

THE ELEMENT OF CHRISTIAN ASCETICISM
IN ENGLISH PURITANISM AND FRENCH JANSENISM
IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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PREFACE

The choice of the present subject, which grew from a seed sown by Principal (then Professor) John Baillie, was not purely fortuitous. The writer welcomed the opportunity of investigating a persistent, though to the modern mind uncongenial, type of Christian piety about which such a variety of opinions are held; while the specific problem of why two contemporary movements should manifest marked ascetic tendencies was in itself stimulating, especially in the absorbing context of the seventeenth century. In addition, he was personally interested both in English Puritanism and in French Jansenism, in the former as a result of having been reared in a home in which something of the Puritan spirit had survived, and in the latter because of a long-standing love of the French language, strengthened by a previous period of study in France. And due to a keen interest in the cause of the World Church, he was attracted by a comparative study of prominent religious movements in England and France and within two of the three great streams of Christianity. Here was an ecumenical subject!

The writer's aim was first to come to an intimate understanding of the ascetic spirituality of English Puritans and French Jansenists by "getting inside" their religious consciousness, and then, having seen life as they saw it, to present their outlook in their own terms and frequently in their own words. Without ignoring defects to which sufficient attention has been drawn in the past, it was felt best to adopt a positive approach and to bend one's efforts towards an appreciation of the loftier elements in the asceticism

of the two movements. It is believed that it is just such a positive task that needs to be undertaken in order to restore the balance of truth. To enter sympathetically into the experience of seventeenth century Christians is by no means easy for the modern mind. As Douglas Bush has said: "The modern reader who would understand seventeenth-century literature must shake off his habit of believing only what he sees and must try to realize a world in which man's every thought and act are of vital concern to God and to his own eternal state, a world interpenetrated by spiritual potencies." ¹ An effort has been made to appreciate this seventeenth century world, and to reproduce with fidelity a picture of life as viewed by Puritans and Jansenists. At every point primary evidence is offered to substantiate the picture being sketched in order to convey a more direct impression of their outlook.

One of the hazards in the way of a satisfactory treatment of the present subject was the great volume of literature which confronts and probably overawes any student of Puritanism and Jansenism. "Port-Royal peut peupler une bibliothèque", ² said Calot simply and accurately with reference to the latter, and for those of English tongue it is scarcely necessary to labour the point regarding Puritanism. In face of all the literature that could be consulted with profit, it was early decided that a thorough study of the ascetic thought of one representative from each movement should form the hard core of the thesis. The choice among English Puritans fell

1 Douglas Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600-1660, pp.36-7.

2 Frantz Calot, "Aperçu Historique sur le Jansénisme et Port-Royal", in Frantz Calot and Louis-Marie Michon, Port-Royal et le Jansénisme, p.25.

upon Richard Baxter, whom Henson described as "the Saint of Puritanism, and ... its most illustrious exponent."¹ Although it is impossible to select the "typical Puritan", Richard Baxter is ideally representative because of his moderate and central position which, one believes, embodies the essence of the Puritan spirit. For the parallel purpose in Jansenism, only one choice commended itself, that of Jean du Verger de Hauranne, Abbé de Saint-Cyran, whom Hallays described as "le fondateur, l'inspireur, le théologien, le moraliste"² of the movement. For unlike Puritanism, Jansenism is dominated by the spirit of one man, without knowledge of whose life and works its ascetic spirituality is quite incomprehensible. In addition to these major sources, a further selection of important primary documents was made, including on the Puritan side such names as Bunyan, Downname, Fox, Hutchinson, Penn, Prynne, Rogers and Sibbes, together with Acts and Ordinances, diaries and catechisms; and on the Jansenist side Mère Angélique, Mère Agnès, Arnauld, d'Andilly, Coustel, Hamon, Le Maistre, Nicole, Racine, Quesnel, de Sacy, and Singlin, together with the Mémoires, Nécrologes, and other documents which, due to persecution, mostly remained unpublished until the eighteenth century. Among secondary sources the writer would acknowledge his indebtedness to such authors as William Haller, M. M. Knappen, Perry Miller, Jean Orcibal and C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, whose works are invaluable in primary orientation in these fields.

Not the least merit of these last cited authors is their avoidance of the bias and bitterness which have perpetually enshrouded the Puritan and Jansenist stories. The acrimonious struggles between

1 H. Hensley Henson, Puritanism in England, p.143.

2 André Hallays, Le Pèlerinage de Port-Royal, p.35.

Puritan and Anglican, Jansenist and Jesuit, were not altogether attractive to begin with, and the latent animosities and prejudices which they aroused, and continue to arouse, in the breasts of their chroniclers, have always made it extremely difficult for the latter to serve the interests of truth impartially. Clearly the present writer has been subject to the usual pitfalls confronting investigators of these controversial subjects, and has had at all times to attempt to discount not only the particular bias of the authors he has studied, but also his own tendency to fall into a partisanship which would mar his judgement. However, this effort to steer a course between Scylla and Charybdis has not prevented his taking a position or exhibiting sympathies which he believes to be warranted by the facts.

The actual plan of the thesis is simple. The first part (Chapter I) is devoted to establishing a clear conception of Christian asceticism as a basis for the present investigation. The second part (Chapters II to V) deals with Puritan asceticism. An examination has been made of the situation into which it came; the inner nature of its spiritual athleticism; the most obvious and often imperfectly understood aspect of this, namely, the attitude to recreation and the arts; and finally the means of direction and discipline which made this thorough-going intramundane asceticism possible. Space has been allotted to each section according to what was considered to be its relative importance. Similarly in part three (Chapters VI to IX) Jansenist asceticism is broken down into its essential parts, which in the case of a predominantly monastic piety, contrast markedly with those of Puritan piety.

After investigating the setting and the formative factors, an analysis has been made of the asceticism of the nuns of Port-Royal, of the famous "Messieurs", and finally of the adherents of the movement in the normal social context, to each of which space has been allotted according to relative importance. Having set forth the facts on each side, the last part (Chapter X) is devoted to a critical conclusion in which Puritan and Jansenist asceticism in the seventeenth century are compared and contrasted.

The composition of the present thesis was not immediately apparent when the research was begun, and in its preparation much relevant material was gathered which had subsequently to be excluded in order to reduce the study to workable proportions. Biographical details and cross-references have for the most part been deleted, while the historical data pertaining to the movements have largely been relegated to an appendix giving a brief parallel chronology. In addition certain problems of peripheral rather than central concern were examined but had later to be omitted for lack of space, as for example, the relation of Quaker asceticism to Puritan asceticism and the bearing on piety of the substitution of the "inner light" for the doctrine of election, as revealed in Fox's Journal; the close relationship of Pascal to Jansenism as far as his ascetic piety is concerned; and the ascetic element in the educational ideal and practice of the Jansenists in the Petites Écoles de Port-Royal. What has been left is, one believes, the essence of Puritan and Jansenist asceticism in the seventeenth century.

Certain technical points require brief explanation. As for footnotes, sources are for the most part identified by author and

title without place or date of publication. Full entries, however, are given in the case of periodicals and modern editions of primary sources, while otherwise the date of primary works is given in initial entries. In order to preserve the authentic flavour of the period the fewest possible alterations have been made in spelling and punctuation in seventeenth century documents. To avoid unnecessary confusion however, punctuation has occasionally been modified, and in the case of u's and v's, i's and j's, spelling has been altered to conform with modern usage. Necessary apostrophes have been added in many English words while in French words accentuation has been modernized.

The writer is grateful to his supervisors, the Rev. Principal C. S. Duthie and the Rev. Professor J. H. S. Burleigh for their counsel and guidance during the preparation of this thesis. He would also thank the librarians and staff of the following institutions where his research was carried out.

1. In Edinburgh: New College especially, and also the National Library of Scotland and the University of Edinburgh;

2. In London: the British Museum, Sion College, and the Palace of Lambeth;

3. In Paris: the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne, and the Faculté de Théologie Protestante.

Above all he would express his gratitude to his wife for continual support and encouragement.

Edinburgh,
October, 1951.

CHAPTER I

CHRISTIAN ASCETICISM

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

I John 2:15-17.

A. The Concept of Asceticism.

There is no precise, universally accepted definition of asceticism. To the popular mind, however, the word usually connotes a pessimistic world-denying pattern and philosophy of life characterized by not infrequently revolting physical austerities. "Proclaiming war upon human nature",¹ "the passion of self-contempt wreaking itself on the poor flesh",² and "rigorous self-discipline, severe abstinence, austerity",³ are three expressions of such a notion from readily accessible general treatments and definitions of the subject. Small wonder, then, that asceticism popularly connotes irrational, joyless,

1 W. E. H. Lecky, History of European Morals, Vol. II, p.336.

2 William James, Varieties of Religious Experience, p.304.

3 Oxford English Dictionary, Vol. I, p.483.

and for the most part, useless self-denial which may do no harm, but which is definitely to be shunned by average men and women who wish to lead happy and useful lives.

Closer investigation of such a conception, however, shows that although containing a measure of truth it embraces in its purview only limited stretches of ascetic country. It is indeed true that the history of asceticism includes much of physical austerity, of sheer negativity, and even of pathological morbidity; but it is also true that it offers countless examples of noble physical and spiritual discipline and of joyful, positive, self-transcending actions. For asceticism is an exceedingly widespread and comprehensive phenomenon. Although "askesis" derives from ancient Greece, referring originally to the bodily discipline of the Greek athlete, and later to the wider sphere of moral and spiritual discipline, that for which it stands has been manifest in all epochs of human history and in cultures both primitive and advanced the world over. As Zöchler has said, "Die Askese ist etwas gemeinschaftliches, sie durchdringt als ein bald schwächer bald stärker auftretendes Ingrediens alle Religionen und religiösen Kulturen."¹ Obviously then, it is impossible adequately to convey the fullness of its meaning in a brief, well-rounded definition. The best that can be done is to give a summary of its features, such as Hardman has done pre-eminently well. Asceticism, he writes,

... must be held to include legitimate self-discipline, as well as bodily purgation based on a materialistic conception of evil; it may be regarded as a means of self-adjustment in the attempt to

1 Otto Zöchler, Askese und Mönchtum, Vol. I, p.3.

establish an ideal system of relationships, as well as direct striving for self-development; it covers varying degrees of stringency of practice, and may not be restricted to types which are characterised by undue severity, by a false estimate of suffering, or by sheer negativity. It is a widely inclusive term, covering practices good and bad, noble and debased, heroic and foolish; and may be described as the voluntary practice of renunciation, suffering, and toil, for the deliverance and protection of the soul from defilement, for the increase of its powers by the discharge of its proper functions in accordance with its own conception of the moral and spiritual order, and for the consequent achievement and enjoyment of its full status. 1

B. Christian Asceticism:
New Testament Roots

Now it is possible to consider such an

intricate subject from many different points of view. Asceticism, accordingly, has attracted the attention of students of sociology, psychology, philosophy, ethics, theology, and comparative religion. 2 It is not to the present purpose however, 3 further to consider general ascetic theory. The immediate aim is rather to investigate the more concrete phenomenon of Christian

1 O. Hardman, The Ideals of Asceticism, p.16.

2 For an ample bibliography of the subject based on these lines v. O. Hardman, op. cit., pp.vii-xviii.

3 Zöchler has written the still standard work of this kind. His very useful logical schema (op. cit., I, pp.10-13) is as follows:

- I. Individual-Askese negativer (sinnlicher) Art, oder Askese der Enthaltung, sich bethätigend auf den besonderen Gebieten
 - a) des diätetischen Lebens (Fasten-Askese);
 - b) des geschlechtlichen Lebens (Virginitäts-Askese);
 - c) des häuslichen Lebens (Obdach-, Kleider- und Lager-Askese);
 - d) der Körpermisshandlung (Peinigungs-Askese)
- II. Individual- und Sozial-Askese positiver (geistlicher) Art, oder Askese der Erhebung, geübt entweder
 - a) als Gebets- und Kontemplations-Askese Einzelner (asket. Privatandachtsstreben);
 - b) als gottesdienstliche Askese (asketische Verwertung der öffentlichen Kultusakte und kultischen Heilmittel).
- III. Sozial-Askese oder genossenschaftlich betriebene Askese der Arbeit, in sich schliessend die teils negativ- teils positiv asketischen Übungen
 - a) der Absperrung vom Weltverkehr: mönchische Keuschheitspraxis (Klausur);
 - b) der Fernhaltung vom Privatbesitz: mönchische Armutspraxis;
 - c) der Ertötung des Eigenwillens: mönchische Gehorsamspraxis.

asceticism as it has developed in practice and theory, with a view to analysing it into its constitutive elements, and so establishing a norm in the light of which later to examine and compare two important Christian ascetic movements of the seventeenth century. The conception which evolves, it will be observed, is not limited to the normal technical connotation of the word in ecclesiastical history, i.e., withdrawal from the world, as in the case of the early desert monks, largely for the practice of bodily austerities conceived as essential for salvation, but has been enlarged to encompass a much broader area of striving and discipline informed by a concern for salvation, whether in withdrawal or in the world.

Although it did not come into the ancient world with anything like the force of novelty,¹ Christian asceticism is discoverable in germ in the New Testament itself. In the life and teaching of our Lord all the elements of a dynamic asceticism are to be found as integral parts of His gospel. There is indeed much apparently contrary evidence. He took His part in normal social life, He "came eating and drinking",² He delighted in the natural world as a sphere of God's love,³ and He exhibited deep and warm human affections. He manifested a positive attitude to the body and physical life,⁴ teaching the sacredness of marriage and spending Himself in works

1 It is well to recall that when Christian asceticism was in its infancy, "a movement of asceticism had long been raging like a mental epidemic through the world." (W. E. H. Lecky, op. cit., II, p.102). Nor was this movement inactive in the early centuries of our era. Reference is often made to the Essenes and Therapeutae of Judaism, the Cynics, the Stoics, Manichaeism, and Neo-Platonism. On the debatable extent of this external influence, v. P. Pourrat, Christian Spirituality, Vol. I, pp.78-80.

2 Matt. 11:19.

3 cf. His attitude to children, Mark 10:13-16.

4 Mark 10:6-9.

of healing. Yet, on the other side, He repeatedly taught the discipline of sober watchfulness.¹ He devoted much time to prayer and meditation,² and emphasized the life of prayer for His followers. He Himself underwent the rigours of fasting, and assumed that after His death His disciples would fast.³ And always He subordinated concerns of the body and the physical world to those of the soul and eternal life.⁴

At the deeper level, then, He taught that men should be supremely concerned to lay up treasure in heaven⁵ and to remember that one day their souls would be required of them.⁶ And because "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way",⁷ His followers must not shrink from severe self-discipline and radical renunciation. One must be ready to mortify the flesh when it betrays the soul,⁸ to renounce riches when they block the way to the Kingdom,⁹ to sacrifice family ties and even one's own life,¹⁰ in order truly to be His disciple. "If any man will come after me," He said, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."¹¹ In this invitation to bear the cross - and it is an invitation, to be freely and inwardly accepted, and not legally and outwardly enforced - one sees the radical nature of the life of self-discipline, suffering, and renunciation which constitutes the ascetic element in the life and teaching of Christ. And one is forcibly reminded that while the Kingdom of God will be bestowed as

1 Matt. 24:42, Mark 13:37.

2 Luke 6:12.

3 Matt. 9:14-15.

4 Matt. 10:28.

5 Matt. 6:19 ff.

6 Luke 12:16-21.

7 Matt. 7:14.

8 Matt. 5:29, 30.

9 Matt. 19:16-26.

10 Luke 14:26.

11 Matt. 16:24, 25.

a divine gift,¹ the disciple must nevertheless strive earnestly to appropriate that gift.² The Christian ascetic thus takes seriously both sides of the paradox of Christian life, the gift and the struggle.

It must be borne in mind, however, that to isolate this teaching of Christ from its setting in the fullness of the gospel is to do violence to the gospel and to distort the ascetic element. The context from which it is inseparable is nowhere more clearly or succinctly set out than in our Lord's statement of the great commandment and its corollary: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength ... and ... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."³ From this epitome of our Lord's teaching may be deduced the three-dimensional bearing of all Christian moral action in general, and of the voluntary self-mortifications of Christian asceticism in particular. A true evaluation of the self is implied, which, as we have already seen, is to be found in a recognition of the supremacy of spiritual values, and a consequent concern for the salvation of one's soul. At the same time, love of the neighbour will transcend these considerations so that as a follower of One who made Himself the servant of all, toiling, suffering, and renouncing even life itself for others, the Christian ascetic would humble, discipline, and deny himself, in order to serve his neighbour and give adequate expression to his love for him. And of supreme importance, undergirding and giving rise to the first two dimensions,

1 Luke 12:32.

2 Luke 13:24.

3 Mark 12:30, 31.

there is the Christian disciple's love of God, whom he knows through the person of Christ. It is this love which constrains him to embrace the disciplined life, that through it he may better serve and glorify God. True Christian asceticism, then, will give due expression to all three of these dimensions of our Lord's teaching.

Turning to St. Paul one is again confronted with the elements of such a dynamic spirituality. As before, it is true that there is much apparently contrary evidence. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ¹ ... for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified", one might well infer that there is no need of acts of discipline and mortification. For the rejection of legalism is the characteristic note of all Pauline teaching. Again, such normal ascetic practices as "forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats", are regarded as departures from the faith, "for every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving."² But on the other hand there is an unmistakable ascetic strain in Paul's life and teaching alike. He exhibits a marked preference for the unmarried state as better serving spiritual ends, especially for those who are living in the last days.³ Although "bodily exercise profiteth little",⁴ yet Paul disciplines his body, to bring it under⁵ subjection to the spirit and so to further the ends of godliness. He so values the life of the spirit that he becomes a spiritual athlete, always under training and discipline that he might win life's race. Timothy, too, is urged to "endure hardness" and to

1 Gal. 2:16.
2 I Tim. 4:3, 4.
3 I Cor. 7:29-40.

4 I Tim. 4:8.
5 I Cor. 9:27.

undergo the discipline of separation from the world's enticements.¹
 Paul himself says, "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the
 world."² Above all he never tires of stressing the spiritual
 discipline of continued prayer and watching.³

The theological basis of Pauline asceticism rests on the
 distinction between the flesh and the spirit, between the old man
 and the new man. "Although S. Paul's 'flesh' stands in direct
 relation to the body and its needs, its meaning is not thereby
 exhausted."⁴ Rather, it embraces body and soul, standing for the
 earthly, natural, sinful nature of man, with its lustfulness and
 worldly sensuality, and its proud disobedience to God.⁵ It
 continually wars against the spirit in man, and in the weakness and
 carnality of the old man it has the upper hand, giving rise to the
 characteristic works of the flesh.⁶ But as in the old man the flesh
 is in the ascendancy, so in the new man who is in Christ, the life
 of the spirit triumphs, giving rise to its own distinctive fruits.⁷
 On the one hand, this new life is "the gift of God" who "hath
 quickened us together with Christ";⁸ but on the other, it is
 dependent on the response of the Christian to the divine call to
 "walk in the spirit", for even in the new man "the flesh lusteth
 against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh."⁹ In order
 that the spirit may triumph, the Christian is called to a life

1 II Tim. 2:3, 4.

2 Gal. 6:14.

3 e.g. Col. 4:2; Eph. 6:18; I Thess. 5:17.

4 K. E. Kirk, The Vision of God, p.43. Paul speaks of "our vile
 body" which will be "fashioned like unto his glorious body",
 (Phil. 3:21), and it is evident that for those whose "conversation
 is in heaven" the body is of distinctly secondary importance.

5 Eph. 2:1-3.

8 Eph. 2:4-9.

6 Gal. 5:19-21.

9 Gal. 5:16-17.

7 Gal. 5:22-26.

of struggle and warfare, of discipline, self-denial and mortification.

Here, too, asceticism has a three-dimensional bearing.

Because the life of the spirit is of the utmost importance, the Christian ascetic takes thought for his own spiritual welfare, striving for the mastery in this world, that finally he may receive the "incorruptible crown", and not find himself a castaway.¹ But again there is a wider motive in his ascetic renunciations, namely, the love of the neighbour, for "if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth ...".² Paul is always concerned in love to serve his brethren. But the ground and strength of Pauline asceticism lies above all in that love of God which comes through the mystical union of the believer with Christ. Having "put on Christ",³ henceforth the sincere disciple strives inwardly to conform to His spirit of humility and outwardly to share His suffering.⁴

C. The Primitive and Mediaeval Patterns.

Turning now to the history of the church to discover how the biblical emphases were embodied in practice, one encounters two main patterns of Christian asceticism, the first of which was ultimately to be normative for Protestant ascetic groups, the second for Roman Catholicism. The first, apparent in the primitive church, is that of the life of struggle and discipline on the part of the whole Christian community while set in the midst of society. It was marked by a distinct sense of having been called by God to separation from the corruptions of the world, i.e., of being literally the "ecclesia", whose true citizenship was in heaven, not on earth. "I have chosen you out of

1 I Cor. 9:25-27.

2 I Cor. 8:13.

3 Gal. 3:27.

4 Phil. 2:5-8.

the world"; "Be not conformed to this world"; "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world"; these were the watchwords¹ of the primitive church. A passage in the Second Epistle of Peter² enshrines forever this spirit, showing the way in which the early followers of Christ and the inheritors of the Pauline tradition were interpreting the Christian life. Through Christ they had "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust"; they were now citizens of heaven; each one, therefore, "purged from his old sins", was called to "glory and virtue" by a patient exercise of personal godliness and brotherly charity; and by so demonstrating their "calling and election" in the midst of the world all were assured an entrance "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Here one encounters the pattern of dynamic intra-mundane asceticism which characterized the primitive church, and which marked it off from the world about it. Kirk has called it "domestic" or "lay" asceticism, with the reminder that during the first two centuries "nothing approaching a systematic over-valuation of asceticism was yet known in the Church."³ It issued simply from a spontaneous and fervent desire to engage in radical Christian discipleship. And so, by fasting, exalting virginity, renouncing worldly amusements, sacrificing personal property to serve the ends of charity, and supremely by suffering martyrdom, the mass of the faithful living in the midst of the defilements of a pagan environment demonstrated during the early centuries the unique quality of the life in Christ. They were constantly sustained by the faith that

1 John 15:19; Rom. 12:2; I John 2:15.

2 II Peter I:1-11.

3 K. E. Kirk, op. cit., p.81.

"whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world",¹ and fed on the promise of eternal life which struggling souls have ever cherished. For it is written: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of² the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Gradually as the persecutions ceased and the hope of Christ's second coming and the sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit became less vivid, the pristine vigour of the Christian community began to decline as it accommodated itself to the world. The gap between the church and the world narrowed, and that between the church and its ascetic ideal widened. The situation became intolerable for many of those who took their salvation seriously, with the result that although lay asceticism was by no means extinguished, its animating impulse came more and more to be expressed in a complete abandonment of the world. The first development in this direction was the rapid growth, from the days of the hermits Paul and Antony, of the eremitic life. This was shortly followed by the founding of the coenobitic life by St. Pachomius early in the fourth century, and by the end of that century, monachism was firmly established in East and West. By these stages one sees the gradual development of the second pattern³ of Christian asceticism known as the double standard: the one of salvation, a lower grade of Christian achievement for the faithful leading an active secular life; the other of perfection, a higher standard for professional ascetics who renounce the world and especially the married state in favour of the "religious" contemplative

1 I John 5:4.

2 Rev. 2:7.

3 The nature of the distinction between the "two lives" was variously conceived in patristic and mediaeval times. v. K. E. Kirk, op. cit., pp.104-112.

life - a distinction ever since perpetuated by the Roman Church. The history of monasticism in the West from the fourth century onwards need not detain us, except for the recording of two facts which are important for an understanding of the present subject: the first, that mediaeval monasticism is not identical with Christian asceticism, but that its history may be reduced precisely to the perpetual warfare between the ascetic tendencies inherent in monastic life and the alien but seductive anti-ascetic tendencies of the world; the second, that it exhibits a steadily growing appreciation of the man-ward dimension of Christian discipleship, self-denial and renunciation motivated by love of God and the imitation of Christ increasingly assuming the form of loving service to mankind. Thus while in one direction monasticism was repeatedly deflected from its ascetic goal, in another it approached more nearly to a rounded Christian standard which included with the life of solitude and prayer that of charity and action.

D. Roman Catholic and Calvinist Interpretations.

Leaving the historical perspective, it is necessary at this point to examine the main elements of the two principal theories of Christian asceticism. The orthodox Roman Catholic conception is not based on the universal rigorism of the primitive church but on the mediaeval pattern of

1 The repeated declensions and subsequent reforms of Benedictinism fully illustrate this.

2 Originally the monk's own salvation was his sole ascetic motive. Gradually however, recognition was given to the monastery's responsibilities to the world by the founding of various orders of Canons Regular and Mendicant Friars, and especially of the Franciscan Tertiaries or lay-helpers. The word "friar" as contrasted with "monk" epitomizes this trend, the former connoting brotherly relations with the world, the latter the life of solitude and prayer.

monastic withdrawal. The biblical foundation for the distinction of the double standard is found in our Lord's words to the rich young ruler: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me."¹ This, as over against the precepts which all Christians must follow, is the evangelical counsel to perfection which, according to Roman Catholic theology, is fulfilled only by the formal monastic life but is incumbent only on those who receive a divine vocation to it. Asceticism is precisely this pursuit of perfection, this following Christ by renouncing the world,² and ascetical theology is the theology which deals with perfection in the Christian life.

In connection with this theory, it is to be noted that withdrawal from the world and renunciation of the married state do not imply a judgement that the present physical life is evil. On the contrary, being part of God's creation, both the body and the natural world are held to be good, though subject to grave misuse by sinful man. It is rather a case of renouncing a good for a greater good, of surrendering all that stands between a man and God. "He does not love nature less, but he loves something else more."³ And so what appears to be an entirely negative attitude to life is based on a primarily positive outlook. The fact that monastic history affords many examples of perverted attitudes and practices in no way affects Roman Catholic theory.

1 v. Matt. 19:16-22.

2 cf. P. Pourrat, *op. cit.*, I, p.304.

3 Alban Goodier, An Introduction to the Study of Ascetical and Mystical Theology, p.113.

But since the ascetic life is lived on the supernatural level, it entails unremitting struggle on the part of natural sinful man. If constant effort and discipline are required of a natural man that he may attain some self-set ideal, how much more necessary it is that the aspirant to the infinitely higher goal of Christian perfection should struggle to master his unruly inclinations.¹

Cette nécessité se prouve encore par les vices, les passions, les inclinations déréglées, les tentations intérieures et extérieures, contre lesquels nous avons sans cesse à combattre tant dans le corps que dans l'âme et que nous ne pouvons vaincre sans la mortification. 2

Mortification therefore must be inward as well as outward, with the object not only of subduing the passions and controlling the senses by temperance in drinking, eating, and sleeping, by fasting, flagellation and the avoidance of all luxury and delicacy, but also of training the spirit and disciplining the intellect by renouncing the conversation of men and studiously uprooting curiosity and pride. By these negative works of penance freely embraced, the soul is prepared for the new life with which God will fill it. On the other hand, there are the positive techniques of exercising the soul in grace - the steady routine of prayer, devotion, and watching which is of inestimable aid to the mortified soul in its struggle for perfection. Thus, by way of the closely related and perpetually overlapping steps of purgation, illumination, and union, one is led from a negative denial of self to a positive love of God and the

1 Alban Goodier, op. cit., p.107. A classic exposition of this element of constant struggle which recurs in writings on Catholic spirituality is to be found in St. Augustine's De Civitate Dei, XIV, 28, which describes the conflict between love of self and love of God which rages in man, the triumph of the one characterizing the earthly city, and of the other the heavenly city.

2 Dictionnaire d'Ascétisme, Vol. I, p.1088.

joyful imitation of Christ. The passions are subdued, pride gives way to humility, and the ascetic struggle culminates in the joy of mystical union.

An important element in this ascetic theory is the doctrine of merit. Goodier states precisely that ascetical theology "teaches a man how he may make the best of himself in the eyes of God ..."¹ For, according to Roman Catholic dogma, the merits of Christ's passion are effectual for salvation only if the believer joins to them the merits of his own life of earnest struggle, thus appropriating those of the Saviour.² Consequently, the ascetic tries by his mortifications to make himself worthy before God, that in so growing towards spiritual perfection he may claim the reward of mystical union with Him in this life, and eternal blessedness in the life to come. But it is essential to note that, doctrinally, it is only through grace, through adoption to sonship by God's gift of His Son, that man is enabled to make progress toward perfection and so attain merit in His sight. Through "being in this 'state of grace', man's deeds have a new value; they merit, they deserve, thanks to the divine,³ condescending promise they can claim, a reward in the sight of God."

It is obvious that the standard ascetic theory of Roman Catholicism takes very little account of the masses of the faithful⁴ living in the world. But the growing attempt, already noted, to extend the range of traditional monasticism has been followed in

1 Alban Goodier, op. cit., p.4.

2 Dictionnaire d'Ascétisme, I, p.854.

3 Alban Goodier, op. cit., p.113.

4 cf. supra, p.12, note 2.

more modern times by the tendency to interpret Christian asceticism not merely in terms of the superior standard of obedience, poverty, and chastity of the monastic state, but so as to be relevant to the life of the ordinary layman. In this way the pattern of the primitive church has come into greater prominence. This process, indeed, had been going on in practice from the fourth century in the form of disciplinary penance, later to become a sacrament centering in the confessional, which was essentially a form of ascetic symbolism providing Christians in the world with a type of spiritual direction and discipline suited to their state.¹ The life of the Tertiaries and the earnest preaching of the early friars had also familiarized the people with an ideal of simplicity and sobriety of life.² But a major factor in the extension of ascetic theory to include life in the world has been the development by the Jesuits, largely spurred on by the Protestant stress on the lay state, of a conception of positive world conquest rather than of negative monastic withdrawal.³ And so a prominent Jesuit has written recently:

Though it may be true that religious life is, theologically, called the 'state of perfection', that is, one who embraces it embraces at the same time the obligation to aim at the perfect

1 Penitentials, "unauthorized manuals of spiritual direction which had grown spontaneously to meet the needs of the life of devotion in the cloister", were transferred by Celtic missionaries to Christians in the world; later they developed, after much opposition by the church, into the sacrament of penance, authorized in 1215 by the 4th Lateran Council. cf. A. L. Lilley, in Malcolm Spencer, (editor), Social Discipline in the Christian Community, p.28.

2 cf. infra, pp.56-7.

3 In France, St. François de Sales also promoted the practice of lay asceticism, which in time however, slipped into laxity as a result of the attempt of Salesian and Jesuit to catch all men in the Christian net.

service of God, still this does not by any means confine perfection to that state. Often enough, in practice, we see the contrary to be the case; in some sense the perfect following of Christ outside the 'state of perfection', with all its protections and safeguards, is a higher vocation still. Sanctity attained by a man or woman in the world, in the family, in the workshop, in the school, in the army or navy, in Whitehall, may be looked on as the highest vocation of all 1

It is the dissemination of this spirit throughout the church which marks modern Roman Catholic spirituality, drawing it closer to the Protestant intra-mundane pattern.

Before leaving Roman Catholic asceticism one must note its affinities with the roots of Christian asceticism observable in the New Testament. In both the teaching of Christ and the ascetic theory of Roman Catholicism there is the element of fasting, the stress on prayer and watchfulness, the deep concern for the spiritual life and the subordination of the physical life to its higher claims, and the element of serious striving to do God's will. Moreover, the Catholic standard of perfection looks to an imitation of the chastity, poverty, humility, and suffering of Christ, and in demanding withdrawal from the world takes literally His counsel to forsake all, including possessions and family, in order to attain such perfection. It also shows affinity with Pauline asceticism in its preference for the unmarried state, its emphasis on the struggle of the spiritual athlete, the need to keep the body under, and the dependence of the new man on grace. On the other side, the Catholic doctrine of merit, though partly traceable to the teaching of both

1 The Most Rev. Alban Goodier, Archbishop of Hierapolis, op. cit., pp.105-6. cf. pp.72-3 where the Archbishop pleads for an asceticism "equally accessible to all", and not only for "a class apart, a kind of spiritual élite ...". Except for his clinging, in theory at any rate, to the doctrine of the double standard and of "religious" perfection, this attitude approaches the typical Protestant attitude.

our Lord and St. Paul regarding the rewards awaiting those who strive in sincerity to serve God,¹ developed a legalistic tinge quite foreign to the spirit of the New Testament. And finally, as it has already been seen, Catholic asceticism has paid ample attention to concern for the progress and well-being of the soul, and has been directed to the glory of God, but traditionally has had to resist the tendency to become the pursuit of a self-centred élite and to leave out the second or social dimension which was so pronounced in the New Testament.

The Reformed position stands in sharp contrast to Roman Catholic theory, the most striking difference being an entire repudiation of the flight from the world and the special merit of monastic perfection, and a return to the universal intra-mundane asceticism of the earliest Christians. Although Lutheranism reacted violently against monasticism, it is in Calvinism that the most distinctive Protestant ascetic theory is to be found.² Calvin, vehemently opposed to an asceticism based on a false standard of perfection,³ underlines the duty of a Christian to serve his fellows.

It is a beautiful thing to live the life of a philosopher in retirement, at a distance from the society of men; but it is not the part of Christian charity for a man to act as if he hated all mankind, withdrawing to the solitude of a desert, and abandoning the principal duties which the Lord has commanded.⁴

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- 1 v. Matt. 5:11, 12; Matt. 10:42; Luke 6:35; I Cor. 9:25; II Tim. 2:12 - but note that all these have to do with serving one's neighbour through love, or suffering for Christ's sake, and not with the self-mortifications of the cloister, for the sake of "... making the best of oneself in the eyes of God." cf. K. E. Kirk, op. cit., pp.69-76.
- 2 Calvinism is the first of the four forms of distinctly ascetic Protestantism listed by Weber, the other three being Pietism, Methodism, and the sects growing out of the Baptist movement. v. Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, p.95.
- 3 v. John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Vol. II, Bk. IV, Chap. XIII, pp.525, 532, 537, 539.
- 4 ib., Vol. II, Bk. IV, Chap. XIII, p.548.

In contrast, Calvin teaches an evangelical spirituality by which, according to the doctrine of the vocation or calling, every Christian is called to serve God in his particular station in society, a fact which affords

... peculiar consolation, since there will be no employment so mean and sordid (provided we follow our vocation) as not to appear respectable, and be deemed highly important in the sight of God. ¹

But although in the reformer's mind there is no place for a physical withdrawal from the world, there is, after the pattern of the primitive church, a definite psychological separation from it based on the contrast between life in this world and life in the world to come. Thus, looking to the prize of eternal life, Christians should regard this life as "a race of righteousness", ² attempting to quench "our strong natural inclination to a brutish love of the world", and "to habituate ourselves to a contempt of the present life, that we may thereby be excited to meditation on that which is to come." ³ It is not a case of regarding the created order and the present bodily life as evil, for even though in a weary moment Calvin calls the world a sepulchre and the body a prison, ⁴ he urges that "believers should accustom themselves to such a contempt of the present life, as may not generate either hatred of life, or ingratitude towards God ...". ⁵ It is rather that those whose citizenship is in heaven have, even while living in the world, set their affections on the infinitely more precious life beyond this historical existence.

1 John Calvin, op. cit., Vol. I, Bk. III, Chap. X, pp.790-1.
 2 ib., Vol. I, Bk. III, Chap. VI, p.746.
 3 ib., Vol. I, Bk. III, Chap. IX, p.777.
 4 ib., Vol. I, Bk. III, Chap. IX, p.781.
 5 ib., Vol. I, Bk. III, Chap. IX, p.779.

It is against this background of the two worlds that Calvin's insistence on the mortified Christian life is to be viewed. The elect, though sinful and remaining in a sinful world, have been called by divine grace to salvation and eternal life. Hence arises the necessity of continual mortification and struggle in order to make one's calling sure and to advance in the way of the Lord. As Hunter put it,

It is not to a life of safe and easy comfort that the elect are called, but to one which involves unceasing struggle with much fear and trembling and a continual sharing in the sufferings of Christ. ¹

In Calvin's own words, because "there is a world of vices concealed in the soul of men" there is no "other remedy than to deny yourself and discard all selfish considerations ...".² Calvin is careful to point out, however, that the self-regarding consideration is not sufficient by itself, but that true mortification and self-denial "will not take place in us unless we fulfil the duties of charity ... from a sincere principle of love"³, i.e., of God and of the neighbour. We must also be ready to take up whatever cross God may call us to bear, so that in place of "foolish, vain, carnal confidence, relying on which we become contumacious and proud, in opposition to God Himself"⁴, we may learn obedience, humility, patience, and reliance on God. Stoic insensibility or the destruction of human feelings must nevertheless be avoided by Christians,⁵ who are to have nothing to do with "that iron-hearted philosophy ...".

1 A. Mitchell Hunter, The Teaching of Calvin, a Modern Interpretation, p.111.

2 John Calvin, op. cit., Vol. I, Bk. III, Chap. VII, p.753.

3 ib., Vol. I, Bk. III, Chap. VII, p.759.

4 ib., Vol. I, Bk. III, Chap. VIII, pp.766-7.

5 ib., Vol. I, Bk. III, Chap. VIII, p.773.

As the occasion demands, pastors are to exhort the people to such ascetic practices as "fasting, or solemn supplications, or to other exercises of humility, repentance, and faith ...".¹ Fasting is calculated to restrain the flesh, to serve as a preparation for prayers, and to testify to humility before God. As a spiritual discipline, Calvin lays down the duty of meditation on eternal life, which duty is to be engaged in by all "with increasing cheerfulness and readiness ...".² In a passage which comes very close to the traditional Catholic position but in the much wider context of the whole body of Christians, Calvin sums up his concept of the mortified life, urging that

... with sincere simplicity, we keep our end in view, and press forward to the goal, not practicing self-adulation, nor indulging our evil propensities, but perpetually exerting our endeavours after increasing degrees of amelioration, till we shall have arrived at a perfection of goodness, which, indeed, we seek and pursue as long as we live, and shall then attain, when, divested of all corporeal infirmity, we shall be admitted by God into complete communion with him. 3

The most distinctive feature of Calvinist asceticism is associated with the rigorism⁴ of the spiritual direction and discipline worked out under Calvin in the Genevan theocracy, which

1 John Calvin, op. cit., Vol. II, Bk. IV, Chap. XII, p.515.

2 ib., Vol. I, Bk. III, Chap. IX, p.781.

3 ib., Vol. I, Bk. III, Chap. VI, p.750. For a typical statement of the Christian ascetic ideal in the various Calvinist Confessions, v. Sec. XVIII of the Second Helvetic Confession in Philip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom ..., Vol. III, The Creeds of the Evangelical Protestant Churches, p.280.

4 This term refers both to the strict enforcement of specific doctrines or laws such as those of the Genevan moral code, and more generally to moral strictness and sober restraint. cf. Lindsay Dewar and Cyril E. Hudson, Christian Morals, a Study in First Principles, pp.68, 71, 178, 179.

systematically regulated social, economic, and political, as well as personal life, frowning on frivolity and indolence, making work incumbent, and encouraging self-denial and self-discipline.¹ Based on the idea that every Christian should strive for perfection, this system aimed to promote that godliness which was the soul's true good, "to fortify the spirit in its contest with the sins besetting the flesh and imperilling the soul in its exercise of the power of self-direction and self-control."² H. A. L. Fisher has described this theocracy as a "sombre, fault-finding, inquisitorial government", enforcing a "minute and irksome supervision into private life."³ Many have condemned it as a mere relic of Old Testament legalism. But to Calvin it was a return to the spiritual discipline of the early church and was undoubtedly the life-blood of Calvinist intramundane asceticism. And if it degenerated into a form of legalism, nothing could have been further from his mind, as expressed in the Institutes. He writes that in Christian liberty "consciences do not observe the law, as being under any legal obligation; but that, being liberated from the yoke of the law, they yield a voluntary obedience to the will of God."⁴ To strive for Christian perfection is not to be weighed down by enervating scruples of conscience but rather to embrace freely the rigours of discipline for the sake of the soul's well-being and from a desire to do God's will.

1 For an account of Calvin's Genevan discipline, v. A. Mitchell Hunter, op. cit., pp.217-224.

2 Malcolm Spencer, op. cit., p.83.

3 H. A. L. Fisher, A History of Europe, Vol. II, Renaissance, Reformation, Reason, p.545.

4 John Calvin, op. cit., Vol. II, Bk. III, Chap. XIX, p.79.

The rigorism of Calvin's ascetic discipline, then, despite its outwardly negative aspect, was designed to serve the positive purpose of directing and developing the soul in the "race of righteousness". That it was severe there is no doubt, but in its severity one discerns a sign of the typical earnestness which the Christian ascetic always displays in his struggle to promote his own and the corporate spiritual life, especially in circumstances of laxity and libertinism such as confronted Calvin. Its conception of complete submission constituted the equivalent of the vow of obedience required of those who embraced the monastic type of ascetic life. Its defects were that, quite naturally in a period when the principle "cujus regio, ejus religio" obtained, it enforced discipline without paying sufficient regard to the free response of individuals to it, and that it so easily degenerated into the temper of legalism, with its two possible consequences, Pharisaic pride or a tormented conscience. But it was an honest attempt to provide serious guidance for the ordinary Christian who was freely striving to deny himself, to fight self-assertion and greed and pride - in short, to be crucified with Christ.

This denial of self aided by voluntary but scrupulous obedience to the will of God as interpreted in the corporate discipline, which is a precise description of Calvinist ascetic rigorism, implies once again the three dimensions which we have seen to characterize all Christian asceticism, and so is in line with the teaching of our Lord. In both, too, asceticism is an integral part of the total outlook on life rather than a neatly defined compartment of it. Calvinist rigorism is somewhat less appreciative of the joys and pleasures of the present physical life than was our Lord, yet in

practice, following His example, it exalted normal life in the world. Its attitude to prayer, watchfulness, fasting, renunciation, and above all its supreme concern with the spiritual life bear close affinities to His teaching. And it takes seriously the paradox of the Christian life in which acceptance of the gift of God is not incompatible with constant effort towards renunciation and self-denial.

The general affinity with Pauline asceticism is apparent in its stress on the voluntary nature of Christian self-discipline, in the perpetual contest between flesh and spirit, between the old man and the new man, and in the attitude which views this life as a race of righteousness in which all Christians, as spiritual athletes, are engaged. Insofar as it tended to legalistic interpretations, however, it diverged from the spirit of St. Paul.

E. A Normative Concept

On the basis of the foregoing examination of the main features of Christian asceticism in the biblical, historical and theological context, one can proceed to delineate a working conception of this phenomenon which may serve as a norm for the later investigation of our special field of study. That this is possible is due to the fact that however disparate the Roman Catholic ideal of monastic flight from the world and the Protestant ideal of perfection in the world may be, basically they have very much in common. It was the interpretation of ascetic acts as meritorious and the monopoly of a select group, together with the abuses and laxities which crept into monastic life, which Calvin primarily condemned, and not the voluntary austerities, exercises of piety, fasting, and

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other practices of the monks. If the conception and practice of monasticism had not so degenerated, Calvin might have found little to condemn.

