



STUDIES IN SALESIAN SPIRITUALITY

WILLIAM MARCEAU, C.S.B.

The Influence of Italian and Spanish Mystics on St. Francis de Sales

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IN the initial page of his *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Francis de Sales writes that he is only arranging spiritual flowers as did the bouquet maker Glycera in order to form the bouquet of his doctrine which he would present to the world. Among those flowers composing his bouquet were the saints Catherine of Siena and Genoa in Italy and, of course, St. Teresa of Avila in Spain. The teachings of these holy women formed the basis for St. Francis' doctrine of pure love.

In his writings their names are very often found associated: "Such were," he cries out for example, "St. Catherine of Genoa and the blessed Mother Teresa, when, like spiritual does, panting and dying of thirst for divine love, the burst forth in these words: 'Ah, Lord, give me that water!'"⁽¹⁾ Or further when he writes: "See what I have said of St. Catherine of Siena and of Genoa"⁽²⁾ -- you will be able to read the books of Mother Teresa or of St. Catherine of Siena ⁽³⁾ He very often joins other names to theirs, in particular that of St. Francis of Assisi.⁽⁴⁾ But whatever the circumstances, the reason for placing them together is the same: it is the mystery of love which is at work in these privileged souls: "And why is it then," he questions, "that we are not as far advanced in the love of God as were St. Augustine, St. Francis, St. Catherine of Genoa . . .?"⁽⁵⁾ This question torments every heart anxious for perfection and gives to these witnesses of pure love the force of an irresistible example. There are some souls, he continues:

who love only what God wills and as God wills. Blessed are such souls, for they love God, their friends in God, and their enemies in God. . . Such were St. Augustine, St. Bernard, and the two saints Catherine of Siena and of Genoa, and many others, in imitation of whom everyone can aspire to that divine degree of love. Rare and singular souls, who... do not love any creatures in themselves but only in their Creator and their Creator in them. If they cling by the law of charity to any creature, it is only to repose in God, the unique and final aim of their love.⁽⁶⁾

Hence, this passage offers a testimony of supreme and authentic love toward God, a revelation of the demands and the concern of God for those he calls to the perfection of love. This is what St. Francis asks of these great mystics.

What were their replies? That is, what was the particular influence of each of these mistresses of the spiritual life on the thought of our doctor of divine love? To just what point have they influenced his doctrine of love?

Let us first turn toward Italy.

CATHERINE OF SIENA

St. Catherine of Siena does not seem to have exerted an influence on St. Francis de Sales comparable to that of the holy virgins of Genoa and of Avila. Without doubt, he revered St. Catherine of Siena as a woman of exceptional sanctity. A sure index of this personal devotion is that he does not hesitate to compare her in identical terms to his seraphic St. Francis.⁽⁷⁾ But we must be aware that a few of the more specific traits of the mysticism of St. Catherine are not found in Salesian teaching. Here are two examples. As many authors of the Middle Ages, she founds her spiritual doctrine on the knowledge of God, the first leading to the second and thus producing in us divine love and sanctity.⁽⁸⁾ Now although St. Francis de Sales teaches us both knowledges, it is not in this general setting that he has constructed his spiritual works. Besides, we know the devotion so characteristic of St. Catherine of Siena for the blood of Christ,⁽⁹⁾ but once again there does not exist any parallel in the work of St. Francis de Sales.

However, these remarks must not lead us to underestimate the value of the testimony of St. Catherine of Siena! If the holy Bishop of Geneva has received elsewhere the guiding inspirations of his spirituality, the life of Catherine confirmed him in his most essential conclusions of his doctrine of divine love. He likes to use her as his authority and example, where it pertains to affirming the extreme exigencies of the love of God,⁽¹⁰⁾ the need to suffer for the one whom one loves⁽¹¹⁾ or the mystery of union which supernatural charity brings about in our souls.⁽¹²⁾ But, beyond this, certain passages of the Dialogue of St. Catherine could have exercised a more profound action on the thought of St. Francis de Sales. However, we do not have any direct proof of it. It is in the chapters which describe the ascent of the soul from imperfect love of worldly people to perfect love that he reveals his thought on true union with God. "When my servant loves me imperfectly, it is much less I whom he seeks than the consolation for which he loves me The unique means for my servants to will to escape every illusion is to accept all for the love of me who am their end, in depending completely on my will."⁽¹³⁾

