the Holy Roman Church, in whose obedience I depart this life." Thus died St. Thomas, at the age of fifty, March 7, 1274, some hours after midnight, at daybreak.

LACORDAIRE.

JEAN BAPTISTE HENRI LACORDAIRE, a French Dominican, was born at Recey-sur-Ource, Côte d'Or, May 12, 1802, and died at the college of Sorèze, which he had founded, Nov. 22, 1861. He was educated for the bar, and, after practising law for some time, and with great success, abandoned it for theology, and was ordained in 1827. In 1835 he began a series of Lenten discourses at the cathedral of Nôtre Dame, Paris, which were continued for several Lenten, and which have since been published, and admirably translated into English by H. Langdon. His "Inner Life," by his religious superior, Père Chocarne, was published in 1867.

#### IV.

#### 55. BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

TEACH me, O God, the truest adoration;  
Give me to know, in Thy mysterious ways,  
Shall hymns of joy and fervent aspiration  
Or tearful silence best proclaim Thy praise?

2. Whene'er I bow in humble prayer before Thee—  
So great my load of sorrow and of sin—  
So great my joy one moment to adore Thee,  
Sobs and hosannas strive my heart within.

3. Woe to the soul that can not here discover  
Her own Creator and the angels' King—

<sup>1</sup> Vi at' i cum, provisions for a journey; hence, the name applies to the Holy Eucharist when given to persons dying after illness.

King of the angels—but man's mōre than lover,  
Tortured and slain for our vast ransoming.

4. And yet the vilest dust concealèth wonders,  
Teems with strange marvels, miracles indeed:  
And heaven hath distance, splendor, time, and numbers  
The lordliest mind shall never grasp and read.
5. Still man, who sees Thee in the humblest flower,  
Who knows so little round him or above,  
While he, perforce, admits Thy boundless power,  
Presumes to set a limit to Thy love!
6. Had heaven to me a shining sceptre yielded  
Of some strōng angel, whose bright throne may be  
O'er many a starry myriad, lightning-shielded,  
In glōry marching through eternity—  
Oh! happier far, in humble adoration,  
Were I, to bend my pride, head, heart, and knee,  
And feel—no more a discord in creation—  
My soul in harmony with her and Thee!
7. Before Thee, then, this world seems cold and nārrōw,  
The spirit blossoms like the prophet's rod;  
And every sigh becomes a burning ārrōw,  
Whose bright point flashes through the heart of God!
8. Thou hast unnumbered seraphim to sing Thee  
Adoring canticles from pole to pole;  
But we, alas! faint praise, poor offering bring Thee,  
Yet Thou hast died for this—the human soul!  
Oh! make it Thine by grace and tribulation,  
And when life's brief calamity is o'er,  
Crown us in love's sublimest adoration,  
Where faith is lost in vision evermore.

WILLIAMS.

RICHARD DALTON WILLIAMS was born in Dublin, October 8, 1822, and died at Thibodeaux, La., July 5, 1862. His earlier poems were published in the Dublin "Nation," over the signature "Shamrock." They have never yet been collected in book form, but they evince a delicate and peculiar genius, which will, doubtless, some day secure them that honor.

V.

56. HYMN TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

CLEAR vault of heaven, serenely blue,  
How many stars come shining through  
Thy āzure depths?

"Beyond all count are they."

Praised be the Holy Sacrament as many times a day!

2. Fair world, the work of God's right hand,  
How many are the grains of sand  
In all thy frame?

"Beyond all count are they."

Praised be the Holy Sacrament as many times a day!

3. Green meādōw, wide as eye can see,  
How many o'er thy swārd may be  
The blades of grāss?

"Beyond all count are they."

Praised be the Holy Sacrament as many times a day!

4. O groves and gardens, rich and fair,  
What bounteous harvests do you bear  
Of fruits and flowers?

"Beyond all count are they."

Praised be the Holy Sacrament as many times a day!

5. Great ocean, boundless, uncontrolled,  
How many do thy waters hold  
Of briny drops?

"Beyond all count are they."

Praised be the Holy Sacrament as many times a day!

6. High sun, of all things center bright,  
How many are the rays of light  
That from thee dart?

"Beyond all count are they."

Praised be the Holy Sacrament as many times a day!

7. Eternity, O vast sublime!  
 How many moments of our time  
 Are in thy length?  
*"Beyond all count are they."*  
 Praised be the Holy Sacrament as many times a day!  
*Translated from the German, by M. R., in the "Irish Monthly."*

## SECTION XIV.

## I.

## 57. BETTER MOMENTS.

- M**Y mother's voice! how often creep  
 Its accents on my lonely hours!  
 Like healing sent on wings of sleep,  
 Or dew to the unconscious flowers.  
 I can forget her melting prayer  
 While leaping pulses madly fly,  
 But in the still, unbroken air,  
 Her gentle tone comes stealing by—  
 And years, and sin, and manhood flee,  
 And leave me at my mother's knee.
2. The book of nature, and the print  
 Of beauty on the whispering sea  
 Give eye to me some lineament  
 Of what I have been taught to be.  
 My heart is harder, and perhaps  
 My manliness hath drunk up tears;  
 And there's a mildew in the lapse  
 Of a few miserable years—  
 But nature's book is even yet  
 With all my mother's lessons writ.
3. I have been out at eventide  
 Beneath a moonlight sky of spring,  
 When earth was garnished like a bride,  
 And night had on her silver wing—

- When bursting leaves, and diamond grass,  
 And waters leaping to the light,  
 And all that make the pulses pass  
 With wilder fleetness, thronged the night—  
 When all was beauty—then have I  
 With friends on whom my love is flung  
 Like myrrh on wings of Ar'aby,  
 Gazed up where evening's lamp is hung;
4. And when the beautiful spirit there  
 Flung over me its golden chain,  
 My mother's voice came on the air  
 Like the light dropping of the rain—  
 And resting on some silver star  
 The spirit of a bended knee,  
 I've poured out low and fervent prayer  
 That our eternity might be  
 To rise in heaven, like stars at night,  
 And tread a living path of light.
5. I have been on the dewy hills,  
 When night was stealing from the dawn,  
 And mist was on the waking rills,  
 And tints were delicately drawn  
 In the gray East—when birds were waking,  
 With a low murmur in the trees,  
 And melody by fits was breaking  
 Upon the whisper of the breeze,  
 And this when I was forth, perchance,  
 As a worn reveler from the dance—  
 And when the sun sprang gloriously  
 And freely up, and hill and river  
 Were catching upon wave and tree  
 The arrows from his subtle quiver—
3. I say a voice has thrilled me then,  
 Heard on the still and rushing light,  
 Or, creeping from the silent glen,  
 Like words from the departing night,  
 Hath stricken me, and I have pressed