First of all, then, Christian asceticism involves a life of struggle. The reason for this lies in the Christian understanding of man and his relation to God, i.e., of sin and grace. It is difficult, or perhaps impossible, to formulate a literal description of man, but the Christian testimony holds that he is a psychophysical entity, in which body and soul are inseparably related. On the one hand, as a creature with a physical body, he belongs to the natural world and is subject to its laws and biological impulses. On the other, being created in the image of God who is spirit, man is a spiritual being elevated above the natural world and called to a free response to divine love. In the Christian understanding man always means man-in-relation-to-God, so that only when he uses his freedom to choose the path of conscious obedience to Him, rather than becoming the slave of selfish passions, can he be true to his own nature and fulfil his own high destiny. It is at this point that the element of struggle enters the picture. For in the world as we know it there has been a Fall and things are no longer true to their essential nature as God created them. The body, though good, because created by God, is subject to misuse; the will, weakened and corrupt, is mastered by the passions rather than mastering them and serving the interests of the spirit. Man is therefore divided against

1 cf. John Calvin, op. cit., Vol. II, Bk. IV, Chap. XIII, pp.539-542, for a passage which quotes a long section from St. Augustine describing the ideal monastic state, which Calvin approvingly calls "a description of holy and legitimate monachism" (p.541), going on, however, to oppose the application of the term "perfection" to this and not to other callings.

himself, contradicting his own true nature; i.e., he is sinful. The Christian ascetic, seeing himself in the light of revelation as he really is, determines with the aid of the supernatural grace by which he has been redeemed to carry on the struggle with sin, to discipline his body and train his spirit, that he may fulfil his high destiny and glorify his Creator and Redeemer. And so he embarks on the life of training and renunciation which characterize this struggle, under no illusions as to its difficulty but unwavering in the knowledge that through grace he is moving toward a fulfilment of the divine purpose for his life. Thus, paradoxically, the gift of salvation is spontaneously accompanied by the ardent struggle to realize and appropriate it in its fulness.¹

This leads to the second feature of Christian asceticism, namely, that because it is always the product of a voluntary individual response to the love of God,² it is of a living dynamic character. Having experienced God's love in Christ, the individual is moved and empowered to renounce the claims of self and to practice that self-discipline which marks the soldier of Christ. It is the Imitatio Christi, the desire to follow the Saviour, which prompts him to take up the cross and share His sufferings.

By such imitation, or rather by such likeness - for, coming from within it is more than imitation - by union with Christ in life and act, 'keeping in step' with Him at every moment, we do not merely perfect ourselves, we reproduce Him³

As a result of this intimate relationship Christian asceticism is

¹ cf. Romans 3:24; Matt. 5:48; I Cor. 9:24; Romans 9:16.

² The close association of ascetical and mystical theology in Roman Catholicism, as well as the Protestant doctrine of faith and works, both point to this dynamic religious quality.

³ Alban Goodier, op. cit., p.94.

responsive to prevalent spiritual and moral conditions. It is always present but less conspicuous when these are thriving vigorously, reacting most strongly in times of laxity and reminding the church of her uniqueness as the self-denying body of Christ, and suffering gladly for His sake when the church is persecuted. For the same reason it is characterized by a wide range of ascetic practices variously combined according to concrete circumstances, including the life of struggle both in withdrawal and in the world; physical and spiritual disciplines ranging from bodily mortifications to a strict schedule of prayer and other exercises of piety; positive actions such as the direct service of one's fellows, or engaging in physical toil, and negative practices including the foregoing of bodily comforts, amusements, aesthetic pleasures, riches, marriage or Sunday recreation. It is evident, therefore, that piety of this kind ceases to be Christian when it consists merely in a routine observance of static rules and practices, or when it is the result of inescapable and burdensome compulsion; so that such common practices as fasting, engaging in regular religious exercises, or abstaining from worldly amusements are identifiable with Christian asceticism only when they stem from a vital relationship to Christ. But when this condition obtains, it is accompanied by deep spiritual joy deriving from the sense of true freedom which he alone experiences who has voluntarily surrendered himself and his petty selfish interests to God.

In the next place it is to be noted that the dynamic ascetic response assumes three dimensions, the self-ward, the man-ward, and the God-ward. That is to say, the renunciation and discipline of the Christian are meant to promote his own spiritual well-being

(self-ward), the welfare of his fellows (man-ward), and the glory of God (God-ward). While at any particular time one or other motive may be predominant, yet in the total picture each plays its due part. A primary criterion as to the Christian character of ascetic practices or movements will therefore be the success with which these three dimensions are kept in proper balance. An overemphasis on any one to the detriment of the others will lead to an emasculated natural asceticism characterized by lovelessness or pride or both, and incompatible with true Christian spirituality. In relation to specific practices these dimensions may be reduced to two, namely, a self-regarding and a self-transcending dimension, of which the first may be applied whenever the specific act of self-denial is primarily motivated by a desire to train or discipline the soul, to promote one's spiritual welfare, to prepare for fellowship or mystical union with God, and the second when self-denial takes the form of service of one's fellows or of God, or is calculated to train or prepare one the better to perform such service. It is obvious that there is no room in Christian faith and practice for that type of asceticism which by definition is purely self-regarding. For it is of the essence of the Christian revelation not only to confront man with a picture of his essential nature and so awaken in him a sense of the primacy of the spiritual as the clue to life's meaning, and an ultimate concern for the welfare of his soul; but also, and at the same time, to take him beyond himself to God, whom he meets in Christ, and in responsive love out to his fellow men. In true Christian asceticism the legitimate self-regarding element is always combined with and overshadowed by the self-transcending element.

It remains to be noted that such asceticism can all too

easily degenerate to a sub-Christian level. There is a constant danger of slipping into a metaphysical dualism in which the natural world and the body are regarded as inherently evil, leading to unspeakable austerities designed to destroy rather than discipline the body and its passions.¹ This is a manifest perversion of the Christian doctrine that the body and the created order are good, but that life is to be lived in a two-world context in which this life is a training ground for and the beginning of the eternal life of the spirit in the world to come. There is also, as has become abundantly clear, the danger of overemphasizing the self-regarding dimension of Christian asceticism, of thinking only in terms of one's personal salvation, with the deadly consequences of spiritual pride or scrupulosity. Examples of record-breaking and the doctrine of merit in ascetic acts point to this pitfall in monasticism as does the possibility of legalism in Protestant rigorism. An allied danger is that of a solely negative outlook, of mere uncreative flight from the world either physically or psychologically, and of emphasizing prohibitions to an unwarranted degree. And finally, unless a vital religious experience is maintained, there is the perpetual peril of subverting Christian asceticism into a tool of some secular goal or pattern of perfection.

True Christian asceticism is consequently an expression of intense moral and spiritual earnestness, an evidence of having taken seriously the Christian understanding of man, and a testimony

1 The psychopathic tendencies to which this gives rise have, with no little reason, educed the remark that "a Suso or a Saint Peter of Alcantara appear to us to-day rather in the light of tragic mountebanks than of sane men inspiring us with respect." William James, op. cit., pp.360-1.

to the freedom of the human spirit when liberated by God. It may be defined as a dynamic, voluntary, loving response in acts of physical and spiritual renunciation and suffering to the love of God in Christ, directed towards the soul's true welfare, the highest good of the neighbour, and the greatest glory of God, involving a life of striving in the power of and in fellowship with One who Himself toiled and suffered, and a conviction of thus fulfilling one's God-given nature and destiny.

*Nos quoque florimus: sed flos fuit ille caducus:
Flammaque de stipula: nostra brevis que fuit. Ov.*



*Farewell vaine World: as thou hast been to me
Dust and a Shadow; those I leave with thee:
The vnseen Vitall Substance I committ,
To him that's Substance. Life. Light. Love. to it.
The Leaves & Fruit are dropt, for soyle & Seed,
Heaven's heirs to generate; to heale and feed:
Them also thou wilt flatter and molest:
But shalt not keep from Everlasting Rest.*

CHAPTER II

THE SETTING AND ORIGINS OF PURITAN ASCETICISM

When sin grown high & bold, out-fac'd the Light;
When Pride and Faction pleaded Divine Right.
When most their Love, & some their Patience lost;
When proud malicious men must not be crost: ...
And when the sacred Tribe, despising Souls,
Through love of wealth & honor blow'd the coals: ...
When they that sought their good things in this life
Had banisht Love, & fill'd the Church with strife! ...
When Holiness the common Foe was deem'd,
And nothing more intollerable seem'd. ...
When sin was not so much oppos'd as God,
Then were we ready for the bloody Rod.

Richard Baxter,
"Love Breathing Thanks and Praise",
Poetical Fragments, (1681), pp.47-8.

From the preliminary discussion it has become apparent that any manifestation of Christian asceticism can be understood only in terms of the response to concrete historical conditions of a dynamic spirituality. It is now necessary, therefore, first to examine the general ethos confronting seventeenth century English Puritanism; secondly, to contrast and appraise the spirituality of the movement itself in this setting; and finally, in the light of this investigation to delineate briefly the precise bearing of the main formative factors on Puritan asceticism. This attempt at reconstruction and analysis is essential to an understanding of why the Puritans were ascetics, a question which must be answered before the asceticism

itself can be appreciated. And although only the broad lines can be developed here, the complex motivation of the phenomenon under consideration will, it is hoped, become sufficiently clear as to demonstrate that it can not be accounted for on the basis of any single explanation.¹

A. England: Scanned from a twentieth century
The Seventeenth vantage point, the history of England during
Century Ethos the age of the Stuarts affords a multiple fascination. During that period, commerce and colonization were writing a brilliant chapter in the British saga by establishing an empire overseas. In the homeland, lustre was being added to life by the long and arduous struggle for liberty. At home, too, another absorbing interest in the form of the natural sciences was claiming the attention of investigators with curious and probing minds - a Francis Bacon, a Robert Boyle, an Isaac Newton. In the arts, and above all in literature, the era was one of rare distinction. Had it done no more than bestow on the English-speaking world its greatest literary and spiritual heritage, the Authorized Version of the Bible, its fame would be secure. But in addition it was the age of Shakespeare's mature genius, of Milton and Bunyan, of Donne and Dryden, and a galaxy of lesser lights. In architecture it was the century of Inigo Jones and Sir Christopher Wren; in music, of Orlando Gibbons and Henry Purcell. In short, as even this brief glimpse of their

1 e.g. that Puritans belonged to that race of confirmed and sour misanthropes which is always with us; or that their asceticism was purely the spawn of Calvinist theology (cf. Max Weber, op. cit.); or that it was simply a continuation or reproduction of the asceticism of mediaeval friars (cf. G. R. Owst, Preaching in Medieval England, An Introduction to Sermon Manuscripts of the Period c. 1350-1450); and infra pp.50-59.

achievements will show, it was for Englishmen an age of bustling activity and perhaps unexcelled greatness in wide areas of human endeavour.

Intellectually, this brilliant age was marked by the progressive extension of the spirit of liberal humanism, scientific rationalism, and secularism, entailing an optimistic estimate of man, an ever growing confidence in the ability of autonomous reason to arrive at truth without benefit of the supernatural, and a consequent weakening of the sense of divine sovereignty in human life and of its basis in revealed religion. In this "Janus-age",¹ the conception which discovers meaning in this life only in terms of a supernatural world, a personal sovereign God, and a better life beyond, was being replaced by the modern humanist secular spirit, revelling in man's own powers, in the attractions of a natural world waiting to be explored and explained, and in an unbounded faith in science, that magic broom which was to sweep away the 'cobwebs of the old authoritarian theology. In natural philosophy, from a tacit acceptance of supernatural religion the new scientific spirit thus led to an insistence on natural religion and even to an assertion of extreme materialism - from Francis Bacon to Lord Herbert of Cherbury to Thomas Hobbes. In theology the "via media" of Anglicanism manifested a growing faith in reason from the days of the judicious Richard Hooker.² The "humane and rational view of religion" inherent in the religious settlement for which the Established Church stood in the seventeenth century became clearer in the acceptance of Arminianism which, having set out to vindicate God's honour against

1 Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background, p.54.

2 William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism, p.224.

the Calvinism which made Him a ruthless tyrant, was in effect pleading for the right of man to have some hand in his own salvation. "The criticism was too rational to be cogent, for it was, as it were, an assertion of the rights of man over against the sovereignty of God."¹ Also in the stream of a rational, humane interpretation of Christianity were the early Latitudinarians, John Hales and William Chillingworth; the great Cambridge Platonists,² Benjamin Whichcote, Henry More, Ralph Cudworth and John Smith; and the later rational theologians, John Tillotson and Edward Stillingfleet. The inevitable result to which both science and religion contributed was the growth of the liberal spirit with its confidence in the criteria of nature and reason, which indirectly conduced to what was "at first a perceptible, then a growing, and finally a fairly strong current of unbelief among the more intelligent public ...". The signs of this trend were the ... secular tone of the drama, the numerous charges of atheism, the frequent works of apology against free-thought, and the occasional punishment of those who denied the fundamental articles of religion³

Spiritually, Anglicanism was not at a uniformly high level, its piety being largely concentrated among the learned to the neglect of the basic spiritual needs of the masses. "There is no parallel in the annals of any other Protestant State, of so wonderful a concentration, and so imperfect a diffusion of learning and genius, of piety and zeal."⁴ The century produced, indeed, many specimens of rare individual piety, a Lancelot Andrewes, a George Herbert, a Joseph Hall,

1 A. M. Fairbairn, Cambridge Modern History, Vol. V, The Age of Louis XIV, p.717.

2 Though rationalistic theologically, these men of Cambridge, a Puritan stronghold, exhibited marked Puritan tendencies in ethics and piety.

3 Preserved Smith, A History of Modern Culture, 1543-1687, pp.399, 422.

4 Sir James Stephen, An Essay on Richard Baxter, in Francis John, An Excerpt from Reliquiae Baxterianae, p.72.

a Jeremy Taylor, in whose spirituality a rich Christian humanism was combined with marked ascetic traits.¹ There was also the famous Little Gidding experiment of Nicholas Ferrar, who attempted a revival of a modified religious life on the basis of a rule of fixed and regular devotions combined with work and charity.² But as these examples indicate, by and large Anglican piety was dignified and learned in tone rather than popular. "Clerus Anglicanus Stupor Mundi"³ was no idle boast. Based on a doctrine of the Incarnation, the chief significance of which was the sanctification of the human and the material rather than the humiliation and condescension of the divine to meet the utter sinfulness of man, this piety was characterized by marked sacramental, sacerdotal, liturgical, and ecclesiastical features. Symbolic of these emphases was Laud's attempted revival of "the beauty of holiness" and his effort to enforce uniformity on this basis by his policy of "thorough". But the scholarly, the aesthetic, the ceremonial and the priestly elements of Anglican worship and piety were scarcely calculated to have a profound effect

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- 1 Taylor's strongly ascetic conception of this life as a miserable episode to be passed under the continual scrutiny of conscience in preparation for death, that door to the glorious life, is quite untypical of Anglican humanism. cf. Edward Dowden, Puritan and Anglican, pp.203 ff.
 - 2 The Little Gidding experiment was not, as has been suggested, "the only attempt at community life in England between the Reformation and the middle of the nineteenth century ...". (Felix R. Arnott, Anglicanism in the Seventeenth Century, in Paul Elmer More and Frank Leslie Cross, Anglicanism: The Thought and Practice of the Church of England, illustrated from the Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century, p.LXIX). On similar schemes in the last half of the century, v. S. L. Ollard, Gordon Crosse, Maurice F. Bond, A Dictionary of English Church History, p.515.
 - 3 John Cosin's Collection of Private Devotions (1627) was intended not for the masses but for the ladies of the court, while the Preces Privatae (1648) of Lancelot Andrewes was written for his own use in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin.

on the masses. Gardiner states that "Laud's teaching had been addressed to scholars, not to the multitude", and so was "hardly to be reckoned as a factor in the popular religious life of the time."¹

The most serious concomitant of this condition was the subservience to the state, and particularly to the arbitrary whims of irresponsible monarchs, of the Arminian clergy, as Laud and his followers were known. "Nursed by the Tudors, adopted by the Stuarts, and wedded in her youth to a powerful aristocracy", the Church of England thus became "a resting-place and a refuge" to "the great, the learned, and the worldly wise."² Social and political affairs were of course legitimate concerns of the church, which moreover, assailed by Calvinist and Romanist and labouring under the handicap of an inefficient and disordered clergy inherited from Tudor times, was in a far from enviable position. But under the completely Erastian policy of Laud the church became a mere tool of the state and of the Stuart theory of the divine right of kings. The conception of the transcendent sovereignty of God in all human affairs faded out as a practical policy. "The state of monarchy was the supremest thing on earth, because kings are not only God's lieutenants here below and set upon God's thrones, but even by God himself are called gods."³ "No bishop no king" (and vice versa) became literally true, as the Courts of High Commission and Star Chamber made abundantly clear. In short, as Henson writes, "the clergy were tied hand and foot to the Crown precisely at the moment when the Crown was getting

1 S. R. Gardiner, History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1649-1656, Vol. II, p.85.

2 Sir James Stephen, op. cit., p.72.

3 Godfrey Davies, The Early Stuarts, 1603-1660, p.31.

out of touch with the national sentiment."¹

The gravity of this situation becomes all the more apparent in the light of the low moral tone of the court in the seventeenth century. The court of James I, to whom the church had bound its fate, was notorious for its looseness. Though his own family life was respectable, James countenanced coarseness, intemperance, immorality, profanity, and wild extravagance.² By comparison, Charles I's court was orderly and dignified.

Men of learning and ingenuity in all arts were in esteem, and received encouragement from the king, who was a most excellent judge and a great lover of paintings, carvings, gravings, and many other ingenuities, less offensive than the bawdry and profane abusive wit which was the only exercise of the other court. ³

So wrote Lucy Hutchinson. But he was possessed of an even more overweening pride in his conviction of divine right than his father.

Despite his personal dignity, as John Richard Green noted, his was

... the duplicity which lavished promises because it never purposed to be bound by any, the petty pride that subordinated every political consideration to personal vanity or personal pique. ⁴

The notoriety of the corrupt Restoration court of Charles II scarcely needs further chronicling. The king, his mistresses publicly acknowledged, set the pace for a cynical and immoral concept of "fine gentlemanship". Bishop Burnet comments that his

1 H. Hensley Henson, Studies in English Religion in the Seventeenth Century, p.31.

2 John Richard Green, A Short History of the English People, p.487.

3 Lucy Hutchinson, Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, (Everyman's Library, s.a.), p.67.

4 John Richard Green, op. cit., p.495. Of Charles I, Felix R. Arnott, writing in Paul Elmer More and Frank Leslie Cross, op. cit., p.LXVII, gives a strangely divergent view. "Charles I set a noble example to his country, and we find the quiet and spiritual manner of his life reflected in all classes of the community."

... sense of religion was so very small that he did not so much as affect the hypocrite; but at prayers and sacraments let every one, by his negligent behaviour, see how little he thought himself concerned in these matters. 1

It is not surprising that the higher "Arminian" clergy, so closely associated with such monarchs, were not a little infected with the spirit of worldliness. Hence the famous and not altogether facetious answer to the question concerning what the Arminians held, viz., that they held all the best benefices. Their self-seeking and secularism were patent in the fact that the court, the sure road to preferment, was the focus of interest of even the most pious. Powicke has said that although

...some of the Bishops were good men, and many morally respectable ..., on the whole, their ambitions, their habits, their religion, their churchmanship, their temper were steeped in worldliness. In other words, they were controlled by those social forces and interests which rule men when life is regarded apart from the will of God 4

The contemporary evidence bears this out. Richard Baxter tells of his confirmation at the age of fifteen years, along with thirty or forty others "that had come for to be Bishopt ...". Describing the perfunctory manner of the confirmation he writes:

The Bishop examined us not at all in one Article of the Faith; ... But whether we were Christians or Infidels, or knew so much as that there was a God, the Bishop little knew, nor enquired. And yet he was one of the best Bishops esteemed in England. 5

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- 1 [Gilbert] Burnet, History of His Own Times, p.33. For a rare picture of the vicious luxury of Charles II's court, v. John Evelyn, The Diary of John Evelyn, p.366, under entry of February 4, 1685.
 - 2 Often re-told, as for example in Preserved Smith, op. cit., p.383.
 - 3 H. J. C. Grierson, Cross Currents in English Literature of the XVIIth Century ..., p.167.
 - 4 Frederick J. Powicke, The Reverend Richard Baxter under the Cross, 1662-1691, p.261.
 - 5 Richard Baxter, Confirmation and Restauration ..., (1658), p.155.

And Bishop Burnet relates how, after the wholesale ejections of 1662, the bishops took over the vacant livings, renewed lapsed leases, and raised large fortunes for their private enrichment, while their example of slothfulness and high living "was a pattern to all lower dignitaries ...".¹

The most serious effect of co-operation between a worldly clergy and a more worldly court was the alienation from the Established Church of a large section of those who represented the most radical moral and spiritual earnestness of the times. Henson writes:

It was the supreme misfortune of the National Church that, so far from drawing into itself this moral enthusiasm, it offended and drove it into revolt. ... Generally, the Court stood for moral licence, and the clergy stood for the Court. ²

At no point was this more obvious than when the church aided the King in the enforcement of the Declaration of Sports against the will of a large body of spiritually alive clergy and laity.³ The results of such a policy were disastrous. "Under the plea of fencing the church against schismatics, Laud and his party had succeeded in keeping out of its benefices almost every man of evangelical piety."⁴ The zealous Puritan, William Prynne, complained bitterly when those who excelled in holiness were reviled by the church, whereas those who excelled in the "naturall humane excellencies" such as "Phisicke, Musicke, Law, Philosophy, or any liberall science or mechanicke trade" were "honoured, revered, frequented, admired, and

¹ [Gilbert] Burnet, *op. cit.*, pp.43-4; cf. p.87.

² H. Hensley Henson, Studies in English Religion in the Seventeenth Century, p.11.

³ William Holden Hutton, The English Church from the Accession of Charles I to the Death of Queen Anne, 1625-1714, pp.108-9. The Book of Sports, as it was popularly known, was first issued by James I in 1618, and reissued by Charles I in 1633.

⁴ J. B. Marsden, The History of the Later Puritans ..., p.53.

beloved ...".¹ The highest value was by no means placed on godliness, as Lucy Hutchinson made abundantly clear when she wrote:

... in short, all that crossed the views of the needy courtiers, the proud encroaching priests, the thievish projectors, the lewd nobility and gentry - whoever was zealous for God's glory or worship, could not endure blasphemous oaths, ribald conversation, profane scoffs, sabbath breaking, derision of the word of God, and the like - whoever could endure a sermon, modest habit or conversation, or anything good, - all these were puritans; and if puritans, then enemies to the king and his government, seditious, factious, hypocrites, ambitious disturbers of the public peace, and finally, the pest of the kingdom. 2

Such was the intolerable moral and spiritual vacuum which played a not insignificant part in kindling the Puritan revolution.

As a result of the policies of the Establishment throughout the century the level of spirituality amongst the parish clergy was uniformly low. Baxter states that

... to rail at Godliness, and daily scorn it, ... was so far from being a matter of danger, that many took it up in expectation of preferment; and the Preachers of the times were well ware that the rising way was to preach against the precise Puritans, and not to live precisely themselves. 3

The vicar whom he replaced at Kidderminster on his return from Rous-Lench "understood not the substance of Religion, the common Catechism or Creed", while his curate, whose ignorance was even more abysmal, "had long lived upon Ten pound a year and unlawful Marriages,⁴ and was a Drunkard, and a Railer, and the Scorn of the Country." Pluralism, scandalous negligence in the conduct of public worship⁵ and the cure of souls, and a lack of preaching and catechizing, were

1 William Prynne, Histrio-Mastix. The Players' Scourge ..., (First Edition, 1633), p.810.

2 Lucy Hutchinson, op. cit., pp.64-5.

3 Richard Baxter, Gildas Salvianus, The Reformed Pastor, (Second Edition, 1657), p.158.

4 Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae ..., (MDCXCVI), Part I, p.80.

5 cf. Richard Baxter, Confirmation and Restauration ..., pp.155-6.



nearly universal. John White's The First Century of Scandalous Malignant Priests, a record of the cases of the first hundred clergymen to be ejected by the Puritans and one of the most sordid documents of the period, details case after case not only of utter pastoral incompetence but also of gross immorality. A typical and fairly mild entry describes one Peter Danson who was

... a common drunkard, and drunke at the times of his officiating at Burials and Baptizing; ... and after the administring of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, expended the money given to the poore in Sack, and drank it in the Church. 2

The deplorable state of affairs is substantiated by Archbishop Laud himself, who, reporting to Charles I for the year 1636, wrote concerning his own province of Canterbury:

There hath been a custome that some ministers thereabouts, have under diverse p'tences lyved for y^e most part at Canterbury, and gone seldome to their benefices, w^{ch} hath given a double scandall, both by their absence from their severall cures, and by keeping too much companye, and y^e not in ye best manner, 3

and went on to give assurances that he was remedying the situation.

It was a far cry indeed from the ideal clergyman of George Herbert's A Priest to the Temple, or the Country Parson, to actual parish conditions where the clergy, in Trevelyan's words, were

... careless shepherds, anxious only to retain their seats at the shearer's feast, devoid of learning or enthusiasm to fulfil their duties, which they often relegated to substitutes too like themselves. 4

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- 1 The Parliamentary Committee for Scandalous Ministers, set up in December 1640, dealt with over eight hundred similar cases but White, its chairman, was dissuaded from publishing further volumes because the cases related in the first were so revolting. cf. William A. Shaw, A History of the English Church during the Civil Wars and under the Commonwealth, 1640-1660, Vol. II, pp.177, 178, and Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. XXI, p.59.
 - 2 John White, op. cit., (MDCXLIII), p.12. cf. pp.14, 15, 21, et passim.
 - 3 Archiepiscopal MSS, Lambeth Palace, dccccxliii, p.267.
 - 4 G. M. Trevelyan, England under the Stuarts, p.63.

Considering the model of conduct held up by court and clergy and the almost total lack of spiritual guidance, it was altogether natural that the general level of morality and spirituality amongst the common people should be at a very low ebb. With the issue of the Book of Sports, official sanction both royal and ecclesiastical was given to the rough pleasures of the times on Sundays, especially in connection with Church-Ales, Clerk-Ales, and Bid-Ales,¹ often leading to ruffianism, vulgarity and drunkenness. Speaking of the "shews or uncouth spectacles", Morrice-dancing, stage-plays, wakes and revels characteristic of the early part of the century, Baxter wrote that

... all men observed that these were the times of the most flagitious crimes; and there was then more drunkenness, more fighting, more horrid Oathes and Curses uttered than in many weeks at other times²

Contemporary diaries are by no means devoid of telling symptoms of spiritual decline, revealed in the frequent combination of formal religiosity with immorality.³ Pre-Commonwealth drama was shallow, rhetorical, corrupt, endeavouring "to excite a jaded imagination with extravagances of romantic passion or even of unnatural lust."⁴ The Restoration would render the stage totally secular by the addition of its own brand of callous cynicism. The general picture

1 These were special Sunday festivals to raise money for some parish project, or the parish clerks, or the local poor.

2 Richard Baxter, The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day ..., (1671), p.111.

3 v. W. B. Whitaker, Sunday in Tudor and Stuart Times, p.88; and Arthur Ponsonby, More English Diaries, pp.64, 66. Societies for the Reformation of Manners grew up spontaneously in the reign of William and Mary to combat the widespread social irregularities and vice which had become so prevalent since the Restoration.

4 Edward Dowden, op. cit., p.2.

then, is one of a people often the victims of plague, famine,¹ disease, pauperism and vagrancy, unconcerned for genuine religion because of no first-hand acquaintance with it, and under the aegis of the church, content to abide by the formal requirements of a state religion and for the rest to enjoy the crude natural pleasures of life. Again Richard Baxter realistically summarizes the situation as it obtained generally in seventeenth century England.

It is known to all Faithful Ministers and others, who converse with the common sort of men, that a great part of the people of England are ignorant of the very Essentials of Christianity, and a great part dull and worldly neglectors of all serious religiousness; and a great part sensual, drowned in filthy fleshly sins: Besides the ignorance, weakness, and unwarrantable opinions and passions of many that are more seriously religious than the rest. 2

B. English Puritanism: The It is against this background that
Seventeenth Century English Puritanism must be viewed. To speak of "Puritanism", however, is to refer to a very complex phenomenon. As to its history, Fuller's famous metaphor aptly describes its growth:

... for now nonconformity in the days of king Edward was conceived, which afterward in the reign of queen Mary (but beyond sea, at Frankfort) was born; which in the reign of queen Elizabeth was nursed and weaned; which under king James grew up a young youth or tall stripling; but towards the end of king Charles his reign shot up to the full strength and stature of a man, able not only to cope with, but conquer, the hierarchy, its adversary. 3

With deep roots in the sixteenth century, it had by the time of the Commonwealth passed from a protest concerning vestments and ceremonies

1 Douglas Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600-1660, p.10.

2 Richard Baxter, The Nonconformists' Plea for Peace ..., (1679), p.228.

3 Thomas Fuller, The Church History of Britain, from the Birth of Jesus Christ, until the year MDCXLVIII, Vol. IV, Cent. XVI, Bk. VII, Sec. 23, pp.60-1. Puritanism includes the terms Nonconformity and Dissent, the former being used early in the seventeenth century of all Puritans, Presbyterian and Independent, who would not subscribe; the latter, after 1662, of those who left the Establishment. cf. M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p.490.

to a determined challenge of the "jus divinum" of Episcopacy, to a broad demand for personal religion and genuine godliness ensured by adequate, biblically sound church government, as over against prelacy and its attendant evils. Moreover it was at no point a solidly welded body, but contained within its ranks widely divergent¹ views on toleration, theological dogmatism and church government. Presbyterians were often at loggerheads with Independents, Episcopally-minded Puritans with both, and the sects with all the preceding and with one another. Baxter engages in disputes with the Baptist Tombes, the Independent Owen, and the people called Quakers. But despite its wide diversity of emphases seventeenth century English Puritanism may be held to be a distinct religious movement embracing all Christians whose aim was the purification (1) of church worship and discipline, and (2) of personal conduct and English moral and spiritual life generally.² God was to be worshipped in "purity" according to His word, not only in the Sabbath service but also in every facet of daily life. It was this second emphasis especially by which all Puritans came popularly to be identified and which will be the chief concern of the present study. Whether moderate Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Independent, Separatist, or Quaker, whether seeking to reform the Established Church or to embody pure religion in a new form altogether, all were characterized by an intense spiritual and moral earnestness in living the godly Christian life, and it was this which created the large measure of unity in

1 For an excellent brief delineation of the various wings of Puritanism v. G. F. Nuttall, The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience, pp.8-14.

2 G. M. Trevelyan, England under the Stuarts, p.60.

diversity which makes it possible to speak of a Puritan movement. Thus despite its origin as an opprobrious epithet, the term Precisianism or Puritanism, aptly described by Lucy Hutchinson as "the reproach of the world, though the glory of good men",¹ became a cherished badge of honour² connoting a common commitment to serious Christian discipleship.

It was through this movement that the spiritual insights of the Reformation, and particularly of Calvinism, really took root in English life. Although it is true that visibly Calvinism never had in England the profound influence it exerted in Switzerland, Holland, and Scotland, it is equally true that in creating a spiritual atmosphere breathed by a vast company of preachers and laymen and inspiring a great Puritan literature, Calvinism greatly affected the religious life of large numbers of Englishmen. The attitude of the two largest Puritan bodies, the Presbyterians and the Independents, may have differed widely on the question of church government, but theologically they were at one on the basis of the great Calvinist doctrines which were embodied in the Westminster Standards and the Savoy Declaration alike.³ And if the century exhibited a weakening of the hold of Calvinism as the left-wing sects of the Puritan reform movement came to the fore during the Commonwealth, it is at least arguable that without the preparation of the ground by Calvinist

1 Lucy Hutchinson, op. cit., pp.31-2.

2 Ernest Barker, Church State and Study, pp.109-10.

3 It is interesting that in An Apologetical Narration, Humbly Submitted to the Honourable Houses of Parliament, by Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrack Simpson, Jer. Burroughes, and William Bridge, these Independent worthies, while contending for a non-Presbyterian form of government, hastened to protest their theological orthodoxy. op. cit., (MDCXLIII), p.28.

spiritual earnestness, England would have seen these sects shooting up in far less profusion.¹

The essence of the Calvinistic spirituality of countless English Puritans was an overwhelming sense of divine sovereignty and unmerited grace and a consequent inward personal relationship to God. It was what Selbie called "the personal rule of God in human things",² the direct relation of the soul to God without the necessity of sensuous or priestly media.³ God was the one great reality of Puritan religious experience. And this certainty was heightened by the accompanying but far more sombre consideration of the utter depravity of human nature. It was the combination of these two convictions which kept the Puritans from yielding to the easy-going contemporary ethos. The left-wing sects on the fringe of Puritanism, especially those who have been called "spirit mystics",⁴ carried to its extreme the movement's emphasis on immediacy in religion, the doctrine and experience of the Holy Spirit being

1 William Haller, op. cit., pp.193 ff. cf. G. M. Trevelyan, Social History of England, p.267, who says, referring to the Quakers:

"The Puritan pot had boiled over, with much heat and fury; when it had cooled and been poured away, this precious sediment was left at the bottom."

2 W. B. Selbie, Nonconformity, Its Origin and Progress, p.68.

3 G. F. Nuttall sums up his richly documented work on The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience thus: "Throughout this study the Puritan movement, in its various phases, has evinced itself to be a movement towards immediacy in relation to God." op. cit., p.134.

4 In contrast to Sir Francis Rous, Peter Sterry, Walter Cradock, Morgan Llwyd, John Everard and Giles Randall who have been described as mystics of the classical type who sought specific "union experiences", Brauer lists the Seekers, Ranters, Happy Finders, Quakers and such figures as Sir Harry Vane, Jr., and Josiah Sprig as "spirit mystics", who felt they possessed the Spirit of God though they did not seek "union experiences". v. Jerald C. Brauer, Puritan Mysticism and the Development of Liberalism, Church History, Vol. XIX, No. 3, September 1950, pp.152-3.

transformed into the "inner light" and personal illumination. Thus, while magnifying the immediate relationship of the soul to God, the radical Puritan tended to lose sight of the doctrine so closely associated with it, the depravity of man.¹ To the extent that discipline was undermined and the balance between immediacy and restraint destroyed, the sects departed from the genuine two-fold witness of Puritanism, and contributed unwittingly to the developing liberal spirit.²

Since the essence of the piety of Puritans was the drama of sin and grace, it is no wonder that a genial Christian humanism which in practice plainly obscured both man's depravity and God's sovereignty should be altogether distasteful. It is natural, too, that the Puritans should have opposed Arminianism as a subtle attack upon the divine sovereignty and an assertion of spurious human autonomy.³ They particularly assailed the "state-interest"⁴ which in practice undermined the divine headship of the church and the sole spiritual allegiance of its members to that Head. For, said Lucy Hutchinson,

... it was impossible to make them [the people] slaves, till they were brought to be idolaters of royalty and glorious lust; and as impossible to make them adore these gods, while they continue loyal to the government of Jesus Christ. 5

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- 1 "The bedrock of their religious life is the centrality of union between man and the Divine." J. C. Brauer, op. cit., p.154.
 2 For the precise ways in which the sects unconsciously contributed to liberalism and encouraged a secularized conception of universal rational principles, v. J. C. Brauer, op. cit., pp.151-170.
 3 John Owen was one of the leaders of this attack, in such works as The Display of Arminianism (1642), The Death of Death in the Death of Christ (1647), and Doctrine of the Saint's Perseverance (1654).
 4 Lucy Hutchinson, op. cit., p.55.
 5 ib. p.64.

The reaction to sacerdotalism and sacramentalism was also basic to the Puritan conception and experience of immediacy in religion.

"Those whose religion centred in the pulpit could have little understanding of those who found in the altar the wellspring of their spiritual life."¹ Puritanism belonged to the prophetic Hebrew tradition with its shift from the ritualistic to the ethico-social, the external to the internal, the national to the individual.

Really to worship God was not, in the Puritan mind, to excel in ritual holiness, but rather in "the practical power of grace, or in the inward beauty of holinesse."² And of course, above all, there was the century-long rebellion against worldliness and laxity in church and state which made a mockery of genuine godliness. The Root and Branch Petition of 1640 is typical of a series of public protestations of the Puritan persuasion, in its censure of

... manifold evils, pressures, and grievances caused, practiced and occasioned by the Prelates and their dependents ..., [the] great increase of idle, lewd and dissolute, ignorant and erroneous men in the ministry ..., [the] swarming of lascivious, idle, and unprofitable books and pamphlets, play-books and ballads; ... [the] Profanation of the Lords Day, pleading for it, and enjoining ministers to read a Declaration set forth (as it is thought) for their procurement for tolerating of sports upon that day 3

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- 1 R. Trevor Davies, Four Centuries of Witch-Beliefs, p.123. Nuttall has pointed out that there was an "unresolved tension" in many Puritan minds regarding the sacraments. For while it was customary to believe that God had ordained two chief means for working upon men's hearts, the Word and the sacraments, nevertheless the intrinsic Puritan principle of immediacy between the soul and God was capable of undermining the latter as being among those merely creaturely aids which were quite superfluous in the communication of God's spirit to the elect, and this tendency was to become apparent in the left wing of the movement. v. G. F. Nuttall, op. cit., pp.90 ff.
- 2 William Prynne, op. cit., p.810.
- 3 S. R. Gardiner, The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660, pp.138, 139, 141.

In all these ways the Puritans, not content to stop at Canterbury or to accept the Anglo-Catholic compromise with its Roman trappings - which, as they believed, was no Reformation at all - reacted against their milieu and served as the vehicle of what they felt to be the true Reformation spirit to the people of England, interpreting Christianity in terms of a dialogue between the individual soul and God, and so fostering genuine first-hand religion.

C. Puritan Asceticism: An Analysis of Formative Factors

Having now examined the religious implications of the Puritan movement and the moral and spiritual climate in which it flourished, one can proceed to summarize the chief factors which made precisely for the element of Christian asceticism in its composition. And first there is the altogether obvious reaction to the spiritual flabbiness and moral laxity which everywhere confronted it, a crucial contributing factor which, surprisingly, has been too often neglected by those whose chief criticism has been that of "narrowness". Recoiling from the indifference, blindness, and apostasy of the church, the Puritans turned to an ascetic rigorism consistent with their profession of faith. It is a truism that earnest Christians of every age have believed theirs to be the most faithless of generations; and the average Puritan, looking at the Anglican church, was disposed to fasten on the negative aspect of the picture and to ignore the

1 It is scarcely possible to pick up any Puritan writing of the period without encountering this reaction. cf. e.g. John Bunyan, Life and Death of Mr. Badman, (edited with The Holy War by John Brown, Cambridge, 1905), p.9; William Penn, An Address to Protestants upon the Present Conjuncture (1679), p.6; Apologie des Puritains d'Angleterre A Messieurs les Pasteurs et Anciens des Eglises Reformees en France, (MDCLXIII), pp.69-70; Richard Baxter, Compassionate Counsel to Young Men, (edited by Samuel Charters, Hawick, 1803), p.86.

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positive spirituality which existed in it. But it is none the less true that, but for existing conditions in church and society, there would have been little likelihood of the occasional extremes of ascetic rigorism which were created by reaction. And it was precisely because exemplary godliness, discipline and direction were almost totally lacking that they were to become the heart of the Puritan witness. From the almost innumerable illustrations in Puritan literature of the way in which asceticism was born of laxity, one passage from Richard Baxter must here suffice. Describing the "Morrice-dancers" who, breaking off their play, would rush into the church, "bells jingling at their leggs", staying long enough to hear Common Prayer and dashing out again when the last word was read, Baxter asks:

Was this a Heavenly Conversation? Was this a help to holiness and Devotion? or to the Mortification of fleshly Lusts? Was this the way to train up youth in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord? And were such Assemblies like to the primitive Churches? Or such Families governed Christianly and in the fear of God? O Lord set wise and holy Pastors over thy poor Flocks, that have learnt themselves the holy Doctrine which they Preach, and who love, (or at least abhor not) the service and imitation of a Crucified Christ, and the practice of that Religion which they themselves profess. 2

There is obvious point in Trevelyan's moderate reflection that "the Puritans were at least not without provocation to the combat with vice which finally cost them so dear ...".³

Secondly, the ascetic tendency was further accentuated by the policy of suppression and persecution adopted by church and state.

1 A moderate Puritan like Baxter, however, gives a balanced and more reliable picture.

2 Richard Baxter, The Divine Appointment of the Lords Day, pp.117-118.

3 G. M. Trevelyan, England Under the Stuarts, p.64.



Like the early Christians who incurred the enmity of the world, the Puritans had much opportunity to bear the cross and to find joy in mortification. From the days of the Marian exile onward they came to see the vanity of life on earth apart from the transcendent eternal reference, and they learned to subordinate every interest to the one thing of permanent significance, the soul's eternal welfare. Their books might be burned; their common assemblies forbidden; trials, imprisonment, ignominy their lot; the result was but to intensify their self-discipline, their desire for purity. James might vow that he would make the Puritans conform or harry them out of the land; he merely contributed to their desire to struggle on for the sake of the Kingdom. And similarly, when the church reacted against the resultant Puritan preciseness it was itself unwittingly fostering rather than uprooting that rigorism which was believed to be the badge of the soldier of Christ. Significantly, it was when the Puritans gained control of affairs that they were threatened with pride and complacency, deadlier enemies to the spirit of Christian asceticism than the repression to which they had for so long been subjected.

Again, Puritanism on its ascetic side owed a very great debt to the Continental Reformation, and particularly to John Calvin and the Genevan experiment. From this source came the ideal of a theocratic disciplinary rigorism which, with necessary modifications, was cherished by large numbers of Puritans in the early part of the seventeenth century. From Calvinism, too, they inherited the Reformed conception of the intra-mundane character of the struggle with the flesh and the world, and particularly of the value of labour in a calling. Closely associated with this in the spirituality

of those who acknowledged the Westminster Standards were the doctrines of predestination and assurance which gave rise to the psychology of "proof" in ascetic toil. And finally, Puritan spirituality was constantly moulded by those doctrines at the heart of Calvinism and of "the Augustinian strain of piety"¹ generally, human depravity and divine sovereignty. Since the chief end of sinful man was to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever, the earnest Christian would bend every effort to train himself for the fulfilment of this high destiny and to keep the channels of grace constantly open. Thus from its Calvinistic heritage English Puritanism drew manifold inspiration for its ascetic piety, the end of which was that sanctification which William Ames described in his classic Marrow of Sacred Divinity as "a reall change of a man from filthinesse of sin, to the purity of God's image."²

But in order satisfactorily to account for the asceticism of Puritans, a further and even more important factor must be considered. For their supreme criterion in all matters of faith and doctrine, worship and order, public and private life, was the Word of God. The debt to Calvinism was great, but as Haller suggests, "Calvin's most important effect upon the preachers was to send them posting back to scripture ..."³ Only because Calvinism was a vivid reproduction of scriptural truth was it so vital to the piety of Puritans. "Their convictions came from the Bible, and if men in the

1 v. Perry Miller, The New England Mind, The Seventeenth Century, Chap. I, which bears this title. "The similarity of mood between Augustine and the Puritans could be illustrated merely by the frequency with which he is quoted in Puritan writing." ib. p.22.