Catherine rids them of all obstacles to the soul's progress and especially that subtle temptation of spiritual self-love which would try to make us abandon the service to our neighbor in order to preserve the gentle peace to union with God; because the sign of perfect love is expressed in works for our neighbor: "this love is the holy spirit himself who is present everywhere in his will, communicating to it his strength, inspiring in it the desire to accept suffering and to be aware of its withdrawal, in order to produce good works towards our neighbor The soul no

longer fears losing its spiritual consolations. Once arrived at a perfect and free love, it goes out of itself, it can no longer be retained." [\(14\)](#) In the state of perfect love, the Christian is entirely stripped of his own will which is dead in him. "The will of the soul so ordained," she writes,

lives in Me clothed in my eternal will. The soul loses all will in tasting the sweetness of My charity, and hence finds peace and repose Thus the soul finds peace, so perfect a peace that nothing can trouble it. It has lost and denied self will and is in repose: this will leaves it in peace, because it is dead. Those who are in this state joyfully beget virtues in respect to their neighbor But, from there on, it is I whom they love for Myself, because I am the sovereign good, sovereignly lovable. If they love themselves, it is for Me; if they love their neighbor, it is for Me, in order to render honor and glory to my name. [\(15\)](#)

The death of self-will, peace of soul, exclusive and complete love of God, zeal for his unique glory are so many qualities which will characterize the virtue of indifference in *The Treatise on the Love of God*. But could we speak of a formal dependence of the *Treatise* on this part of the *Dialogue*? We may not, because on the one hand the similitude bears only on some points of traditional doctrine in mystical theology and on the other hand no precise indication authorizes us to relate the two texts.¹⁶ It remains, however, that this teaching of the *Dialogue* evokes irresistibly that of Books nine and ten of the *Treatise*. The reading of the life and of the *Works* of St. Catherine of Siena could only encourage St. Francis de Sales to teach zealously what so many saints had professed and lived before him.

ST. CATHERINE OF GENOA

Our study of the spiritual bonds which unite the thought of Francis de Sales to that of St. Catherine of Genoa leads us to the same conclusions. Born on Italian soil in 1447 a century after the Virgin of Siena (1347), she belongs by the spread of her sanctity and her writings to this Italian sixteenth century whose spirituality we have already pointed out as strongly imbued with zeal for divine love. [\(17\)](#) In this respect she is considerably closer to St. Francis de Sales and the distinctive traits of her influence are easier to determine.

"St. Angela de Foligno," writes Fr. Pourrat, "strongly felt the absolute transcendence of God; St. Catherine of Siena, His love and His mercy for men. As for St. Catherine of Genoa, she was allowed to contemplate the incomprehensible purity of the divine essence. The view and sentiment of this sovereign purity explain the life and the works of the saint." [\(18\)](#) And that is actually what struck St. Francis de Sales. In chapter thirteen of the tenth Book, entitled "In what sense God is jealous of us," he explicitly invokes her testimony:

Theotimus, if we wish to see this jealousy described in a delicate and excellent way, we must read the instructions that the seraphic St. Catherine of Genoa has given to state the properties of pure love, namely, love that has gone as far as zeal, cannot suffer any mediation, intervention, or mingling with anything else, not even God's gifts. It even becomes so rigorous that it permits love of paradise only with the intention of more perfect love for the goodness of him who gives it. [\(19\)](#)

In general, he calls the great mystic to mind as soon as it is a question of ineffable jealousies of the Lord towards his creature or sufferings of a heart wounded with love and tortured with the unique fear of not sufficiently loving.⁽²⁰⁾ Hence it is clear that St. Francis de Sales owes a special debt to St. Catherine of Genoa, in this keen awareness of the exigencies of divine love of which he himself gave proof in his *Treatise* and in all his spirituality. Let us specify this point further.

