

it needs a powerful and extreme contemplative counterpoise; compromise forms will not be so effective. The revival of hermits would be spectacular, as it was long ago—but only of course on condition of being as deliberately unspectacular as possible. For it is the hermit's strife to be alone with God that is spectacular; and any advertisement on his part would destroy it. To be effective, such an institute of hermits would have to make every effort and take every precaution to be unknown and to remain unknown; it would not have to seek vocations, but to wait for them to come, and flee with them ever farther from the world. There are, no doubt, many parts of the world where this could still be done. Africa was the original home of the hermits, and that continent has something in its make-up that can drive men and help men to solitude; we may see hermits once again (indeed there are followers of Charles de Foucauld) in the desert, or perhaps, since that has now fallen to the Mohammedan yoke, in the better climate of the solitudes of Southern Africa. But these are not things that can be planned or organised; they must just happen.

A PRAYER OF ST THOMAS OF AQUIN
BEFORE STUDY
ORATIO S. THOMÆ AQUINATIS



CREATOR INEFFABILIS, qui de thesauris sapientiæ tuæ tres Angelorum hierarchias designasti, et eas super cælum empyreum miro ordine collocasti, atque universi partes elegantissime distribuisti: Tu, inquam, qui verus Fons Luminis et Sapientiæ diceris, ac supereminens Principium, infundere digneris super intellectus mei tenebras, tuæ radium claritatis, duplices, in quibus natus sum, a me removens tenebras, peccatum scilicet, et ignorantiam.

Tu qui linguas infantium facis disertas, linguam meam erudias atque in labiis meis gratiam tuæ benedictionis infundas. Da mihi intelligendi acumen, retinendi capacitatem, addiscendi modum et facilitatem, interpretandi subtilitatem loquendi gratiam copiosam.

Ingressum instruas, progressum dirigas, egressum compleas: Tu qui es verus Deus et homo, qui vivis et regnas in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.¹

TRANSLATION FROM THE ENGLISH PRIMER

O Unspeakable Creator, which forth of the treasur of thy wisdom hast pointed out three hierarchies of Angels and placed them by a

¹ This text is taken from the A.A.S. 1933.

wonderfull order above the firy heaven, and hast most seemly distributed the parts of the world: Thou, I say, which art called the tru fountain o light and wisdome, and the highest beginning, voutsafe to poure upon the dareknes of my understanding, in the which I was born, the dooble beam of thy brightnes, removing from me darcknes, that is to say, sinne and ignorance. Thou which makest eloquent the tongues of then (them) that want utterance, instruct my tongue and poure into my lips the grace of thy blessing. Give me quicknes of understanding, capacity of retayning, subtilty of interpreting, facility of learning and copious grace of speaking: guyde my going in, direct my going forward, and accomplish my going forth. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

THE DEADLY SINS

(*Ancren Riwle*, Part 4 cont.)

BY

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.



HE classical characterisation of this period of the beginner, or the purgative way, is given in the words of St Thomas: *Primo incumbit homini studium principale ad recedendum a peccato et resistendum concupiscentiis ejus, que in contrarium caritatis movent: et hoc pertinet ad incipientes in quibus caritas est nutrienda, vel fovenda, ne corrumpatur.*

'At first it is incumbent on man to occupy himself chiefly with avoiding sin and resisting his concupiscences, which move him in opposition to charity: this concerns beginners, in whom charity has to be fed or fostered lest it be destroyed.' (II-II, 24, 9.) This aspect of struggle against lower nature and the war against vice is therefore the depressing but dominant feature of the age; but this does not mean a purely stoical attitude to self-mastery—it is always that 'charity may the more abound'. The enemies of love must be slain and these enemies are marshalled under seven generals, the capital sins, which are not only the sources of other moral evil, but the directors giving point to other 'wickedness. If therefore these seven are slain, charity will march forth the conqueror of all the rest of human evil; so it is to these seven that a man must turn his chief attention when he begins to follow God. (cf. I-II, 84, 3 and 4.) St John of the Cross begins his *Dark Night of the Soul* with a long analysis of the seven deadly or capital sins in respect to the life of the beginner; and the *Ancren Riwle* fills a good deal of the fourth part with a similar analysis which is however very different in tone.