2 op. cit., (s.a.), p.125.

3 William Haller, op. cit., p.86.

previous century had maintained the same opinions, it was because they too had sat under the same schoolmaster.¹ For the Bible, bearing the authentic mark of divine, not human, authority, was not only to be believed but obeyed. Here, therefore, was a major source of all Puritan asceticism.² From the Bible Puritans derived their spiritual earnestness, their constant endeavour to put first things first, their opposition to all sham and mere ceremoniousness in religion. The Old Testament did much to foster that concept of righteousness, based on the sovereign majesty and holiness of God, which was never far from the Puritan mind, and to promote the ideal of a theocratic society in which the individual fulfils his spiritual destiny by obedience to the will of God as expressed in a corporate code, involving a moral rigorism strongly reminiscent of Hebrew law. However, the role of the Old Testament has frequently been over-estimated,³ and its spirit of legalism was largely tempered and transformed by the dynamic religious experience encountered in and engendered by the New Testament. Many biblical emphases - the imitation of Christ by self-denial and cross bearing, the war between the flesh and the spirit so central in Pauline teaching, the concern for the welfare of one's soul and for that of the neighbour - will

1 Perry Miller, op. cit., p.93.

2 As the abundance of cogent scriptural quotation in all Puritan ascetic treatises testifies. Even the Quakers whose emphasis on the Spirit tended to undermine the authority of the Bible, did not discard that authority, but rather in Puritan fashion claimed scriptural support for their own principles. cf. Robert Barclay, A Catechism and Confession of Faith, (Eighth Edition, s.a., Preface dated 1673), p.5.

3 cf. M. M. Knappen, Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries by Richard Rogers and Samuel Ward, p.14, note 17.

4 cf. supra pp.5-9, and infra Chaps. III, IV, V. For a remarkable passage showing the profound biblical basis of Puritan asceticism, v. Richard Baxter, Directions and Perswasions to a Sound Conversion ..., (Third Edition, 1673), p.29.

reappear later in the Puritan picture.

There was also in Puritanism a marked tendency to take the primitive church as its model of perfection - that church which, as they believed, had maintained its unique quality of life in the midst of a wicked society by struggling against the temptations of the world and the unruliness of the inner man. To the early Christian community before the development of the double standard all wings of the movement looked for guidance in life's race. In his tirade against the stage William Prynne asks in typical fashion:

And shall we then who professe our selves the undoubted progenie, followers, successours of the primitive churches, Saints and Christians, so farre degenerate from their piety, purity, zeale and Christian discipline: as not onely to tollerate, but even patronize, admire, honour Players, Play-Poets, Theatres, Stage-players, which they so severely censured, so diligently suppressed? 1

Richard Baxter repeatedly harks back to the early church as a model for Puritan discipline, pastoral oversight, and catechizing. 2 The Quakers too laid great emphasis on this matter. George Fox attacked not only the Papists but all other branches of the church, including the Puritans - "Presbyterian, Independents, Seekers, Baptists, Episcopal-men, Socinians, Brownists, Lutherans, Calvinists, Arminians, Fifth-Monarchy-Men, Familists, Muggletonians and Ranters" - because they all lacked "the same Purity, Practice, Power and Spirit, that the Church in the Apostle's time was in." 3 Thus, with whatever degree of practical success, all Puritans regarded the primitive church,

1 William Prynne, op. cit., p.567².

2 e. g. Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest ..., (Third Edition, 1652), "The Dedication of the Whole", p.A 4, (unpaginated).

3 George Fox, A Journal or Historical Account of the Life, Travels, Sufferings, Christian Experience, and Labour of Love in the Work of the Ministry, of that Ancient, Eminent and Faithful Servant of Jesus Christ, George Fox, (1694), p.247.

resisting the world in the midst of the world, as their guide and model.

Also of importance for an understanding of seventeenth century Puritan asceticism is what Coulton aptly called The High Ancestry of Puritanism.¹ Just as the Puritans may be said to be the spiritual successors of John Wyclif and the Lollards,² so they were the heirs of a broad stream of mediaeval asceticism. In being carried by the friars from the monastery to the world³ the mediaeval ascetic ideal had been adapted to suit the needs of average laymen, the resultant pattern being recognizably similar to that of later Puritanism. The rule of the Franciscan Tertiaries or lay helpers condemned the theatre and prescribed severe simplicity of dress and of life, specific abstinences, prayers and religious exercises. Penetrating the universities where it survived the dissolution of the monasteries, a similar discipline resulted in scholars being prohibited from wearing fashionable long hair, dancing in the streets, engaging in dicing and card-playing, and playing games at certain Christian seasons.⁴ Through the preaching of earnest friars the people at large were familiarized with a strict ascetic ideal altered only to make allowance for property and for marriage. And above all, generations before the Reformation, serious discipleship was fostered among the masses by the perpetuation of the sermons of the friars in religious manuals for the use of English households, resulting in "that peculiarly English type of staid and independent domestic

1 G. G. Coulton, The High Ancestry of Puritanism, The Contemporary Review, August, 1905.

2 James Heron, A Short History of Puritanism, pp.31-42.

3 cf. supra pp.12, 16.

4 M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, pp.425-7.

piety which blossomed out into the Puritanism of subsequent centuries ...".¹ Thus, reviewing the extant sermons of fourteenth and fifteenth century English friars, a capable mediaevalist affirms that "our stubborn Puritan temper comes ... not from Protestant Geneva or Wittenberg, but mediaeval Yorkshire",² and sums up his argument on this theme:

Further, all that that unpopular word 'Puritanism' has ever stood for, to the minutest detail, shall be found advocated unceasingly in the preaching of the pre-Reformation Church. The long face, the plain diet, the plainer attire, the abstention from sports and amusements in company, the contempt of the arts, the rigid Sabbatarianism, the silence at meals, the long household prayers, the stern disciplining of wife and children, the fear of hell, the heavy mood of 'wanhope', are typical of the message of the faithful friar, as it may be read to-day. ³

Although these contentions, however well documented, fail to take into account the widespread laxity which early infiltrated the ranks and vitiated the influence of the friars, and constitute an oversimplification of the origins of Puritan asceticism, they serve at least to show that this phenomenon was by no means a novelty to Englishmen in the seventeenth century.

Finally, a much more conscious factor in the formation of its asceticism was the abiding hatred of popery evident in every wing of the movement. Ever since the Marian exiles had returned from those centres where anti-popery was firmly entrenched - Basel, Zürich, Geneva, Strasbourg and Frankfort - English Puritans had nourished their hatred of everything smacking of Romanism, and this bias was to have two chief repercussions on their asceticism. In the first place it was to reinforce the Reformed view of the Christian life as

1 G. R. Owst, op. cit., p.280.

2 ib.

3 ib., p.94.

a common obligation of every man wherever God had cast his lot in society, and not just of a monkish élite. The effect of this antipathy to the double standard is observable in the Seven Treatises of Richard Rogers who was encouraged

... to write these Christian directions, as a counterpoise to all such enchantments of Papists, who would by these meanes beare men in hand, that al true devotion dwelt amongst them, and were inclosed and tyed to their Cels and Cloysters, In which uncleane cages it is impossible for any true spirituall and holy meditations to have their abiding 1

Consequently it was in no small measure as a reaction to the Catholic ideal of world flight that the Puritans came to adopt an asceticism² of labour by which the world itself was used for moral growth. And secondly, largely because of their anti-popery, they were led to an ascetic opposition to sensual idolatry in worship and to the importation into the English church of all Romish adornments. As a result of this antipathy therefore, Puritan spirituality was to maintain that God was to be approached directly by all men, not superstitiously through seductive media or from behind the walls of a monastery.

Many factors have now been educed as having played significant roles in the formation of Puritan asceticism. But there were multitudes in England in the seventeenth century who, subject to the same external environment, did not react against it as did the Puritans but rather blended into it or gave way before it. For

1 Steph. Egerton, "To the Christian Reader", in Richard Rogers, Seven Treatises, containing such direction as is gathered out of the holy scriptures, leading and guiding to true happiness, both in this life, and in the life to come: and may be called the practise of Christianitie ..., (1603), p.A 3, (unpaginated).

2 v. Preserved Smith, op. cit., p.376.

years, too, Calvinism was the common heritage of Englishmen, yet it was the Puritans who made it their own and whose inner experience it came to symbolize. As for the Bible, it was no more accessible to them than to their countrymen, yet they above all others took spiritual nourishment from it. What then was the explanation of these facts? It was not that the Puritans deliberately set out to be ascetics, for the conception of such a special kind of life was foreign to them. Their own answer would surely have been - and without it their piety can be described but not understood - that the hand of God had been placed upon them, beckoning them to the high and noble life of Christian holiness. It was the immediate experience of God in the soul which created the inner compulsion to purity; it was the direct action of God on human personality, infusing it with grace and power in its every fibre. Henceforth the Puritans mastered their circumstances rather than being mastered by them. How else, ultimately, can one explain a Richard Baxter, a John Bunyan, a George Fox? The psychologist undoubtedly has light to throw on the problem, but he cannot wholly solve it. For in the forefront of the causes of Puritan asceticism one must posit the supernatural factor which transcended and embraced all the natural causes which, beyond doubt, exerted influence.

CHAPTER III

THE PURITAN CHARACTER: THE SPIRITUAL ATHLETE

Use me on earth as seemeth good to thee,
So I in Heav'n thy Glorious face may see.
Take down my Pride; let me dwell at thy feet:
The humble are for earth and heav'n most meet.
Renouncing Flesh, I Vow my self to thee;
With all the Talents thou hast lent to me.
Let me not stick at honour, wealth or blood:
Let all my dayes be spent in doing good.
Let me not trifle out more precious hours;
But serve thee now with all my strength and powers.
If Flesh should tempt me to deny my hand;
Lord these are the Resolves to which I stand.

Richard Baxter,
"Self-Denial, A Dialogue between
the Flesh & the Spirit",
Poetical Fragments, (1681), p.74.

A. Intra-Mundane Ascetic Rigorism.

Proceeding now from the origins to an analysis of the nature of Puritan asceticism, one is immediately impressed by the positive God-ward dimension which at every point is the most conspicuous feature of this life of discipline and renunciation. The Puritan, painfully aware of his sinfulness but rejoicing in the miracle of salvation, freely committed himself out of his boundless gratitude to the Redeemer to a life of which every thought, word and action was consciously directed to His glory. Lucy Hutchinson, whose definition of Christianity was, in fact, a classic interpretation of Puritan spirituality, made this

basic ascetic principle clear in one significant statement. She wrote:

By Christianity I intend that universal habit of grace which is wrought in a soul by the regenerating Spirit of God, whereby the whole creature is resigned up into the divine will and love, and all its actions directed to the obedience and glory of its Maker. 1

At a stroke one is at the heart of Puritan asceticism, for it is nothing more nor less than a total, voluntary, self-transcendence in a God-ward direction. It is the reorientation of every faculty and power of the whole personality in response to the divine call to the soul, leading to the unspeakable joy of communion with Him. Giving rise to every ascetic act, positive or negative, disciplinary or renunciatory, was this overpowering impulse, this perpetual consciousness that man's "chief and highest end is, to glorifie God, and fully to enjoy him forever."² It was the ineradicable conviction of this high calling which made the seventeenth century Puritan an untiring spiritual athlete, a genuine Christian ascetic voluntarily accepting God's rule over the whole of his life. None has put this fundamental Puritan insight more concisely or more fervently than the indefatigable Richard Baxter in his Directions and Perswasions to a Sound Conversion.

I beseech you therefore remember what it is to be truly converted: It is to be called from things common and unclean, and separated to God; It is to be brought nigh to him, as the Children of his Houshold, that are themselves, and all that they have in his hands: It is to be taken off your Selves, and your Own, and to lose your selves, and all you have in God, by the most gainful loss; lest indeed you lose your selves; and all, while you perswade your selves you save, or gain. It is a taking God in Christ for your All, and so being content to have Nothing but him, and for him. It is a changing of your old Master self, for God a better Master: and your old work, which was self-seeking,

1 Lucy Hutchinson, op. cit., p.21.

2 The humble Advice of the Assembly of Divines Sitting at Westminster, Concerning a larger and a shorter Catechisme, (1647), p.1.

and self-pleasing, to self-denial, and to the seeking, and pleasing of God. 1

Although the concept of formal asceticism was foreign to the seventeenth century Puritan, his life was manifestly characterized by the dependence, submission, consecration and discipline which mark the relation of the Christian ascetic of every age to his God.

Because their hearts were set on God alone, because their souls were athirst for God alone, in Puritan minds a gulf was fixed between this present world and the world to come. And here the self-ward dimension becomes discernible. For in seeking to live so as constantly to glorify God, the Puritan was also conscious of working out his own spiritual destiny, of preparing his soul for the heavenly life beyond the veil. It is scarcely possible to open any spiritual writing of the period which comes from a Puritan pen without encountering this other-worldliness writ large on every page. John Howe writes:

You must cast off all other lovers, if you intend delighting in God. Get up into the higher region, where you may be out of the danger of having your spirit engulfed, and, as it were, sucked up of the spirit of this world, or of being subject to its debasing, stupefying influence. 2

In similar vein the pious Oliver Heywood ejaculates,

O my soul, what a life mightest thou live if heaven were as much in thy thoughts as earth, if thy mind were lifted up above this inferior world, conversing with the Lord of life and glory. 3

And again no more typical exponent of this other-worldly orientation of Puritanism could be found than the author of the famous Saints'

1 Richard Baxter, op. cit., p.194.

2 ut per R. F. Horton, John Howe, p.73.

3 The Whole Works of the Rev. Oliver Heywood ..., with Memoirs of His Life, [by Rev. Richard Slate], Vol. I, p.397.

Everlasting Rest. For not only this, but all Baxter's devotional manuals throb with the conviction that this life has meaning only in terms of the life beyond. "Christianity is a practical religion", he wrote; "It is a devoted seeking for another life, by the improvement and contempt of this."¹ This was the burden of all his passionate pleading with men, especially in his plain and simple Poor Man's Family Book. "Did you not know," he asks a poor "ignorant sinner" who was living for the pleasures of the world, "that your business in this world was to prepare for Heaven, and to do all that ever must be done, for your everlasting hope and happiness?"² Nor could anything like an air of unreality have accompanied this constant reference to heaven, for, as Edmund Calamy, having heard Baxter preach, records; "He talked in the pulpit with great freedom about another world, like one that had been there, and was come as a sort of an express from thence to make a report Concerning it."³

It is necessary at the outset to make it clear that this marked two-world context of Puritan asceticism is not the reflection of a metaphysical dualism.⁴ Puritans were quite convinced that God created

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- 1 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world By The Cross of Christ, (1658), Preface, pp.4-5. This sentiment is almost an exact repetition of Calvin's "contempt of the present life", already noted in the Institutes. cf. supra p.19.
 - 2 Richard Baxter, The Poor Man's Family Book, (1677), p.10.
 - 3 Edmund Calamy, An Historical Account of My Own Life with some Reflections of the times I have lived in. (First Printed, edited and illustrated by John Towill Rutt, London, 1829), Vol. I, pp.20-1.
 - 4 The best evidence is that throughout the century the earthly life of Christ loomed large in Puritan minds, whereas a "dualistic account of the Creation involves, as its inevitable corollary, a Docetic account of the Incarnation; if matter is intrinsically evil, God can never have clothed himself in it; the human body of Jesus Christ was only a phantom." R. A. Knox, Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion, p.93.

the universe good, and in their writings one can detect no trace of Manichaeism or Catharism, of a belief that matter is evil. "What a deal of the Majesty of the great Creator doth shine in the face of this fabrick of the world!"¹ Baxter exclaims in wonder and awe. However, being in the Augustinian stream and sharing its wholly supernatural outlook, one can frequently detect in Puritan piety a practical if not a metaphysical dualism which is at times strongly suggestive of Neo-Platonism, of that thirst for God which leads to the long struggle to see Him. If the whole creation depends on God for its existence, it is nevertheless but a copy of the real spiritual world, so that this life is regarded as an exile, a shadow of the true good beyond. Oliver Heywood remonstrates with his soul in this manner:

Hast thou not infinitely preferred the pleasures of grace before the pleasures of the world? And wilt thou now return to the beggarly and weak elements of the world? ... Nay, nay, my soul, exchange not gold for glass, leave not the tried substance for the shadow 2

And Baxter, having expatiated on the glories and "mysterious worth" of the whole created order, asks in contrast, "what then is that place where God himself doth dwell? and is prepared for the just who are perfected with Christ?"³ Thus Puritanism evinces itself to be a type of that Augustinianism which, as Kirk points out,

... lends itself to a seductive doctrine of the relative worthlessness, the vain and illusory character of the things of this world, which is very difficult to distinguish from dualism itself 4

1 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part IV, p.226.

2 Oliver Heywood, op. cit., I, p.388.

3 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part IV, p.226.

4 K. E. Kirk, op. cit., p.134.

Essentially, that which united all Puritans was a view of this life "sub specie aeternitatis". They were citizens of heaven, runners in the race of righteousness, intensely concerned about the eternal verities. The present life was good, the body must be fed and clothed, but temporal blessings and creaturely comforts simply paled into insignificance beside the spiritual blessings which nourished the soul and alone lent meaning to this earthly life. Viewing "this world as but a gallery conducting to eternal life",¹ John Ball gravely reflected during the rejoicings of a marriage feast that

... One thought of Jesus Christ reaching the heart, is more to be valued, than all Creature-contentments whatsoever, though they should be enjoyed in their fulnesse for a thousand years without interruption. ²

Every human being had a God to serve and a soul to save; these were life's primary concerns. It was only as by-products of these that the great secular gains to which Puritanism contributed - the advancement of democracy and of political freedom - were achieved.

Thus Knappen warns

... that in the Puritan's opinion attention to the affairs of the next world was far more important and that, judged by our own standards, the great bulk of his interests, like that of an iceberg, lay in the realm of the invisible. ³

In a very real sense, therefore, Puritanism was world-renouncing in character, a tendency reinforced by its strong emphasis on the

1 H. J. C. Grierson, op. cit., p.80.

2 Samuel Clarke, The Lives of Thirty-Two English Divines, Famous in their Generations for Learning and Piety, and most of them Sufferers in the Cause of Christ ..., (Third Edition, corrected, and enlarged, 1677), pp.151-2.

3 M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p.350.

Fall and the consequent vitiation of human powers. As a result, the "memento mori" was never far from the Puritan mind. This was especially true of Richard Baxter, whose whole life was dogged by persistent illness and physical suffering.¹ Moreover, preaching as a "dying man to dying men", his vital concern was the preparation of men's souls for death. This was the "unum necessarium" to which all his unflinching pastoral labours were directed. Frequently this led to an almost morbid contemplation of death as a spur to spiritual earnestness. Baxter urges his readers "to be much in the house of mourning, and see the end of all the living", to go among the sick, to stand by the dying, to look on the corpses of dead friends, to take notice of graves and bones, and to observe the frailties and diseases of one's own flesh.² Again he asks: "Cannot carcases, and bones, and dust instruct thee, to see the End of Earthly glory, and all the pleasures of the flesh?"³ In the gallery of Samuel Clarke's Puritan saints a similar bent is exhibited in the portrait of Mrs. Jane Ratcliffe, who left a treatise entitled Why I desire to dye. She was animated by a love of God, "insomuch that she feared a long life would keep her too long from the enjoyment of him ...".⁴ She was further encouraged to look to the end of her life

... because this world is generally infected with the plague of sin, and some have this Plague-sore running upon them, and I myself am tainted with the same disease, so as whilst I live here, I can be in no place, nor in any company, but I am still in danger of being infected, or to infect others 5

1 Baxter writes: "Thus was I long kept with the Calls of approaching Death at one Ear, and the Questionings of a Doubtful Conscience at the other!" Reliquiae Baxterianae, Part I, p.5. cf. pp.9 f.

2 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world ..., p.162.

3 Richard Baxter, The Poor Man's Family Book, p.261.

4 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.384.

5 ib.

In short, "because nothing in this world can give me solid, and durable contentment", she looks longingly forward to the consummation of this earthly struggle in the life everlasting.¹

On this basis the Puritan did not regard the present life as an end in itself but as a pilgrimage, a journey in which every step leads one either closer to or further from God. The true disciple "must not look for a treasure on earth, but only pass through the world as a traveller, or labour in it as the harvest of the Lord, in expectation of a Reward and Rest hereafter ...".² As citizens of heaven, the delight of the Christian in this life as in the life to come must be God Himself. Thus John Howe urged:

Bear yourself as the inhabitant of another country. Make this your mark and scope, that the temper of your spirit may be such, that the secret of the Divine presence may become to you as your very element, wherein you can most freely live and breathe and be most at ease, and out of which you may perceive you cannot enjoy yourself: and that whatever tends to withdraw you from Him, any extravagant motion, the beginnings of the excursion, or the least departing step, may be sensibly painful and grievous to you.³

But despite this world-renouncing conviction, and the unutterable longing for the glorious day when the soul would enjoy untrammelled communion with God, the Puritan ascetic did not yield to the temptation to withdraw from the hurly-burly of everyday life. Some indeed there were, notably Puritan women, who did withdraw from society to the greatest degree compatible with their normal duties.

1 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.385. It is interesting to note the use by a Puritan saint of the words "infected" and "solid", the former referring to this world, to fallen man, and to his carnal pleasures; the latter, by way of contrast, to the life of the soul and to spiritual contentment. These same words recur as basic elements of the Jansenist ascetic vocabulary.

2 Richard Baxter, Directions ... to a Sound Conversion, p.275.

3 ut per R. F. Horton, op. cit., p.73.

Mrs. Margaret Ducke said that "next to God's house, she could best spend her time in her own", and was "so far from the gadding disposition of other talking, walking women, that she was for the most part as a Snail, Domi porta, within her own shell and family",¹ where she could best maintain her private intercourse with God. Even more significant is Richard Baxter's confession in his "Self-Review", in which he writes:

I am more and more pleased with a solitary Life; and though in a way of Self-denial I could submit to the most publick Life, for the service of God, when he requireth it, and would not be unprofitable that I might be private; yet I must confess, it is much more pleasing to my self, to be retired from the World, and to have very little to do with Men, and to converse with God and Conscience and good Books 2

But this statement is precisely significant in that, despite Baxter's inclination to solitude, he is known to posterity not as a pious recluse but as one of the most faithful pastors, fearless preachers, untiring reconcilers, loyal, long-suffering, and selfless men of God in the annals of the whole century. For it was the profound conviction of Baxter, as of every genuine Puritan, not only that the Christian's true citizenship was in heaven but also that it was God's will for His children that, with all earnestness and diligence, they should prepare their souls for the life beyond within the context of the normal society of men.

There is something heroic, whatever we may think of the wisdom and the effects, in the thorough-going fashion in which the English Puritans asserted the other-worldly character of Christianity, while, in distinction from Catholicism, they also spurned all thought of a retreat from the world, affirmed that the world itself is the arena of the spiritual askesis and warfare which prepares the soul of man for the world to come. 3

1 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.409.

2 Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, Part I, p.134.

3 H. J. C. Grierson, op. cit., p.285.

The asceticism of English Puritans was therefore of a marked intra-mundane character. Voices from every wing of the movement were raised in condemnation of monastic withdrawal and the double standard. Baxter, in a typical complaint, writes:

It is one notable cheat among the Papists, that occasions the ruine of many a soul, that they make a Religious mortified life, to be a work of supererogation [sic], and those that profess it, (and some of their own inventions with it, which turn it into sin) they Cloyster up from the rest of the world, and these they call Religious people, and some few even of these that are either more devout or superstitious than the rest, they call Saints.

Thus, eschewing the compromises facilitated for the masses by the Roman doctrine of the "religious" life, Puritans were committed to utilize the world, infectious as it was for sinful men, as the sphere of moral growth. The result was a universal ascetic rigorism which demanded heroic efforts of every Christian in whatever station in life God had placed him. The arduous task of the Puritan was to be in the world but not of it, to love the world with "weaned affections" in order to avoid becoming a victim of its charms, to exercise constant discipline and restraint in order to keep his supernatural end in view. His, therefore, was a systematic disciplinary asceticism extending to every facet of daily life, "a rational planning of the whole of one's life in accordance with God's will", leading to "a status which marks off its possessor from the degradation of the flesh, from the world." And paradoxically, by combining normal life in the world with rigorous self-mortification and self-discipline,

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- 1 v., e.g. the Puritan attack on Nicholas Ferrar's semi-monastic experiment contained in a defamatory pamphlet addressed to Parliament in 1641, entitled The Arminian Nunnery, or a Brief Description and Relation of the late Erected Monastical Place called 'The Arminian Nunnery' at Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire, largely reproduced in Paul Elmer More and Frank Leslie Cross, op. cit., pp.737 ff.
- 2 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world ..., p.74.
- 3 Max Weber, op. cit., p.153.

both world-renouncing and world-affirming tendencies were fused in a dynamic piety which focused attention on the heavenly goal but enforced endless striving in this present life. Such intra-mundane ascetic rigorism¹ was the very antithesis both of a humanism which, forgetful of the perversions to which sinful man is prone to subject the creature, aimed simply at enjoying the good things of life, and of monastic asceticism which measured perfection in terms of flight from the snares and defilements of the world. In the Puritan conception perfection was required of all men, under the most difficult of conditions, i.e., in the world.

The universal ascetic standard of Puritanism was known by the name of "godliness",² a word which at once indicates its dynamic religious character. On this point an early biographer of Baxter wrote:

To salvation as the cure of sin, he attached as much importance as to salvation considered as deliverance from its punishment. He could find happiness only in likeness to God, which constituted, therefore, his constant desire, as it was the object of his most earnest recommendation.³

Many in seventeenth century England complained that this norm of godliness was far too lofty and exacting for average men. Baxter, however, pointed out that to make this criticism was to fail completely to understand Protestant Christianity which, based on the New Testament,

1 K. E. Kirk, op. cit., p.27, defines rigorism as "the ideal of a consistent renunciation not merely of the ways of the world but of the joys and interests and ideals of the world as well (however innocent and laudable in themselves they may appear to be) ...". cf. supra p.21, note 4.

2 For short definitions of this term, v. Richard Baxter, The Poor Man's Family Book, pp.251-2, and A Saint or a Brute, (lacking title page, Preface dated 1662), pp.5 f.

3 William Orme, The Practical Works of the Rev. Richard Baxter: with a Life of the Author, and a Critical Examination of his writings, (London, MDCCGXXX), Vol. I, p.481.

called all men unequivocally to be saints. Papists might be content to "Canonize a Saint as a wonder", but in glaring contrast "Protestants would have none but seeming Professing Saints in their Churches ...".¹ Serious godliness was in fact integral to salvation.

He [God] hath made such Laws as you will call severe, for all that will be saved, as well as for his Ministers (though he impose not on them the same employment): for all must deny themselves, and mortifie the flesh, and be crucified to the world, and take up their cross, and [sic] follow Christ, that will be his Disciples. 2

But this is not to say that the Puritan engaged in the ascetic life in an attempt to merit salvation by works. On the contrary, for sinful men this was an absolute impossibility. It was God alone who, in His grace, enlightened and empowered His elect to live the godly life. The condition on which salvation was granted, wrote Baxter, "is not some meritorious or mercenary work, but the Accepting of the benefit freely given, according to its nature, use and ends."³ But Puritan doctrine held that it was the divine will not only to justify but also to sanctify, so that perseverance in the ascetic life was universally regarded as assurance of "proof" of salvation. "And therefore," asserted the Westminster Confession of Faith,

... it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure; that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience,

1 Richard Baxter, A Key for Catholics, To open the Jugling of the Jesuits ..., (1659), p.277.

2 Richard Baxter, Gildas Salvianus, The Reformed Pastor, p.404.

3 Richard Baxter, Directions ... to a Sound Conversion, p.44. In his attempt to counter Antinomianism, Baxter, however, tended to emphasize obedience to God almost to the point of undermining at times the unique "sola fide" principal of Protestantism. The story of his Antinomian crusade is succinctly chronicled by F. J. Powicke, A Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter, 1615-1691, pp.237-45. On Baxter's theological position generally, known as "Baxterianism", v. Irvonwy Morgan, The Nonconformity of Richard Baxter, pp.75 ff.

the proper fruits of this assurance: so far is it from inclining men to looseness. 1

That this was no mere academic pronouncement but the motivation of the practical piety of English Puritans is everywhere evident in the literature they produced. Baxter testified personally: "I the easilier believe the Pardon of my Failings through my Redeemer, while I know that I serve no other Master, and that I know no other End, or Trade, or Business ...".² And John Downame in his immensely popular Christian Warfare summed up the evangelical character of Puritan asceticism in the words:

If therefore we can find in our selves, that our sinnes and corruptions are by little and little mortified, that we strive and endeavour after holinesse, and righteousnes of life; if our understanding be somewhat inlightened in the knowledge of God's truth, and our stubborne wils enclined to holy obedience; if we discern that our affections are in some measure changed and renewed, then may we be assured that we are endued with a true and lively faith, which hath applied unto us Christ Jesus and his bloodshed, death and merits, by vertue whereof this worke of regeneration is begun in us. 3

In order to persevere in the life of godliness, to serve no other master but God and thus to gain assurance of salvation, the Puritan consciously bound himself to a life of unremitting struggle. And so life was not only a pilgrimage but also a deadly serious race of righteousness in which every runner must be a hardy spiritual athlete, straining every nerve to attain the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Indeed, because the struggle was so severe

1 Philip Schaff, op. cit., Vol. III, Chap. XVIII, Sec. III, p.639. The theology of the covenant, an extension of the doctrine of predestination, developed and disseminated by such men as Perkins, Ames, Preston, Sibbes, Ball and Baxter, and expounded in Chap. VII of the Westminster Confession, was also linked to a doctrine of assurance in which sanctification becomes an evidence of effectual calling and election.

2 Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, Part I, p.134.

3 John Downame, The Christian Warfare ..., (Third Edition, 1612 ff.), Vol. I, Part I, pp.603-4.

the Christian was regarded not only as an athlete but as a warrior for whom life was a battle-ground.

Methinks I live as on a field of battle, where I hear the terrible noise of combatants, and dashing of warlike weapons. Methinks my darling soul stands just at the mouth of a destructive cannon, ready to be shattered to pieces at any moment. 1

In these words Oliver Heywood described the universal experience of Puritans. As to the nature of the lifelong "Christian warfare" to which they were committed, no fuller or more vivid account can be found than in the almost three thousand pages which John Downname devoted to it. He epitomized his own conception thus:

The Christian man's life is a continuall warfare, wherein he is daily assaulted (I know not whether with greater subtiltie or furie, policie or power) by three puissant enemies, the divell, the world, and the flesh; every one of which have many legions under their conduct, which are ready to second and succour them, when they give sign of battaile. The divell is the grand captaine, and general of these forces; the world and the flesh, are chiefe commanders under him, who have many millions of spirituall enemies under their ensignes, that continually fight against us. Satan ordereth the battaile, and guideth all these forces to his best advantage, and our ruine; the world ministreth unto him weapons and munition, whereby this fight is maintained; and the flesh, like a wicked traitor, openeth the gates of our soules when we are assaulted, and receiving the pay of worldly-vanities, joyneth with these externall forces to worke our finall overthrow. The issue of this fight is either their, or our victory; the former is accompanied with the divels triumph, and our perpetuall captivitie and thraldome in the chaines of darknesse; yea with the most exquisite and ineffable torments of hell fire: the other with the crowne of victory which our great Commander, the Lord of hosts, hath promised to those that overcome; even that super-excellent and eternall waight of glory reserved in the highest heavens. 2

Here in dramatic terms, strikingly reminiscent of the mediaeval morality play, was the same conception of the spiritual life which for centuries before the rise of Puritanism had animated countless

1 Oliver Heywood, op. cit., I, p.390.

2 John Downname, op. cit., II, Part II, "To the Christian Reader", unpaginated preface.

Christian souls.

Basically the ascetic struggle was twofold: there was the contest with the inner sinful self, and the battle with the outer seductive world.¹ Evangelist addressing Christian and Faithful in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress gave forceful expression to the dual nature of the combat:

Let nothing that is on this side the other world get within you; and, above all, look well to your own hearts, and to the lusts thereof, for they are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; set your faces like a flint; you have all power in heaven and earth on your side. 2

As for the inner struggle, because men were desperately sinful, they had "a multitude of head-strong passions to subdue, and abundance of deadly sins to kill; and rooted vices to root up ...".³ Negatively, therefore, they must seek every means to mortify the flesh, while positively they must be equally diligent in finding and employing every good means of fortifying the spirit.⁴ The task was all the more arduous because the corruption of the flesh extends not only to the body and its sensitive faculties, but also to the mind, the will, the heart and the soul itself, as Puritans, in the genuine Pauline tradition, plainly indicated.⁵ As for the outer struggle with the world, it too was essential because of human depravity. In Downname's words, "Sathan and the world could not hurt us, were they not ayded by our owne flesh."⁶ Baxter defined the world as "an Idol subservient to the flesh, as being the matter of its delight, and the means by

1 Ernest Barker, op. cit., p.113.

2 John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress, (The World's Classics, London, 1902), p.84.

3 Richard Baxter, Directions ... to a Sound Conversion, p.240.

4 John Downname, op. cit., I, Part I, p.280.

5 ib., III, Part IV, pp.33-47, pp.156-7.

6 ib., III, Part IV, p.3.

which it is attained",¹ while Downname in similar vein gave it the even wider connotation of

... impious, carnall and unbeleeving men, with all their baites and inticements unto vanitie, and all their discouragements, afflictions and miseries, wherewith they hinder Gods children in travelling the path of righteousness which leadeth to God's kingdom. 2

In this sense and as distinct from the good creation of God,³ the world was to be regarded as the mortal enemy of the soul, a deceiver and a traitor against which the soul must constantly struggle. Baxter, indeed, devoted a whole book to The Crucifying of the world By The Cross of Christ, a task involving manifold renunciations and disciplines which became the hall-mark of Puritan godliness.

The earnest Puritan was not dismayed at the severity of the lifelong battle with the flesh and the world which he was called to wage. Oliver Heywood found

... infinite cause to bless thy God for these hart-battles which are evidences of regeneration, means of thy deeper humiliation, and occasions of the manifestation of God's goodness, and wisdom, and power. 4

Moreover, as this statement indicates, the ascetic life constantly drove the Puritan to seek the mercy and power of Almighty God. For to strive perpetually for godliness, as Baxter asserts, "cannot be done without continual supplies of grace, whereof Christ is the only Fountain ...".⁵ The Puritans were content to struggle unceasingly for the glory of God and for their own spiritual welfare, in the

1 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world ..., p.15.

2 John Downname, op. cit., I, Part I, p.33.

3 Baxter urges his readers to avoid "a low and base esteem of the world or any thing therein, as in its Natural State considered, it is the work of God." The Crucifying of the world ..., pp.5-6. cf. infra pp.120-1.

4 Oliver Heywood, op. cit., p.391.

5 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part III, p.366.

knowledge that "Christ indeed hath freed us from the Impossibilities of the Covenant of Works, and from the burthen and yoke of Legal Ceremonies, but not from the difficulties and pains of Gospel duties."¹ Actually, they knew that it was impossible to "arrive", to achieve perfection in this life.² Heppe's account of William Perkins' conception was valid among Puritans generally.

Ein Christ ist ihm ... nicht ein Mensch der von allem Bösen frei geworden ist, (denn einen solchen gibt es nicht) sondern ein Mensch der seine angeborene Sündhaftigkeit als Elend empfindet und bejammert, und der unter der Führung des Geistes Gottes männlich und beherrlich gegen die Sünde kämpft 3

It was not freedom from sin that was expected of the Christian, but rather radical seriousness of endeavour as over against "bare Opinion."⁴ And all who thus laboured were buoyed up by the conviction that "There can be no victory where there is no combat",⁵ as Richard Sibbes put it, and by an unshakable faith in ultimate victory. This will be foreshadowed during the lives of those who strive manfully with Satan, the world, and the flesh, in that they will find "the corruptions of sinne lessened, and their power abated, so that they cannot wholly oversway us as in former times",⁶ but the final triumph will be realized only at the end of this life. Death, indeed, will be swallowed up in victory, for

... with it we shall destroy more of them [our enemies], then we have done in the whole course of our lives; ye in trueth then, and not before, wee shall destroy them all, so as for ever after they

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- 1 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part I, p.22.
 2 The humble Advice ... , Concerning a larger and a shorter Catechisme, p.43.
 3 Heinrich Heppe, Geschichte des Pietismus und der Mystik in der Reformirten Kirche, Namentlich der Niederlande, p.25.
 4 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world ..., Preface, p.19.
 5 Richard Sibbes, The Bruised Reed and Smoking Flax, (Edited by Alexander Beith, Edinburgh, 1878), p.158.
 6 John Downname, op. cit., I, Part I, p.718.

shall never bee able to assault or disturb our peace: and therefore in the meane time ... we must continue fighting till we have by death gotten a full and finall victory 1

A most important aspect of the ascetic struggle was the obligation to perform one's duties. The "old English Puritane", as Geree describes him,

... was careful in all relations to know, and do duty, & that with singleness of heart as unto Christ ... He accounted religion an engagement to duty, that the best Christians should be best husbands, best wives, best parents, best children, best Masters, best servants, best Magistrates, best subjects, that the doctrine of God might be adorned, not blasphemed. 2

The Larger Catechism, which was widely expressive of Puritan opinion, not only insisted that man was thoroughly corrupt but that he was bound nevertheless to fulfil the moral law. Manifestly, as has been seen above, perfection in the discharge of this tremendous obligation was impossible, but the purpose of the law and the duties which it enjoined was, according to the Catechism,

... to inform them [all men] of the holy nature and will of God, and of their duty, binding them to walk accordingly; to convince them of their disability to keep it, and of the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts and lives; ... and thereby help them to a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and of the perfection of his obedience. 3

In this evangelical sense Richard Baxter repeatedly interpreted the ascetic struggle in terms of Christian duties. Prayer, watching, meditation, family worship and discipline - all are urged as obligations of every earnest disciple. ⁴ And if this frequently recurrent emphasis on duty and striving seems at times to restrict the full gospel

1 John Downname, op. cit., I, Part I, pp.725-7.

2 John Geree, The Character of an old English Puritane or Non-conformist, (1646), p.5.

3 The humble Advice ... , Concerning a larger and a shorter Catechisme, pp.23-4.

4 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, "The Dedication of the whole", unpaginated.

liberty of the redeemed, it cannot be doubted that it was occasioned by the baleful irresponsibility and disorderliness of the times. Moreover, Baxter was fully aware of the dangers of formalism and complacency and constantly fostered a dynamic Christian asceticism. "Think it not enough to delight in Duties," he warned, "if you delight not in God: Judge not of your duties by the bulk and number, but by this sweetness."¹ On the other hand, he scorned the hollow profession of those who demanded proof that the holy life - the observance of the Lord's day, the conduct of family worship - was obligatory on believers.² To one whose personal godliness was a loving response to the grace of God, such shallowness was incomprehensible. And as he lived, so he taught.

The true Convert perceiveth so much sweetness in holy duties, and so much spiritual advantage by them to his Soul, that he is loth to be kept back; he cannot spare these Ordinances and Mercies, no more than he can spare the bread from his mouth, or the cloaths from his back; yea, or the skin from his flesh, no nor so much. He loveth them; he cannot live without them³

In such a statement, which reveals a profound Christian asceticism, one discovers why the seemingly inexhaustible lists of duties in the Westminster Catechisms and in Puritan writings generally were regarded not as oppressive burdens but as opportunities for spiritual development through the service of God and man.

"By self-imposed discipline," Trevelyan wrote of the Puritans, "they endeavoured, in the very thick of worldly business, to preserve self-control and unquenchable devotion to the ideal of duty."⁴ This "self-control", however, was constantly regulated by the experience

1 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, "The Dedication of the whole", unpaginated.

2 Richard Baxter, Directions ... to a Sound Conversion, p.225.

3 ib.

4 G. M. Trevelyan, England Under the Stuarts, p.66.

of each solitary soul in relation to a transcendent God. It was this personal communion which, even in the midst of the world's affairs, provided the burning motive for the devotion to duty by which the Puritan was working out his salvation, glorifying God, and discharging his responsibilities to his neighbour.¹ There is a very real sense in which Bunyan's lonely figure, "the poor man seeking salvation with tears, with no guide save the Bible in his hand",² as he has been described, is the living symbol of the ultimate solitude of the Puritan's spiritual pilgrimage. For however much company there might be on the journey, each pilgrim was keenly aware of his personal responsibility for his own spiritual destiny under the will of God.

B. Spiritual Disciplines.

Born of this sense of personal relatedness to a holy God, and a vital part of the Puritan askesis, was the regular examination of conscience. Periodically the Christian must pause in the daily round of duties to take his spiritual pulse, discovering how it was with his soul and whether he was making progress towards his eternal home. In Baxter's words,

This Self-Examination, is, An enquiry into the course of our lives, but more especially into the inward Acts of our Souls, and trying of their Sincerity by the Word of God, and accordingly judging of our Real and Relative Estate. ³

With customary thoroughness the author of the Saints' Everlasting Rest proceeds to give exhaustive, and to the modern reader exhausting, directions for the frequent performance of this indispensable feat of

1 cf. Max Weber, op. cit., pp.104 ff. Weber, however, greatly exaggerates this inescapable sense of personal responsibility into "a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual", which was not characteristic of the average Puritan.
 2 G. M. Trevelyan, Social History of England, p.234.
 3 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part III, p.138.

spiritual gymnastics - to avoid slothfulness in its exercise, to come to it without "too peremptory Conclusions of your selves before-hand", to be steeped in scripture in order to judge oneself impartially, to apply oneself carefully to the searching of the soul, to pass honest sentence and to record it for future reference, and to resolve anew to "cleave to Christ" and to return often to this salutary exercise. ¹ Baxter was under no illusions as to the difficulty of the task, for the darkness of the human soul was not easily fathomed, even under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. ² But despite the arduous labours involved "the Comforts of that Certainty of Salvation which this Trial doth conduce toward, are yet far greater ...". ³ And practically, the exercise was of inestimable help in fitting the soul for the all-important godly life.

The true saint, though under the guidance of the spirit, applies himself the more intently, the more assiduously, to probing every recess of his being, to leaving no place unexplored in which sin may hide, to unmasking every disguise which nature puts on in its frantic effort to pretend holiness without actually surrendering its lusts. ⁴

The practice of self-examination, displacing the confessional of Roman Catholic piety, was universal amongst serious Puritans and was widely recommended in their popular devotional guides. While opportunity for its exercise was provided in daily private devotions, the more thorough examinations would take place on especially solemn occasions. Part of the "most exact preparation" for the Lord's Supper, "an ordinance of nearest communion with Christ", was, according to Geree's description of the "old English Puritane", "the

1 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part III, pp.183 ff.

2 *ib.*, pp.153 ff.