The well-springs of Catherine's holiness, as St. Francis de Sales recalls elsewhere, are the sudden revelation of holiness and the love of God: "She became," says he, "completely changed and dead to the world and to created things and living only to her Creator."⁽²¹⁾ "My God, she cried, I want you completely, because I see by your light that love cannot be satisfied except when it has arrived at its purity, at its supreme felicity Do you not see, my gentle Master, that the desire to be pure and holy in your eyes, consumes me as the flame which bursts in the furnace?"⁽²²⁾ It is this ardent desire which will cause her to struggle to the very end against

this malignant plague which is the obstinate love of one's self-will, the most subtle of the vices, because it creeps into our good as well as our bad actions The first sinner in the earthly paradise, said she, opposed his will to the divine will. That is why we must now seek as the object of our pleasure the celestial will, and ask the Lord to destroy and to annihilate mercilessly our self-will.⁽²³⁾

But it is still divine love which, as a purifying fire, will bring about in her this complete renunciation. Destroying in her the roots of pride, it gives her, at the same time a horror of sin⁽²⁴⁾ and an immense desire to be transformed into the sovereign purity of God. It is at that moment that God replaces the action and the light of these souls by His life and His action; He makes them repudiate any action which would not be his own. Not even in the optimism of spiritual progress would God permit a desire, a thought, a sigh, where His very perceptive eye would be able to detect the most minute particle of self seeking. This state of absolute renunciation, this boundless detachment before the infinite holiness are necessary in order that God be able to give Himself to searching souls and that He accord them unfailing virtue, that they develop like the light of the sun which would never set. This virtue is that of pure love, by which one loves God for God alone. Is it not evident from that moment, concludes St. Catherine, that only the man who reduces himself to nothing can possess the pure love of God and say with St. Paul: "I live, no, not I, but Jesus lives in me"⁽²⁵⁾

INDIFFERENT LOVE OR ABANDONMENT

Let us open now the *Treatise on the Love of God*, chapter sixteen of book eleven.⁽²⁶⁾ There one will find not only the same doctrine but the same accent, the same fervor:

At times the soul reaches such a perfect state that it does not fear any longer not to be sufficiently united to him (God). Its love assures it that this union will be forever, but still fears that the union may not be so pure, simple, and attentive as its love would desire. Such is that admirable lover who would not love spiritual saviors, delights, virtues and consolations for fear of being

distracted, be it ever so little, from the unique love it bears for the beloved. It protests that it is himself, not his gifts, that it seeks The mighty soul of St. Paul, St. Francis, St. Catherine of Genoa, and others were touched by this holy fear found in divine spouses. They desire that nothing be intermingled with their love but strove to make it so pure, so simple, and so perfect that neither consolations nor the virtues themselves would find any place between their heart and God so that they might say: `I live, no, not I, but Jesus Christ lives in me: [\(27\)](#)

Now what is remarkable here is that the incontestable bond of dependence does not concern a question of detail, but the soul itself of Salesian spirituality. Because where does St. Francis de Sales wish to lead us by such an abandon if not to the very summits of pure love? What he has retained from his latest reading of St. Catherine of Genoa are not so much the ecstasies or the curious anecdotes, as the extreme purity of an effective love which no longer wants to know anything but God alone. In teaching us "absolute renunciation," "nothingness" at the same time as "pure love," these authors teach us the virtue of indifference or of abandonment?[\(28\)](#)

St. Francis de Sales tells us what constitutes this abandonment which is so necessary in his spirituality:

You must know that to practice self-abandonment, and to forsake ourselves, is nothing else but to yield up and get rid of our own will that we may give it to God. For, as I have already said, it would be of no benefit at all to renounce and forsake ourselves, if it were not done in order to unite ourselves perfectly to the divine Goodness. It is then with that aim only that we must make this act of renunciation, which would otherwise be useless, and would resemble those of the ancient philosophers, who made admirable renunciation of all things and themselves also, under the vain pretense of devoting themselves to philosophy. Take as an example of this, Epictetus, a very famous philosopher But, as for us, we only desire to abandon ourselves in order that we may leave ourselves at the mercy of the will of God.[\(29\)](#)

It is in St. Francis de Sales, the doctor of disinterested love, as we have written elsewhere.[\(30\)](#) that the Christian can better inform himself on this subject. This great humanist and Doctor of the Church shows in an extraordinary way how the Christian can sanctify himself through indifference.

Salesian indifference is a pure love; it raises the soul to the perfection of charity and union with God. St. Francis de Sales is not at all interested in the "masterpiece of the will" realized by the practice of indifference, but it is to succeed by the immolation of our own will to perfectly honor and love the will of God alone "because of His sovereign and infinite goodness as God and according to which He is God."[\(31\)](#)

THE SPANISH SCHOOL AND ST. TERESA OF AVILA

From the soil of Italy, the same cry for heroic love has welled up from one century to another, toward God and toward the Christian world -- Saints Cajetan, Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Genoa and Catherine of Siena were living witnesses of it.