3 *ib.*, p.177.

4 Perry Miller, *op. cit.*, p.56. cf. Edward Dowden, *op. cit.*, p.27.

examination of himself".¹ Oliver Heywood made self-examination "the chief part of his employment on the return of his baptismal day", and also observed it most carefully before the Sabbath, especially if the Lord's Supper were to be administered, and at other important times.² Ralph Josselin was led to a particularly serious probing of his own spiritual state on the death of his infant son.³ But whatever the occasion, the self-examination was always conducted in the light of the absolute norm the Puritan had set himself; no matter how far he had advanced, there was still need for further purging and discipline. And as for results, these were to be seen in frequent serious resolutions to amend the sinful conditions which the examination of conscience revealed. Josselin felt certain that his affliction in losing a son was a divine visitation because of spiritual declension. Having carefully examined his heart and ways, he discovered that one of his recent sins had been playing too much chess and so he resolved to be "very sparing in y^e use of that recreation and that at more convenient seasons."⁴ Further, confessed Josselin,

I have walked with much vanitie in my thoughts and resolved agst it and have served divers lusts too much in thought and in actions, whereas both body and soule should bee the Lords who hath called me to holyness⁵

Therefore, he continues, "I hope the Lord will keepe my feete in uprightnes that I may walke alwayes with him, and I trust it shall

1 John Gere, op. cit., p.3.

2 Oliver Heywood, op. cit., I, Memoirs of His Life [by Rev. Richard Slate], p.336.

3 Ralph Josselin, The Diary of the Rev. Ralph Josselin (1616-1683), (Edited by E. Hockliffe, Camden Third Series, Vol. XV, London, 1908), p.47.

4 ib., p.47.

5 ib.

be my endeavo^r more than ever ...".¹ Life, for the Puritan spiritual athlete, was a tissue of such soul searchings and renewals of consecrated endeavour.²

Frequently the upshot of self-examination and resolution of amendment was the particularly solemn ascetic exercise of making a personal covenant with God, which was widely recommended in Puritan literature. The initial covenant between the soul and God was sealed at baptism, the parental vow having later been ratified by the Christian and frequently renewed at the Lord's Supper.³ But periodically, after plumbing the depths of the soul and experiencing a revived sense of personal communion with God, the earnest pilgrim entered into a new and solemn pact with Him. Baxter repeatedly pled for this act of genuine repentance as a decisive step forward in the race of righteousness. "Get thee to thy knees, and bewail with tears thy former life, and deliver up thy self wholly now to Christ; and never break this Covenant more",⁴ he urged. Oliver Heywood made a number of such radical commitments. On one occasion, lamenting that while God had been faithful to His part of the covenant, he as a sinner had been woefully perfidious, he returned in penitence to God to renew in all solemnity his own sacred vow.⁵ In another case, the personal covenant was made when all other exercises were found to be unequal to the task of preserving the soul from the assaults of its enemies. The transaction was committed to writing in the form of a

1 Ralph Josselin, op. cit., p.47.

2 v. Oliver Heywood, op. cit., I, pp.386-420 for a collection of "soul-soliliquies" which give a revealing insight into the self-examination of the conscientious Puritan.

3 v. Richard Baxter, Directions ... to a Sound Conversion, p.311.

4 *ib.*, p.322.

5 Oliver Heywood, op. cit., I, pp.404-5.

personal letter beginning "Dreadful Jehovah, I am thy poor creature;" and ending in a final burst of total consecration, "Thy devoted servant for ever, Oliver Heywood."¹ Part of the body of this covenant must be reproduced, for it takes one to the very heart of the Christian asceticism which was the noblest feature of English Puritanism. Heywood writes:

I do also here give up myself to thee, body and soul, all that I am, have, or can do, or shall be, to thy service and use, looking upon myself henceforth no more as my own, but the Lord's, entreating thee to sanctify my whole soul, and spirit, and body, resolving by thy grace to spend and be spent for thee. ... I do also unfeignedly bind myself, under every obligation, to fight against Satan's temptations, to mortify my most beloved lusts and corruptions, to avoid all appearance and occasion of sin, and to this end, to study thy holy word, to perform all the duties thou requirest of me, and to walk all my days, in obedience to thy revealed will, to love mine enemies, deny myself, bear the cross thou layest upon me, and follow the Lord Jesus, what way soever he shall be pleased to lead me. ²

The God-ward, self-ward and man-ward dimensions of the ascetic struggle of the earnest Christian could scarcely find more eloquent utterance than in this spontaneous effusion of the Puritan soul.

Closely allied with self-examination and covenant making as a spiritual exercise was the habit of keeping a diary which, among Puritans, became a religious account book for the recording of every gain or loss in the health of the soul.³ Knowing that one day they would be required to give strict account to their Lord of their earthly discipleship and growth in grace, they believed that to set

1 Oliver Heywood, op. cit., I, *Memoirs of His Life* [by Rev. Richard Slate], p.159.

2 ib., p.160.

3 Arthur Ponsonby, *More English Diaries*, pp.8, 31. Ponsonby, one believes, fails to understand the Puritan character or to appreciate Christian asceticism when he writes that "if abject humility and violent self-depreciation constituted saintliness, we should be able to point to a large number of diarists who ought to be canonized ...". ib., p.8.

down on paper both the hidden desires of the heart and the conquests which through grace had been made over evil inclinations was a very real help in effective spiritual warfare. Moreover, perseverance in the practice testified to the writer that God was still undertaking for his soul, implanting grace and so maintaining a healthy anxiety over his eternal destiny.¹ The general conception of this spiritual discipline, and its three-dimensional bearing, is best seen in Samuel Clarke's account of Herbert Palmer.

And he was very carefull to order all his actions according to his constant rule, of being subservient to the glory of God, and the good of souls, so that even his journeys, visits, discourses, and familiar converses with any, were not undertaken without a special eye hereunto; so did he also keep an exact account of what had passed; every night before his going to rest, setting down in writing (in his usuall Character,) the passages of that day, what actions or discourses he had been employed in, what successes or disappointments, what mercies or Crosses he met withall, and what faillings he observed in himself: all which he surveyed again at the end of every week, writing down the chief passages of that week, and so from moneth to moneth, and year to year. By means whereof he was thoroughly acquainted with his own spiritual condition, and did maintain a constant exactnesse, and even walking with God; which being so uniform, might perhaps by some be the lesse observed. 2

In addition to the asceticism inherent in the concept and practice of diary keeping, the diaries themselves give intimate glimpses of the struggling Puritan, as in a laboratory, before one's very eyes. From this vantage-point one sees a certain Presbyterian minister, Henry Newcome, ever lamenting his spiritual deadness and striving for diligence and liveliness. Significant is the entry which gives this pithy list of faults: "1. Pride and vaine glory. 2. Slothfulness. 3. An unwillingness to secret dutys. 4. Want of

1 cf. William Haller, op. cit., pp. 96 ff.

2 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p. 191.

spirituality. 5. Impatience. 6. Distrust."¹ Again, he complains of listlessness in the performance of duties, negligence in devotions, formality in preaching, and failure to edify his family.² Another time he is wrestling with the habit of smoking tobacco, observing that "selfe denial about such a stinkinge thing might do well."³ It is obvious that his persistent quest for godliness and humility is not altogether successful. Despite his vigilance a trace of Pharisaism occasionally escapes his rigid censorship; at other times he too thoroughly enjoys his self-disparagement for it to be quite genuine.⁴ But the reader is led to wonder when the diary will reveal that these vices too have been detected and an effort has been made to exterminate them.

Self-examination, covenanting and diary keeping were important links in the network of spiritual exercises by which systematically the Puritan was preparing his soul for the celestial city. "Keep grace in exercise", wrote Richard Sibbes, "it is not sleepy habits, but grace in exercise, that preserveth us."⁵ Another chief means to this end was regular meditation on one's relation to God, the plan of salvation in Christ, and allied matters. "Heavenly Meditation", Baxter said, was "the delightfullest task to the Spirit, and the most tedious to the Flesh, that ever men on earth were employed in."⁶ And his friend Matthew Sylvester declared that Baxter devoted a certain period every day to that "weighty work".⁷ In his

1 Arthur Ponsonby, English Diaries, p.129.

2 ib.

3 ib.

4 ib., p.130.

5 Richard Sibbes, The Bruised Reed and Smoking Flax, p.141.

6 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part IV, pp.5-6.

7 Matthew Sylvester, Elisha's Cry after Elijah's God ..., (Appended to Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, 1696), p.15.

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Saints' Everlasting Rest, where he treats the subject at some length, Baxter disabuses those who regard meditation as "nothing but the bare thinking on Truths, and the rolling of them in the understanding and memory", declaring that its proper exercise requires "the supernatural renewing grace of the spirit ...".² Its object, he says, is not the filling of a notebook with mere notions about God, but the filling of a soul with deep yearnings for Him.³ With this in mind he urges his readers to engage in meditation systematically in order to stimulate their affection for the godly life, their love of God and faith in Him, and a burning desire for communion with Him both now and in the Everlasting Rest. Such a source of joy and courage in the race of righteousness will prove invaluable to the Christian warrior. As on other points of practical piety, so here, out of his rich experience, Baxter sets forth a number of rules for guidance⁴ in this vital matter. But he adds typically,

If thou canst not do it methodically and fully, yet do it as thou canst; onely, be sure thou do it seriously and frequently. If thou wilt believe a man that hath made some small Trial of it, thou shalt finde ... That ... a day in these contemplations will afford thee truer content, then all the glory and riches of the Earth. 5

The records of Puritanism attest the fact that Baxter was by no means alone in making this discovery and profiting to the full by the practice of meditation.⁶

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- 1 "The Fourth Part, Containing a Directory for the getting and keeping of the Heart in Heaven: By the Diligent Practice of that Excellent unknown Duty of Heavenly Meditation." loc. cit., p.1.
- 2 ib., Part IV, pp.151, 149.
- 3 ib., p.152.
- 4 ib., pp.156 ff.
- 5 ib., p.295.
- 6 cf. e.g., the example of Thomas Hooker, in Benjamin Brook, The Lives of the Puritans, Vol. III, p.64.

Simple prayer was, however, the commonest and most constantly exercised spiritual discipline among Puritans. Geree's "old English Puritane" was "much in prayer; with it he began and closed the day. In it hee was exercised in his closet, family, and publike assembly."¹ That this way of life required sustained and vigorous effort cannot be doubted. Bunyan relates how the devil in the form of a bull or a bison would assault him in his prayers distracting his thoughts from God, and tempting him to break off to some lighter pursuit.² But as the concomitant of all the other means by which the ascetic struggle was carried on from day to day, perseverance in prayer was regarded as the "sine qua non" of the godly life. Matthew Henry epitomized the Puritan attitude in his Method of Prayer when he wrote:

A golden thread of Heart-Prayer must run thro' the Web of the whole Christian life: we must be frequently addressing ourselves to God in short and sudden Ejaculations, by which we must keep up our Communion with God in Providences and common Actions, as well as in Ordinances and religious Services. Thus prayer must be sparsim (a sprinkling of it in every Duty) and our Eyes must be ever towards the Lord. 3

Another staple and profitable exercise among Puritans was the reading of edifying religious literature. Above all there was the Bible, the supreme guide and authority in the earthly pilgrimage. Baxter made plain its ascetic significance when he wrote:

Remember that it is the very Law of God which you must live by, and be judged by at last. And therefore read it with a full Resolution to obey what ever it commandeth, though flesh, and men, and devils contradict it. 4

1 John Geree, op. cit., p.1.

2 John Tulloch, English Puritanism and its Leaders, pp.418-19.

3 ut per Horton Davies, The Worship of the English Puritans, (Westminster, 1948), p.283.

4 Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory: or, a Summ of Practical Theologie, and Cases of Conscience ..., (Second Edition, 1678), Part II, p.88.

It was supremely by prayerful reading and obeying of the Bible that Puritans hoped to be made wise unto salvation. But the reading of other devotional writings was widely encouraged and practised.¹ By this means one of Samuel Clarke's saints, Mrs. Margaret Ducke, the same lady who lived in almost snail-like solitude,

... made her heart, Bibliothecam Christi, a library of Christ, and furnished her self with such a stock of Christian knowledge, and devotion, as carried her on, with much comfort and cheerfulness through all her afflictions, till she arrived at her long, and much longed for home. 2

The list of spiritual exercises practised by English Puritans is far from exhausted. Mutual encouragement was sought and received by frequent contact with fellow Christians, by conferences or discussions on matters pertaining to the common warfare, and by the recording and repetition of sermons.³ But whatever the exercises chosen by the individual, they would generally be woven into a tissue comprising a daily rule, a routine discipline calculated by its very uniformity to fortify the soul in its constant upward striving. The Puritans abandoned the specific paraphernalia by which the mediaeval church had held the attention of its followers - the use of rosaries, fasts at regular intervals, repeated services at fixed hours, and the repetition of set prayers.⁴ But they still had faith in the efficacy of routine and uniformity, or as they referred to it, constancy and settledness. It was not by accident that they were called Precisians, in the same way that in the next

1 Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory, Part II, Chap. XXI, pp.89-90.

2 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.409.

3 v. M. M. Knappen, Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries, by Richard Rogers and Samuel Ward, p.8, and Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.414.

4 M. M. Knappen, Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries, by Richard Rogers and Samuel Ward, pp.6-7.

century other zealous Christians were to become known as Methodists. Mrs. Jane Ratcliffe found that constancy in daily exercises was the royal road to perfection.

Her constancy also was very remarkable, by which her Spirit was stedfast with God, and her Heart stedfast in his Covenant. ... what she was for Faith and godliness from her first Conversion, the same she was in all places, at all times, and in all companies: But for the measure or degree of Grace, she was not, as a stake in an hedge, which grows not, but as a plant in the Garden that springeth up, no dwarf in Gods House, but one that by spiritual Nourishment, and daily exercise of her graces, grew up apace towards the stature of Christ 1

Typical of the works which recommended a definite daily direction or "exercise of grace" was Richard Rogers' Seven Treatises [on] ... the practice of Christianitie, in which he offered a rule "which everie² Christian must practice everie day in his life ...". For Puritans, the necessity of persisting in a daily routine was axiomatic to the successful spiritual life.

C. Labour in a Calling.

Within this framework of regularity

and uniformity, labour in a calling was

regarded as an integral and vital discipline. The monk had recognized the ascetic value of work, especially of manual labour. Now the Puritan was to transform this cloistered virtue into a more basic and far more potent askesis than ever it had been in mediaeval Catholicism. In the getting and maintaining of a good conscience, labour in a calling was to take its place as one of the most positive elements in an active Christian piety.³ "In place of the old asceticism of pain came the new asceticism of labor [sic]. Everyday work was

1 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.390.

2 ut per M. M. Knappen, Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries, by Richard Rogers and Samuel Ward, p.7.

3 v. Ernest Barker, op. cit., p.116.

deemed the highest duty of all men and the one most blessed of God."¹
 John Carter, a Puritan minister, once came upon a man tawing a hide, who was embarrassed at being discovered at such a menial task. Carter replied: "Let Christ when he comes finde me so doing." The man expressed his surprise at this remark, whereupon Carter added: "Yes - faithfully preparing the Duties of my Calling."² This was typical of English Puritanism. For, "attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto,"³ as enjoined in the Westminster Confession of Faith, meant, in addition to the mortifications and disciplines required of corrupt men in a corrupt world, the diligent performance of work in that occupation in which God had placed them. For those whose calling involved very little arduous work, manual labour was voluntarily taken up after the manner of the monks of old. It is said of Mrs. Ratcliffe in her widowhood that "to keep down pride, she ... willingly wrought with her hands ... and readily descended to such homely offices as were meet for the meanest of her servants."⁴ Puritans therefore regarded labour in a calling as part of the strenuous training of every Christian for the fuller life beyond, and as a means of fulfilling their true nature and destiny in the sight of God.

But as an ascetic conception it had an obvious weakness, as Weber and his school emphasized.⁵ The false conclusion was often reached that the financial success to which diligence and industry

1 Preserved Smith, op. cit., p.376.

2 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.136.

3 Philip Schaff, op. cit., III, Chap. III, Sec. VIII, p.610.

4 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.377.

5 - or rather overemphasized. v. Max Weber, op. cit., passim, especially pp.95-128. cf. H.M. Robertson, Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism, A Criticism of Max Weber and His School, (Cambridge, 1933).

so frequently led were tokens of divine good-pleasure, and that conversely poverty and slothfulness (often synonymous with unemployment) were signs of divine disfavour.¹ This is not surprising in view of the fact that, despite the extensive moral checks set down, the Larger Catechism enjoined "an endeavour by all just and lawfull means, to procure, preserve, and further, the wealth and outward estate of others, as well as our own."² This promoted, it is claimed, both self-assertion and materialism which are the very antitheses of the self-renunciations of ascetism. There is, of course, evidence to support this contention. In the diary of Ralph Josselin, for example, "shrewd business calculations³ jostle cheek by jowl with fervid expressions of piety."

However, the basic concept of struggle inherent in all Puritan piety was not in the seventeenth century allowed to wither away ingloriously in a blaze of material prosperity. The struggle must be continued, it was taught, by using the wealth which accrued from one's toil for the service of God and one's fellow men, and the calling itself must be chosen from these motives and not because of the likelihood of its gratifying one's acquisitive instinct.⁴ And repeatedly self-denial in business relations, as well as in other spheres of the life of the Christian, was vigorously demanded in

1 v. Douglas Bush, op. cit., p.11. cf. C.H. Firth and R. S. Rait, Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660, (1911), Vol. II, p.1098, which reproduces "An act against Vagrance and wandring, idle dissolute persons", of June 9, 1657.

2 The humble Advice ... Concerning a larger and a shorter Catechisme, p.40.

3 Ralph Josselin, op. cit., Preface by E. Hockliffe, p.ix. cf. the diary itself, pp.16, 162.

4 v. The humble Advice ... Concerning a larger and a shorter Catechisme, pp.39 ff. on its interpretation of the Eighth Commandment. cf. M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p.398.

Puritan literature. In his Mr. Badman, Bunyan demonstrated forcibly that to sell as dear and to buy as cheap as one could was inconsistent with Christian discipleship, with true love of God, the neighbour, and the self.¹ And the reader of Baxter's Christian Directory² is familiar with an unmistakable emphasis to the same effect. Indeed in all his writings Baxter kept returning to a doctrine of strict stewardship of time and money on the part of men who must give an exact account to Almighty God of every moment, every penny. Not only did the very toil which produced wealth involve genuine ascetic discipline but the same kind of radical self-denial was rigidly required in spending it, as Baxter made abundantly clear.

Had I ten thousand pound a year, I should think it my duty for all that, to pinch my flesh that I might spare as much of it as is possible for God. ... If you fare the hardlyer, and go the plainer in your attire, and deny yourselves that which is for any needless pomp or ostentation or splendor [sic] in the world; that you may have so much the more to do good with; you deal then like good husbands for God and your souls, and faithful Stewards. ... so you use it [wealth] for God and your poor Brethren, an honest parsimonie and gathering is a duty 3

Thus if working out one's salvation in a calling seemed logically to lead to a condition which threatened the very foundations of asceticism, Puritanism at its best taught that covetousness and ambition must be mortified for the glory of God, the service of one's fellows and one's own eternal felicity. And typical of the large body of evidence showing that this principle was widely applied was the case of Mrs. Ratcliffe who "often besought of Almighty God rather to make, and keep her poor, than to suffer her heart in any sort to

1 John Bunyan, Life and Death of Mr. Badman, pp.120-1.

2 v. Jeannette Tawney, Chapters from a Christian Directory, Introduction, et passim.

3 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world ..., Preface, pp.37-8.

sink down from her Maker, to dote upon Mammon."¹ Manifestly, in the practical piety of the movement daily toil and the consequent building up of an estate were both regarded as the God-given occasions of ascetic struggle and self-denial.

D. Bodily Mortifications.

In addition to the network of spiritual disciplines already described considerable attention was also paid to bodily mortifications. For in the warfare between the spirit and the flesh, it was the Puritan's task not only to train and strengthen the spirit but also to mortify the flesh, of which the body and the sensitive faculties were agents. It was, indeed, recognized that the body was good. Baxter, who for five or six years practised physic and was much concerned for the bodily as well as the spiritual well-being of his flock, taught that both body and soul "considered as the workmanship of God, must not be thought or spoke contemptibly of."² And to an unusual degree in his century, he was conscious of the close inter-relation of soul and body.

Matthew Sylvester, the friend of his later years, wrote:

God made him feel and mind that Body wherein this Soul of his was lodged; and wherein and how far his better Part might be helped or hinder'd thereby: and the two Worlds whereto both Soul and Body were related: and wherewith they were variously concerned. ³

Baxter's advice was to take due care for bodily health, knowing full well how closely "a vigorous cheerfulness" of spirit was connected with it;⁴ and Puritans generally paid reasonable regard to such concerns of the physical existence as food, clothing, and shelter.

1 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.384. cf. M. M. Knappen, Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries, by Richard Rogers and Samuel Ward, p.57.

2 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world . . ., p.6.

3 Matthew Sylvester, Preface to Reliquiae Baxterianae, unpaginated.

4 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part IV, p.143.

But ever conscious of the pernicious effects of the Fall, they belonged to the school of little compromise with the flesh, and so believed in wise physical as well as spiritual discipline for the sake of their eternal felicity. For although a useful servant, the body was "a most devouring Tyrant, if thou give it the Mastery, or suffer it to have what it unreasonably desireth",¹ a view which in the seventeenth century was corroborated by widespread indulgence and sensuality. Combined with Puritan other-worldliness, this consequently led on occasion to a depreciation of the body as a prison, "a rotten, dirty, diseased, wayward, distempered, noysome habitation...".² By and large the upshot was the almost universal practice of moderate fasting and abstinence according to individual needs and circumstances. The "old English Puritane", typical of his brethren, "condemned that superstition & vanity of Popish mock-fasts: yet neglected not on occasion to humble his soule by right fasting...".³ An example of such right fasting may be had in Samuel Clarke's picture of John Carter engaging in one of his frequent secret fasts, being joined in it by his wife, and though refusing food, quaffing "a draught of ordinary Beer to sustain nature."⁴ Here was a moderate physical discipline voluntarily undertaken in an earnest endeavour to promote the welfare of the soul, a well-tryed aid to godliness which no right-minded Puritan would fail to employ. This was especially true in combination with adequate spiritual exercises, as Mrs. Ratcliffe had discovered.

1 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part IV, p.143.

2 *ib.*, Part II, p.294.

3 John Gere, *op. cit.*, p.3.

4 Samuel Clarke, *op. cit.*, p.138.

Well she knew, that though Fasting makes the Body weak ... yet it strengtheneth the spirit, and maketh it vigorous in Conflict, and Victorious in the Event; yea Fasting and prayer make a potent combination, which is able to drive the strongest Devil out of his usurped possession ... These two she used, not onely as weapons against the Devil, but as wings to elevate her soul God-ward and Heaven-ward 1

Lewis Bayly in his tremendously popular Practice of Piety also recommended fasting in conjunction with prayer and meditation, but extended it to include refraining from work and business, sleep, pastimes, and anything especially pleasing to the senses, the whole calculated to foster a profound inner state of penitence for one's sins.² Above all, Puritans were agreed that in their physical mortifications they were to be very careful not to destroy the body in an effort to tame the flesh,

... nor kill or hurt our friend whilst we intend war against our enemy, as whē by watching fasting & much strict exercises, we so weaken our bodies that they are disabled unto all good duties. 3

These principles were generally observed by Puritans whether fasting privately, in groups, as congregations,⁴ or later, on legally recognized national fast days. And the popularity of this kind of physical discipline is indicated by the fact that between the years 1665 and 1701 Oliver Heywood observed no less than 1256 fasts, or an average of more than 35 per year.⁵ It is obvious that the pious

1 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.383.

2 Lewis Bayly, The Practice of Piety, (Edited by Grace Webster, London, MDCCGLII), pp.207 ff. cf. Heinrich Heppe, op. cit., pp.67-8.

3 John Downame, op. cit., III, Part IV, p.339.

4 Congregational fasts often lasted from early morning till late afternoon. v. C. E. Whiting, Studies in English Puritanism from the Restoration to the Revolution, 1660-1688, p.448. When the Puritans were not in power, such fasts incurred the risk of disciplinary measures by hostile authorities.

5 Oliver Heywood, op. cit., I, Memoirs of His Life [by Rev. Richard Slate], p.350.

Puritan found fasting an effectual aid in the training of the soul for its high destiny.

As for the ascetic ideal of celibacy, there is evidence that Puritans were not altogether successful in shaking off this traditional feature of the quest for perfection. Their reasons were biblical, however, and did not mitigate their opposition to the double standard. Reference was commonly made to Pauline sentiments on the matter, as that

He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. 1

Mrs. Ratcliffe's refusal to remarry on the death of her husband was animated by her desire to be free to serve God alone.² Richard Baxter, though opposed to the enforced celibacy of the clergy, believed "that a single life is of very great Convenience to a Pastor, when it can be held ..."³ Richard Rogers, too, held in unqualified admiration the "contentation in a sol life"⁴ of John Knewstubs, a fellow preacher. It is not without significance, however, that Rogers himself was twice married. And in fact, both celibacy and marriage were regarded ascetically as potential training grounds for the soul. In relation to marriage, Haller's admirable epitome of the Puritan attitude makes this quite clear:

The saints married early and as often as mortality gave occasion, and they begot children without restraint. Like all other activities to which men might be called, marriage was an opportunity for spiritual effort, something to be sanctified by the spirit. 5

1 I Cor. 7:32-33. cf. Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory, Part II, p.3, and Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.383.

2 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.383.

3 Richard Baxter, A Key for Catholics, p.228.

4 M. M. Knappen, Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries, by Richard Rogers and Samuel Ward, p.95.

5 William Haller, op. cit., p.120.

E. Qualities of the Ascetic Life.

Having investigated the nature of the lifelong ascetic struggle to which Puritans were committed one must now examine the qualities of life which this struggle produced. In the first place, was the typical Puritan basely hypocritical, as has so often been suggested? When viewed from the vantage-point of Christian asceticism, considerable light is shed on this problem. The classic form of the charge is contained in Butler's caricature, Hudibras.

Why didst thou chuse that cursed Sin,
Hypocrisie, to set up in? ...
Because it is the thriving'st Calling,
The only Saints-Bell that rings all in;
In which all Churches are concern'd
And is the easiest to be learned 1

But one does not have to defer to those who, like Butler, viewed their Puritan contemporaries entirely from the outside and were incapable of appreciating the significance of religious fervour.² More to the point is the fact that serious members of the movement themselves bewailed the infiltration of hypocrisy into their ranks. Baxter assailed those "That have spoken well of Christ and Scripture, and godliness in the general, and yet silyly and closely do what they can to bring it into disgrace ...".³ Robert Harris, who died in 1658, "complained that the power of Godliness and exercise of Love,⁴ and Self-denial, were much abated in these latter dayes ...". And the reader of Lucy Hutchinson's Memoirs of her husband is confronted with a discomfiting amount of evidence that many had given up the inner struggle, although continuing to present to the world every

1 Samuel Butler, Hudibras in Three Parts, Written in the Time of the Late Wars, Part III, lines 1221-6, p.247.

2 cf. Edward Dowden, op. cit., pp.281-2, 309, and Harold H. Child, Cambridge Modern History, Vol. V, Chap. VI, p.133.

3 Richard Baxter, Gildas Salvianus, The Reformed Pastor, p.42.

4 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.333.

outward appearance of it, while the "puritan party being weak and oppressed, had not faith enough to disown all that adhered to them for worldly interests ...".¹

To attack such men as these, however, is to leave the genuine Puritan ascetic untouched and to fail to understand his dynamic spirituality. But if such an understanding be one's aim, the obviously important inference to be taken from the Hutchinson Memoirs is that there were those who did not seek to hide the fact of many insincere persons taking shelter behind the Puritan cloak, but that they sought to disclaim these as impostors, as wolves that had entered the sheepfold by stealth. Nothing but scorn was reserved for one Captain Charles White who, though secretly immoral, "put on a vizard of godliness and humility and ... to keep up a fame of godliness ... gave large contributions to puritan preachers ...".² Samuel Clarke expressed the genuine Puritan attitude when he noted that Mrs. Ratcliffe "was so sincere in her whole course, that she hated the least appearance of Hypocrisie ...".³ Actually, what to the outsider looked like hypocrisy often betokened an inner struggle with an unruly nature which could not be subdued during the earthly pilgrimage. Ralph Josselin was by no means a saint. His diary reveals a man strongly tempted to the sins of pride, cupidity, and complacency, more prone to the comforts of compromise than the rigours of resistance,⁴ and the observation of these traits by the onlooker must often have led to the charge or at least the suspicion of

1 Lucy Hutchinson, op. cit., p.66. cf. pp.23, 65, 101, 294.

2 ib., p.103.

3 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.390.

4 Ralph Josselin, op. cit., pp.141, 169, 178.

hypocrisy. But the careful scrutiny of the diary discloses not a hypocrite but one who, with however little success, was struggling by grace to overcome the greed and worldliness which had plagued him throughout his life. On January 25, 1677-8 he writes: "Lord teach mee humility, & submission, I am the greater sinner."¹ On January 26, 1680: "Sensible this day entred my 65 yeare, I mourning it with God that he would bee with mee, subduing my corruptions, & keeping my heart close to him through the grace of Christ."² On May 2, 1683: "God give mee patience for I have more than ordinary need of it."³ Like many Puritans, Josselin might be weak; but however far from moral perfection he might be, and though his attainments might not match his aspirations, his life was a mirror reflecting lofty purpose and radical seriousness. Perhaps nowhere better than in the following soul-soliloquy of the Reverend Oliver Heywood is the shallowness of a Hudibras and of the vast range of its literary kith and kin better demonstrated. No clearer evidence could be submitted that the Puritan was his own severest critic, ever striving by the miracle-working power of grace to come closer to his goal.

Thou hast said, (and dost thou not believe thyself?) that a man is so far a Christian, as he is one in secret between God and his own soul, and that secret acts of religion are precious tokens of sincerity. Thou mayest do much before men, pray zealously, preach affectionately, and take much pains to divide the word of God aright, and yet all be tainted with the secret leaven of hypocrisy; yea, if thou dost not make conscience of private as well as public duties, thy ends are very liable to suspicion, thy case dangerous, and thy heart too, too deceitful.

1 Ralph Josselin, op. cit., p.172.

2 ib., p.178.

3 ib., p.182.

... Why dost thou make others believe thou enjoyest something of God in secret, if it be not so? ... God cannot be mocked as men may, nor doth he see as man seeth. Fair words and a false heart will not pass current in the court of heaven. ... Art thou not ashamed that others should think better of thee than thou art? ... Of all the burdens that oppress me, this hard and stupid heart is the greatest load, and is the most dangerous, except the Lord work a miracle in raising the dead. 1

This is not the language of the hypocrite, but of the saint, agonizing as long as he is separated from God by the slightest margin. Such earnestness alone - and not hypocrisy - accounts for the years of suffering endured by Heywood and his Nonconformist brethren. The first characteristic of the ascetic life of Puritans therefore was perseverance in the upward struggle, in the race of righteousness.

The second indictment of Puritan asceticism is that it was hopelessly egocentric, that the self-ward dimension was altogether too prominent. As Weber put it: "The salvation of the soul and that alone was the centre of their life and work."² Again, Puritans themselves were not unaware of the danger. Baxter felt that far too commonly Christians lived "in the use of meer self-love and fear", and that all too often their practice of religion was motivated by "a timorous care to be saved ..."³ The diary of the Reverend Ralph Josselin may be cited as evidence that the self-regarding element did merge into egocentrism. The most striking of several flagrant signs of this vice was the regarding of his fellows as mere instruments of his own salvation.⁴ But Josselin was in fact an inveterate egotist,⁵ although as has already been seen, he was struggling manfully against his sinfulness. Moreover, to isolate the

1 Oliver Heywood, op. cit., pp.394-5.

2 Max Weber, op. cit., pp.89-90.

3 Richard Baxter, The Poor Man's Family Book, p.227.

4 v. Ralph Josselin, op. cit., pp.3, 29, 47. cf. Max Weber, op. cit., pp.108, 225, note 34.

5 Ralph Josselin, op. cit., pp.18, 34.

self-ward element is to distort the picture. What actually emerges on closer investigation of the Puritan character is not a harsh and unlovely self-centredness, known examples of which are hardly normative, but on the contrary, a balanced attitude to life characterized by the three dimensions of Christian asceticism at its best, self-ward, God-ward and man-ward.

That the self-regarding element was strong cannot be questioned; the Puritan was concerned to work out his salvation with fear and trembling. The scriptural paraphrase which Bunyan puts in the mouth of Evangelist well expresses the usual outlook:

The crown is before you, and it is an incorruptible one; so run, that you may obtain it. Some there be that set out for this crown, and, after they have gone far for it, another comes in, and takes it from them: hold fast, therefore, that you have; let no man take your crown. ¹

The life and ministry of Baxter testify that similar thoughts were seldom far from his mind. To the readers of his Compassionate Counsel to Young Men he said: "If heavenly blessedness be not the chief end that you live, hope and labour for in the world your whole lives will be but carnal, vain, and the way to misery ...". ² And to the charge that such self-concern fostered godliness only for the sake of reward, Baxter replied that "if seeking Christ be mercenary, I desire to be so mercenary." ³ The self-regarding element was constant and pronounced in Puritan piety, as in all Christian asceticism.

But as has already become apparent, the concern for purity and salvation began from an experience of God and looked to His glory, so that the self-ward and God-ward dimensions were inseparably

1 John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress, p.83. cf. I Cor. 9:25, Rev. 3:11.

2 Richard Baxter, loc. cit., pp.65-6.

3 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part I, p.9.

bound together. In Baxter's words: "We should aym at the glory of God (not alone considered, without our salvation, but) in our salvation."¹ For the Puritans were God-intoxicated men. Their self-examination, their self-criticism, their self-discipline, must all be seen in the light of their communion with God and of their desire to reflect His holiness. Kirk has rightly recalled that "self-examination and self-criticism are dangerous in the highest degree unless the soul is already reaching out in self-forgetfulness to something higher and better than itself"², and this condition was fulfilled in Puritan piety.

Moreover, the profound nature of this God-ward dimension is patent in the intense concern for Christlikeness which marked the Puritan character. The imitation of Christ through His indwelling spirit was a pronounced feature of the ascetic life in every wing of the movement. Baxter was ever pleading for the acceptance of Christ as King as well as Saviour,³ and for the self-identification with His cross which testified to such a relationship. And the radical self-transcendence implicit in assuming His yoke was never minimized in his writings.

When you have so long beheld that Cross by faith, as that you can be contented to be hanged between heaven and earth, and become the most forlorn and despicable creature in the eyes of men, and to be stript of all the comforts of life, and life it self for the sake of Christ, and for the Invisible Kingdom which by his Cross was purchased for you; then are you thoroughly Crucified to the world, and the world to you by the Cross of Christ. 4

In such a statement Baxter was but re-echoing the teaching of such

1 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part I, p.11.

2 Kenneth E. Kirk, op. cit., p.47.

3 cf. Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part I, pp.12-13; Directions ... to a Sound Conversion, p.173.

4 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world ..., p.151.

illustrious forebears as William Perkins, who also exhorted men to identify themselves with the suffering, dying, and resurrection of Christ.¹ William Penn left no doubt about the Quaker attitude when he said that "Christians ought to be distinguished by their likeness to Christ and not their Notions of Christ, by his Holy Qualifications, rather than their own Lofty Professions and Invented Formalities."² And as an example of the exalted Christocentrism which animated Puritan ascetic piety, the following passage among many of a similar nature in the writings of Oliver Heywood may profitably be considered.

My Soul embraceth a dear Saviour in the arms of my faith.
 Welcome Christ with his yoke! Welcome the cross of Christ! O
 that my soul may come to Christ aright! I am willing to part
 with the world, sensual gratifications, and all for Christ, and
 to give up myself to Christ. I have no other Saviour, no other
 Sovereign; the Lord my Righteousness is the Lord my Judge; the
 Lord my King will save me. 3

Christ Himself was the goal of the Christian, drawing him ever onward, beyond the things of this world, beyond himself, to the joy of intimate communion.

In the process of preparing the soul for its eternal home by yielding to the rule of God and of His Christ, the Puritan was led not only to the denial of self but also, and in consequence, to a new and fruitful service of his fellow men. Thus to the God-ward and self-ward elements in his piety was added a positive self-transcendence in a man-ward direction, and it is virtually impossible for long to isolate any one of these dimensions. Self-denial and renunciation on behalf of the neighbour are discernible at every point in Puritan

1 Heinrich Heppe, op. cit., p.25. cf. pp.52-3 for the Christocentrism of Puritan piety.
 2 William Penn, An Address to Protestants upon the Present Conjuncture, (1679), p.119.
 3 Oliver Heywood, op. cit., I, Memoirs of His Life, [by Rev. Richard Slate], p.192.

asceticism. It was, to begin with, of fundamental importance in the determination of its intra-mundane character. Puritans protested against monkery because by it a sinful, perishing world was left to its own devices. "A good man is a common good; and compassionate to the miserable, and desirous to bring others to the participation of his felicity",¹ wrote Baxter, expressing the common sentiment. The repeated use of the simple phrase "or others" in the Larger Catechism was very significant in this respect.² Puritans were under the conviction that it was their duty to assist their struggling neighbours in every possible way, no matter how great the self-denial involved might be. According to the Catechism they were to aim at "such a charitable frame of the whole soule toward our neighbour, as that all our inward motions and affections touching him tend unto and further all that good which is his."³ The man-ward dimension in their piety was especially emphasized in the matter of personal example, it being a heinous sin to hold up ungodliness "against any of the Saints, particularly weak brethren, the soules of them or any other, and the common good of all or many."⁴

Self-denial was especially directed toward the spiritual welfare of the neighbour. In their passion for souls, Puritans would go to any length for the salvation of their brethren. Bunyan, in the simple forcefulness of his Life and Death of Mr. Badman again speaks for every Puritan.

Who, that sees an house on fire, will not give the Allarum to

1 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world ..., p.8.

2 v. The humble Advice ... Concerning a larger and a shorter Catechisme, pp.30, 37, 39, 40, 42, etc.

3 *ib.*, p.43.

4 *ib.*, p.44.

them that dwell therein? Who that sees the Land invaded will not set the Beacons on a flame? Who, that sees the Devils, as roaring Lyons, continually devouring souls, will not make an Out-cry? 1

Oliver Heywood, in compassion for those of his countrymen who were missing the way to salvation, addressed his soul thus:

Do not thy bowels yearn over poor ignorant, hard-hearted people, and for some wicked and wretched souls that know not their right hands from their left in spiritual things? ... O my soul, methinks these things should shame thee out of thy security, and provoke thee to industry. 2

He then went on to exhort his soul to greater diligence in the ascetic struggle so as best to perform the man-ward duties of his high office. The whole course of the lifelong pastoral labours of Richard Baxter stands as a monument to the self-denial of the seventeenth century Puritan on behalf of the neighbour. In a passage "extorted from him"³ by a Quaker charge that he plied the sacred ministry for the sake of personal gain, he exclaimed:

I am contented to consume my body, to sacrifice my Reputation to his Service, and to spend all that I have, and to be spent myself, for the soules of men - though the more I love, the less I may be beloved. 4

His writings alone, amounting to almost two hundred volumes, a large percentage of which were designed as aids to the godly life, bear eloquent testimony to the fact that self-denial and self-forgetfulness were the laws of his existence, which neither disease nor ill-treatment nor imprisonment could alter. And the fact that in the case of all Puritan ascetics, self-denying love of the neighbour stemmed from love of God and was always subordinate to it, and that

1 John Bunyan, Life and Death of Mr. Badman, p.10.

2 Oliver Heywood, op. cit., I, p.393.

3 F. J. Powicke, A Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter, 1615-1691, p.286.

4 ut per F. J. Powicke, ib., p.288.

in addition it was accompanied by the ever present self-ward dimension, can in no way obscure the strong man-ward element in their piety. Rather, seeking to glorify God and to work out their own spiritual destiny in active concern for the welfare of the neighbour served invariably to intensify that concern.

Nor was this self-denial expended only on matters spiritual. For charity, in the common as well as the theological sense of that word, was a characteristic quality of Puritan asceticism. The Puritan minister was not one to boast of his good deeds but "he opened his purse to needy prisoners, assisted struggling students through the university, and sold his crops to the poor below the market rate."¹ Baxter refused stipends of up to £500 to come to Kidderminster for less than £100, a large part of which he devoted to the support of his poor kindred and to other charitable purposes, while from 1662 to 1673 he accepted no money for preaching.² The annals of Puritanism afford many such examples. William Bradshaw, seeing his brethren in great need yet being without funds himself, would borrow money to dispense charitably and would scrupulously repay it as soon as possible.³ During both the Fire of London and the Great Plague, the Nonconformists, inured to the rigours of self-denial, stayed in the city of London to minister to the dire needs, both physical and spiritual, of those whom the Conformist ministers had abandoned, "resolved that no obedience to the Laws of any mortal Men whosoever, could justifie them for neglecting of Men's Souls and Bodies in such

1 M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p.344.

2 F. J. Powicke, A Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter, 1615-1691, pp.80 ff; The Reverend Richard Baxter under the Cross, 1662-1691, pp.109 ff.

3 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.59. cf. p.70.

extremities ...".¹ And of course the virtue of charity was not confined to the ministry. God endowed Mrs. Ratcliffe, one is told, not only with a liberal estate but also with a liberal heart. Accordingly, in the country round about her home this good woman voluntarily "visited and relieved the sick, and cloathed the naked, fed the hungry and healed the wounded."² In short, in addition to perseverance in arduous self-discipline and to genuine Christ-centredness, profound Christian charity must be included among the qualities of life which characterized the Puritan ascetic.

Perhaps the most typical attribute of the earnest Puritan, and the one which most meaningfully bespeaks his genuine Christian asceticism, is that of humility. For his constant endeavour was to mortify the subtle temptations to "hardnesse of heart, pride, presumption, carnall security"³ which, in the words of the Larger Catechism, plagued his every move. How great must have been the temptation to deadening spiritual pride on the part of those who believed in the infallible assurance of election.⁴ Or again, since Puritanism laid such stress on preaching and the ministry, how resolutely its clergy must have had to struggle against the pride of their office.⁵ Indeed, the mature Baxter was acutely aware of the disastrous effects of pride, for he writes in his Self-Review:

1 Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, Part III, p.2.

2 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.417. The pious biographer adds: "Now this rare Gentlewoman reaps the fruit of her serving of God, and the whole harvest whereof she received onely the first-fruits in this present world." cf. the case of Thomas Gataker, ib., p.251.

3 The humble Advice ... Concerning a larger and a shorter Catechisme, p.27.

4 ib., p.19.

5 The same weakness has been attributed to John Milton, though in relation to his calling as poet. "Milton's confidence in the high worth of his poetic endowment was not belied by the work that he achieved, yet perhaps a touch of modesty might have given it more of the indefinable quality of appeal." So H. J. C. Grierson, op. cit., p.236. The author is careful to add later however, in a statement which does justice to the Puritan poet: "But Milton is never merely concerned with himself. His true self is his ideals, the good cause, and the English people." p.271.

I am much more apprehensive than long ago, of the Odiousness and Danger of the Sin of Pride; scarce any Sin appeareth more odious to me: Having daily more Acquaintance with the lamentable Naughtiness and Frailty of Man, and of the Mischiefs of that Sin; and especially in Matters Spiritual and Ecclesiastical 1

But there is a wealth of evidence to show not only that Puritan authors were perpetually pleading for the mortification of "Pride and Self-conceitedness"² as in Baxter's Treatise of Self-Denyall, but also that Christian humility was in fact the crowning feature of the character of the Puritan ascetic. The grounds of this quality were in the profound apprehension of the sinfulness of human nature and in the repeated contemplation of the condescension of the Incarnate Christ. This is plain in the case of Richard Sibbes who frequently preached on the Incarnation; "and therefore (saith a Reverend Divine) the noted humility of the Author I lesse wonder at, finding how oft his thoughts dwelt upon the humiliation of Christ."³ By a similar process the piety of the Quakers was formed, for William Penn declares:

It is the Light of Jesus in our Souls, that gives us a true sight of our selves, and that Sight that leads us to Repentance, which Repentance begets Humility, and Humility that true charity that covers a multitude of Faults; which I call God's Expedient against man's Infirmary. 4

It was this spirit of repentance for sin and the desire to be like Christ which impelled Puritans to strive to conquer self and to gain true humility. "See that the work of Humiliation be throughly done, and break not away from the Spirit of Contrition before he have done

1 Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, Part I, p.134.

2 Richard Baxter, A Treatise of Self-Denyall, (1660), p.81. cf. ib. Chap. XIV, "Self-conceitedness must be denied", pp.76-87.

3 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.144.

4 William Penn, Letter of 24th October, 1688, unpaginated, bound with Wm. Penn and Geo. Whitehead, The Christian-Quaker, and his Divine Testimony Vindicated ..., (1674).

with you"¹ was Baxter's advice, and this was a constant strain in the ascetic theme. The exemplary humbleness of Baxter testifies to the fact that he was consistently among the first to give heed to his own teaching, as a perusal of his autobiography will demonstrate.² But the history of the seventeenth century movement which he so nobly represents yields many examples of such victory over self. When Oliver Heywood found that the success of his preaching "did too much tickle me with vain-glorious opinion of myself",³ he set about to mortify his pride as befitted a good servant of God. The same divine had felt great misgivings about his worthiness to enter the high calling of the ministry, and accepted ordination only after the consciousness of thus serving God and man and fulfilling his own spiritual destiny had prevailed with him.⁴ This same sense of humility caused Richard Rothwel to refuse a regular benefice and to take only the inferior positions of lecturer and private chaplain.⁵ Colonel Hutchinson, typical of many prominent Puritans, accepted the responsibilities of his rank but without pride, spending much time with common soldiers and labourers and showing "a loving and sweet courtesy to the poorest ...".⁶ Indeed, the lives of the Puritan saints are exceptionally rich in their testimony to the universality of humility, both in its inward depth and outward scope.⁷ Pomp,

1 Richard Baxter, Directions ... to a Sound Conversion, p.71. For Baxter's teaching on "humiliation" v. especially pp.75-115.

2 v. e.g. Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, Part I, pp.124 ff.

3 Oliver Heywood, op. cit., I, Memoirs of His Life, [by Rev. Richard Slate], pp.338-9.

4 ib., p.24. Heywood was actually ordained by the second classis of Lancashire ministers assembled at Bury on August 4, 1652. ib., p.23.

5 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.69.

6 Lucy Hutchinson, op. cit., p.26.

7 This may be verified by a perusal of Clarke's "Lives". v. e. g. Samuel Clarke, op. cit., pp.144, 150, 153, 154, 159, 163, 174, 177, etc.

ostentation, pride of rank or learning were foreign to their spirituality. Here again Mrs. Ratcliffe's case is representative. "As for Humility, she made great account of it; she studied it seriously, and got it so by heart, that there was no need of Art to make profession or ostentation of it."¹ This quality of the ascetic life of English Puritans is perhaps the best indication of its dynamic self-transcending nature.

Closely allied with this was the virtue of patience under suffering and affliction, the studied discipline of submission to the will of God, however heavy His hand might seem. Baxter welcomed afflictions precisely "because they are so great advantages to Humiliation."² Among the grave sins forbidden by the First Commandment were, according to the Larger Catechism, "resisting and grieving of his [God's] Spirit, discontent, and impatience at his dispensations, charging him foolishly for the evils he inflicts on us ..."³ It has already been suggested that the persecution of the Puritans was in some degree responsible for their ascetic piety. It is also true to say that the patience with which they accepted suffering of every kind was in itself an important element in their asceticism. "Man must be Disciplin'd by God for Heaven: and trained up by manifold Providences for those most blessed Regions whereto he is consigned by God"⁴, wrote Matthew Sylvester. In similar vein one of the watchwords of Richard Rothwel was "Persecutio pignus futurae felicitatis"⁵. Persecution and suffering were thus always

1 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.388.

2 Richard Baxter, Directions ... to a Sound Conversion, p.83.

3 The humble Advice ... Concerning a larger and a shorter Catechisme, p.28.

4 Matthew Sylvester, Elisha's Cry after Elijah's God, p.1.

5 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.69.

regarded as divinely imposed disciplines for the soul's true welfare.

It was because the Puritan was engaged in an unending struggle against his own corruption and the enticements of the world, because his was a systematically disciplined life, that he was able to persevere under persecution and to utilize suffering for the strengthening and training of his soul for glory. The hardships of the Nonconformists after 1662 were particularly rigorous; yet in the patient bearing of them one discerns one of the noblest aspects of Puritanism. This was especially true of the Quakers, who not only accepted suffering but rejoiced in it, believing that the world would always hate the children of God, that men's power to kill touched the body and not the soul, and that those who took up the cross and suffered with Christ would reign with Him. The Apologie des Puritains, written to explain to Continental Protestants the position of English Puritans, takes one to the heart of their attitude on this point, and is strongly reminiscent of the outlook of the early Christians. It claims with conviction that although outwardly forsaken,

on ne scauroit empêcher la grâce de notre Dieu, de nous consoler au dedans, avec les paroles de sa patience, & de nous donner le courage & la force de résister aux assauts des Tentations, & Persécutions aus-quelles nous pourrons être exposez, car quoy que nous soyons foibles en nous-mêmes, la grâce de Dieu nous suffira, & sa vertu s'accomplira en nos infirmités. Notre Seigneur & ses saints Apôtres nous ont depuis long temps montré le chemin de la croix, & puis que nous sommes par sa grâce membres de l'Église militante, nous savons que c'est par plusieurs [sic] tribulations qu'il nous faut entrer dans la

1 v. Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, Part III, pp.3, 4, 104, 105.

2 Godfrey Davies, The Early Stuarts, 1603-1660, p.402, notes that "Just as persecution seemed to bring forth all that was noblest in puritanism, so adversity gave birth to its finest literary efforts", viz., Milton's Paradise Lost and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

3 Robert Barclay, A Catechism and Confession of Faith, pp.90-1. cf. John 15:18 ff; Matt. 10:16 ff; II Tim. 2:12.

trionphante au Royaume des cieux: & nous aurons cette consolation de souffrir en bien faisant, comme nous y sommes déjà appelez, & cette assurance qu'on ne nous scauroit ôter, que c'est pour sa cause, & pour le témoignage de sa vérité 1

This picture of the servant of Christ patiently bearing the cross of affliction affords an essential insight into the nature of the spirituality of the movement.

But Puritans were able to turn the major persecutions to account because in all life's ordeals they had cultivated the same submissive disposition. On the loss of some part of her estate, Mrs. Ratcliffe would show her submission to the will of God, her voluntary acceptance of His chastisement, by saying:

He would not have me to be in love with, nor relye upon uncertain riches, which were never true to any that trusted them, but upon himself, and I willingly renounce them to rest upon him. 2

On one occasion this pious lady suffered a horrible facial deformity which was "the shipwrack of much beauty and comeliness, ... yet shewed she admirable patience under this great affliction, to which her Heart was brought meekly to submit ...".³ Nothing, however precious, could be compared in the Puritan mind to the pearl of great price, the possession of God by the soul. This was the consuming passion of life; to this end all life's experiences were made to contribute, and especially that suffering which would otherwise be worse than meaningless.

No nobler representative of this attitude could be found than Richard Baxter who, by precept and example, made known to his countrymen the profound meaning of patience under affliction. The practitioner of physic yet the lifelong victim of sickness and pain;

1 Apologie des Puritains d'Angleterre ..., p.160.

2 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.387.

3 ib., p.388.

the selfless reconciler yet the butt of extreme ecclesiastical parties; the tireless author of aids to godliness yet the most criticized of men for his voluminousness and lack of polish; the would-be faithful son of the Church of England yet the object of its persecutions for many years; the defender of law and moderation yet under Bloody Jeffreys the object of the ignoblest miscarriage of justice;¹ than such a man, none knew better the meaning of submission to the chastening hand of God. His serenity under affliction is epitomized in a letter written to Compton, Bishop of London, after his conviction by Jeffreys, in which he said: "If God will have me end a painful weary life by such suffering, I hope I shall finish my course with joy ..."² And this patient submission which, far from being unique, had marked his whole career, was just a faithful reflection of his own teaching in The Saints' Everlasting Rest, "That Afflictions be Gods most effectual means, to keep us from stragling [sic] out of the way to our Rest ... [and] to make us mend our pace in the way to our Rest. They are his Rod, and his Spur ..."³ That is the authentic word of the Christian ascetic. And as long as Baxter is read and studied, it will be impossible to forget that the willing acceptance of suffering was a basic quality of the spirituality of English Puritans.

It is little cause for wonder that the ascetic rigorism of the movement based on the conception of life as a vast training

1 F. J. Powicke, The Reverend Richard Baxter under the Cross, p.145, says that at Baxter's trial Jeffreys "made himself Counsel as well as Judge: and then left it for a packed Jury to say amen."

2 ut per F. J. Powicke, *ib.*, p.149.

3 Richard Baxter, *op. cit.*, Part III, pp.254, 255.

ground, an arena of combat, should have been characterized by a certain sober gravity which in some cases bordered on austerity. Far from being negative, it had its source in the positive masculine pursuit of godliness, which was a very serious and engrossing occupation. The Puritan had sworn allegiance to Almighty God; he was in earnest about the eternal verities; he was his brother's keeper. The tremendous obligations which these weighty facts laid upon him prevented him from turning aside to worldliness and frivolity, and from making religion a custom, a convenience, a respectable appendage to worldly ends. ¹ This, as Baxter indicated in his Christian Directory, ² was the basis of what he called the "serious godliness" ² of Puritanism.

Remember that there is but one God, one Heaven for us, one Happiness, and one Way: And this one is of such moment, as calls for all the intention and attention of our souls, and is enough to satisfie us, and should be enough to call us off from all that would divert us. ³

Could such a conception with its single-minded solemnity have issued from anything but a sour and sombre and darkly austere spirit? Were not seventeenth century Puritans quite bereft of the joy of living? There is no reason to suppose that there were no thwarted souls within their ranks. There are hints, indeed, even in the lives of the saints, that a reputation for gloom was undermining the witness of Puritanism to the world. John Dod

... used to presse much to meeknesse, and a sweet disposition to affability, charity and cheerfulness, not to be rigid, sour, tart, nor sad, lest the world should think that we served an hard Master. ⁴

1 v. Horton Davies, op. cit., pp.145-6.

2 Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory, Part I, p.180.

3 ib.

4 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.176.

That the exhortation was not needed is improbable. In fact, many Puritan ministers had unwittingly fostered a doleful spirit. Baxter used to urge his readers to "godly sorrow" and "good sadness", not because "sorrow as sorrow is desirable; but as a necessary Consequent of our grievous sinning",¹ and although in his careless age the message was by no means irrelevant, it is likely that some zealous souls went to extremes. Moreover, although Puritans could enjoy the normal pleasures of this life in their place, that place was distinctly secondary in their scale of values, so that there must have been very few cases of spontaneous carefree mirth, of a Rabelaisian effervescence of spirit. Clarke's description of one of the saints leaves no doubt about this.

In his mirth (to which he sometimes unbended himself to Recreate his over-wearied mind, that with renewed strength he might return to his more serious, and severer studies) he strictly observed the bounds of honesty, civility, modesty, and the gravity of his place; well considering, that the least dead fly in the Apothecaries' Choisest Oyntment causeth it to send forth an displeasing savour. 2

But that gloom was a universal mark of the Puritan ascetic is a charge the facts will not support. For, despite his gravity, or as he would have said, because of it, he was filled with an inner joy which the world could neither give nor take away - a deep contentment born of the constant communion with God which was a concomitant of the mortified Christian life. It was other-worldly in origin, arising from the transference to the human heart of the eternal reality of the spiritual world, of the Spirit of the living God; and it fed on the hope of complete fulfilment in the life to

1 Richard Baxter, Directions ... to a Sound Conversion, p.109.

2 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.310.

come. But a very real foretaste of that future bliss was the portion of the Puritan here and now. His "were spiritual joys and not material ones, it is true, but they were of this world in the temporal sense of the phrase."¹ Baxter, and in this again he is typical, kept returning to the delights of godliness, affirming that

... to Rejoyce in the true mortification of the flesh, and in the holy contempt of worldly things, and in the desires and hopes of the glory to come ... [was] the part of the Saints on earth²

Thus, far from emptying life of zest, the ascetic struggle of English Puritans in the seventeenth century invested life with an unalterable³ confidence and joy, the peace of God which passes understanding.

However hazardous the struggle for grace, however narrow and strait the path, the Puritan could afford to smile at men who pretended that their easier way was also the more delectable.⁴

Finally, in the light of the Puritan race of righteousness and the qualities of life which, at its best, it produced, it is impossible to doubt that one is in the presence of an ascetic piety profoundly Christian in character and altogether removed from a sterile and static moralism. And none has made this plainer than the earnest Richard Baxter who wrote, in a passage similar to many others from Puritan pens:

O that you did but throughly believe, that it is the only wise and gainful choice, to deny your carnal selves, and forsake all and follow Christ, in hope of the heavenly treasure which he hath promised. And let me tell you again, as the way to this; That though melancholly may make you weary of the world, and stoicall precepts may restrain your lusts; yet it is only the power of the Holy Ghost, the Cross of Christ, the belief of the promise, the Love of God, & the Hopes of the everlasting invisible Glory, that will effectually and savingly Crucifie you to the

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- 1 M. M. Knappen, Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries, by Richard Rogers and Samuel Ward, p.9. This statement, made largely on the basis of a study of Elizabethan Puritanism, is entirely accurate with regard to the movement throughout the seventeenth century.
- 2 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world ..., p.232.
- 3 v. Oliver Heywood, op. cit., I, p.387.
- 4 Perry Miller, op. cit., p.62.

world, and the world to you. It is a Lesson that never was well taught by any other Master but Christ, and you must Learn it from him, by his Word, Ministers and Spirit in his School, or you will never Learn or Practise it aright. 1

IMMEDIATION AND THE JEM

The calls a self-possessing power, His,
 That as a syllable was crucified.
 They are in words and signs that in vain
 He learned his words and signs that in vain
 That's all of the receiving of a Bible,
 Or saying of a Prayer, or a Fiddle,
 But what he learned how to live and die,
 For what was that that dwell eternally?
 I want the pleasures of my spouse and love,
 But all that would be new-like only show,
 I want I would be happy that shall work,
 Which was of God, for every word shall lead
 I want and open heaven to show
 That hearts be led to his Service show

Richard Baxter,
 "Love Preaching, Truth and Peace"
 Christian's Magazine, (1707), p. 22, 23.

1 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world . . ., p.219.

CHAPTER IV

RECREATION AND THE ARTS

Who calls a self-condemning sinner, Wise,
That on a syllable can criticize;
That can in mode and figure talk in vain;
Or learnedly his pride and sin maintain?
That's best at the resolving of a Riddle,
Or playing on a Bag-pipe, or a Fiddle:
But hath not learned how to Live and Die,
Nor where his Soul must dwell eternally? ...
O that the pleasures of my sports and toys,
Had all been turn'd to man-like holy Joyes! ...
O that I could my wasted Time call back,
Which now my Soul for greater works doth lack ...
O happy men whose portion is above!
Whose hearts to God and to his Service clove!

Richard Baxter,
"Love Breathing Thanks and Praise",
Poetical Fragments, (1681), pp.32, 35.

A. The Basic Principles.

In the popular mind Puritanism is usually synonymous with a cheerless and depressing outlook on life, compounded of austerity, sobriety, and forbidding narrowness, and symbolized by a notoriously rigid Sabbatarianism. The word especially connotes a negative unbending attitude to games and sports, to the arts, and to the spontaneous enjoyment of the natural pleasures of life generally. It is therefore essential to an analysis of the element of Christian asceticism in the movement to proceed to investigate the precise nature of its reaction to those facets of human experience which

fall broadly into the categories of recreation and aesthetics, an enquiry considerably facilitated and illuminated by the preceding examination of the basic framework of the Puritan askesis, of which in reality it is an extension.

With that framework in mind, it is obvious that although the popular conception of the movement viewed from outside is little more than a superficial caricature, the Puritan outlook was nevertheless poles apart from the humanist view of life. The humanist mind was willing to accept the world as something to be enjoyed, a source of beauty and therefore of pleasure, quite apart from a constant, conscious, other-worldly reference. Respect for human nature and free play for the mind and the imagination in intellectual and artistic endeavour came high in its scale of values. In the terms of Grierson's definition,

Humanism was an acceptance of human life and values as right and reasonable, and, if controlled by a sense of measure, needing not in themselves to be repented of, a revival of values and ideals on which the best thought of antiquity had set the seal of its approval; and among these values is pleasure, the enjoyment of life and its good things, and chief among them the arts - the great decorators of man's life, the fullest and finest expression of the joy of life, the beauty inherent in all that is. 1

With English Puritans, as has become apparent above, it was quite otherwise. For them there was something far more zestful in life than the enjoyment of the transient pleasures of the world, whatever form they might assume. Viewing life as a pilgrimage, an unending struggle preparing the soul for heaven, their most exhilarating occupation was the pursuit of godliness, by which every act, word, and deed was calculated to glorify God, to fortify the

1 H. J. C. Grierson, op. cit., p.18.

soul, and to edify the neighbour. The one thing that mattered to the Puritan - and that constantly - was the immediate relation of the invisible soul to the invisible God, and thus there was little room left for the spontaneous enjoyment of the good things of life, independently of the great realities of God, eternity and sanctification. This is the principle which Baxter was laying down in his Sound Conversion when he wrote:

God who is the End of your hearts, and lives, must be the End of every action of them, unless you will step out of the way of Order, and Safety, and Holiness. For every action that is not from God, and by God, and for God, is contrary to the true nature of true Sanctification. 1

Such is the positive pulsing conviction underlying what seems to be the totally negative attitude of Puritans to life's innocent pleasures. The diversions and beauties of life must at all times be consciously subordinated to godliness, and only in so far as they were its handmaidens were they acceptable. The inevitable result was the diminution of the role of the diverting and the aesthetic in human experience. It is true of the Puritan, as Chambon has said, "dass ihm das Auge abgeht für alles, was nicht im Lichte der Ewigkeit betrachtet werden kann, dass manche Melodie, dass auch mancher Wohlklang dieser Welt ihm fehlt ...".² But in the transaction there was no consciousness of loss, for something infinitely precious had been effectively safeguarded. A good had been exchanged for a better.³

For Puritans not only regarded the created order as good,⁴ but they believed that the sensible apprehension of its beauties and

1 Richard Baxter, Directions ... to a Sound Conversion, p.186.

2 Joseph Chambon, Der Puritanismus: Sein Weg von der Reformation bis zum Ende der Stuarts, p.285.

3 v. Jeannette Tawney, op. cit., pp.159-60.

4 cf. supra pp.63-4.

the enjoyment of its gifts were also good. "No seventeenth century Puritan ever said that food, love, and music were intrinsically bad or that recreation was inherently evil."¹ The reason for this was because these things revealed the bounty of God the Creator.

Doubtless as the Soul, while it dwelleth with flesh doth receive its objects by the mediation of sense, so God hath purposely put such variety of sensible delicacies into the creatures, that by every sight, and smell, and hearing, and touch, and taste, our souls might receive a report of the sweetness of God, whose goodness all proceed from. ²

Baxter, the author of these words, went on in typical Puritan fashion to convince his readers that they must labour continually to "read the Book of the Creation"³ aright by discerning God in all its sensible delights. But it was just this distinction which men seemed incapable of making. And at this point in the Puritan outlook one discovers the second, or negative, principle which was to govern the reaction of Christians to the normal pleasures of life.

Since the Fall, by which human nature was completely vitiated, man had been rendered incapable of unrestrained spontaneous enjoyment of the creature, without perverting it to feed his pride and to nourish his spirit of rebellion against God. Due especially to the corruption of the imagination, the reason, the will, and the affections, the world though good in itself was "apt to be the Matter of our temptation"⁴, so that

... we must never imagine that we can make it so wholsom or harmless a thing, as that we may feed upon it without great caution and suspition, or ever return to friendship with it again. ⁵

1 Perry Miller, op. cit., p.41.

2 Richard Baxter, The Reasons of the Christian Religion, (1667), p.108.

3 ib.

4 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world ..., p.23.

5 ib., p.22.

This entailed a policy of severe restraint with regard to creative activity and diversions of every kind. For all these encouraged men who were beset by the weakness of the flesh to love the creature in and for itself, and to forget the Creator behind the creation. "Every man naturally is a flat Idolater;" wrote Baxter; "our hearts turned from God in our first fall; and ever since the creature hath been our God: This is the grand sin of Nature ...".¹ Accordingly, he was continually at pains to urge his readers to avoid this pitfall in their pleasures and sports and to be ever vigilant against the temptation to seek their true happiness outside the only rightful sovereign of their souls, Almighty God. "As the creature is set in competition with God, or in the least degree of Co-ordination with God, so is it to be hated, rejected and crucified."² All men belonged to the order of nature, but the saints also belonged to the order of grace,³ through which they were enabled to transcend the natural order. Henceforth the Christian must struggle to use his body, his intellect, his imagination, his emotions, his passions, his creative ability, to serve God and to redound to His glory and to the soul's eternal welfare. There could be no autonomy for the natural and the secular pursuits of men. The idolatry of the flesh must be mortified in the supreme effort to maintain the sovereignty of God and the supremacy of the spiritual in every facet of human activity. "Know not, desire not,

1 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest. Part I, p.167.

2 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world ..., p.11.

3 A. S. P. Woodhouse, Puritanism and Liberty, p.39.

love not any creature, but purely as subordinate to God!"¹ was thus a powerful principle moulding the predominantly negative attitude of Puritans to recreation, the arts, and all sensuous culture.

In addition to the positive pursuit of godliness and the negative avoidance of idolatry, a third factor contributing to the same end was the rooted conviction that many forms of pleasure inevitably catered to the flesh by fostering sensuality, unless the strictest kind of discipline was maintained. In an age given over to the unrestrained pursuit of pleasure, Puritans laid special stress on the need to keep constant guard over the sensual appetites. And one of the chief measures in this war against "flesh-pleasing" was the careful avoidance of all diversions which conduced to virtual enslavement by the senses. In Baxter's practical works there was no more frequent theme than this.

Away therefore from idleness; pamper not the flesh with fulness or delights; abhor all time-wasting, needless recreations; away from the baits of fleshly lusts; ... Presume not on your own strength. He is safest that is farthest from the danger. 2

Such "corrupting vanities" could never be tolerated in the race of righteousness. This was not to say, however, that all men were bound to precisely the same kind or the same degree of renunciation, but that all were required to mortify sensuality. Each, therefore, must ferret out his particular weaknesses, and stop up the gaps in his spiritual defences. "Know what it is that you are most in danger of; whether lust and idleness, or excess in meat or drinks, or play; and there set the strongest watch for your preservation"³, exhorted Baxter. No amusement or enjoyment could be countenanced which

1 Richard Baxter, The Poor Man's Family Book, p.272.

2 Richard Baxter, Compassionate Counsel to Young Men, pp.75-6.

3 Richard Baxter, The Poor Man's Family Book, p.276.

strengthened the flesh in its struggle against the spirit, and in the Puritan reckoning this principle laid very severe restrictions on the gratification of the natural tastes and desires of men.

B. Sabbatarianism and Recreations.

Turning now to the application of

these three ascetic principles to specific Puritan practice in the matter of recreation and sport, one is immediately confronted with the phenomenon of Sabbatarianism which provides an excellent focal point for the consideration of this problem. For the position of the movement with regard to the Sabbath was not merely "another aspect of the general ascetic attitude" of English Puritans, but actually "underlay and did much to stimulate the others."¹ No better insight into Puritan Sabbatarianism can be had than in the following extract from Geree's account of the "old English Puritane".

The Lord's day he esteemed a divine ordinance, & rest on it necessary, so far as it conduced to holinesse. He was very consciencious [sic] in observance of that day as the mart day of the soule. He was very carefull to remember it, to get house, and heart in order for it: and when it came, he was studious to improve it. He redeemed the morning from superfluous sleep, and watched the whole day over his thoughts and words, not only to restrain from wickednesse, but worldlinesse. All parts of the day were alike holy to him, and his care was continued in it in variety of holy duties: what he heard in publike, he repeated in private, to whet it upon himselfe and family. Lawfull recreations he thought this day unseasonable, and unlawfull ones much more abominable: yet he knew the liberty God gave him for needfull refreshing, which hee did neither refuse nor abuse. 2

One is here in the presence of a thorough-going active Christian

1 M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p.442. It is not within the scope of this investigation to analyse the complex factors, social, political, religious, which combined to produce the Puritan attitude to Sunday; but only to seek to understand it as a crucial feature of Puritan asceticism, and specifically of its attitude to recreations.

2 John Geree, op. cit., pp.2-3.

asceticism. In three directions the Puritan was making spiritual capital of the God-given opportunities of the Lord's Day - self-ward, by the positive exercise of the soul; God-ward, by the performance of holy duties in worship; and man-ward, by the edifying example set the neighbour. Negatively and in consequence he was careful not only to renounce those pastimes which, otherwise lawful, would divert the soul from its true sovereign, Almighty God, but also to keep a careful watch over his senses and to avoid all recreations which fostered godlessness and sensuality. Such were the arguments which run through Baxter's Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day. He finds it impossible to understand professing Christians who prefer the "tempting, diverting, unnecessary recreations, or pleasures of the flesh",¹ to the holy employments of the soul which the Christian Sabbath² makes possible.

What hearts have those men, that had rather be in an Ale-house, or a Play-house, or asleep, than to be in heart with God? That can find so much pleasure in jesting and idle talking and foolery, that they can better endure it, than to peruse a Map of Heaven, and to read and hear the Sacred Oracles! Who think it a toile to praise their Maker and Redeemer, and a pleasure to game and dance and drink! ... Do they not tell the world what enemies they are to God, who love a pair of Cards, or Dice, or Wanton Dalliance, better than his Word and Worship? 3

His prayer, therefore, was that "men's sleepy sensual souls" should be so illuminated and energized as to see in the Sabbath an extraordinary

1 Richard Baxter, The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day, p.110.

2 Baxter did not accept the "Jewish Ceremonious Sabbath", (ib., p.126), although Bound's The True Doctrine of the Sabbath of 1595 had widely established among Puritans "the theory that any right observation of the Sunday should be based upon the old Mosaic law for the Sabbath". (W. B. Whitaker, Sunday in Tudor and Stuart Times, p.59). Frequently this led to a static Old Testament legalism which both a reaction to prevalent laxities and corrective Puritan legislation tended to accentuate.

3 Richard Baxter, The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day, pp.103-4.

occasion for spiritual warfare and especially for the casting off
of seductive pastimes.¹

The contrast is striking between the English Puritan and the
unspiritual man of the times. Bunyan's Mr. Badman

... could not endure the Lord's Day, because of the Holiness
that did attend it ... [but] would sleep at Duties, would talk
vainly with his Brothers, and as it were, think every godly
opportunity seven times as long as it was, grudging till it was
over. 2

The Puritan, eagerly seeking to turn the Sabbath to account from an
inner compulsion to godliness, voluntarily renounced legitimate
pleasures and studiously mortified sensual ones; whereas Mr. Badman,
finding the religious exercises of the Lord's Day a burden, was
anxious to break away from such irksome chores to the sports and
revels of the village green. In this he had been encouraged by the
Book of Sports which had managed to cajole the people into attending
church only by offering them the bribe of recreation when this formal
requirement had been fulfilled. Outside of his rough pleasures the
non-Puritan found the Sabbath to be a day of gloom and ennui. But
to the Puritan it was neither. On the contrary, it was a time for
intensified spiritual effort which no diversions could be allowed to
mar;³ and as such it was a day of heightened zest and joy. "Come and
spend but a day in Loving God, as thou dost in talking of him, and
try whether Love, and the holiest Love, be a wearisome work"⁴, was
Baxter's confident invitation to those who believed that more pleasure
was to be had in playing than in worshipping.

1 Richard Baxter, The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day, p.127.

2 John Bunyan, Life and Death of Mr. Badman, p.28.

3 C. E. Whiting, op. cit., p.443.

4 Richard Baxter, The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day, p.123.

The most significant feature of the Puritans' attitude to recreation therefore, is that religion was their chief recreation. Cromwell's soldiers, when not engaged in the disciplines of war, devoted themselves with gusto to prayers and praise and religious exercises, rather than to the licentious revels preferred by the king's army.¹ John Dod, as Clarke relates, because he "was of a weaned disposition from the world himself, and ... laboured to wean others",² believed that only the spiritually ill craved the solace of too frequent amusement.

Speaking of Recreation, he said, he marvelled what the Vocation of many was, who were so eager for Recreation. And if we should come into a house, and see many Physick-boxes and Glasses, we would conclude some body is sick; so when we see Hounds, and Hawks, and Cards, and Dice, we may fear there is some sick soul in that Family.³

Similarly, Herbert Palmer felt no need of diversion, or indeed of anything but the minimum attention to bodily needs, "accounting time so precious, that he would redeem it, not only from sports, but from sleep also so far as the necessities of nature would permit."⁴

Puritans generally were by no means averse to healthful sports and recreations as such, however. Realizing that the body was good and that it could be a very useful servant, Baxter taught that bodily exercise was a duty for the preservation of health and fitness.⁵ He also recommended "any thing which truly tendeth to recreate, revive, or cheer the spirits for the service of our Master."⁶ Colonel Hutchinson enjoyed fencing, dancing, and archery; Henry⁷

1 J. B. Marsden, The History of the Early Puritans ..., pp.136-7.

2 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.172.

3 ib., p.173.

4 ib., p.200.

5 Richard Baxter, Gildas Salvianus, The Reformed Pastor, p.392.

6 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world ..., p.49.

7 Lucy Hutchinson, op. cit., p.19.

Newcombe, a Presbyterian minister, found diversion in playing bowls, shovelboard and billiards; while Oliver Cromwell allowed mixed dancing till early morning following the wedding of one of his daughters.² It was the Puritans who, by ordinances of June 11 and 28, 1647, set aside the second Tuesday in every month specifically for "such convenient reasonable Recreation and Relaxation"³ as was formerly allowed the people on Holy Days.

But the role of recreation was distinctly subordinate to the pursuit of godliness. Thus Puritans were strictly opposed to diversions which overreached their limited purpose by consuming too much time, or which contributed to the undoing of the personality rather than to its general welfare, or which could not be pursued to the glory of God. On these grounds Baxter condemned many "sensual sports", such as bowling, hunting, card-playing, gambling, racing, dancing, stage-plays, bear-baiting and cock-fighting.⁴ The social corruption and moral chaos too frequently associated with what otherwise might have given little offence, led him to say:

They corrupt the Fantasie; They imprint upon the Thinking faculty, so strong an inclination to run out after such things; and upon the Appetite so strong a list and longing for them, that carnality is much encreased by them; Mortification hindred; Concupiscence gratified; the flesh prevailleth, the spirit is quenched; and the soul made as unfit for heavenly things, as a School-Boy is for his Book, whose heart is set upon his play⁵

Similar ascetic motives gave rise to the Puritan acts and ordinances which prohibited sports on monthly fast days and Sundays, imposed

1 Arthur Ponsonby, English Diaries, p.128.

2 Percy A. Scholes, The Puritans and Music in England and New England ..., p.60.

3 C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, op. cit., I, p.954.

4 Richard Baxter, The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day, p.110.

5 ib., p.115.

penalties on the authors of books advocating their morality at such times, prohibited cock-fighting and horse-racing, and enacted the forfeiture of money won at these sports and at card-playing.¹ The Lord Protector and his Council forbade cock-fighting, for example, because it was "commonly accompanied with Gaming, Drinking, Swearing, Quarreling, and other dissolute Practices, to the Dishonor of God, and ... the ruine of Persons and their Families ...".² Such action was furthered by the pagan superstition, grossness and debauchery which still attended popular festivals, wakes, and May-days.³ Under these conditions it is not to be wondered at if the genuinely ascetic attitude which required constant discipline self-ward, God-ward, and man-ward should later have degenerated to outright opposition to the very use of recreations, and not only to their abuse. Abhorring the tainted pleasures which were corroding English life in the seventeenth century, Puritans became suspicious of many innocent enjoyments. Here if anywhere is the source of the popular conception of their austerity and narrowness.⁴

G. Sobriety and Simplicity.

The ascetic discipline of the movement normally aimed, however, at the avoidance of abuses on the part of pilgrims who must ever struggle to reach the goal, as the attitude to drinking serves to illustrate. Puritans were by no means teetotalers, and had no objection to alcohol itself;⁵

1 C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, op. cit., I, p.23, (Aug. 24, 1642); p.81 (Feb. 15, 1642/3); II, p.1168 (June 28, 1657); p.861 (March 31, 1654); pp.941-2 (July 4, 1654); p.1250 (June 26, 1657).

2 ib., II, p.861 (March 31, 1654).

3 cf. H. J. C. Grierson, op. cit., p.132.

4 cf. A. F. Findlay, Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. I, p.401.

5 In this they followed Continental Calvinism. In Calvin's Genevan clubs, wine was permitted though card-playing and dancing were prohibited. v. A. Mitchell Hunter, op. cit., p.262.

and indeed, in a day when to drink water frequently involved a serious risk to health, such an attitude was almost inconceivable. Thus Ralph Josselin enjoyed his beer, William Prynne his ale, and Oliver Cromwell his small beer and wine.¹ John Carter, who maintained a heavy schedule of pastoral work until late in life when his body had become weak, believed that the "comfortable draughts" which he enjoyed following his Sunday labours were "Crutches to shore up a ruinous House ...".² But here too the Puritan was patently the ascetic, continually on guard lest he be led astray. For he was painfully aware that in his day one of the most serious stumbling-blocks to the godly life was the sin of intemperance. Ralph Josselin found his beer to be a tonic,³ but was under no illusion about the sinfulness of drunkenness. William Prynne enjoyed his ale, but pled for sobriety and attacked excessive drinking in his Healthes: Sicknesse: or, A Brief Discourse proving the Drinking and Pledging of Healths to be sinful and utterly unlawful to Christians, (1628). And although no teetotaler, Cromwell ordered the strict suppression of unnecessary ale-houses, and punished drunkenness. The Puritan attitude was exhibited by Herbert Palmer who "abstained from strong drink altogether; Wine he drank very sparingly so far forth only as the necessities of Nature did require ...".⁴ And William Penn, pleading for the disciplined spiritual life, manifested the usual three dimensions of Christian asceticism in his censure of excess in drinking when he maintained it to be a violation of the law of God,

1 v. Ralph Josselin, op. cit., pp.29, 55, 182; Benjamin Brook, op. cit., III, p.57; C. H. Firth, Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Puritans in England, p.353.

2 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.138.

3 Ralph Josselin, op. cit., p.17.

4 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.200.

of our own natures, and of our duty to the neighbour.¹ Of the offenders in this regard he asks: "will this kind of Improvement of their Worldly Talent give them Peace in the Day of Judgement?"²

In similar fashion Puritans inveighed against gluttony, for excess in eating was an equally enticing diversion in the seventeenth century. In his Christian Directory Baxter marshalled most of the telling arguments. Above all, "Luxury and Gluttony is a sin exceeding contrary to the Love of God: it is Idolatry: it hath the Heart which God should have ..."³ It is a time waster, a symptom of a carnal mind, an enemy of body and soul, and a serious obstacle to salvation. "Thou pleasest thy throat, and poysonest thy soul ..."⁴ And of equal gravity it involves a radical lack of self-denial on behalf of the poor and starving in the land. Such an intemperate, sensual pleasure must therefore be uprooted by the most careful mortification and by earnest rededication to the Christian life. "Live faithfully to God, and upon spiritual durable delights", was Baxter's sincere exhortation.⁵ The use of almost identical arguments by Quakers, whom Baxter so frequently opposed, shows the universality of the Puritan ascetic witness in this regard.⁶

An allied appeal was for moderation and simplicity in dress, furnishings, and general mode of life. The description of Geree's "old English Puritane" on this point is normative of the movement as a whole.

1 William Penn, An Address to Protestants ..., p.7.

2 *ib.*, p.8.

3 Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory, Part I, p.312.

4 *ib.*, p.313.

5 *ib.*, p.315.

6 cf. William Penn, An Address to Protestants ..., pp.18 ff.

He was sober in the use of the things of this life, rather beating downe the body, then pampering it: yet he denyed not himselfe the use of Gods blessing, lest he should be unthankfull, but avoyded excesse lest he should be forgetfull of the Doner. In his habit he avoyded costlinesse and vanity, neither exceeding his degree in civility, nor declining what suted with Christianity, desiring in all things to expresse gravity. 1

Thankfulness, self-discipline, gravity - these were the positive qualities of the Puritan animating his protest at the self-indulgence and vanity of the world. Clothes, they argued, were meant to cover nakedness and to provide warmth, but fashion perverted their use to serve the ends of pride and even lust.² Painting and patching the face and wearing wigs and long hair were designed for the same purpose. By way of dissent, Puritans cultivated decency and honest plainness, refused to conform to fashion, and produced such books as William Prynne's The Unlovelinesse of Love-lockes (1628). Behind these protests lay the passionate concern for spiritual discipline and godly warfare. Modish extravagance and ostentation were, as Bunyan said, "visible signs of heart pride", in which he included plaiting the hair, wearing jewels and costly apparel, imitating the proud in speech, dress, or action.³ In like manner Puritans sought to avoid idolatrous pride and sensuality in the furnishing of their homes. On this subject Penn writes:

It is a most inexcusable Superfluity, to bestow an Estate to line Walls, dress Cabinets, embroider Beds, with an Hundred other unprofitable Pieces of State, such as Massy Plate, Rich Chiny, costly Pictures and Painted Windows of no use in the Earth, only for Show and Sight: the Interest of which Money so ill employed, might profitably Maintain the Poor of a Numerous

1 John Gere, op. cit., pp.5, 6.

2 William Penn, An Address to Protestants ..., p.14.

3 John Bunyan, Life and Death of Mr. Badman, p.130.

Parish. 1

Again one can discern the attitude of the Christian ascetic who finds room only for the spiritually profitable in life. The same outlook was characteristic of John Carter, in whose house plain earthen and wooden ware did duty for expensive plate, and where "Pewter, and Brass were the highest Mettals for his Utensils."² Thus in respect of clothing and furniture, as in other spheres, Puritans attempted to establish a scale of values in which first things were put first and which conduced to the mortification of a proud and vain self-indulgence which took honour from God, showed lovelessness to the neighbour, and proved to be a fatal drag on the soul.

D. The Arts and Worship.

Proceeding to a consideration of the

Puritan attitude to artistic and cultural pursuits generally, one is confronted with a picture of caution and discipline in every way consistent with the outlook on amusements, clothing, and furnishings. Although Weber's contention that the movement exhibited a "fundamental antagonism to sensuous culture of all kinds"³ was somewhat exaggerated, it is true that the place which Puritans found for the claims of art, music and literature was distinctly subordinate to their concern for the moral and spiritual life. Thus, as Dowden suggests,

... among the Puritans of the seventeenth century few besides

1 William Penn, An Address to Protestants ..., p.17. It is interesting to note that Penn blames all these excesses on France. "We have been more Careful to receive the Law from France for our Clothes, than from Christ for our conversation ...", he writes, adding: "and so Prevalent is the Humor of that Country with us, and Powerful the ascendant it hath over us, that we seem to be French-Men, only we live in England." *ib.*

2 Samuel Clarke, *op. cit.*, p.135.

3 Max Weber, *op. cit.*, p.105.

Milton, who was more than a Puritan, had that coherent conception of human life and human culture which recognizes the Divine Spirit as present and operative in all the higher strivings of man. 1

There is indeed much evidence that there was no inherent antipathy to cultural attainments as such. Colonel Hutchinson "had great judgment in paintings, gravings, sculpture, and all liberal arts, and had many curiosities of value in all kinds ...". 2 He was, in fact, conversant with all the arts of the gentleman. Nor did the eminent Puritan minister John Howe have any objection to the training of young men in these gentlemanly arts.

What should hinder but that learning to sing, or dance, or fence, or make a modish leg, might consist with learning to know God in Christ, in which knowledge stands eternal life? Whatsoever hath real excellency or hath anything in it of true ornament will in no way disagree with the most serious Christianity. And how lovely is the conjunction of the well accomplished gentleman and the serious Christian. 3

But, and this is vital, Puritans were manifestly concerned to put the practice of serious Christianity at the pinnacle of their scale of values. Just so far as cultural pursuits were consistent with this aim were they acceptable to runners in the race of righteousness. "Only sever inconsistencies," Howe therefore continued, "- as how fashionably to curse, and swear, and damn, and debauch, which are thought to belong to good breeding in our age." 4 For in the seventeenth century too frequently a broad culture was the possession of the immoral and the godless, who were not prepared to submit to the disciplines which the earnest Christian saw were necessary. Moreover, the tendency to find one's delight in that which was less

1 Edward Dowden, op. cit., p.12.

2 Lucy Hutchinson, op. cit., p.19.

3 ut per R. F. Horton, op. cit., p.208.

4 ib.

than God was proving to be a dangerous snare to the salvation of many souls, encouraging a spurious sense of human autonomy and rebellion against God. Observing this, again the Puritans could do nothing but protest. As Grierson remarks,

When put on her mettle, the Christian Church has always distrusted and must always distrust the arts, for in them the free spirit of man will endeavour to express itself uncurbed and in its entirety. 1

Committed to the positive pursuit of godliness and refusing to jest about sacred things in order to worship at the shrine of art, Puritans found it impossible to make that further effort to claim as a spiritual aid what had patently become a spiritual enemy, with the result that many failed to appreciate the role of the arts in the enrichment of human life.