St. Francis de Sales piously picks up the echo. Like his holy patron, he sings of divine love, and we know that his voice reechoes the call of all God's heralds even to our own day. However, the determining influence of the mystics of the Italian school does not make us forget the profound spiritual affinity which unites the holy Bishop to the blessed Mother Teresa. The message that the virgin of Avila addresses to us from the depths of Catholic Spain is substantially the same as we have already studied. But the privileged place St. Francis de Sales accords in his work to the great mystic of Carmel obliges us here to devote a few pages to her.

In the *Treatise of the Love of God* no spiritual author is so often named as St. Teresa; all of whose principal works are cited by Francis. Frequently in his letters he recommends reading her.⁽³²⁾ Furthermore, is it not significant to see how in the preface of the *Treatise*, St. Francis de Sales detaches her name from all those authors whose authority he invokes, as if to give more weight to her testimony; after indicating his sources, he adds:

Lastly, the Blessed Teresa of Jesus has written so well of the sacred movements of charity in all the books that she has left us that we are amazed to see so much eloquence amid such great humility and such firmness of mind in such great simplicity. Her most learned ignorance causes the knowledge of many learned men to seem like ignorance, for after their great efforts at study they are put to shame by not understanding what she has written in so happy a way in the practice of holy love. ⁽³³⁾

We discover at the same time in these lines what conquered St. Francis de Sales in the teaching of Mother Teresa; it is the combination of profundity and simplicity! He so often condemns in his letters the complication of all these "very obscure books which progress along the summit of mountains."⁽³⁴⁾ In his preface, he confesses that he does not always understand the doctrine of those subtle authors, but on the contrary he relishes the ease with which St. Teresa reveals to us the most profound mysteries of the supernatural life. In her works, he finds this "good and amiable clarity" that he was looking for himself to teach "in the most difficult places" of his *Treatise* ⁽³⁵⁾ and that he manifests there such unmistakable pleasure.

Such then is the optimistic and subtle solution of the saint. One of her spiritual sons synthesizes it in these terms: "Contemplation is not necessary to sanctity, but it is a powerful means of sanctification. Favored with contemplation, we have more than what is strictly necessary to obtain perfection, we are nourished with a munificence which helps us to progress more quickly on our way toward sanctity. This is why mystical contemplation can be called a 'shortcut'; and for the same reason it remains a gratuitous gift of God, a gift that one cannot properly merit But God who is Mercy itself is very inclined to give us this superabundance, provided that we are disposed properly to receive abnegation of ourselves and continual recollection."⁽³⁶⁾

This careful analysis was necessary in order to dissipate any ambiguity and to better understand the spiritual proximity of our two saints. St. Teresa speaks a great deal in her writings about the graces of prayer. She extols its inexpressible value, but the ideal always remains the union of conformity by total adhesion of our will to that of God. If she constantly insists on humility and on the death of our own will, it is thus both in order to make us progress in the authentic way of sanctity, and to prepare us for the gratuitous gifts of contemplation which would make us advance by giant steps on this same road.⁽³⁷⁾ St. Francis de Sales, pastor and director of

conscience is more concerned about teaching "the ecstasy of work and life" than to describe the superior states of the life of prayer which depend on exceptional graces and are not indispensable in order to acquire sanctity. For him as well as for St. Teresa, sanctity is the perfect conformity of our will with the divine will, it is the death of our own self-will, it is the entire indifference of these souls, "who among all sorts of incidents always hold their attention and affection on the eternal goodness in order to honour and cherish it forever"!(38)

We already know the teaching of Book nine of the Treatise. Listen to St. Teresa: perfection "consists in uniting our soul so closely to God's will that there is no division between Him and our soul. There remains only one, single and same will, manifested not only by words or by desires, but by works.(39) "Henceforth, the soul wants to possess nothing of its own, but to abandon itself entirely to what the Lord will judge conformed to His glory and His will."(40) At every page we come across these essential affirmations, but two things are noticeable: for St. Teresa, as for St. Francis de Sales, this conformity must above all be manifested by works and, St. Teresa adds, must be unceasingly animated by love. "The Lord demands works of us," she repeats incessantly... practice effective charity toward your neighbor, "do it, not so much from love for her (a sick sister) as for the love of God, who desires it, as you know. Such is the true union of will."(41)

Of course, there are other Spanish writers who have influenced the doctrine of St. Francis de Sales such as Louis of Granada, Peter of Alcantara and Osuna. However, we have limited ourselves to giving the testimony of only the mystics; that is, of those saints who have given us a spiritual doctrine along with an exceptional experience which God has granted them.