Clearly discernible here are the three major principles already elicited as governing the general reaction of Puritans to the enjoyment of the pleasures of life, namely, the waging of spiritual warfare, the avoidance of excess, and the fear of idolatry. But as in the case of recreations, a further formative factor in the Puritan view of the arts was their impingement on the practice of religion. As the relation of amusements to Sabbath observance had considerably influenced Puritan practice, so in the present instance antipathy to the use of aesthetic aids to worship was to colour the attitude to the arts as a whole. The Puritans lived in an age when, as they felt, the Established Church was attempting to substitute aestheticism for morality, to equate holiness with beauty of ritual and architecture and music. Nothing could have been more foreign to their predominantly ethical and prophetic conception of worship. In

1 H. J. C. Grierson, op. cit., p.19.

the first place, those for whom the soul's immediate relation to God was paramount felt no need of sensuous stimuli in worship. As a recent student of the subject has written:

Compared with the beautiful ritual and ornamentation of the Anglican worship, Puritan meeting houses and services were bare. The truth was that the Puritan was never aware of any aesthetic impoverishment in his services. The very intensity of his realization of the presence of the Holy God rendered all adventitious, sensuous aids to worship otiose. 1

This is what William Ames was contending when he declared "that such humane inventions are not aptae to any spirituall use ...".²

Moreover, viewing life as a continual struggle between the flesh and the spirit, Puritans saw in the use of "pleasing and sensual Rites and Ceremonies",³ a dangerous obstacle to true spiritual progress. How many, lamented Baxter, would "cheat your souls with a few ceremonies and formalities, as if by such a Carnal Religiousness, you could make all whole ...".⁴ Aesthetic aids to worship, though not evil in themselves, were thus potential detriments to the true glory of God and to the salvation of the soul because they encouraged men to delight in that which was less than God, to mistake aesthetic pleasure for supernatural grace. Again, to men who were in the habit of mortifying pride and cultivating humility of character, rich adornments and ritual ceremonies were regarded as symbolic of the vainglory and pompousness which thwarted rather than aided the approach of the soul to God. New Testament simplicity and humility should characterize the worship of serious Christians. The proud

1 Horton Davies, op. cit., p.12.

2 [William Ames], A Fresh suit Against Human Ceremonies in God's Worship ..., (1633), Part I, p.12.

3 Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory, Part I, p.180 (margin).

4 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world ..., Preface, p.6.

and "toyish" aids of man's contriving fixed attention on man, not on
 1 God. William Bradshaw claimed that "all things must be done in the
 service of God, in decencie, order and comeliness", but that

The more light and toyish the thinges seeme to bee that without
 warrent from God are brought into the worship of God, the more
 we should abhorre conformitie unto them, it being a fearfull
 presumption to serve God in a toyish manner 2

And, as always, in Puritan asceticism there was a strong man-ward
 dimension in its opposition to the use of dangerous and needless
 adornments of worship. If ceremonies and aesthetic aids were
 indifferent, argued the Arminian, what harm was there in using them?
 But, contended Bradshaw,

The more indifferent an occasion is in itselfe, the more odious
 it ought to be unto us when we shall perceave it to hurt our
 brothers soule, which ought to be a thousand times dearer unto
 us then his body, or our own lives, for he shewes neither love
 nor mercy to his brother, that had rather be the instrument of
 his damnation then omit the doing of a meere indifferent thing,
 though he should incurre therefore any bodily punishment whatever. 3

Added to all these factors in the ascetic reaction to the aesthetic
 in worship, especially in the matter of vestments and ceremonies,
 was the hatred of popery, superstition and idolatry which they
 inevitably connoted. Bradshaw wrote: "If any apparell doe deforme
 God's true worship it is that apparel, that doth most beautifie and
 grace the false and Idolatrous worship of God ...".⁴ The serious
 Puritan felt in duty bound to combat popish idolatry and to preserve
 the glory of God by ruthlessly casting down whatever threatened to
 usurp it. In sum therefore, one sees the struggling Christian ascetic

1 cf. Godfrey Davies, Arminian versus Puritan in England, ca. 1620-1640, (The Huntington Library Bulletin, Number 5, April 1934), p.166.

2 [William Bradshaw], A Treatise of Divine Worship ... (1604), pp. 34, 33.

3 ib., p.40.

4 ib., p.37.

striving to serve God and to further his own salvation and that of the neighbour by renouncing all sensuous aids to worship. In his attack on the pomp of clerical garb and ceremony, William Ames epitomizes the Puritan attitude generally in these terms:

What profit or wholesome use can the Christian people have by them? But on the contrary, we have showed that godliness is weakened by them, the pure worship of God is violated, Popish superstition is by little and little called back, the godly be offended, the wicked be confirmed and hardened in their ungodlinesses; the weak in faith are brought into hazard of their salvation, there are occasions of many evils given 1

The result was that bareness and simplicity characterized the worship of English Puritans in the seventeenth century. The typical service was conducted by a minister in a plain black gown adorned only by the simple white Genevan bands, in a sanctuary completely devoid of embellishment and furnished only with the necessary pulpit,² communion table, and pews. Thus the senses were mortified and no diverting snare was put in the way of the worshipper. Nor, as a minority movement, did Puritans ever cease to protest against what Chambon calls "die Theatralik des anglikanischen Ritus ...".³ Coloured satin draperies, intricate tapestries, vessels of gold and silver, and other ornaments of the sanctuary could never receive their approval.⁴ Puritans called for continual vigilance, discipline, and renunciation in this regard, as part of the lifelong spiritual effort required of pilgrims making their way to another and better world. Indeed, at times their outcry against "forms" hardened itself into a kind of formalism, although the vitality of the inner dynamic

1 [William Ames], A Fresh suit Against Human Ceremonies in God's Worship ..., an addition between Parts I and II, p.60.

2 Horton Davies, op. cit., p.246.

3 Joseph Chambon, op. cit., p.7.

4 cf. Apologie des Puritains d'Angleterre ..., p.62.

could not permanently be stifled.¹ The inter-regnum saw the protest assume the extreme form of iconoclasm, which aimed at ridding the church of all sensuous idolatry. William Dowsing, "that uncompromising zealot of iconoclastic fame",² stands as the incarnation of Puritan anti-aestheticism in worship. By virtue of a Parliamentary warrant for 1643-4 he went about the country breaking up works of art by the score, whenever these were deemed to contribute to superstition,³ idolatry, creature or image worship, or immorality. Although royal "visitors" under Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Elizabeth were responsible for much of the destruction erroneously attributed to seventeenth century Puritans,⁴ the latter would not wish to be absolved from what they considered an inescapable duty conscientiously performed. The outburst, however, was not against art and beauty as such, the excesses that were committed being largely due to the passions engendered by the tumult of the times, but against art as an enemy of spiritual growth, a servant of superstition, or an end in itself.

In relation to music the signs of an active Christian asceticism are again visible. Within the framework of their usual discipline, Puritans were no more averse to music than to the visible arts. Colonel Hutchinson loved music in which he had "an exact ear and judgment", and was a master on the viol; Oliver Cromwell too, enjoyed music and though no performer himself, frequently provided musical entertainment for state occasions; while during the Commonwealth

1 Ernest Barker, op. cit., p.113.

2 William Dowsing, The Journal of William Dowsing, of Stratford, Parliamentary Visitor ... for Demolishing the Superstitious Pictures and Ornaments of Churches ..., (Edited by C. H. Evelyn White, Ipswich, MDCCCLXXXV), Introduction, p.3.

3 cf. ib., p.38, where Dowsing caused to be smashed a piece of sculpture representing "Seven Fryars Hugging a Nunn".

4 Joseph Crouch, Puritanism and Art: An Inquiry into a Popular Fallacy, pp.85 ff.

and Protectorate a government "Committee for the Advancement of Musicke"¹ was set up. Yet Puritans did in fact show considerable hostility to music because of the immorality with which it was often associated in popular dances and stage-plays.² Others went further, seeing in it an occasion for the wasting of precious time which might be spent to better advantage in the all-important growth in grace. John Mulliner, in A Testimony Against Periwigs and Periwig-Making (1667), wrote:

I have been so troubled, as I have been playing that I have laid my instrument down, and have reasoned with myself after this manner, and fell a crying to God, it is true I love this musick, but what good can these sounds do me when my soul wants Peace with God; and this doth but stir up Laughter and Lightnes of Spirit, to make me forget my Maker and this will last but a little while, and I had better seek my peace with God, and then, At his Right Hand are Pleasures for ever more; and these thoughts I had then so that my Musick began to be a Burden to me. 3

As for the use of music in public worship, the normal Puritan position is succinctly stated in Geree's description of the "old English Puritane".

His chiefest musicke was singing of Psalms, wherein though he neglected not the melody of the voyce, yet he chiefly lookt after that of the heart. He disliked such Church-musicke as moved sensuall delight, and was in hinderance to spirituall enlargements. 4

Rigorous self-discipline was required to prevent sensuous idolatry from undermining the soul's pure worship of God. Psalms might be sung in church, because they required only the use of the human voice, which was the gift of God the Creator, and because their words were proper for spiritual edification and for glorifying Him. But even on this point there were dissenters within the Puritan ranks. The

1 Lucy Hutchinson, op. cit., p.19; Godfrey Davies, The Early Stuarts, pp.385-6; Percy A. Scholes, op. cit., pp.160 ff, 282 ff.

2 Percy A. Scholes, op. cit., pp.69, 183, 320.

3 ut per Horton Davies, op. cit., p.270.

4 John Geree, op. cit., p.4.

General Baptists for the most part disapproved of psalmody as a worldly occupation leading to carnal formalism,¹ while many Quakers, partly because of the lamentable quality of church singing at the time, felt that the singing of psalms was doing more to dishonour² than to honour God and was contrary to true spirituality. As to organ music, it was widely regarded as a hindrance to pure worship and on May 9, 1644, a parliamentary ordinance decreed the removal and defacement of church organs.³ Baxter, indeed, believed that organs and other musical instruments could be "a help partly Natural, and partly Artificial, to the exhilarating of the Spirits for the praise of God",⁴ but his appreciation of sacred music and his defence of it against all detractors was somewhat unusual in the movement. His example demonstrates, however, that music was far from incompatible with Puritan asceticism. For Baxter, within the context of the mortified Christian life, could write: "For myself I confess that harmony and melody are the pleasure and elevation of my soul."⁵

It was for dramatic art that the Puritan ascetic reserved his severest scorn. By men of all shades of opinion in the movement from William Prynne, the author of the extravagant Histrion-Mastix: The Players' Scourge, to the moderate Richard Baxter, the profligacy and irreligion so inevitably associated with the drama were believed

1 Horton Davies, op. cit., p.172.

2 v. Georgina King Lewis, Puritan Singing in the Seventeenth Century, (Friends Quarterly Examiner, Vol. LIII, No.210, 4th Month, 1919, pp.171-181). cf. Robert Barclay, The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth, pp.451 ff.

3 C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, op. cit., I, p.426.

4 Richard Baxter, The Judgment of Mr. Baxter concerning Ceremonies and Conformity ..., (1689), p.4.

5 Richard Baxter, Poetical Fragments: Heart-Employment with God and It Self ..., (1681), Preface.

to render it a deadly enemy of the godly spiritual life, and incompatible with serious religious purpose. Baxter labelled the stage the "Devils Church", and claimed its patrons should be regarded as his disciples, pointing to the absolute renunciation of it by the early Christians.¹ William Penn lamented that by "Plays and Romances ... the warm and uneven Passions of our Youth" were stimulated to wanton excesses.² And William Prynne epitomized the dynamic Christian asceticism underlying the common antipathy when he claimed that plays

... wholly indispose their actors and Spectators to all religious duties: ... withdraw and keepe them from Gods service: ... bring the Word, the worship, yea all the ordinances of God into contempt; making them vaine and ineffectuall to their soules. 3

In an age when the stage was given over to dissoluteness, Puritans were not prepared to accept the distinction between religious and secular which, in the drama, permitted free play to the exercise of a lawless imagination which conjured up unnatural images, seduced the will and the affections, and led to vain and sinful delights. For the imagination, unchecked by the Holy Spirit, was the servant of the flesh in its war against the spirit. To this "natural pronitide in us to give our fansies an unlimited liberty", as Thomas Hooker put it, the Puritan was an unyielding foe.⁴ Here was but another arena for the perpetual combat with the flesh and the world. It is not difficult to understand, therefore, the enactment of prohibitory legislation when the opportunity presented itself. Ordinances were passed suppressing plays, declaring players to be

1 Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory, Part I, p.337.

2 William Penn, An Address to Protestants ..., p.10.

3 William Prynne, Histrion-Mastix, p.522, folio.

4 ut per Perry Miller, *op. cit.*, p.259. cf. pp.257-260.

rogues, and ordering the pulling down of stage galleries, seats and boxes, the forfeiture of monies collected at plays, the imposition of fines on spectators, and the whipping of players.¹ In place of the "lascivious Mirth and Levitie" of the stage these acts sought to foster "the profitable and seasonable considerations of Repentence, Reconciliation, and peace with God ...".² That which, under the guise of art, had for so long been abused to the detriment of serious godliness and to the dishonour of the Lord could have no place in the life of the consecrated Christian.

In the matter of literature and literary art, Puritans again exhibited the disciplined ascetic attitude which insisted on human dependence on the sovereign Creator-God as the source of creative power, the subordination of art to the dictates of godliness, and the rigid exclusion of cultural idolatry and pride of style and learning. On these grounds the reading of all light literature could not be countenanced, as, for example,

... idle Tales, and Play-books, and Romances or Love-books, and false bewitching Stories, and the seducing Books of all false Teachers ... For where these are suffered to corrupt the Mind, all grave and useful Writings are forestalled.³

As for the reading of books of "Humane Learning", Baxter gave his approval on the ground that not only the light of grace but also the light of nature came from God,⁴ and that "Education is God's ordinary way for the conveyance of his Grace ...".⁵ To an unusual degree among Puritans he recognized the delights of natural knowledge.

1 C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, op. cit., I, p.1070 ff. (Feb. 11, 1647/8); pp.26-7 (Sept. 2, 1642); p.1027 (Oct. 22, 1647).

2 ib., I, pp.26-7.

3 Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory, Part II, p.89.

4 ib., Part III, p.184.

5 Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, Part I, p.7.

"What a pleasure is it to dive into the secrets of nature? to finde out the mystery of Arts and Sciences? to have a clear understanding in Logick, Physicks, Metaphysicks, Musick, Astronomy, Geometry",¹ writes Baxter in his Saints' Everlasting Rest. But again the word of caution is immediately uttered. For he goes on to demonstrate the relative paltriness of such learning in comparison with "the knowledge of God and Christ his Son."² Thus while the friend of all kinds of good literature, Baxter proved himself to be the true Puritan ascetic by repeatedly warning men who were preparing their souls for heaven to beware of finding their felicity in a premature level of security.

Are you famous for Learning? and have you great parts in knowledge and utterance? Glory not in it as any of your felicity, or evidence thereof. There are learned men then you in hell³

Believing the risk to salvation and the temptation to pride of learning altogether too great, there were others in the movement and especially in the sects who decried such literature and learning and championed an anti-intellectual position. The claims of culture were as nothing compared with the primary ends of the Christian life. Among the leaders defending this view in an extensive and acrimonious pamphlet warfare were William Dell, John Webster, and George Fox, and at this point the sectaries seem to have been more faithful to the genius of ascetic Puritanism than those of the movement who took a less radical stand.⁴ Among the latter who conducted the paper war in defence of learning were such solid Puritans as Sydrach Simpson, Joseph Sedgwick, Thomas Hall, Seth Ward, Henry Thurman, and E.

1 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part IV, p.224.

2 *ib.*

3 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world . . . , p.251.

4 v. Perry Miller, *op. cit.*, p.77.

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Waterhouse. Actually it was not the basic ascetic outlook which was at stake in these controversies, but only the degree to which it was insisted upon. None would have disagreed with Baxter's warning against the idolatrous tendency inherent in an addiction to secular literature and learning as ends in themselves, and all, one believes, would have welcomed his epitome of the Puritan attitude when he wrote that

... niceties, and fooleries which some spend their lives in for meer ostentation, and also uncertain presumptions, should be much neglected; And the great, certain, necessary, saving Verities of Morality and the Gospel must be dearly loved, and thankfully imbraced, and studiously learned, and faithfully practiced, by all that would prove wise men at last. 2

This ascetic view was as conspicuous in regard to sacred as to secular literature. The authors of spiritual writings and sermons were ever at pains to mortify pride and to subordinate the claims of style to those of godliness and spirituality. Once more their outlook was conditioned by what they regarded to be flagrant abuses of these principles on the part of the clergy of the Establishment, many of whom had tried to make their learning and literary merit do duty for the infinitely more precious pursuit of godliness and the true edification of the people. Commenting on such men in The First Century of Scandalous, Malignant Priests, John White stated that "had some of these men sanctity of life as well as light of knowledge, they had been favourable to Religion, and useful to soules", but that "learning in a man unsanctified, is but a pearle in a Swines snout ...".³ Puritans, on the other hand, were vitally concerned for the

1 v. G. D. Henderson, Religious Life in Seventeenth Century Scotland, pp.40, 248, note 74.

2 Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory. Part III, p.184.

3 loc. cit., Epistle to the Reader.

radical seriousness of both preacher and hearer, author and reader, and having in view only the crucial transcendental end, salvation and communion with God the Redeemer, they consciously minimized the claims of style. Flourishes of rhetoric, classical allusions, elaborate metaphysical metaphors, were merely the signs of human pride calculated to detract from the main end. In preaching, the self must be mortified, vanity eschewed, and the glory of God and the spiritual welfare of the hearer ever kept in mind. Normative of the ideal of the movement was the view of the "old English Puritane" who

... esteemed that preaching best wherein was most of God, least of man, when vaine flourishes of wit, and words were declined, and the demonstration of Gods Spirit and power studied¹

Puritan hagiology testifies amply to the consistent efforts made by the saints to put these ascetic principles into practice. Their aim was a "profitable plainness" which was achieved in the case of one Samuel Crook by the studious avoidance of popular applause and the disdain of the "airy dews of effeminate Rhetorich", "the excrementitious superfluties of frothy brains, and unhallowed hearts ...".² And typical of the experience of many Puritans was that related by Baxter in one of his revealing prefaces. Speaking of how the simple self-authenticating divine word had no need of the "ornaments of fleshly wisdom", he says that when younger

... I thought to have acquainted the world with nothing but what was the work of Time and Diligence: But my Conscience soon told me, that there was too much of Pride and Selfishness in this; and that Humility and Self-Denyal required me to lay by the affectation of that stile, and spare that industrie, which tended but to advance my name with men, when it hindred the main work,

¹ John Gere, op. cit., p.2.

² Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.206. Puritan Clarke describing the ingenuous Puritan Crook manifestly feels free to make fancy use of the King's English while declaring that plain language is best.

and crost my end 1

The result was that Baxter spent his life writing for the most part "popular unpolished Discourses"², as he called them, in the conviction of the Christian ascetic that in that way he was called to glorify God, promote true godliness, and give evidence of the grace that was in him. And within this self-imposed literary strait jacket, he and many of the greater preachers of Puritanism achieved by their very artlessness an artistic quality which flashes intermittently in their ponderous tomes, and which³ succeeded in stirring imaginations and winning hearts for God.

E. The Emotions and Reason.

From what has preceded it is apparent that in their attitude to recreation and the arts, Puritans aimed at strict control of the emotions, the senses, the affections, the passions, and the imagination, i.e., of all the non-intellectual side of human nature and experience. But it is an exaggeration to deduce from this a picture of a cold, unemotional, almost mechanical rationalization of life.⁴ For such a picture fails to do justice to two important facts revealed by a study of Puritan asceticism, namely, that on the one hand there was a rich emotional life and a legitimate latitude for natural affections in the spirituality of the movement, and that on the other the exercise of reason which was to control the sensual nature in the interests of godliness was itself subject to the empowering and chastening influence of grace. These points must therefore be investigated briefly in concluding this phase of the present study.

1 Richard Baxter, A Saint or a Brute, Preface, unpaginated.

2 ib.

3 cf. William Haller, op. cit., p.23.

4 cf. M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p.342.

It is essential to note that the Puritan was no Stoic seeking to suppress the natural activity of the affections and passions, but a Christian ascetic striving to keep these pure and undefiled in accordance with the will of God, by whom man had been endowed with them. He was simply struggling to avoid any form of idolatry of the flesh. But there was ample room for the legitimate expression of the passions and affections, as the words of Baxter demonstrate:

... what sweetness is there in the exercise of natural Love? whether to Children, to Parents, to Yoakfellows, or to Friends? The delight which a pair of special faithful friends do finde in loving and enjoying one another, is a most pleasing, sweet delight 1

The conjugal affections which united Colonel Hutchinson and his wife Lucy were deep and abiding, as was the love between Richard Baxter and his wife Margaret. But in each case pulsing through their human love and giving it its undying quality was a greater love, the love of a common God and Father who occupied the upper room of both their hearts. Even this phase of the emotional life was subject to a higher power in the eternal interests of the children of God. Again Baxter gives exact expression to the Puritan sentiment when he writes:

The best creature-affections have a mixture of some creature-imperfections, and therefore need some gall to wean us from the faulty part. God must be known to be God, our rest, and therefore the best creature to be but a creature! 2

And Lucy Hutchinson, writing to her children concerning their father, also expressed the ascetic ideal when she declared that his love for her,

... which was the highest love he or any man could have, was yet

1 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part IV, p.225.

2 J. T. Wilkinson, (Editor), Richard Baxter and Margaret Charlton A Puritan Love-Story ... being the Breviate of the life of Margaret Baxter, by Richard Baxter, 1681, (London, 1928), p.105.

bounded by a superior, he loved her in the Lord as his fellow-creature, not his idol, but in such a manner as showed that an affection, bounded in the just rules of duty, far exceeds every way all the irregular passions in the world. 1

In grace the Puritan strove not only to avoid those abuses of his emotional and sensual nature which popular pastimes and cultural media encouraged, but to channel his affections in such a way as to fulfil his God-given nature and destiny.

In this arduous but deeply satisfying task Puritans sought the disciplinary aid of reason. In his frequent exhortations to avoid idolatry and sensuality in the passing pleasures of life, Baxter pleaded for the subjection of the senses to reason.

The bait taketh advantage of the brutish part, when Reason is asleep; and if by the help of sense it get the Throne, the Beast will ride and rule the Man; and Reason become a slave to Sensuality. 2

Such an appeal, based on the Christian understanding of man, has always been strong in the history of Christian asceticism, especially in its Roman Catholic form. Baxter, indeed, was more of a rationalist than many of his colleagues, 3 and had more confidence in men hearkening to rational arguments in his calls to godliness than most Puritans. "The Spirit doth advance and not destroy our Reason: It doth rectifie it, and then use it as its ordinary Instrument for the conveyance of things to our Affections ...". 4 But Puritans knew

1 Lucy Hutchinson, op. cit., p.25.

2 Richard Baxter, The Poor Man's Family Book, p.275.

3 v. Perry Miller, op. cit., pp.72-3. cf. G. F. Nuttall, op. cit., p.47: "In Baxter there is always an attempted synthesis, at once unique and 'ideally normal' in Puritanism, of the rational and the spiritual principles, both of which were strongly marked in his own temperament." A. S. P. Woodhouse, op. cit., p.41, notes: "In their attitude toward reason the Puritans differed widely among themselves, ranging from the extremes of voluntarism and obscurantism to almost pure rationalism ...".

4 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part III, p.160.

that in the descendants of the first Adam, the light of reason was woefully beclouded, and as Baxter's statement indicates, itself needed the empowerment of grace. The rational faculty, like all others, had suffered as a result of the Fall. If continually renewed by the Spirit, reason could be the instrument of the discipline and mortification of the senses; but in turn, it too must be constantly trained and directed in the effort to keep down soul-destroying intellectual pride. And always reason was subordinate to revelation.¹ Speaking of "The Arrogancy of Reason against Divine Revelations", Baxter lamented that "Men have such arrogant understandings, that be they never so empty, they think themselves immediately capable of receiving any truth that shall be delivered to them."² God, and not proud, imperfect, carnal reason was the ultimate controller of human life. For Milton, right reason was the constitutive element of man but it involved a sense of man's proper creatureliness and a reasonable submission to Almighty God. In the ascetic discipline of the passions and the senses, reason could be an agent only if in turn it was the subject of renewal and constant vigilance. The whole man, including his distinctive reason, was, in the Puritan reckoning, ever under the great Taskmaster's eye. Reason, over sense, under God, was the ascetic formula.

In sum, the attitude to the creative and recreative aspects of life involved the strict discipline of the whole man in the interests of godliness. The Puritan patently was no philistine. His race was not cursed with abnormally dull aesthetic sensibilities; nor was it

1 M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p.342; H. Hensley Henson, Puritanism in England, pp.101-2.

2 Richard Baxter, The Unreasonableness of Infidelity ..., (1655), p.36.

lacking in genuine "joie de vivre". But the men of this race had found an even more magnetic attraction in the love of God, a more fascinating activity in love of the neighbour, a more consuming concern in the welfare of their immortal souls, than in all the sports or paintings or plays or books in the world. And until respect for the sacred and a true sense of values were reinstated in the public consciousness, they were prepared to make their convictions known in the only way possible, the negative and unattractive way of censure and prohibition. Moreover, at its best, as for example in the person of Colonel Hutchinson, the picture is far from being either negative or unattractive. For this gentleman succeeded in combining a right use of the blessings of this life with a consistent dynamic asceticism in an admirably balanced way. Skilled in the arts, a fluent speaker and pleasant conversationalist, he was a model of the cultured gentleman of his day. Yet unlike many of his station,

His whole life was the rule of temperance in meat, drink, apparel, pleasure, and all those things that may be lawfully enjoyed; ... a true, wise, and religious government of the desire and delight he took in the things he enjoyed. ¹

Above all, he was humbly submissive to the will of God, and "how intent soever he were in anything, how much soever it delighted him, he could freely and easily cast it away when God called him to something else."² Therein lies the secret which is at the heart of this and every other phase of genuine Puritan asceticism.

¹ Lucy Hutchinson, op. cit., p.28.
² ib.

CHAPTER V

AIDS TO GODLINESS

Surely God's Messenger, if any man,
Should speak with all the seriousness he can;
Who treateth in the Name of the Most High,
About the Matters of Eternity!
Who must prevail with sinners Now or Never,
As those that must be saved Now, if Ever:
When sinners endless Joy or Misery,
On the success of his endeavours lie!
Though God be free, he works by Instruments,
And wisely fitteth them to his intents. ...
And utter strangers to the Life to come,
Are not the best Conductors to our home

Richard Baxter,
"Love Breathing Thanks and Praise",
Poetical Fragments, (1681), pp.40-1.

A. Spiritual Direction.

Like the early Christians, English

Puritans were committed to the race of righteousness in the very midst of a careless, pleasure-seeking society which made mockery of godliness and was forever strewing its path with obstacles. Theirs was the dread but blessed personal responsibility of conforming to the will of God by waging spiritual war not only on the flesh but also on the world. In consequence of the heroic efforts thus required of them, they were in constant need of guidance and direction in the way leading to eternal life, in order that every moment might be "improved" and turned to spiritual

account. All were in training with a view to reaching a common goal, and all were facing difficulties and temptations which could be met only by constant, mutual assistance and by a readiness to utilize every potential ally of godliness. It was not by accident therefore, that direction and discipline came to play such crucial roles in the drama of Puritan asceticism. For without these gifts of grace the burden of the individual would have been too great to bear; but through them, fellow pilgrims were made conscious of their brotherhood and given strength and zest for their lifelong struggle with evil.

In the Puritan mind the most glaring sin of the majority of the clergy outside the movement had been their gross failure to provide this altogether indispensable direction. "They have been by our Lawes entrusted with Care and Provision for the soules of the King and Subjects, to heed, feed and watch over them", it is pointed out in the preface to White's First Century.¹ But faithless to their high calling, they had neglected this sacred duty with disastrous results. "And hereby they have taken the high-way to destroy the souls committed to them, and to drown them in Perdition."² To the radically serious Puritan who viewed his life solely in terms of a great and urgent spiritual warfare preparatory to the perfect life beyond, no more damning charge could possibly be made.

But it was quite otherwise with the consecrated Puritan minister. "Oh, how solemn a business is it to treat with souls, and how much to be dreaded lest they miscarry through our imprudence or neglect!"³ wrote John Howe, expressing the innermost conviction of

¹ John White, op. cit., "To the Reader", unpaginated.

² ib.

³ ut per R. F. Horton, op. cit., p.21.

his brethren in the ministry. Baxter regarded the provision of ample direction as the key to the sanctification of individuals and the reform of the whole English church. It was, he said, "the painful execution, and the diligent and prudent use of means for men's conversion and edification, by able faithful men, that must accomplish the Reformation."¹ Now to give the necessary guidance was by no means an easy task. For the "old English Puritane", as Geree asserts, "was a man of good spirituall appetite, and could not be contented with one meale a day."² Substantial nourishment for the steady growth of the soul and the development of its powers was required not only on Sundays but every day of the week as well; hence the exacting vocation of every Puritan minister.

How many precious spiritual duties have we to set them upon, and excite them to, and direct them in! How many objections of flesh and blood, and cavils of vain men, have we to refute! How much of their own corruptions and sinful inclinations to discover and root out! ³

To encourage true godliness - the mortification of the flesh and the vivification of the spirit - was the fundamental and immensely difficult aim of all pastoral oversight. As physicians of the soul, our Puritan ministers felt the heavy responsibility of the prevention and cure of all spiritual diseases. For the rigorous march along the high road leading to eternal life demanded such health and vigour of the soul as could be ensured only by the unending watchfulness of every pastor in relation to his whole flock. The herculean labours of Baxter at Kidderminster provide the best example in the history of English Puritanism of the conscientious discharge of this onerous

1 Richard Baxter, Gildas Salvianus, The Reformed Pastor, p.345.

2 John Geree, op. cit., p.2.

3 Richard Baxter, Gildas Salvianus, The Reformed Pastor, p.59.

duty. But, less conspicuously perhaps, many other ministers were utilizing every means at their disposal to the same great end, the sanctification of their people. The ideal of the devoted and patient spiritual guide may be seen in many of Samuel Clarke's portraits of Puritan saints, of whom Richard Stock, "a painful and faithful Minister of Jesus Christ; a skilful and powerful dispenser of God's Word",¹ is representative. To his great credit it is said that

... the multitudes of those which have acknowledged themselves to have been edified, built up, and bettered by him, are the seal of his Calling, and of Christ speaking in and by him, and not verball or vocall, but reall Letters testimoniall of the efficacy of his Ministry, through God's blessing upon the same. 2

The means by which godliness was sustained were many. There was in the first place the personal example of the Puritan clergy. It is a principle theme of one of the most celebrated of Richard Baxter's works, The Reformed Pastor, that those who would lead others in the paths of discipline and self-denial are themselves bound to cultivate the godly, mortified life.

If it be not your daily serious business to study your own hearts, and subdue corruptions, and live as upon God, if you make it not your very work which you constantly attend, all will go amiss, and you will starve your auditors 3

Baxter's own exemplary ascetic piety is evidence of the fact that he was the first to practise what he preached. He rejoiced in being called to work out his salvation for the glory of God and the highest service of his fellows, however much self-discipline, self-denial, and renunciation it involved, and one cannot doubt that among the manifold means by which he tried to provide adequate spiritual

1 Samuel Clarke, op. cit., p.62.

2 ib., pp.62-3.

3 Richard Baxter, Gildas Salvianus, The Reformed Pastor, p.274.

direction for his people, his personal example of humility and godliness was one of the most effectual. Nor in this respect was Baxter by any means unique, as the student of the Puritan hagiologies and Baxter's own Reliquiae will know. In the latter one reads of a certain Will Cook, "a Learned Man, and of a most godly Life, and unwearied Labour",¹ who was typical of a number of ministers who are praised for their Christlikeness and self-forgetting labours of love, even whilst suffering for conscience' sake.

Like the first Preachers, he can go in poor clothing, live on a little, travel on Foot, Preach and Pray almost all the Week, if he have opportunity, in Season, and out of Season, trampling on this World as dirt, and living a mortified laborious Life.²

And since all eyes were turned on the minister as the norm for the ascetic struggle, manifestly the standard exemplified by every shepherd of a flock was one of the primary means of direction in Puritan spirituality.

By the large and powerful body of divines, Presbyterian and Independent, gathered at the Westminster Assembly, the administration of the sacraments was also regarded as an important aid to the growth in grace of the people.³ The sacrament of baptism marked the first vital step in the Christian's lifelong conflict with sin, setting the direction in which he must henceforth travel and opening up the unlimited power of grace for the struggle. Indeed, the fulfilment of the baptismal engagement was the basis of the mortified life of every individual.

The needfull, but much neglected duty of improving our Baptisme, is to be performed by us all our life long; ... by serious and thankfull considerations of the nature of it ... and our solemn

1 Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, Part III, p.98.

2 ib. cf. pp.90-98.

3 cf. supra p.49, note 1.

vow made therein; by being humbled for our sinfull defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to the grace of baptisme and our ingagements; ... by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sinne, and quickning of grace; and by endeavouring to live by faith, to have our conversation in holinesse and righteousnesse 1

And invaluable in the waging of the effective spiritual warfare thus incumbent on the Christian was the regular participation in the benefits of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, whereby loyal followers of Christ

... feed upon his body and bloud, to their spirituall nourishment and growth in grace, have their union and communion with him confirmed, testifie and renue their thankfulness and ingagement to God, and their mutuall love and fellowship each with other, as members of the same mysticall body. 2

Without worthily coming to this sacrament, the Christian living in a sinful world and beset by his own corruption would be seriously handicapped in his conflict with evil. And precisely because it was so vital to the ascetic life, preparation for Communion was to include meticulous self-examination, serious meditation, and the exercise of fervent prayer. Here then were both the occasion of that rigid discipline which was the lot of all men in this mortal life, and the source of strength for it. It was this marked moral and ascetic connotation of the sacraments that distinguished the Puritan emphasis from the sacramentalism of the Established Church.

In reaction, however, to a sacramentally correct but morally corrupt church, and in line with the Puritan emphasis on immediacy in the approach of the soul to God, the ordinance of preaching outdistanced the administration of the sacraments as a practical aid

1 The humble Advice ... Concerning a larger and a shorter Catechisme, p.47.

2 ib., p.49.

to the Christian life. The inspired personality of the preacher was regarded as the special vehicle of the grace of God, and preaching the natural instrument of the direction and stimulation of the godly life. Baxter expressed the Puritan view succinctly when he wrote in his Key for Catholics:

Our preaching is to open men's sin and misery, and cause them to perceive their lost condition, and so to reveal to them a crucified Christ, and then to set them on the holy self-denying heavenly life that Christ hath prescribed them. 1

And in The Crucifying of the World he exhorted his readers to "attend to the lively preaching of the word, which will disgrace the world to you, and be still drawing your hearts another way." 2 These were authentic statements of the profoundly ascetic connotation given by the movement at large to this valuable means of the feeding of souls. Under adverse circumstances preaching had been kept alive in Elizabeth's reign by the ill-starred Propheesyings 3 or Exercises, and in the early part of the seventeenth century by the more successful system of lecturers 4 by which spiritual stimulus and direction were maintained in cases where the official clergy were

1 Richard Baxter, A Key for Catholics, p.277.

2 Richard Baxter, The Crucifying of the world ..., p.174.

3 The sadly neglected people came in crowds to hear the ministers assembled at these preaching exercises which, beginning at Northampton about 1571, spread rapidly through the kingdom under Archbishop Grindal's protection, but were finally forbidden by order of the Queen who saw in their popular assemblies a potential political danger. v. J. B. Marsden, The History of the Early Puritans, pp.104 ff.

4 These men formed "a kind of Puritan order of preaching brothers" (William Haller, op. cit., p.52), without official ecclesiastical rank, who were usually employed not in fixed benefices but as special preachers to congregations on appointment by the congregations themselves, some group of members, or a wealthy patron. In 1625 "Century" White and eleven others formed a committee for buying up impropriated tithes to support these lecturers, but the agency was dissolved and its funds confiscated due to Laud's implacable enmity on Feb. 11, 1632-3.

neither qualified nor disposed to provide them. And when the Puritans came to power, preaching was to flourish in England as probably never before nor since amongst a people for whom guidance in the race of righteousness was an absolute necessity. A great many acts and ordinances were passed dealing with the preacher's responsibilities, and making provision for his approbation,¹ ordination, maintenance, and discipline. No effort was too great to safeguard an office which was so essential to the urgent business of conquering sin by grace and the flesh by the spirit.

It would be difficult to find a more thoroughly ascetic conception of preaching than that put forward in the Larger Catechism.

The Spirit of God maketh the Reading, but especially the Preaching of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners, of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ, of conforming them to his Image, and subduing them to his will, of strengthening them against temptations & corruptions, of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holinesse and comfort through faith unto salvation. 2

Here the verbs - humble, drive, conform, subdue, strengthen, build, establish - all point to the indispensable directive function of preaching in the disciplined life essential to the growth in grace and holiness. The pulpit ministry was viewed with the utmost seriousness, especially in its God-ward and man-ward dimensions. The preacher was required to labour zealously "with fervent love to God, and the soules of his people: sincerely, aiming at his glory, and their conversation, edification and salvation."³ The people, on

1 v. C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, op. cit., III, pp.28-30, for a list of these acts and ordinances.

2 The humble Advice ... Concerning a larger and a shorter Catechisme, p.45.

3 ib.

the other hand, were to hear the Word "with diligence, preparation, and prayer", to receive it meekly, meditate on it, and "bring forth the fruit of it in their lives."¹ Thus, by the edifying words of the preacher and the willing submission of the people to his leading, the work of sanctification moved toward its fulfilment.

Another important feature of Puritan direction was the practice of catechizing, designed as a means of illuminating the nature of the Christian life. In this matter, as in preaching, the record of the Anglican Church did not satisfy the Puritans. It is true that one of the most popular of contemporary catechetical works was A Practical Catechisme written by the Royalist Henry Hammond, whose teaching on self-denial, purity of heart, and other features² of godliness was in harmony with that of the reformers. But the general tone of Anglican catechizing, when it was carried on at all, was quite different. Under Laud, rather than being an important aid in building up Christians unto godliness, it was enforced as a substitute for preaching and lecturing and really amounted to a political manoeuvre designed to control the pulpit.³ By way of contrast English Puritans, conceiving this life as a race of righteousness, the outcome of which was fought with the gravest eternal consequences, regarded it as of the utmost importance to their spiritual welfare. As Edward Elton wrote in the preface of his

1 The humble Advice ... Concerning a larger and a shorter Catechisme, p.46.

2 H. Hammond, A Practical Catechisme ..., pp.77, 107, 117, 153, etc.

3 William Holden Hutton, op. cit., p.105.

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catechism, one of a great many¹ at the disposal of the zealous pastor and householder:

The chiefest thing a man or woman should desire and seeke after, is how to live and die comfortably: and after death, how to remaine blessed for ever. Now this can never be attained, unlesse a man know God aright, and have a right knowledge of Jesus Christ, whom hee hath sent. ... And this knowledge is not in us by nature, and one speciall meanes to attain it, is instruction in the grounds of Religion 2

Similarly Richard Webb offered his catechism to keep men from the snares of sin and to transform a decaying religion from "a Stirrup to lift them up in this world", to a "Chariot to carry them to Heaven ...".³ It was meant not only for formal catechizing, but as a handy reference book to be kept in the home "as a little Index with the Bible", available as need arose in the promotion of the spiritual life.⁴ Above all, the Larger and Shorter Westminster Catechisms, whose contents reveal the very heart of Puritan intramundane asceticism, are decisive evidence of the practical direction available for the spiritual needs of the average parishioner.

Far more than being merely of theoretical value, catechizing was widely put into practice wherever Puritan ministers had a cure of

1 v. Bibliography, *infra* pp.373-378, under the names Ward, Peters, Attersoll, Ames, Josias White, Baker, Hinde, Elton, Webb, and Rogers. The catechisms of which these men were the authors are very similar in general tenor and outlook, minor variations being due to the specific purpose which they were designed to serve, as e. g., the instruction of children, or the preparation of adults for the Lord's Supper.

2 Edward Elton, A forme of Catechising: Set downe by Questions and Answers. Wherein the principall Grounds of Christian Religion are delivered. (Tenth Edition, 1634), Preface.

3 Richard Webb, A Key of Knowledge For Catechizing Children in Christ ..., (1622), Preface "To his Congregation". As an agent for the promotion of Puritan asceticism, the most interesting part of this catechism is the large concluding section entitled "Additions annexed to dissuade from the reigning sinnes of this Age."

4 *ib.*

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souls. Many took special pains with the young, as for example, Richard Stock early in the century, whose method was to deal separately with boys and girls, the more experienced in the presence of the immature, and the latter by themselves, in order to provide the maximum edification and encouragement for all.² Others aimed at making "solid Professors"³ by stressing the catechizing of their adult parishioners, especially in preparation for Holy Communion. None set more store by this work or carried it out with greater diligence and success than Richard Baxter. In his autobiography he describes his own practice during his pastorate at Kidderminster.

Two Days every Week my Assistant and I my self, took 14 Families between us for private Catechising and Conference (he going through the Parish, and the Town coming to me): I first heard them recite the Words of the Catechism, and then examined them about the Sense, and lastly urged them with all possible engaging Reason and Vehemency, to answerable Affection and Practice.⁴

His parishioners were free to accept or reject this opportunity for personal guidance, but he assures us that "there were very few Families in all the Town that refused to come", and that "few Families went from me without some tears, or seemingly serious promises for a Godly Life."⁵ The scope of this work was greatly enlarged when it became an integral part of the pastoral duties undertaken by those ministers who joined the famed Worcestershire Association which Baxter formed in his own county for the promotion of the serious Christian life amongst the people.⁶ A large part of the influential Reformed Pastor was given over to detailed instructions for the

1 Apologie des Puritains d'Angleterre ..., p.80.

2 Samuel Clarke, *op. cit.*, p.65. cf. also pp.73-4.

3 *ib.*, p.126.

4 Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, Part I, p.83.

5 *ib.*, p.85.

6 v. F. J. Powicke, A Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter, 1615-1691, pp.128 f.

carrying out of this vital work by ministers to "the greater Glory of God"; "the welfare of our people"; and their "own welfare".¹

And much later, as an additional effort to foster this great aid to sanctification, Baxter published a practical treatise entitled The Catechizing of Families: A Teacher of Householders How To Teach their Households (1682), in the hope that others further afield would be led to take the Christian life seriously. For he was convinced in true Puritan fashion that the time wasted by many poor benighted souls in learning "a wanton song or balled"² could be spent to eternal profit rather than damnation by learning an edifying catechism.

Another tool of Puritan direction was the moral science of casuistry.³ Within the Established Church notable contributions in this field were made by Joseph Hall, Robert Sanderson, and Jeremy Taylor, but their works were neither typical of the spirituality of the church at large⁴ nor sufficient to meet contemporary needs. But by Puritans working out their salvation in their callings and desirous of making no false steps, constant need was felt for specific direction on the multiplicity of decisions which had to be taken daily in their endeavour to lead the godly life. Thus while in France casuistry was to be discredited by serious professors of Christianity because it had been prostituted to serve the ends of worldliness, in England it was recognized to be a potent ally in the resolution of cases of conscience on the part of those who were

1 Richard Baxter, Gildas Salvianus, The Reformed Pastor, pp.359, 360, 363. cf. all of Chaps. VI and VII, ib., pp.308-452.

2 Richard Baxter, A Treatise of Self-Denyall, p.115.

3 A good discussion of the subject is that by H. Hensley Henson, Studies in English Religion in the Seventeenth Century, pp.171-210.

4 cf. Felix R. Arnott, Anglicanism in the Seventeenth Century, in P. E. More and F. L. Cross, op. cit., p.lxix.

genuinely perplexed about how to proceed in the struggle with the flesh and the world.¹ From Tudor times onward Puritan ministers "made a specialty of answering particular questions which were put to them on all manner of problems connected with the Christian life."² These answers eventually came to be embodied in published works which served not only as professional tools for the clergy but as serviceable manuals of reference for the direct use of laymen whose consciences were troubled because a right course of action was not immediately apparent. William Perkins' The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience was one of the most influential of the earlier casuistic works which provided the pilgrim with "accurate maps of the narrow path he was to follow, with all the gates and sloughs plainly marked."³ This was followed by William Ames' De Conscientia, and later by Richard Baxter's monumental Christian Directory: Or, A Summ of Practical Theologie, and Cases of Conscience, the last of the great works of English casuistry. In harmony with the Puritan interpretation of the ascetic struggle in terms of the performance of duties, Baxter attempted to resolve all cases of conscience which might arise in the fields of Christian "Ethicks (or private Duties)", "Oeconomicks (or Family Duties)", "Ecclesiasticks (or Church Duties)",⁴ and "Politicks (or Duties to our Rulers and Neighbours)". The ascetic nature of the Directory is clearly indicated in Baxter's own

1 A modern manual of Christian morals issues the reminder that "casuistry exists for the benefit of the perplexed, or the doubtful conscience, and only for such ... Casuistry and its rules and findings are not for the man who knows quite well what his duty is, but wishes to evade it." Lindsay Dewar and Cyril E. Hudson, op. cit., pp.175, 176.

2 M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p.391.

3 ib.

4 Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory, Title Page.

statement of his purpose in publishing it, namely, to direct Christians "how to Use their Knowledge and Faith; How to improve all Helps and Means, and to Perform all Duties; How to Overcome Temptations, and to escape or mortifie every Sin."¹ This work, offered as a reference manual for the use of perplexed souls, i.e., as a sum of cases of conscience and not (as has mistakenly been supposed), of necessary² duties to be studied and performed in their entirety,² was Baxter's major contribution to the cause of godliness which was so dear to the hearts of all English Puritans.

Patently one of the principle instruments of direction was the diffusion amongst the people of the published works of the clergy of the movement. As a youth Baxter had had to turn to a revised version of a Jesuit work of edification³ due to a lack of similar Protestant writings, but as the century progressed the gap was rapidly filled by earnest Puritan authors, than whom none was more prolific than Baxter himself. Sermons, catechisms, books of casuistry, hagiographies, and devotional guides of every kind were produced, and perhaps the most significant index of the importance of spiritual guidance in the culture of the godly life is the tremendous volume of such literature that came from Puritan pens. Even Milton's genius was essentially in the mainstream of Puritan didacticism which consecrated every form of literature to the same lofty end, although his contribution came by way of a less ephemeral vehicle than that of most writers of the movement, following "his

1 Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory, Title Page.

2 cf. John Tulloch, English Puritanism and its Leaders, p.385.

3 viz. Edmund Bunny, A Booke of Christian exercise, appertaining to Resolution, that is, shewing how that we should resolve ourselves to become Christians indeed: by R. P. ..., (1584).

decision to make poetry rather than the pulpit his weapon in the war of the spirit."¹ Thus the literary zeal of theologians and other authors kept pace with the demand of the people for works of edification, and with winning spiritual earnestness hundreds of writers pleaded for repentance, led the way to conversion, exhorted to a renunciation of self and a break with the world, and gave directions for the conduct of the battle with sin. And without what has been called "the Puritan literature of confession, pilgrimage and war",² it is difficult to see how the ascetic struggle of the average Puritan and the continual direction which it necessitated could have been maintained.

Although, as has become apparent, the role of the minister was in so many ways crucial to the administration of spiritual direction, the home itself was expected to take this matter very seriously, the head of the family being directly responsible for the growth in grace of all his household. Of the "old English Puritane" Geree wrote:

His family hee endeavoured to make a Church, admitting none into it but such as feared God; and labouring that those that were born in it, might be born againe to God. He blessed his family morning and evening by the word and prayer: And took care to perform those ordinances in the best season. He brought up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and commanded his servants to keepe the way of the Lord. He set up discipline in his family, as he desired in the Church, not onely reprovving but restraining vilenesse³

The Puritan ideal was for every father to be a priest in his own family, taking full responsibility for utilizing such means of

1 William Haller, op. cit., p.306.

2 ib., p.180. This work is indispensable to an understanding of the spiritual writings of Puritanism in the first half of the century.

3 John Geree, op. cit., p.5.

direction as daily family worship, regular catechizing of children and servants, the observance of days of private humiliation, thanksgiving, or fasting, and the reading of sermons by well known Puritan divines.¹ This type of family direction is set forth in detail by Lewis Bayly in his Practice of Piety. The father of the family was urged to assemble his household every morning and evening for the reading of scripture, psalm singing, and prayer. On Sunday it was his duty to ensure the entire cessation of work so that the whole day could be devoted to worship and edification. The only recreation he could allow was the reading of the Bible and of certain devotional books. Having taken his family to public worship, he was to assemble them again after dinner in order to question them on their understanding of the morning sermon, and if time permitted before the next church service, a point in the catechism might be considered. After the second service a walk might be allowed or the sick visited before the head of the family would bring the day to a close with a final period of worship. By such constant direction in the home the young were given every encouragement to become "solid" professors.² And if the responsibilities incumbent on parents seemed onerous, Puritan authors were united in affirming that to shirk them was to hazard the eternal felicity of the souls under their charge. "All you that God hath intrusted with Children or Servants, O consider what Duty lieth on you for the furthering of their Salvations",³ pleaded Baxter, urging parents to apply themselves with all diligence

1 C. E. Whiting, op. cit., pp.448-9.

2 v. Heinrich Hepppe, op. cit., pp.66-7, and Lewis Bayly, op. cit., passim.

3 Richard Baxter, The Saints Everlasting Rest, Part III, p.343.

to the task of fostering in their children the life of mortification, self-denial, and Christlikeness, in order "to make God their chief delight & love, and to have their hearts in heaven while they live on earth ...".¹ In many families, as the spiritual biographies of Puritans show,² this counsel was followed to good effect, and was moreover quite compatible with happy, healthy, domestic relationships. As Hutton wrote: "Households trained on its principles were homes of love as well as of discipline, and to them much that was beautiful as well as strong in later English life was not a little due."³

B. Church Discipline.

Spiritual direction, springing from a passionate desire to train and perfect the soul, was one of the most positive aspects of Puritan asceticism. But as a further aid to the growth in grace, it was also found necessary to supplement direction with ecclesiastical discipline which, although seemingly negative, was designed to foster the positive quality of godliness. How was it possible for the church, the spiritual society which bound together the host of struggling pilgrims, to redound to the greatest glory of God, if corruptness in its members were allowed unimpeded to pollute its fellowship? Moreover, how could the individual advance along the heavenward path if his progress at every point were to be thwarted by allowing free rein to all his sinful tendencies? And how, in any real sense, could he profess to love his neighbour unless he were willing to subject himself to discipline, and so hold up before men the salutary

1 Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Part III, p.345.

2 v. e. g. Samuel Clarke, op. cit., pp.135, 416; Oliver Heywood, op. cit., I, "Memoirs of his Life", p.326.

3 William Holden Hutton, op. cit., p.125.

example of Christlike conduct and of humble submission to the divine will? Underlying the negative features of Puritan discipline were these three dimensions common to all dynamic Christian asceticism.

It was the extreme importance which Puritans attached to discipline as an aid to godliness which aroused their bitterest antagonism to the Established Church. For "the old Diocesane Frame",¹ to use Baxter's phrase, made its exercise impossible by robbing pastors of their proper authority and concentrating power in the hands of a few prelates who could have no personal knowledge of parish conditions. On this subject Baxter wrote:

Yea if the Parish-Ministers might be Pastors, Episcopi gregis, and not forced by strangers to excommunicate, absolve and receive to communion against their knowledge and consciences, nor to profess, promise or practice sin against God, nor omit their known Ministerial duty, far be it from me to be against conformity.²

It was simply "enmity to men's salvation"³ to support a form of church government which was incapable of maintaining that discipline which was essential to true spirituality. This attitude is reflected in all the major documents by which the Puritan position was made public in the first half of the century - the Millenary Petition of 1603, the Root and Branch Petition of 1640, the Grand Remonstrance of 1641, and the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643.⁴ Typical was the Grand Remonstrance which aimed at curbing the "immoderate power" of the prelates, not indeed in a "desire to let loose the golden reins of discipline and government in the church", but to set up a⁵ more spiritual discipline according to the Word of God.

1 Richard Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, Part II, p.281.

2 Richard Baxter, *The Nonconformists' Plea for Peace*, The Epistle to the Reverend Conforming Clergy, Preface unpaginated.

3 Richard Baxter, *Gildas Salvianus*, *The Reformed Pastor*, p.52.

4 Henry Gee and William John Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, (London, 1896), pp.508, 539, 570-1.

5 *ib.*, pp.554, 561.

Puritans valued church censures so highly because they believed them to be the vehicle of grace to the sin-sick, a source of divine mercy restoring the penitent to the narrow way which alone led to eternal life. When the soul had suffered momentary defeat in its conflict with the enemy, then, to use the words of Milton,

... doth excommunication as dearly and as freely, without money, use her wholesome and saving terrors; she is instant, she beseeches, by all the dear and sweet promises of salvation she entices and woos; by all the threatenings and thunders of the law, and rejected gospel, she charges and adjures: this is all her armoury, her munition, her artillery; then she awaits with long sufferance, and yet ardent zeal. In brief, there is no act in all the errand of God's ministers to mankind wherein passes more loverlike contestation between Christ and the soul of a regenerate man lapsing, than before, and in, and after the sentences of excommunication. 1

Ideally the transaction was not one of main force, but rather the fulfilment of a voluntary covenant previously entered into between a man and his Master, defending the honour of Christ and ensuring the soul's true welfare. In it the ascetic quality of obedience looms large. For as in monastic asceticism the religious, by rigid obedience to the head of a community, sacrificed his own will to the will of God and in the interest of the larger group of which he was a member, thus moving slowly along the road to perfection; so in Puritan intra-mundane asceticism the same voluntary self-denial God-ward and man-ward was required of the faithful in the matter of church discipline. At this point the Puritan ascetic was precisely the one who yielded this voluntary response and so gave proof of his radical seriousness in waging spiritual warfare.

Although this conception of discipline was common to Puritanism

1 John Milton, Of Reformation in England, (Everyman, 1927), p.99, ut per Horton Davies, op. cit., p.239.

as a whole, there were wide divergencies of opinion concerning the right methods of giving effect to it. From the days of Cartwright and Travers a large body within the movement felt that only the Presbyterian system of government, divinely inspired as they believed it to be, was adequate to the crucial task of maintaining godliness. Typical of this point of view was Geree's "old English Puritane" who "thought God had left a rule in his word for discipline, and that Aristocraticall by Elders, not Monarchicall by Bishops nor Democraticall by the people ...".¹ By the time of the Westminster Assembly considerable numbers of Englishmen believed in the Presbyterian ideal. That they were by no means a majority however, is evident in the ultimate failure of the attempt to impose it on the whole nation.²

The Presbyterian form of Puritan discipline, administered within the framework of Congregational, Classical, Provincial, and National Assemblies³ as set forth in a parliamentary ordinance of August 29, 1648, included the three stages of admonition, public rebuke together with suspension from the Lord's Supper, and finally excommunication. The primary aim of the whole process was the salvation of the soul of the offender. After the first and second stages opportunity was given to demonstrate genuine repentance, that the sinner might be immediately restored to a state of grace. Only after all due prayer and pleading on the part of the elders had failed, and as a last resort in the face of impenitency, did

1 John Geree, op. cit., p.4.

2 By binding itself to the state (the parliament insisted on final executive authority) and in seeking to enforce its discipline wholesale without regard to local sentiment, Presbyterianism alienated many Puritans as well as the non-Puritan population.

3 C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, op. cit., I, p.1188.

excommunication become necessary. And the prayer pronounced in the act of excommunication reveals an attitude characteristic of genuine Christian asceticism. It beseeches God

That the retaining of the Offender's sin, and shutting him out of the Church, may fill him with fear and shame, and break his obstinate heart and be a means to destroy the Flesh, and to recover him from the power of the Devil, that his Spirit may be saved; that others also may be stricken with fear, and not dare to sin so presumptuously, and that all such corrupt Leaven being purged out of the Church (which is the House of God) Jesus Christ may delight to dwell in the midst of them. 1

Even after the final dread pronouncement had been made, a full public confession of sin accompanied by

... a profession of unfeigned Repentance for it, and of his Resolution (through the strength of Christ) to sin no more; and his desire of their Prayers for Mercy and Grace to be kept from falling again into that, or any the like sin ... , 2

would cancel the sentence. The repentance of an excommunicated sinner was a signal for great rejoicing by the congregation who, thanking God for His mercy, were to restore the penitent to the fellowship. The instruction concludes: "Let the Elders embrace him, and the whole Congregation hold Communion with him as one of their own."³ Here was no spiritual élite lording it over the weaker brethren but a form of discipline whose ideal was in close harmony with the spirit of the New Testament, and a fitting and worthy element in Puritan asceticism.

4

With the decline of the Presbyterian system and the rise of Independency, a type of discipline similar in concept was established

1 C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, op. cit., I, p.1214.

2 ib., p.1212.

3 ib.

4 At the Restoration, the system of classes and synods which for the most part had been set up in London and Lancashire only disappeared, and Presbyterian discipline was then maintained on the congregational level only. v. C. E. Whiting, op. cit., pp.44 ff.

on a voluntary basis and limited to congregational units.

Independents still regarded ecclesiastical censures as a most valuable aid in the race of righteousness, but because the church was viewed as a body of Christians voluntarily in covenant with God through Christ, they were opposed to the universal legal enforcement of such measures and to what they regarded as the high-handed methods of Presbyterianism.¹ Gardiner noted that

The failure of Presbyterianism drove many thoughtful men into the Independent and Baptist churches, in which discipline was exercised not by ecclesiastical officials recognized by law, but by the spontaneous action of the congregations.²

Presbyterianism itself had been most effectual on the congregational level, and under Cromwell's tolerant rule the Independent churches were given a chance to exercise moral and spiritual discipline on the basis of congregational autonomy. They protested against the charge that they stood for "an exemption of all Churches from all subjection and dependence",³ and in contradistinction from the Presbyterian system, as they believed, championed the principle "that each Church is under Christ's government as the sole head, King, Lord, Law giver thereof",⁴ and so was not subject "to the Dictates and Decrees of men ...".⁵

1 At any time the magistrate could be called in to force an offender to appear before an ecclesiastical court, and under certain conditions, a committee of Lords and Commons could adjudge scandalous offences. C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, op. cit., I, pp.1198, 1209.

2 S. R. Gardiner, History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1649-1656, II, p.86.

3 Thomas Goodwin, An Apologeticall Narration, Humbly Submitted to the Honourable Houses of Parliament, (MDCXLIII), p.23. By Tho. Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrack Simpson, Jer. Burroughes, William Bridge.

4 Henry Burton, A Vindication of Churches, commonly called Independent ..., (London, 1644), p.42.

5 *ib.*, p.15.

Describing in 1647 A Model of the Primitive Congregational Way, Bartlet made it clear that Independents were violently opposed to "Those that cry up compulsion in matters of religion",¹ i.e., to any discipline which was not voluntarily accepted for the soul's true welfare. For such methods were carnal not spiritual, and by attempting to control conscience, usurped the power of God. He pictured the members of every congregation mutually "watching over one another" in love, "stirring up one another's graces", and "being patternes and examples in word and conversation, in faith, in Charity, in Spirit and purity ...".² All were to "enjoy Christ's own instituted discipline and government ... which is very effectually, to prevent from falling, and to recover when poore soules are falne ...".³ The same ascetic conception of safeguarding the soul's purity was entertained as in Presbyterianism; it was only the practical administration of church censures that was different.

A similar view of soul-saving Christian discipline was set forth in the Savoy Declaration (1658) which, though identical with the Westminster Confession in doctrine, was quite different on this point. Having joined themselves into particular gathered societies or churches according to the command of Christ, the "Saints by Calling" had at the same time acknowledged the discipline of Christ administered by these local churches in His name.

As all Believers are bound to join themselves to particular Churches, when and where they have opportunity to do so, so none are to be admitted into the Privileges of the Churches who do not submit themselves to the Rule of Christ in the

1 W. Bartlet, A Model of the Primitive Congregational Way ..., (London, 1647), p.128.

2 ib., p.92.

3 ib.

Censures for the Government of them. 1

By this rule censures were ordained "as a means of Edification" for those "who walk not according to the Rules and Laws appointed by him ...".² After admonition, first in private and then before the whole church if necessary, and failing repentance, the offender was to be excommunicated upon the consent of the congregation. Discipline could be exercised however, "only towards particular members of each Church respectively as such ...".³ The offences for which it was required were broadly the same as in Presbyterianism, and in both cases the underlying purpose was to provide struggling Christians with the benefits of a disciplinary system to which voluntary response was invited as a further valuable ally in the interests of salvation.⁴

None took greater advantage of the favourable climate of Commonwealth England for the exercise of church discipline than did Richard Baxter at Kidderminster. Thoroughly imbued with the Puritan zeal in this regard, he felt that too few churches had assumed their responsibility to the full.⁵ As for his own practice, he combined the best features of both the Presbyterian and Independent systems in an effort to foster the spiritual welfare of his parishioners.

1 The Savoy Declaration, Sec. XX, "Of the Institution of Churches, and the Order Appointed in them by Jesus Christ", in Philip Schaff, op. cit., III, p.727.

2 ib., Sec. XVIII, p.726.

3 ib., Sec. XXII, p.727.

4 Baptist discipline was indistinguishable from that of the Independents. The Society of Friends, too, early came to the realization that discipline of a spiritual kind, based on voluntary consent, was necessary for that growth in grace and perfection which the inner light made possible for every man. Thus, even in its most individualistic and "enthusiastic" forms "Puritanism was quite compatible with collectivism, provided the union was one of free minds properly convinced." M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p.347.

5 v. Richard Baxter, Gildas Salvianus, The Reformed Pastor, pp.109, 213.

He admired the zeal with which Presbyterian ministers were "edifying Men's Souls, and keeping up Religion in the Land", and he also noted with satisfaction the "commendable care of serious Holiness and Discipline in most of the Independent Churches ...".¹ But he could not approve of the Presbyterians "grasping at a kind of secular Power", nor of the Independents minimizing the minister's role and enforcing a too strict control which led to the "spiritual Pride of the Weaker sort of Professors."² He shared with the Presbyterians their keen sense of responsibility to the whole community, but insisted with the Independents that only those parishioners who responded voluntarily should come under the church's supervision. For he realized that to be "brought under Discipline without and against their own Consent ... was like to be their utter undoing, by hardening them into utter Enmity against the means that should recover them ...".³ On the basis of these principles Baxter faithfully exercised discipline at Kidderminster, where 600 out of 1600 parishioners freely submitted, and extended it throughout the county by means of his celebrated Worcestershire Association of ministers.⁴ On the first Wednesday of each month a meeting consisting of representative ministers, justices of the peace, deacons and "ancient and godly Men of the Congregation" was held for the purpose of parish discipline at which the impenitent were admonished.

1 Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, Part II, p.140.

2 *ib.*, pp.142, 143.

3 *ib.*, Part I, p.92.

4 On Baxter's exercise of discipline and the Worcestershire Association cf. F. J. Powicke, A Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter, 1615-1691, pp.92 ff, 165 ff. The need for discipline was so great that similar associations spread to nearly twenty counties. *ib.*, pp. 168 ff.

Baxter adds that "we did with all possible tenderness persuade them to repentance, and labour to convince them of their Sin and danger; and pray with them if they consented ...".¹ Those who still did not repent were required to appear before the monthly meeting of ministers which met the day following. If further pleading resulted in confession, the offenders were forgiven and exhorted to their duty for the future; but those who would not yield were to be prayed for on three consecutive days in their respective churches and finally to be excluded from communion and the fellowship of the church.² As a result of the voluntary obedience of large numbers of the people to the rule of Christ as expressed in such discipline, "abundance were converted to serious Godliness", and "All sober, godly, well-minded Persons, if they once fell into any scandalous Action ... did humbly confess their Sin, and walk more watchfully", although those on whom the extreme penalty of excommunication had to be imposed were found to be irredeemable.³ But the aim and practice was the restoration of the sinner to the godly life for the sake of his eternal welfare, and the success of Baxter's experiment will forever be a monument not only to his personal insight and zeal, but to the efficacy of the ascetic discipline of the movement as a whole.

C. Moral Legislation.

Puritanism, it has been said,

... brought the individual face to face with God and with His law, and taught him to submit to Him as Supreme Sovereign; and by a system of firm discipline it sought to bring the law of God home to the community. 4

In addition to the measures taken by the churches in harmony with

1 Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, Part II, p.150.

2 ib.

3 Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, Part I, pp.97, 92-3.

4 James Heron, A Short History of Puritanism, p.4.

this conception, it was only logical that when the Puritans came to power a further stimulus to the race of righteousness should have been recognized in moral legislation, by which temptation could be put beyond the reach of men, or failing that, a secondary deterrent to ungodliness could be established in the form of punishment for transgression. In the large body of laws passed during the Inter-Regnum with a view to regulating English moral life, zealous members of the movement saw an invaluable aid to the achievement of that purity by which alone men were enabled to see God. To many conscientious souls striving to live for Him in a careless world, the new legislation therefore came as a relief, not as a burden. And no greater proof of the ascetic outlook of the legislators is required than the simple fact, so often forgotten, that in passing these laws they were subjecting themselves as well as others to their disciplinary rigour. Here then was an opportunity to train the soul by accepting the renunciations involved in the restrictive legislation of the Christian state. By the same means, too, Puritans were attempting to glorify God, not only by their personal obedience and self-denial, but by extending His sway to the nation at large. For they knew, as Dowden suggests, that

... obedience and loyalty to the divine will does not consist solely in passive submission; they breathe forth or flame forth in an active co-operancy with that will. One who has himself become a part of the heavenly order in the world cannot but seek to extend that order into regions not yet reclaimed. 1

Inherent in the Puritan attitude were the self-ward and God-ward dimensions characteristic of all Christian asceticism.

Equally impressive but frequently underestimated was the

1 Edward Dowden, op. cit., p.28.

potent man-ward motivation of the moral legislation of the Commonwealth and Protectorate. Gravely aware of their responsibility to their fellows, Puritans strove to set a salutary example by their own submission and obedience to the new laws. Moreover, refusing to take the easy path of non-interference which so often hides a callous indifference, they purposed to promote the spiritual welfare of their fellows through legislation which would keep them from sin and, as they hoped, win them to godliness. This was just one more welcome means of helping men to wage war on the flesh and the world. Cromwell believed that it was his duty to extend the benefits of godliness to the whole people, and that under prevailing conditions this was possible only by the tutelary discipline of the state.¹ For years past, voluntary Christian self-discipline had been far too rare among the people and ungodliness had gone almost unchecked, "to the manifest indangering of souls, prejudice of the true Religion, great dishonour of Almighty God, and provocation of his just wrath and indignation against this Land ...",² as the preface to a parliamentary ordinance expressed it. Consequently, for the salvation of men's souls as well as for God's honour, vice must be punished and a norm established by law which would give some promise of reformation and the establishment of godliness. "Let them be who they may that are debauched," said Cromwell, "it is for the glory of God that nothing of outward consideration should save them from a just punishment and reformation."³ Despite the fact that Puritan policy

1 v. C. H. Firth, Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Puritans in England, pp.369, 484-5.

2 C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, op. cit., I, p.420.

3 ut per C. H. Firth, op. cit., p.352.

was by no means solely motivated by religious considerations, it is not difficult to discern in the universal discipline of the legislation to which it gave rise all the elements of an authentic Christian asceticism.

Indications have already been given of the wide range of moral problems dealt with in this manner with a view to encouraging strangers and sojourners in the world in the ways of righteousness. Particular attention was given to the religious observance of the Sabbath ¹ since it was believed that only if men were compelled to refrain from work and sport could they profit by the spiritual instruction and discipline associated with the Lord's Day. Again, parliamentary ordinances were passed setting aside specified days for national thanksgiving, or humiliation, or fasting, which in all cases required the ministers to exhort the people to the observance ² of these days and the magistrates to see to their enforcement. The contents of these documents take one to the heart of the asceticism of English Puritans, revealing their hostility to the sins of the flesh and their radical earnestness in the pursuit of godliness. On a day of thanksgiving, for example, the minister in addressing the people was

... solemnly to admonish them to beware of all excess and riot, tending to gluttony or drunkenness, and much more of these sins themselves, in their eating and refreshing, and to take care that their mirth and rejoicing be not carnal, but spiritual, which may make God's praise to be glorious, and themselves humble and sober; and that both their feeding and rejoicing may render them more cheerful and enlarged to celebrate his praises in the

1 v. C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, op. cit., Vol. I, pp.420-2 (April 8, 1644); p.478 (July 15, 1644); pp.598-9 (January 4, 1644-5); p.791 (October 20, 1645); p.1206 (August 29, 1648); and Vol. II, pp.383-387 (April 19, 1650); pp.1162-1170 (June 26, 1657).
2 ib., Vol. I, pp.606 f., 80 f., 913; 22, 830, 867, 604 f.

midst of the congregation when they return to it, in the remaining part of that Day. 1

A further feature of the organized effort to discourage vice and encourage virtue by legislation was the imposing array of prohibitory ordinances dealing with such matters as drunkenness, blasphemy and swearing, duelling, horse-racing, and many other practices which were believed to dishonour God, debase the soul, and lead the neighbour astray. A scale of penalties for "Prophane Swearing and Cursing" graduated according to the rank of the offender and the number of convictions was put into effect; while to discourage drunkenness the Major-Generals closed public-houses on Sundays and Fast days, and limited both the number of Ale-houses in each parish and the number of new licenses issued.² In short, in every possible way Puritan legislators sought to establish conditions which would contribute to the fulfilment of the high spiritual ends for which the movement stood. Baxter therefore, addressing his people at Kidderminster on the favourable climate for the practice of religion in Commonwealth England, could write:

You have such times of advantage and encouragement as few ages of the world have ever seen, and few Nations on Earth do enjoy at this day. ... Our Rulers countenance the Practices of Godliness: they proclaim themselves the forward Professors and Patrons of it, and take this as their Glory . . . And yet is not the way to Heaven fair enough for you? 3

From the ascetic point of view, however, the good effect of this much needed moral legislation was greatly vitiated by the

1 C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, op. cit., I, p.606-7.

2 ib., II, pp.393-5; Godfrey Davies, The Early Stuarts, pp.302-3. cf. C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, op. cit., I, pp.913-14, 1023, 1133-6.

3 Richard Baxter, Directions . . . to a Sound Conversion, pp.236-7. The contents of this book were first preached in 1658.

violation of the voluntary principle. Many indeed responded willingly to the direction and discipline provided by the state, but large sections of the population had to be coerced into submission. Soldiers were used in the suppression of bear-baiting and cock-fighting; constables were empowered to search private houses in an effort to enforce Lord's Day regulations; and Major-Generals were entrusted with the establishment of morality.¹ This led Trevelyan to speak of "the rule of Saints and Soldiers" with its "democratic ideals and its military realities."² But it is to be remembered that the Puritans were by no means the first legislators of "blue laws", for both Protestant and Catholic authorities on the Continent had enacted many laws concerned with amusements, Sabbath observance, and blasphemy, and England itself had not been altogether exempt.³ Moreover the left-wing sects of Puritanism, even in an age when compulsory methods were still strongly favoured, refused to countenance the use of force to promote the moral life. "It stifles sincerity, makes Hypocrites, and catches good People", claimed William Penn.⁴ It is frequently forgotten, too, that along with the moral laws went a thorough program of evangelization calculated to evoke the willing response of the people to them.⁵ It is also pertinent

1 Godfrey Davies, The Early Stuarts, pp.301-8.

2 G. M. Trevelyan, Social History of England, pp.244, 252.

3 Bills for better Sunday observance were introduced in parliament in 1606, 1614, and 1621, but the first to become law was signed by Charles I in 1625. It put restrictions on travelling and certain recreations and imposed fines on offenders. The Book of Sports, too, enforced church-going on all and sundry. v. W. B. Whitaker, op. cit., pp.78, 111, 98.

4 William Penn, An Address to Protestants ..., pp.200-1.

5 The reader of the laws and ordinances of the Inter-Regnum will be impressed by the great pains taken to ensure an able ministry for the task of deepening the spiritual life of the people.

to recall that most offenders who were ultimately prosecuted under Puritan legislation were deserving of punishment because their offenses were not only anti-religious but anti-social as well.

Nevertheless, taking all these factors into account, the provision of direction and discipline for the ascetic struggle by means of the enforcement of laws was the least successful measure adopted by English Puritans. For those already committed to the race of righteousness, legislative, like ecclesiastical discipline, was generally of salutary effect, providing an opportunity for a free response to guidance in the mastery of the world and the flesh; but the use of arbitrary methods on the prospective convert was not in the spirit of Christ, whose method was to woo to love of God and righteousness. Again the insight of a great Puritan goes to the heart of the matter.

You may cure a man of cursing, and swearing, and railing, and idle and ribbald talking, even in a minute or an hour, by cutting off his tongue: but will God accept him ever the more as long as he hath a heart that would do it if he could? There's abundance of people at this day that are kept from abusing the Lord's day, and from swearing, and stealing, yea and from laying hands on all about them that are godly, and this by the Law of man, and the fear of present punishment; And do you think that these are therefore innocent or acceptable with God? ... Believe it Sirs, you are never Christians, till you see that in God that wins your hearts to him, so that you would not change your Master for any in the world; and till you see that in the hopes of Everlasting Glory, that you would not change it for any thing else that can be imagined by the heart of man 1

In addition to the failure of the Puritans to legislate righteousness, the enactment of a code of conduct to which it was possible to measure up brought with it the grave perils of formalism and legalism. Morally strong men were assailed by spiritual pride, and weak souls measured their success in the race of righteousness

1 Richard Baxter, Directions ... to a Sound Conversion, p.222.

in terms of strict adherence to specific regulations. At that point the disciplinary system became the foe rather than the ally of genuine godliness, as this was interpreted by Puritan authors. In reaction to this formalism, and to the failure to respect individual liberty inherent in "the compelled preoccupation with the things of the spirit",¹ the laws passed during the Protectorate were annulled at the Restoration,² and the cause of religion which they had been designed to serve went down again before the forces of the flesh and the world.

But the exaltation of law was of limited benefit to Puritan intra-mundane asceticism. If Josselin had to record in his diary that "truly our hearts are not cleansed nor our wayes reformed" by the agency of the state, at least he could make the modest claim that while "People hanker after the sports and pastimes that they were wonted to enjoy, ... they are in many families weaned from them."³ The advantages of Puritan policy concerning Sabbath observance were early recognized, so that by a series of acts from 1662 onward, similar steps were taken to preserve a quiet Sunday when power had fallen into other hands.⁴ And some at least must have learned that the use of their freedom to rise above the claims of self and to bow before the absolute authority of righteous laws was of inestimable value in training the soul for the fulfilment of its high destiny. In this sense it is true that "there is a just and proper legalism which is required as a counteractive to a morality purely aesthetic and sentimental", and that its "educational value in habituating

1 H. J. C. Grierson, op. cit., p.300.

2 C. H. Firth, op. cit., p.347.

3 Ralph Josselin, op. cit., pp.52, 46.

4 W. B. Trevelyan, Sunday, pp.73-4.

human beings to resist their natural impulses"¹ is by no means negligible in the ascetic struggle.

In conclusion, to the life of watchfulness and renunciation, of humility and self-denial, of spiritual training and physical mortification which Puritans undertook to live in this world as the necessary prelude to eternal bliss in the world beyond, many forms of direction and discipline, as shown above, made their significant contribution. In order to provide such adequate guidance, not only were moral legislators kept uncommonly active, but of greater importance, a host of zealous ministers gave of their time and talents without stint, content to know that they were serving their God and their fellow pilgrims, and at the same time preparing their own souls for glory. In these ways provision was made for the upbuilding of innumerable men and women who, in that strength and by mutual edification, endeavoured in turn to do battle with the flesh and the world. Only this combination of guidance and personal effort could suffice to transform the "Opinionative Convert" into the "Sound Convert", to use Baxter's meaningful terms. For as he put it, describing the absolute demands of Christian discipleship,

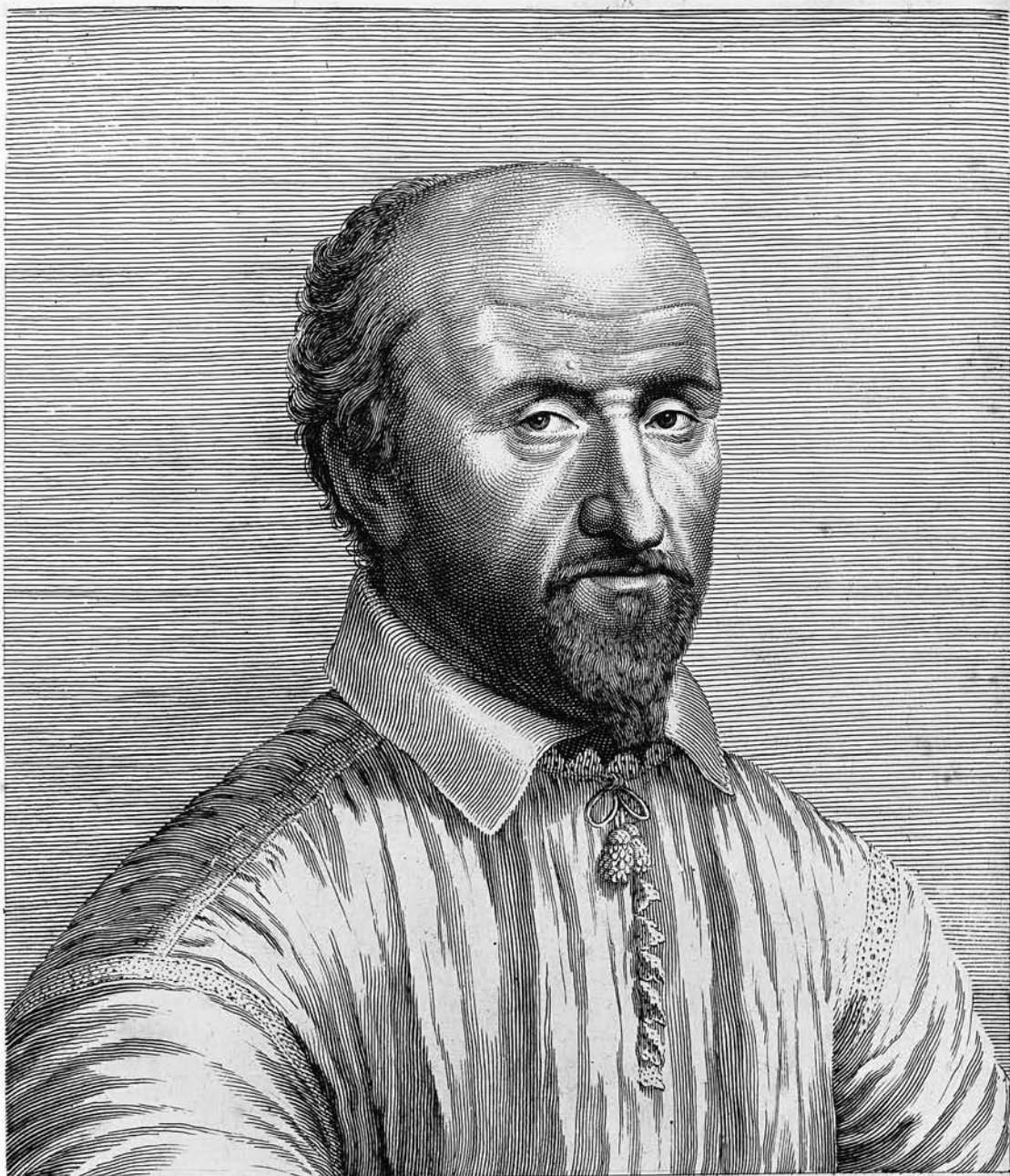
The work of Christ by his Gospel, is no less, than to fetch you off all that which flesh and blood accounts your Happiness, and to unite you to himself, and make you Holy, as God is Holy, and to give you a new Nature, and make you as the dwellers or Citizens of Heaven, while you walk on Earth 3

Such was the nature of the Christian asceticism of English Puritans in the seventeenth century.

1 Eugene Ehrhardt, "Nomism", in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, (ed. James Hastings), Vol. IX, p.381.

2 Richard Baxter, Directions . . . to a Sound Conversion, pp.198 ff.

3 *ib.*, p.209.



M.^{re} Jean du Verger de Hauranne Abbé de Saint Ciran
decede' lⁱⁿ. d'octobre 1643 âgé de 62 ans

L'Humilité profonde, & la haute Science
Firent en ce grand Homme vne sainte alliance:
Il mesprisa l'honneur, les biens, et les plaisirs:
Il vit comme vn neant ce que le Monde enserre,
Et son coeur pour obiet de ses nobles desirs,
Néut que DIEU dans le Ciel, & l'EGLISE en la terre.

D. Dumonstier pinx;

P. Daret Sculp. 1645.

CHAPTER VI

THE SETTING AND ORIGINS OF JANSENIST ASCETICISM

La Grâce est la douceur du joug par qui nous sommes
Heureusement soumis au pouvoir du Seigneur;
Par elle sans contrainte il règne dans le coeur,
Et fait voir ses grandeurs dans les vertus des hommes;
Par elle il établit son amour icy bas,
Qui par de sacrez noeuds & de chastes apas
Nous unit pour jamais à ce Roy légitime;
Par elle il nous conduit au pied de ses autels,
Et montre à nostre esprit qu'il ne sçauroit sans crime
Atacher ses désirs à des objets mortels.

Robert Arnauld d'Andilly,
"Effets de la Grâce",
Oeuvres Chrestiennes, (1634), p.126.

In 1640, the year in which the important Root and Branch Petition was being presented to Parliament in London in the Puritan attempt to reform the Anglican Church, there was published in Louvain the epoch-making Augustinus of Cornelius Jansen which was to be the storm-centre of the Jansenist movement within the Gallican Church. Before attempting to picture the Christian asceticism of this movement which in so many ways parallels English Puritanism, it is essential, as before, first to reconstruct the general ethos in which it evolved; then to examine and contrast Jansenist spirituality in the light of its background; and finally to set forth the chief factors which made precisely for its ascetic piety.

Again, such an analysis seems indispensable. For integral to an understanding of the particular form and nature of their asceticism is an appreciation of the reasons why Jansenists should have become ascetics at all. And only in the full light of their environment and of their conscious Christian heritage can one bring into focus a balanced picture and avoid an over-simplification of the issues involved.

A. France: The Seventeenth Century Ethos.

If England shone brightly in the seventeenth century firmament, France was universally recognized to be the pole-star of the age. Recovering, as the century opened, from the devastations of the tragic wars of religion, France made giant strides to outstrip the other nations of Europe, and during the "siècle de Louis XIV" established that "mission civilisatrice" which was to be her unique role as a nation. While her soldiers and statesmen were winning for her the power and prestige which were slipping from the Spanish grasp, her writers at home - among them Corneille, Racine, Molière, La Fontaine, Boileau, and that universal genius Pascal - were making this her classic century by fashioning the French language into an incomparable instrument of clarity and precision and rendering it a vehicle of singular intrinsic beauty. To further these ends, the Académie Française was founded in 1635 by letters patent of Louis XIII. From 1624 to 1648 in a famous Parisian salon, l'Hôtel de Rambouillet, French conversation was transformed into an art, and together with the cultivation of polite manners, became the chief occupation of a select literary circle. The pinnacle of French grandeur, especially in the last quarter of the century, was the court of Versailles

where extravagant splendour reigned. France was forging her cultural leadership of the world; gradually "the whole of Europe fell under the spell of Gallic thought and Gallic manners."¹

As in England, this brilliant age was characterized by a sense of emancipation from mediaeval scholastic dogmatism, a decline in the interpretation of the natural in terms of the supernatural and of the human in terms of dependence upon a sovereign personal God, and the emergence of the modern humanist, rationalist, secular spirit, with its high estimate of man. Descartes, a Christian who² made a philosophy which, however, was not a Christian philosophy, took as his "point de départ" the bold unambiguous "Cogito, ergo sum". Although content to leave the established religion and conventional morality beyond the scope of his new method, his was in effect an unbounded faith in man and in human reason. As St. Cyres expressed it, "Most Cartesian imaginations fastened on the truths of reason, and but little occupied themselves with those of faith."³ Later, in the hands of a Malebranche and a Richard Simon, the searching rays of rational analysis would be turned on supernatural religion itself, the former declaring that even in religion it was impossible to limit the rights of human reason, the latter applying the scientific method to the scriptures as to any profane book.⁴ The age of reason was in sight.

That man was becoming his own master is evident in various moral patterns discernible in contemporary French life. In the

1 Preserved Smith, op. cit., p.11.

2 v. Etienne Gilson, "The Future of Augustinian Metaphysics" in M. C. D'Arcy, et al., A Monument to Saint Augustine ..., p.290.

3 Viscount St. Cyres, Cambridge Modern History, Vol. IV, p.73.

4 v. Ernest Lavisse, Histoire de France Depuis les Origines jusqu'à la Révolution, Vol. VIII, Part I, pp.398-9, 406.

forepart of the century there was among cultivated Frenchmen a marked resurgence of lofty Stoicism which, although allied with a profession of Roman Catholicism, assumed that man was his own master and that, by the right use of his reason, he could acquire prudence and cure himself of the tyranny of his passions. Strowski comments significantly:

Et déjà les catholiques stoïcisés commencent à perdre non le culte de Dieu, non la croyance à la vérité de l'Église, non l'amour du Christ, mais le sentiment de leur misère et de leur impuissance, mais le besoin de la grâce, mais l'attente désespérée de la rénovation intérieure. 1

The century is also famous for its secular ideal, "l'honnête homme". Refinement, taste, good sense were his watchwords, his moral guides. Based on the conviction that man and nature were both good, "l'honnêteté" aimed merely at pleasing and being pleased. In effect, it was the triumph of the Renaissance spirit, standing for the repudiation of the transcendent supernatural dimension in life and the assertion of faith in man's powers of self-government.