With these great saints of the Italian and Spanish schools, chiefly, Catherine of Siena, Catherine of Genoa, and Teresa of Avila, the holy Bishop of Geneva shares a spiritual affinity which is felt throughout his work. Meditation on their life and writings was an inspiration for the soul of Francis de Sales and certainly contributed to orienting him towards a spirituality of love and of the purest affective love possible.

NOTES

1. *Oeuvres*, V, P. 322; LG II, P. 263; LGK, P. 413. References throughout this article are complete for both French and English sources. The French refers to the *Oeuvres*, Nierat Annecy, 1892-1964. The English refers to the following: John Ryan, *On the Love of God by St. Francis De Sales* (New York, Image Books, 2 vols. 1963 and Tan Books Rockford, IL). LGK=Vincent Kerns, *The Love of God by Saint Francis de Sales* (Visakhapatnam, S.F.S., 1982).

2. *Ibid.*, V, p. 442.

3. *Ibid.*, V, p. 322; LG, II, p. 263.

4. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 273; V p. 93; LG, I, p. 247; LG, II, p. 84.

5. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 123; LG, I, p. 130-1; LGK, p. 63.

6. *Ibid.*, V, p. 181-4; LG, II, p. 152-5; LGK, p. 322ff.

7. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 358. Cf. also IV, p. 273 and V, p. 93; LG, I, p. 311-12. Cf. also p. 247 and LG, II, p. 124.

8. Cf. Pourrat, P., *La Spiritualité française*, II, p. 440ff. Regarding St. Catherine, we know the celebrated word of our Lord: "Do you know, my daughter, who you are and whom I am? If you have this double knowledge, you will be happy. You are she who is not, I am he who is." (Raymond of Capua, *La Vie de Sainte Catherine de Siene*, trans. Hugueny, p. 87.) The saint must not forget this divine lesson. To one of her companions, she gave this advice: "Make yourself another spiritual cell that you will always bear with you: this is the cell of the true knowledge of yourself, you will find there the knowledge of the goodness of God on your behalf. Truly these are two cells in one... these two knowledges then must be united and form only one single element. In acting thus you will arrive at perfection, because by the knowledge of yourself you will acquire the hatred of your sensual nature, and... in the knowledge of God you will find the fire of divine charity."

9. She constantly celebrates the virtues of this redeeming blood. In the same way as the Sacred Heart of Jesus is for us the symbol of the love of God, the blood of Christ is for St. Catherine the sensible sign of our redemption and thus also the ineffable love of God. "I wish," said she, "that we become inebriated with and that we plunge ourselves into the blood of the Christ crucified." She also began habitually her letters with these words: "I am writing you in the blood of Christ," that is in that spirit of ardent charity for God and neighbor of which this blood is witness: "In the blood that she sees spread about by love (the soul) she inebriates herself, she embraces it with a holy desire, she is inflamed with it, and is found filled up with charity, not only by yourself (God), but even by the neighbor." One can investigate this theme in: *Sainte Catherine de Siene: Le Sang, la Croix, la Vérité* -- Treize lettres traduites par L.P. Guiguet, Paris, Gallimard, 1940.

10. Cf. the anecdote reported in the *Treatise*, V, p. 212; LG, II, p. 177-8.

11. "Our Lord having given the choice to St. Catherine of Siena of a crown of gold or a crown of thorns, she chose the latter as more conformed to love." *Oeuvres*, V, p. 116; LG, II, p. 103. And in the choice of stigmata, St. Francis de Sales considers the mysterious union of suffering and of love: "These great souls of St. Francis and of St. Catherine felt unequalled love in their sorrows and incomparable sorrows in their love when they were stigmatized, delighting in the joyful love they experienced for their friend Thus is born the precious union of our heart with its God, which is the infant of sorrow and joy both together." *Oeuvres*, IV, p. 274; LG, I, p. 248.

12. Cf. *Oeuvres*, V, p. 13, and V, p. 158; LG, II, p. 20; LG, II, p. 136.

13. *Dialogue*: I, p. 229-235.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 250.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 259-260.

16. At first sight, an increase of peace seems possible within the four degrees of love, such as St. Francis de Sales exposes to us in the chapter IV and V in Book X, and the four states of four degrees of love according to the doctrine of the *Dialogue*. St. Catherine synthesizes them in this way: "in the first degree they strip the feet of the affection of the heart which makes them conceive the love of virtue. In the third which is that of peace and the quietude of the soul, they experience virtue, and in raising themselves above imperfect love, they arrive at great perfection. There, they finally have repose in the doctrine of my truth." (*Dialogue* I, p. 269.) In favour of this closer union, one can notice that the author of the *Treatise* precisely cites the example of St. Catherine of Siena at the end of Chapter V (*Oeuvres*, V, p. 184; LG, II, p. 154) and that it praises holiness in terms very comparable to those of the *Dialogue*. But beyond that one cannot find any textual contact, he must renounce finding a positive influence there, because the four degrees in

St. Francis de Sales do not correspond to those of the Dialogue. For our saint, the first degree is already a sincere and explicit love of God, and this concerns progress in the perfection of the love itself; this notion of progress is part of the idea of optimism.

17. St. Catherine of Genoa died in 1510. Her life, written by professor Miratoli, was published in 1551. A first French translation was done by the priests at Chartreux de Bourg-Fontaine in 1660. The Visitation of Fenice possesses a volume of this edition: *La Vie et les oeuvres spirituelles de Sainte Catherine d'Adorny de Gênes*, having belonged to St. Francis de Sales and which having without any doubt served for his citations in the *Treatise*. Cf. IV, p. xc, note 3.

18. Pourrat, P., op cit., II, p. 434.

19. *Oeuvres* V, p. 212; LG, II, p. 177. LGK, p. 341.

20. Let it suffice here to copy the title of the chapters which contain the principal quotations from St. Catherine of Genoa. These are first of all the last of Book VI on *Concerning Certain Other Ways by Which Love Wounds the Heart* (ch. XIV), or *Concerning the Loving Languor of the Heart Wounded with Dilection* (ch. XV). Next is chapter XI of the seventh book: *How Some Lovers of God Died also of Love*. These are particularly admirable chapters in the last books of the *Treatise*: *In what sense God is jealous of us* (Book X, ch. 13), *Concerning the Spouses' Loving Fear* (Book XI, ch. 13) *Motives We Must Have for Holy Love* (Book XII, ch. 2).

21. *Oeuvres*, IV, p. 355; LG, I, p. 309.

22. Fliche M., *Sainte Catherine de Gênes, sa vie et son esprit* (Paris: Sauton, 1881), pp. 69 and 71.

23. *Oeuvres*, IV, p. 94ff; LG, 1, pp. 107ff.

24. "How good, holy and pure is divine love! I was seized with sorrow at sight of my faults, which had so often irritated him . . . even the acts that I believed the best, his infinite justice had judged them unworthy of her, and if it had not been possible to purify them in the blood of the Savior, she would have condemned them, stricken with reprobation." (Cf. Fliche, op. cit., p. 323.)

25. Fliche, op. cit., p. 261.

26. *Oeuvres*, V, p. 249; LG, II, p. 242.

27. *Ibid.*, V, p. 295; LG, II, p. 242; LGK, p. 391.

28. St. Francis de Sales in speaking to us of the consummation of the union with God by love and of death of our own will takes great care to safeguard the inalienable privilege of our liberty, and the "voluntary" character of this perfection to abandonment. If not, it is the open door to fatalism or even to pantheism. St. Catherine of Genoa also has some extremely enlightening pages on this delicate point: "It is God who brings this marvelous union; He demands that it be brought about in our souls by the wonderful gift of his charity God exercises no constraint; man keeps his independence but if he consents to alienate it... He will rise practically without effort to perfection." Of what does this "alienation" consist? "O, free will of man," she cried, "my words are addressed to you. Do you have any idea of the marvels that you could accomplish if you did not wish to perpetuate your proud independence of Adam, which has cost us so dearly? Humble yourself or rather learn to subject yourself voluntarily to the divine good pleasure. God has left you master of your future" Cf. Fliche, op. cit., pp. 274-276. Man then must subject himself voluntarily, and this submission of one's own will demands its constant exercise.

29. *Oeuvres*, VI, pp. 22ff; SC, pp. 19ff.

30. Marceau, William, *Stoicism and St. Francis de Sales* (Visakhapatnam, S.F.S. Publications, 1980) pp. 38ff.

31. *Oeuvres*, V, p. 175; LG, II, p. 148.

32. So, to Baron de Chantal on the first of Nov. 1604: "I desire that you see the chapter 41 of *The Way of Perfection* of St. Teresa; because it will aid you to better understand the word that I have pronounced so often to you, that you must not be meticulous in exercise of virtues, but that you must go there in a balanced way, frankly, naively, in the old-fashioned French way, with liberty, with faith, in a general way" (XIII, p. 392) -- or again to Madame Bourgeois, the Abbess of Puits-d'Orbe, in April 1605: "As for humility, I shall scarcely say anything Read well what Mother Teresa says of it in the *Way of Perfection*." (XIII, p. 31.)

33. *Oeuvres*, IV, p. 7.; LG, I, p. 40. It is only in 1614, two years before the publication of the Treatise (Which had already been worked on for several years) that Paul V beatified the Holy Reformer; but her works were already known and commented on considerably in France, as well as in all of Europe. Translated into French in 1590, eight years after the death of the saint, by M. de Br tigny, they were reviewed and published again in 1601 by Dom de Cheure, Prior of the Chartreuse of Bourfontaine.

34. Certain ones were at that moment circulated in the religious world such as *La Perle évangélique l'abrégé de la perfection et La Méthode de servir Dieu* by Father Alphonse de Madrid. The aridity of the reasoning, the divisions and subdivisions of these treatises complicated them to the point of diminishing their effectiveness and of rendering their reading too difficult. "The book of the *Méthode de servir Dieu* is good, he says for example to Chantal, but heavy and difficult -- more so than is necessary." (Cf. *Oeuvres*, IV, p. IX.)

35. Cf. *Ibid.*, IV, p.13; LG, I, pp. 43-4. It is by contrast with this clarity which is so desirable that he adds: "Certainly as I have not wished to follow those who scorn certain books which treat of an eminent life in perfection, so also have I not wished to speak of this supereminence; because I cannot censure the authors, nor authorize the censors of a doctrine which I do not understand." Undoubtedly he was talking here of the masters of the Flemish mysticism, particularly of Ruysbroek.

36. Père Gabriel de Ste Marie-Madeleine, *Sainte Thérèse de Jésus, Maîtresse di vie spirituelle* (Paris: Desclee), p. 67.

37. In the *Interior Castle*, she clearly defines this position: "God, who is all powerful, has many means to enrich souls and to introduce them into these dwellings, without making them take this shortcut which we have mentioned. However, my daughters, know well that this mystical worm (our nature) must die and that it will cost us much more at that moment. In the other union, (of contemplation) the soul experiences so much joy with the new life through which it has passed, that it finds itself powerfully aided in order to make this worm die. But, in the latter, it is necessary that the soul while living its ordinary life, bring about its own death. I confess to you that the work will be much more difficult but the prize will be much more elevated and the reward higher if we triumph. It is impossible for us to doubt victory if our will is truly united to that of God." (Chateau, op. cit., VIII, p. 163,)

38. *Oeuvres*, V, p. 156.; LG, II, pp. 134-5.

39. *Pensées*, op. cit., V, p. 58.

40. *Vie*, op. cit., I, p. 325.

41. Chateau, op. cit., VIII, p. 169. A few pages earlier, she insisted already on this important idea that it is love which counts and not the matter of acts: "Do not imagine, however, having arrived there (at perfection) if your conformity to the will of God is such that you do not experience any sorrow at the death of a father or of a brother, or that you rejoice in the midst of trials and sicknesses. This disposition is good but it comes sometimes from prudence which is

powerless against these evils, and thus rendering virtue necessary. How many actions of this sort or of other like ones have not been accomplished by the philosophers who were following the insights from their knowledge! In the present case God only asks two things of us: that we love Him and that we love our neighbor. There is what must be the goal of our efforts. If we conform to it in a perfect manner, we accomplish His will and we are united to Him That it pleases His Majesty to give us His grace, in order that we merit arriving at that perfection, because this is in our power, if we wish it." (*Ibid.*, pp. 165ff.)