"Pour ce parfait mondain la vie mondaine était la perfection de la vie humaine; elle déterminait l'idéal moral; elle était toute la morale de l'homme ...".²

A similar process was at work amongst those known as the "faux dévots" who, outwardly zealous for the church, were inwardly impervious to its spiritual significance or moral demands. Typical of these was Louis XIV, "le roi très chrétien" for whom Christianity meant the lavish decoration of a chapel or the hounding of the unorthodox, Protestant or Jansenist. In reality, the chief article

1 Fortunat Strowski, Pascal et Son Temps, Vol. I, p.123. The heroes of Corneille breathe this heady Stoic atmosphere.

2 ib., III, p.179.

of his faith, the real centre of his religion, was a belief in himself. The incarnation of pride, he was mastered by one consuming passion, the love of glory. As his fond courtiers so easily convinced him, he was "le Roi Soleil", the veritable centre of the universe. His theory of divine right made him the image of God: "Même on pourrait se demander si ce n'est pas plutôt Dieu qui se modèle sur le Roi ...".¹ Clearly, God was superfluous. The results of "fausse dévotion" were disastrous in the moral life. It has been suggested that Louis XIV's career could conveniently be divided into periods according to his mistresses,² and there were many such devotees of this false religion with its false morality. The nobles and aristocratic hangers-on and courtiers reflected the royal ambition, corruption, and addiction to pleasure. Immorality and coarseness went hand in hand with the accepted formulae of manners, ceremony and devotion.

More than any other court of modern times, the court of Louis XIV provided unlimited scope for time-serving, mediocrity, and licentiousness, in which independence of mind or character was sternly repressed and where sycophancy and hypocrisy went to such lengths as to impress all but the most cynical or the most stolid.³

And finally, there were the "libertins" or free-thinkers who, more consistent than the "faux dévots", were scoffers at religion as well as - though not always - at morality. "To follow nature" was their ambition, by which their avowed model Pierre Charron (1541-1603) had meant to follow the dictates of reason. By

1 L. Halphen and P. Sagnac, Peuples et Civilisations, Vol. X, p.169.

2 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, Port-Royal, Vol. III, p.264. The seven volumes of this work have been consulted as follows: I and VI, Third edition (Paris, 1867); II to V, Tenth edition (Paris, s.a.); VII, Third edition (Paris, 1871).

3 David Ogg, Europe in the Seventeenth Century, p.313.

many of these "beaux esprits" however, it was taken to mean free rein not only for the rational but also for the animal part of their nature, and so, along with the devotion to literature (and a grossly exaggerated estimate of their own works)¹ they frequently gave themselves over to every kind of sensuality and vice.² As Père Garasse put it in horror at their extremes: "Ils disent que pour vivre heureux et content, il faut estrãgler toute ceste nichée de petits vipereaux qu'on appelle scrupules ..."³ The pendulum had gone full swing from supernatural Christianity with its intrinsic moral claims to a debauched, atheistic, naturalism. The spiritual void created by this effective elimination from human life of the transcendent sovereign personal God is patent in the words of Mme. de Maintenon, who wrote:

Je vois des passions de toute sorte, des trahisons, des bassesses, des ambitions démesurées; ... j'ai goûté des plaisirs, ... j'ai passé des années dans le commerce de l'esprit; je suis venue à la faveur, et je vous proteste ... que tous ces états laissent un vide affreux, une inquiétude, une lassitude, une envie de connaître autre chose 4

As for the spiritual tone of the Gallican church, there were signs of vigour and new life, pockets of resistance to the prevalent secularism which was obscuring the fact and the implications of divine sovereignty and human depravity. Early in the century the spirit of the Counter-Reformation was manifested in a revival of traditional monastic asceticism both in the reform of old, hitherto

1 cf. Fortunat Strowski, op. cit., I, p.180.

2 François Garasse, La Doctrine Curieuse des Beaux Esprits de ce Temps, ou Prétendus Tels, (MDCXXIII), pp.684-691.

3 *ib.*, p.969.

4 ut per Ernest Lavisse, op. cit., VIII, Part I, p.436.

decadent orders, and in the establishment of many new ones.¹ The period was also marked by the rise of directors of conscience, priests who specialized in guiding pious souls in the way of salvation as set forth by the church.²

Above all there was the efflorescence of the French School of spirituality which combined apostolic zeal with the traditional asceticism of the cloistered order. At the forefront of this stream of action and charity, "taking religious perfection outside the monastery gate, and offering it with both hands to the secular clergy"³, was the Congrégation de l'Oratoire founded in 1611 by Cardinal de Bérulle, and later led by Charles de Condren and François Bourgoing. The Oratoire assembled a body of secular priests who, by preaching and teaching, sought to revive the spirituality of the church. The Bérullian doctrine which animated this movement enshrined a vital conviction of divine transcendence and of human nothingness, and enjoined a total self-renunciation and mortification based on complete adherence to Christ.⁴ In the same stream of spirituality with its mystic theocentrism and its consequent asceticism was Jean-Jacques Olier who, a disciple of Condren, founded the seminary of Saint-Sulpice with the aim of reviving a decadent clergy; Adrien Bourdoise who founded the seminary of Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet for the education of secular priests; and Père Eudes

1 On the reform of religious orders v. Louis Prunel, La Renaissance Catholique en France au XVII^e Siècle, pp.31-73. Most venerated of all and the only order not in need of reform were the Carthusians, renowned for their austerity.

2 v. Viscount St. Cyres, Cambridge Modern History, Vol. IV, p.79.

3 Alban Goodier, op. cit., p.71.

4 P. Pourrat, La Spiritualité Chrétienne, Vol. III, Les Temps Modernes, pp.516 ff. cf. Henri Brémond, Histoire Littéraire du Sentiment Religieux en France, depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours, Vol. IV, pp.25 ff.

who founded a similar congregation.¹ And most famous of all there was St. Vincent de Paul, founder of the Filles de la Charité, the Congrégation de Saint-Lazare, hospitals for galley slaves and foundling hospitals, all designed to evangelize and succour the common people. In the French School, then, there was a strong current of Christian asceticism emphasizing the man-ward dimension of charity which, conjoined with a high conception of the priesthood, issued in a passionate concern for the physical and spiritual welfare of the mass of the faithful.

By focussing one's attention only on the saints and reformers it is possible to conclude from a reading of the history of the French church in the seventeenth century that this was truly the great Christian century. The obverse of the coin, however, is the inconceivably decadent state in which the church found itself and which made these noteworthy efforts so essential² and, relatively, so inconsequential. For by and large the life of the church was being corroded by the same humanistic spirit which has been seen to characterize the secular life of the age, and by its same fruits of worldliness and moral disorder. Widely blamed for the decadence was the "humanisme dévot" of the Society of Jesus, and the lax moral

1 Besides these efforts in the homeland, the French church during the century was engaged in various foreign missionary enterprises, of which the most noteworthy were the Jesuit missions in Canada. The unequalled record of France in foreign missions dates from this century.

2 M. Brémond tried to refute the established formula that France was spiritually decadent as the century opened by showing us the shining lights of the period. But M. Cognet has demonstrated that the milieu in which they lived was "un univers où la vertu a moins de place que ne le pensait M. Brémond." Louis Cognet, La Spiritualité française au XVII^e siècle, p.5. cf. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., IV, p.350, note 1.

direction which stemmed from it. The Society was attempting to extend piety to the faithful living ordinary lives in the world, rather than allowing it to remain the prerogative of a cloistered élite.¹ In this they were following St. François de Sales, whom Goodier has aptly described as "the apostle of the perfect natural man, perfect balance of character, to be secured by the perfect supernatural; capturing the world's own ideal and sanctifying it ...".² But in the practice of this "humanisme dévot", in capturing the world's own ideal and so making Christianity attractive, the Jesuits, unlike the French School who also took Christianity to the world, tended to lower moral standards and to obscure the sinfulness of man and the uniquely necessary divine redemption.

Poussés par leur idéal de conquête, habitués aux luttes continuelles et fascinés par le succès de leur ordre, certains jésuites prenaient inconsciemment des allures trop confidentes. ... Enfin par suite d'un désir trop ardent d'étendre l'influence de leur ordre, les jésuites firent quelquefois des concessions indues à la politique et aux exigences du monde. 3

Failing to maintain the perpetual tension between being all things to all men and determining to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified, the commendable original impulse of the Society gave way to a pliability and false casuistry which contributed heavily to the laxity of the times. The accusations contained in Pascal's Provinciales induced further investigation in Rouen and Paris on the part of the local curés, with the result that in both cases a strong appeal for the condemnation of the wicked maxims of the Jesuits was

1 cf. supra pp.16-17.

2 Alban Goodier, op. cit., p.71.

3 Albert de Meyer, Les Premières Controverses Jansénistes en France (1640-1649), pp.83-4.

drawn up.¹ Contemporary opinion held that their tactics degraded morality and made pardon too easy;² and the existence within the order of morally exemplary men such as Bourdaloue could not alter the situation. Into the most zealous order of the church had come the spirit of the world, "esprit adultère de l'Évangile; tout à soi et aux siens ... et qui, sous air de douceur, et en l'adulant, convoite éternellement le royaume de la terre ...".³

Decadence and secularism however, far from being limited to the Society of Jesus, were characteristic of the Gallican Church at large. As in England, religion had become a mere tool of statecraft, and in practice any semblance of spiritual autonomy had been abandoned. The fusion, for the most part, of episcopal and royal Gallicanism against Roman ultra-montanism had resulted in a constant insistence on national rights to the point that there was grave danger of their becoming synonymous with Christianity. Religion had become a social and political duty, not the source of a personal piety involving a total inner abandonment to the supernatural life. "On ne conçoit plus guère que la situation religieuse, celle du chrétien et plus encore celle du prêtre, comporte un engagement de toute la personne."⁴

In Richelieu, the Machiavellian cardinal-minister, the fundamentally anti-Christian character of the contemporary church

1 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., III, pp.204-5.

2 cf. Augustin Gazier, Histoire Générale du Mouvement Janséniste Depuis ces origines jusqu'à nos jours, I, Chap. II, pp.18-37, who attempts to show that for these reasons the Jesuits were universally condemned by the other leaders of spiritual reform in France.

3 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., III, p.131.

4 Louis Cognet, op. cit., p.11.

was manifest. His life was a drama in which the priest was but the agent of the ambitious statesman who was at all times governed by "le sens réaliste". In M. Strowski's words,

Richelieu n'ordonne pas ses actes suivant des principes, mais d'après des faits; le soin de la grandeur nationale et de sa grandeur personnelle priment pour lui tous les autres soins. 1

Since he required absolute obedience to his will, loyalty to religious values or tenderness of conscience which threatened to thwart his plans were tolerated of no one.² And except for greater reliance on subtle diplomacy than on force, what has been said of Richelieu holds true for his successor in power, Cardinal Mazarin. In both cases, moreover, forfeiture of spiritual autonomy was accompanied by a pagan worldliness which all but extinguished the last sparks of genuine Christianity. Racine relates that when one of Richelieu's prisoners, the distinguished General Werth, was invited to a lavish theatrical party given by the Cardinal, his significant comment was that the spectacle which had most amazed him in France was that of seeing the saints in prison and the bishops at the theatre.³ Mazarin set a similar example to the church by living like an oriental potentate, his fêtes, ballets and lotteries being altogether worthy of the traditions of his predecessor.⁴

These conditions were widely reflected amongst the higher

1 Fortunat Strowski, op. cit., III, p.109.

2 Richelieu's political machinations not only involved Saint-Cyran and Port-Royal, but threatened the whole French Counter-Reformation. cf. Jean Orcibal, Les Origines du Jansénisme: Vol. II, Jean Duvergier de Hauranne, Abbé de Saint Cyran et Son Temps, (1581-1638), pp.569 ff. David Ogg writes: "France under Richelieu had little internal history - the death-rate among the Cardinal's enemies was too high." op. cit., p.188.

3 J. Racine, Abrégé de l'Histoire de Port-Royal, (MDCCLXVIII), p.50.

4 Ernest Lavisse, op. cit., VIII, Part I, pp.110-111.

clergy. Recruited from the "bourgeoisie élevée", they saw in the French church which possessed one-third of the nation's wealth, the most promising means of supplying them with the money so essential to the maintenance of their position. From motives of ambition and greed, episcopates were given to mere boys who never received holy orders and who devoted their lives to gain and pleasure. To be exiled in one's diocese was considered the most terrible of all penalties, and was inflicted only on those who were disgraced at the court. Cardinals and bishops married and vacated their charges.¹ As Jaccard writes, the princes of the church in the period were almost universally "de grands seigneurs avec maison montée, cour, luxe, chasses, plaisirs, maîtresses,² et ce qui achève le signe d'une authentique noblesse, des dettes."

Nor was corruption confined to the higher clergy. Among monastic orders in the forepart of the century grave irregularities were caused by the use of commendatory abbots who, receiving two-thirds of the income, had only a financial interest in their benefices. Abbeys were possessed by children, laymen, even Protestants, and frequently in plurality.³ Nuns, forced into a life for which they had no aptitude, ignored the closure, amused themselves in card-playing and dancing, and lived in luxury with lackeys and maid-servants.⁴ And monks were to be seen walking through the countryside dressed as merchants or soldiers, having doffed their religious habit

1 Le Vicomte G. d'Avenel, Prêtres, Soldats et Juges sous Richelieu, pp.18, 83 ff.

2 L.-Frédéric Jaccard, op. cit., p.24.

3 Le Vicomte G. d'Avenel, Prêtres, Soldats et Juges sous Richelieu, pp.73 ff.

4 Louis Prunel, La Renaissance Catholique en France au XVII^e Siècle, p.11.

1

for the greater freedom of the world.

The situation amongst the rank and file of parish priests was even more deplorable, especially in rural areas. Due to the almost total lack of seminaries as the century opened, most priests had only the vaguest conception of the holiness of their calling and simply blended into the coarseness of their milieu. Ignorance, incompetence and irreverence in the performance of sacred duties were almost universal. In many parishes preaching and catechizing had long since been abandoned, while superstition and sorcery were instead fostered by the clergy. Immorality was so widespread among candidates for the priesthood that even the pious Bishop of Comminges could only demand of those he was to ordain that they come to hear a sermon the night previous to ordination, and that they abstain from gambling and debauchery in the place where they were to spend the night.

2

Again, as in England, most tragic of all in the French scene was the plight of the common people. In the early years of the century following the religious wars there was widespread poverty and destitution; beggars roamed the countryside and sheltered in the cemeteries; plague carried away by the thousand the poor and the already starving. As the years passed and royal and ecclesiastical luxury increased, the lot of the poor remained intolerable.

3

And the century closed as it had opened, making France, as far as the common people were concerned, "un grand hôpital désolé et sans

1 Louis N. Prunel, Sébastien Zamet, Évêque-Duc de Langres, Pair de France (1588-1655), Sa Vie et Ses Oeuvres, p.98.

2 Georges Goyau, Histoire Religieuse, Vol. VI of Hanotaux, Histoire de la Nation Française, p.413.

3 Men died by the thousand from fever contracted while working on the canal and pond at Versailles.

provision."¹ Under these circumstances ignorance and impiety were rife. Gambling, prostitution, saturnalian revels and debauches were commonplace. Respect for the sacred was at a low ebb, and the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement² had even to fight against immodesty in the churches, particularly in the matter of women's dress. The profanation of the Sabbath and of Holy Days by revelling and vulgarity as well as by labour was a source of grave concern to the seriously religious. Superstition, as in England, was widespread,³ and many poor folk were even ignorant of the existence of God.

In brief, the moral and spiritual life of church and people in France in the seventeenth century showed every sign of degeneracy, and the outward power of the church and splendour of the court could not hide the fact. The French School will forever be the glory of the Gallican church, but as a highly competent authority has recently declared, "elle déçut néanmoins beaucoup des espoirs qu'elle avait d'abord éveillés et n'eut même que peu d'effet sur la vie morale et religieuse de l'ensemble de la nation."⁴ Thus, although in some ways it was a century of Christian reconstruction,⁵ actually the forces of genuine religion were not in control of the mainstreams of French life, social, political, or ecclesiastical.

1 Ernest Lavisse, op. cit., VIII, Part I, p.272.

2 This was a secret society composed of influential bourgeois, magistrates and courtiers which aimed at restoring a semblance of order in the church. On its history v. Louis Prunel, La Renaissance Catholique en France au XVII^e Siècle, pp.143-182.

3 In fact, in Paris M. Olier found an altar erected to Beelzebub. Le Vicomte G. d'Avenel, Prêtres, Soldats et Juges sous Richelieu, pp.129, 4-5.

4 Jean Orcibal, Les Origines du Jansénisme: Vol. II, p.30.

5 cf. Picot, Essai Historique sur l'influence de la Religion en France Pendant le dix-septième siècle, II Vols., to get a balanced picture.

B. French Jansenism in the Seventeenth Century.

Responding to the urgent need for

reform so patent in the contemporary scene, and always to be viewed in this context, was the religious movement known as French Jansenism. To define this term precisely is exceedingly difficult since, as its chief spokesman throughout the seventeenth century, Antoine Arnauld, makes abundantly clear, it had a wide range of connotations.

Car comment le commun du monde pourroit-il définir un terme que chacun entend selon ses diverses prétentions & la plupart selon des idées si confuses, qu'ils ne sauroient dire ce que c'est. Il y en a qui ne conçoivent autre chose par-là, sinon, qu'on n'est pas bien avec les Jésuites. D'autres, qu'on aime Port-Royal, ou M. Arnauld, & qu'on estime les livres de ces Messieurs: c'est comme on parle dans le monde. Pour peu qu'on fasse profession d'une morale sévère, on est regardé par d'autres comme Janséniste. Un confesseur qui a la réputation de ne pas absoudre sur le champ tous ceux qui se confessent à lui, est suspect, en quelques pays, d'être de ce partie-là. On en est encore, dans l'esprit de plusieurs ignorants, quand on soutient la doctrine de S. Augustin touchant la prédestination gratuite & l'efficace de la grâce. ... Mais pour les subtilités d'École ... on ne sauroit plus trouver une personne raisonnable qui l'attache à cette idée. 1

What is certain is that, like Puritanism, Jansenism was first used almost universally in a pejorative sense, in this case to signify revolt in one form or another against the teaching and authority of Rome, i. e., as a synonym for heresy and schism. ² Actually, to give the term a concrete meaning, it may be reduced as Arnauld's informative paragraph will show, to two basic connotations, one theological and one moral. A Jansenist therefore was one who in

1 Antoine Arnauld, Oeuvres de Messire Antoine Arnauld, Docteur de la Maison et Société de Sorbonne, (1775-81), Vol. XXV, p.25. From the beginning Arnauld declared Jansenism to be a "fantôme", a position recently sustained with vigour by Augustin Gazier, Histoire Générale du Mouvement Janséniste, I, Avant-propos, p.V.

2 Cécile Gazier, Ces Messieurs de Port-Royal, p.28.

theology was a convinced disciple of St. Augustine,¹ largely as interpreted in Cornelius Jansen's Augustinus and who, in Christian practice lived the rigorous ascetic life. On this basis the Port-Royalists, nuns and solitaries, were obviously the most genuine Jansenists, so that Port-Royalism has often been used synonymously² for Jansenism.

Most noteworthy among the primary features of this reform movement was, in fact, its very close connection with the Cistercian convent of Port-Royal which, as the visible foyer of the movement, succeeded in dramatic fashion in bringing to bear upon a godless age its profound theological and moral witness. "Car une doctrine vécue est toujours plus vivante et plus tenace que des théories abstraites qui ne passionnent que quelques théologiens."³ A second striking aspect was the leadership of the Arnauld family and especially of Mère Angélique, "Réformatrice de Port-Royal", and of her famous brother Antoine Arnauld, "Le Grand" - as they are familiarly known in the annals of the movement. Although a previous taint of Protestantism in the family was to intensify the hostility⁴ of the Jesuits to the movement, the powerful and devout Arnaulds

1 The Jansenists preferred to call themselves "Les Disciples de Saint Augustin", but were dubbed Jansenists by their enemies. v. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., VI, Appendix, pp. 268 ff.

2 Port-Royalism, however, connotes the moral and ascetic side of the movement chiefly, while Jansenism embraces both this and the theological struggle.

3 Albert de Meyer, op. cit., p. 27.

4 M. de la Mothe, the grandfather of the great Port-Royalists, had been converted to Protestantism and had forsaken the Huguenot ranks only after the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew. Moreover, his son (and the father of our Arnaulds), the eloquent lawyer Antoine Arnauld, had pleaded on behalf of the University of Paris for the expulsion of the Jesuits from France after the attempt on the life of Henri IV in 1593. This was the "original sin" of the Arnaulds. cf. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, p. 69.

were to be a tower of strength both in their conduct of the theological debate and in their contribution of many nuns and solitaires as examples of Jansenist spirituality.¹ And a final distinguishing feature is to be seen in the fact that, unlike English Puritanism, it was initiated as an effective force in France by one man, the Abbé de Saint-Cyran. Amoudru writes:

Par Saint-Cyran, ami et confident de Jansen, l'abbaye réformée par Angélique Arnauld devient l'arche Sainte et la citadelle de la vraie doctrine: la cause de Jansen allait donc bénéficier de la vertu des moniales, de la science des solitaires, des talents héréditaires de la famille Arnauld. 2

It was to the revered Saint-Cyran that Port-Royal owed its soul, for without his labours and example, Jansen's theology would have remained on the purely academic level.

At its heart, as in Puritanism, lay what has been called "the Augustinian strain of piety".³ In opposition to an easy-going humanism, to a deceptive and disastrous Semi-Pelagianism which was giving man too large a place in effecting his own salvation, and even to an undue emphasis on Christian charity which threatened to obscure the essential testimony of the faith that Christ died to save sinners,⁴ Jansenism pointed men unequivocally to the root elements of the

1 On the genealogy of the Arnaulds and their contribution to Port-Royal, v. Mémoires pour Servir à l'Histoire de Port-Royal Et à la Vie de la Révérende Mère Marie Angélique de Sainte Magdeleine Arnauld, Réformatrice de ce Monastère, (MDCCXLII), Vol. I, pp. vi-xx. cf. Louis Cognet, La Réforme de Port-Royal (1591-1618), "Note Généalogique", pp. 251-260.

2 Bernard Amoudru, Le Sens Religieux du Grand Siècle, p.50.

3 cf. supra p.53.

4 On the dire need of Jansenism's particular Christian witness Strowski writes: "Pendant que le catholicisme fleurira et s'épanouira au soleil de la science et de l'art, pendant qu'il sera la Providence visible et secourable des gens qui ont faim, il gardera au centre même de sa vie le groupe tragique de ceux que le sang du Christ ne cesse d'inonder." op. cit., I, p.271.

Christian gospel which were in great need of reaffirmation, namely, the creatureliness and sinfulness of man and the absolute sovereignty and grace of God. It was the defence of these truths which lay behind the Jansenists' unflagging devotion to the cause of the Augustinus; nothing less than these were at stake in the now famous disputes about the Five Propositions, the Formulary, the Case of Conscience, and the Bull Unigenitus.¹ And these doctrines were a literal description of the religious experience of Jansenists from Saint-Cyran onward. For them, religion was of an inward spiritual nature, a dialogue between God and the soul, an I-Thou encounter beginning with an inrush of transforming irresistible grace, the

1 For a full account of the theological controversy favouring the Jansenists, v. Augustin Gazier, Histoire Générale du Mouvement Janséniste, (Paris, 1924). A competent treatment in English written with an anti-Jansenist bias is that of Nigel Abercrombie, The Origins of Jansenism, (Oxford, 1936). The Five Propositions around which the controversy raged were as follows:

- I. Some commandments of God are impossible of performance to just men, according to their present strength, even though they be willing and striving to perform them; and the grace which would make these commandments possible, is also wanting to them.
- II. In the state of fallen nature, no resistance is ever made to eternal grace.
- III. In order to produce merit or demerit in the state of fallen nature, liberty from necessity is not required in man, but liberty from constraint is sufficient.
- IV. The Semi-Pelagians admitted the need of prevenient internal grace for all actions, even for the beginning of faith; and they were heretics, inasmuch as they would have this grace to be such as the will of man could either resist or obey.
- V. It is a Semi-Pelagian error to say that Christ died or shed his blood for all men, universally.

(Charles Beard, Port-Royal, Vol. I, pp.247-8). The Jansenists claimed to support the condemnation of the propositions on the basis of the famous "distinction de droit et de fait", by which they recognized the pope's right to censure but declared that he was in error as to the fact that the propositions were **attributable** to the Bishop of Ypres. Jansen's doctrines were popularized in France through Antoine Arnauld's Apologie de M. Jansénius (1644).

Augustinian experience of conversion by which the elect were called from death unto life, from sin unto holiness. It was this uncompromising supernaturalism based on the irreducible facts of sin and grace, and the call of the elect by the sovereign God to eternal fellowship with Himself, with which Jansenism confronted its age. In its reckoning, life had meaning only in terms of the divine transcendent dimension. As Boutroux points out, it was this which attracted Pascal -

... a conception of religion which did away with the strange parallel readily accepted by the insight of ordinary men between our love of God and our love of things, and which, by acknowledging the emptiness of a world without God, bade him devote to God all his thoughts, all his love, and all his life. 1

During the century French Jansenists were to fight a losing battle with the forces of humanism and rationalism which, exalting the spontaneous excellence of the creature, logically came to dispense with the divine Saviour of Christian faith and so prepared the way for the deism of Voltaire and the optimism of Rousseau.

Indirectly yet insistently the supreme emphasis on grace, conversion, and personal responsibility to God tended in Jansenism to undermine the traditional authority of the Roman Catholic Church. Since grace is free and God deals directly with sinners, the church becomes, if not superfluous, at least of secondary importance in a case of conscience.² "Toute l'histoire du jansénisme est celle de ce conflit."³ Despite their sincere respect for the sacraments of the church, their practice of the cherished devotions of Rome such

1 Émile Boutroux, Cambridge Modern History, Vol. IV, p.795.

2 cf. Mère Angélique's explanation of why she could not sign the Formulary against Jansenism "contre les lumières de ma conscience", [J. Besoigne], Histoire de l'Abbaye de Port-Royal, (MDCCLII), Vol. II, p.113.

3 Paul Bénichou, Morales du Grand Siècle, p.115.

as the veneration of relics and the cult of the Virgin, their eminently high doctrine of the priesthood, and their ardent protestations of orthodoxy and frequent attacks on Protestantism, it was their direct relation to a sovereign God rather than the authority of the church which was the supremely important factor in the religion of French Jansenists. Consequently, like the members of the radical societies of Puritanism, they exhibited a marked tendency to enthusiasm stemming from their strong supernaturalism, as evidenced by the many miracles which they claimed as signs of the direct intervention of God on their behalf.¹ In the seventeenth century this tendency was largely checked by the discipline of normal submission to the church in the person of her bishops, priests, and directors, and by the restraining consciousness of human depravity and fallibility,² while in the next century it was to get out of hand in the convulsions of Saint-Médard.³

Sufficient has been said to indicate the nature of the positive contribution of Jansenism to the revival of true spirituality in seventeenth century France. In such an age its profound Augustinianism constituted it a genuine reform movement. And on this basis it set out to effect that regeneration of church and society which had been somewhat vaguely conceived by Jansen and

1 e. g. "The Miracle of the Holy Thorn" in which Marguerite Périer, Pascal's niece, was cured of a tumour of the eye, or that in which Soeur Ste.-Suzanne de Champagne was cured of a long-standing paralysis.

2 "Je crois qu'avec les miracles il peut y avoir beaucoup d'humain", wrote Saint-Cyran. [Claude] Lancelot, Mémoires Touchant la Vie de Monsieur de S. Cyran, (MDCCXXXVIII), Vol. II, pp. 16-17.

3 v. Augustin Gazier, Histoire Générale du Mouvement Janséniste, I, pp. 276-295.

Saint-Cyran under the cryptic code-word "Pilmot".¹ Designed to combat all the paganizing tendencies which have been seen to characterize the age, it deplored above all the secularization of the church. Typical of the Jansenist attitude was Antoine Le Maistre's reaction to Richelieu. He writes:

M. le Cardinal donneroit sujet de croire qu'il aime moins l'Eglise qui est le royaume de Jésus-Christ que la France qui n'est que le royaume du prince ... & qu'il ne se souvient pas tant de la qualité de chrétien, de Prêtre, d'Évêque, et de Cardinal, ... que de celle de François, & de premier Ministre d'État²

Its specific reforming mission was the cleansing of the church from the noxious doctrines and the disastrous moral consequences of Jesuitism. "On pourrait dire," writes Gazier, "que le jansénisme est la forme française de l'opposition des catholiques aux jésuites."³ But it also included concerted efforts to restore monasticism to its former vigour,⁴ to propagate the gospel by translating and disseminating the scriptures, to raise the general level of religious life by writing and circulating devotional books, to contend for a lofty standard for the sacred ministry,⁵ and to effect a rebirth

1 The word seems to have connoted a general programme of "Réforme religieuse, théologique, morale, disciplinaire", (Henri Brémond, op. cit., IV, p.126), which took shape only gradually, the grouping of the solitaries at Port-Royal (1637), the publication of Jansen's Augustinus (1640), and of Arnauld's Fréquente Communion (1643) being the major steps in the initial stage.

2 Nicolas Fontaine, Mémoires pour Servir à l'Histoire de Port-Royal, (1736), Vol. I, p.62.

3 Augustin Gazier, Histoire Générale du Mouvement Janséniste, I, p.VII.

4 Port-Royal was "un vrai couvent-modèle", (C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, p.51), through which many other foundations were reformed, including Maubuisson, Lys and Poissy. Saint-Cyran's own foundation was also restored to strict rule, and remained so under M. de Barcos, Saint-Cyran's nephew.

5 "Rien ne prouve davantage la rareté de la grâce en ce tems, que la rareté des Prêtres bien appelés." "Pensées sur le Sacerdoce", in Lettres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles de Messire Jean du Verger de Hauranne, Abbé de S. Cyran, Qui n'ont point encore été imprimées jusqu'à présent, (MDCCXLIV), Vol. II, p.436.

of moral and spiritual earnestness by means of the Petites Ecoles de Port-Royal, some of whose pupils might become priests, while most, being high-born, were likely to be of considerable influence in French society. By all these means, Jansenism sought to break up "le compromis séculaire de la religion et du monde",¹ and to replace formal external religiosity with genuine inward spirituality and a sense of personal responsibility to God. Basically, as Sainte-Beuve wrote, theirs was

... une religion, non plus romaine, non plus aristocratique et de cour, non plus dévotieuse à la façon du petit peuple, mais plus libre des vaines images, des cérémonies ou splendides ou petites, et plus libre aussi, au temporel, en face de l'autorité: une religion sobre, austère, indépendante, qui eût fondé véritablement une réforme gallicane. 2

C. Jansenist Asceticism: An Analysis of Formative Factors. In the light of the foregoing diagnosis of the seventeenth century French ethos and of Jansenism in relation to it, it is now possible to delineate the chief formative factors bearing on the pronounced ascetic element in this radical reform movement. In the first place there is the obvious and crucial reaction to the laxity of the times. Like most reformers, the Jansenists not only deplored but tended to magnify the blackness of the picture. Who does not know, asks Antoine Arnauld typically, "Que toutes les véritables marques du Christianisme sont presque aujourd'huy esteintes dans les moeurs des Chrestiens?"³ The heightened reaction produced by such a sombre survey was a most fruitful source of Jansenist asceticism. This was patently true in

1 Paul Bénichou, op. cit., p.82.

2 G.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, p.15.

3 Antoine Arnauld, De la Fréquente Communion, (MDCXLVIII), p.750. Arnauld goes on to give a catalogue of the corruptions of church and society as the Jansenists saw them, which is essential reading for an understanding of the rigorism to which by reaction they gave rise. cf. [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., I, p.50.

face of what was regarded as the dangerous humanism of the followers of Saint François de Sales.¹ But above all the ascetic rigorism of the movement took shape as a formidable weapon against the despised Society of Jesus. "Il y a trop de relâchement en cette Compagnie & on y raffine trop les loix de la conscience",² wrote Saint-Cyran long before the Lettres Provinciales. In reaction therefore to the Jesuits' worldly savoir-faire and accommodating probabilism³ the Jansenists went to extremes in the other direction. For as Saint-Cyran had also said, "Il est bon qu'on nous tienne quelquefois pour scrupuleux en un temps où si peu de monde l'est en des choses où il le faudroit estre ...".⁴

But contemporary influence affected Jansenist asceticism not only in a negative way. In the early part of the century, for example, many souls who had tired of the false pleasures of the world, were beginning to make retreats for the purpose of spiritual stimulation in such centres as Vincent de Paul's seminary at Saint-Lazare,⁵ where for a period they could lead the truly ascetic life, and Jansenism could not have been unaffected by this trend. Considerable inspiration, too, was afforded by the high example of the Carthusians who were greatly admired for their fidelity to the best

1 P. Pourrat, op. cit., IV, p.21.

2 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCGXLIV), II, p.511.

3 This was the doctrine that "in every doubtful case, when the question concerns mere lawfulness, you may follow an opinion which is certainly and substantially probable, even though the contrary opinion is really more probable." Lindsay Dewar and Cyril E. Hudson, op. cit., p.180. In practice this led to laxism; hence the famous "ecce patres qui tollunt peccata mundi."

4 Saint-Cyran, Maximes Saintes et Chrestiennes, Tirées des Lettres de Messire Jean du Verger de Hauranne, Abbé de Saint Cyran, (MDCLIII), p.339.

5 Ernest Lavisse, op. cit., VI, Part II, pp.369, 373.

in the monastic tradition, and whose semi-eremitic life the solitaries imitated.¹ And the positive influence of the Counter-Reformation was by no means negligible. Saint Charles Borromeus, who had given substance to the reforming decrees of the Council of Trent as Bishop of Milan, was looked to as a model because of his edifying personal asceticism and his revival of the primitive practice of the sacrament of penance,² while even more conspicuous was the profound spirituality of Bérulle and the French School.

L'école française suit logiquement la morale de la voie étroite. Bien avant les Provinciales et les écrits d'Arnauld ils s'opposent, sans fracas, mais avec énergie aux complaisances de certains casuistes³

Through Saint-Cyran the Jansenists learned much of ascetic significance from the Bérullian doctrines of adherence to Christ and self-abnegation. In sum, the new reform movement owed a debt not only to the general worldliness but also to the few areas of genuine piety in the contemporary scene.

The great importance of the Abbé de Saint-Cyran as the spiritual father of the movement is especially in evidence in the matter of its Christian asceticism. For it was against the standard of his teaching and personal piety that Jansenists throughout the century measured their own growth in grace.⁴ He has rightly been described as "la presse ou se marquèrent tant de caractères fameux",⁵ and his

1 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, p.513. A very careful study of the indebtedness of Jansenists to the Carthusians has been done by P. Pascal, L'Abbé de Saint-Cyran, Les Chartreux, et les Solitaires de Port-Royal (Revue Historique T.CXCI, 66^e année, avril-juin 1941), pp.232-248.

2 v. e. g., Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles de Messire Jean du Verger de Hauranne, Abbé de St. Cyran, (MDCXLV), Vol. I, p.455.

3 Henri Brémond, op. cit., IV, p.29.

4 [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., II, pp.2-3.

5 L.-Frédéric Jaccard, op. cit., p.10.

disciples never tired of acknowledging their indebtedness to their revered leader. The nature of Saint-Cyran's contribution is made clear in the following extract from the *Nécrologe*, which is typical of a host of similar testimonies:

C'est lui qui nous a inspiré le goût de la piété chrétienne, l'attachement à l'ancienne doctrine de l'Église, & l'amour de la vérité. C'est lui qui a perfectionné cette piété solide & éclairée que tout le monde a admirée en notre Réformatrice la Mère Marie-Angélique Arnauld. C'est lui enfin qui a peuplé de Solitaires ce désert & notre Maison de Paris; & qui a jetté en eux les premières semences de cette austère pénitence, qui s'y est perpétuée avec réputation, & qui s'étant répandue dans le monde, y a triomphé de bien des vices en une infinité de personnes de toute condition. 1

To this might have been added the fact that from Saint-Cyran's patience under suffering and persecution and the resultant deepening of his piety, later Jansenists were to learn how to turn to account the many similar experiences which were in store for them as their cause incurred the wrath of church and state. Henceforth, as in the case of the Puritans, persecution was to intensify rather than destroy their asceticism.

It is already apparent that a basic formative factor in Jansenist piety was its uncompromising Augustinian theology. Since man was totally corrupt and the victim of the earthly delectation, concupiscence, it was never possible to give him the benefit of the doubt in the practice of Christianity. Watchfulness, caution, rigorism, were therefore essential. And since through the heavenly delectation, grace, release from the bondage of sin was promised to the elect, they were required and enabled to mortify their corrupt natures. Both sides of the doctrine manifestly led to the ascetic

1 Nécrologe de l'Abbaïe de Notre-Dame de Port-Roïal des Champs, [Editor, Dom Rivet], (1723), p.395.

life. Moreover, as in Puritanism, complete psychological motivation was provided for the "proof" of one's predestination.

The doctrine of irresistible grace, too, implied that those who had received it would inevitably - and, as it were, in spite of themselves - lead exemplary lives. Conversely, those who were not leading exemplary lives could not have received it and so must be among the damned. 1

Final assurance was not possible since grace could be withdrawn at any moment, but for sinful men an anxious heart together with perseverance in ascetic works would be double encouragement. Theologically Jansenism would sustain a type of arduous Christian life which the humanism of the times could neither produce nor comprehend.

Despite all the foregoing factors, had it not been for the Jansenists' abiding devotion to scriptural truth ² to a rare degree among Roman Catholics, it would be difficult to explain their asceticism satisfactorily. M. de Sacy, who was a lifelong student of the Bible and was largely responsible for the *Mons New Testament*, wrote in the very influential preface of that work that it was of the essence of Christian discipleship to venerate the New Testament. ³ Pasquier Quesnel, in his popular Réflexions Morales sur le Nouveau Testament, even placed the scriptures on a par with the sacrament of the Eucharist, the latter conveying the benefits of the life and

1 Wallace K. Ferguson, The Place of Jansenism in French History, *The Journal of Religion*, Chicago, January, 1927, pp. 24-5.

2 Here too Saint-Cyran's initial influence was great. v. [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., II, p. 91. The beatitudes, Saint-Cyran wrote, "contiennent toute la Religion Chrestienne à laquelle tout le monde est obligé." Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles ..., (Seconde Partie, MDCXLVII), p. 424.

3 Le Nouveau Testament de Nostre Seigneur Jésus-Christ, (Mons, MDCLXXVIII), Preface, unpaginated. Most of the Port-Royalists collaborated in this work; "c'est là un ouvrage de tout Port-Royal". (Le P. Colonia, Bibliothèque Janséniste ..., MDCCXXXIX, Vol. II, p. 55).

death of Jesus Christ, the former His divine teaching. Of special significance in the present context is the following passage:

Mais on peut ajouter que le Livre des Évangiles est proprement le Livre des chrestiens, le Livre des enfans de Dieu: Que c'est par où ils connoissent leur adoption divine & leur nouvelle naissance en Jésus-Christ. Que c'est où ils découvrent les droits & les prérogatives de cette naissance céleste & où ils en apprennent la sainteté & les devoirs, & où ils doivent étudier les loix & les maximes sur lesquelles ils sont obligez de former leurs moeurs & de régler leur vie, pour n'estre pas indignes de cette auguste qualité qui n'a rien de comparable sur la terre. 1

This statement, together with the persistence of Jansenists in popularizing the scriptures, attests the formative influence of the Bible in moulding the piety of the movement.²

But if their love of the Bible drew them away from Roman Catholic orthodoxy and so closer to the Puritan camp, French Jansenists withdrew again to the Roman fold in their loyalty to the tradition of the church as an aid in interpreting the biblical emphases, and especially to the Fathers whom de Sacy called "les vrais interprètes de ce saint Livre ...".³ The Greek and Latin Fathers - Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory of Nazianzus, Cyprian, Jerome, Chrysostom - all these and many more were constantly consulted, and were considered to be indispensable guides in moral as well as in doctrinal matters. Above all others it was St. Augustine, "l'autorité du plus éminent & du plus illustre de tous les Docteurs de l'Église", who exerted the

1 Pasquier Quesnel, Le Nouveau Testament en François avec des Réflexions Morales sur Chaque Verset (MDCCII), Vol. I, p.xiii. It was from this work, first published in 1674, that the 101 Propositions condemned by the Bull Unigenitus of Clement XI were extracted.

2 v. H. T. Morgan, Port-Royal and Other Studies, p.19.

3 Le Nouveau Testament de Nostre Seigneur Jésus-Christ, Preface, unpaginated. Port-Royal took a leading part in the revival of the Fathers in the seventeenth century. v. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, pp.404, 416-17.

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strongest influence on Jansenist piety. His contribution was both direct, by way of the large number of his ascetic writings proper, and indirect, through his theology of sin and grace. Blondel indicates the type of Christian asceticism which the Jansenists encountered under the seal of St. Augustine when he writes:

No one felt more strongly than he not only the bondage of sin and the urgency of reparatory grace, but also the congenital duty of a mortified humility and the gratuitous, transcendent, and indispensable character of prevenient, auxiliary and elevating grace. 2

Love of biblical truth, combined with adherence to early Christian tradition, led to the imitation of the ascetic pattern of the primitive church, which however was not restricted to the apostolic age but connoted the church of the first five or six centuries. The debt in this direction falls chiefly into two categories. Emulating the first Christians living a holy life in the midst of a pagan society, Jansenists would attempt to revive the strict discipline, including public penance, which would guarantee that holiness. And secondly, in the light of the early rise of monastic asceticism, and in the belief that before that development all the faithful, though in the world, had lived like monks,³ Jansenists were to regard the anchorites and monks of Egypt

1 Antoine Arnauld, De la Fréquente Communion, p.744. The reader of this work or of any of the great Jansenist writings knows, nevertheless, that all the Fathers were utilized for the purpose of restoring the truly ascetic Christian life, and that the influence of Augustine was never exclusive, as has often been suggested, e. g., in the seventeenth century by René Rapin, Histoire du Jansénisme depuis son origine jusqu'en 1644 (1861), p.156; and recently by R. A. Knox, *op. cit.*, p.218. cf. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, *op. cit.*, IV, p.554, footnote.

2 Maurice Blondel, "The Latent Resources in St. Augustine's Thought," in D'Arcy et al., *op. cit.*, p.346.

3 Saint-Cyran asserted that "ils ont vescu religieusement durant les premières siècles de l'Eglise, soit dans le Mariage, soit hors du Mariage", Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), p.130.

as the model of ascetic life for those such as the Port-Royalists who, in a perverse and crooked generation, took their religion seriously enough to withdraw from society.¹ Thus, as Amoudru writes, "Port-Royal c'est la primitive Église, la primitive charité d'âmes fraternelles ... où la chrétieneté retrouve son sérieux ...".²

The spirituality of the movement was the product of a reaction to concrete historical circumstances in combination with the resources of a rich Christian heritage. But it was more than a mere synthesis of all these factors. For that which galvanized it into true Christian asceticism was the action of divine grace transforming human personality. It was only after a "coup de grâce" in the literal theological sense that the great Jansenists, one and all, became earnest ascetics. It was a personal experience of God's grace bringing deliverance from the bondage of their own sinfulness which led to their voluntary mortification. Working to this end in the divine dispensation were all the factors so far educed, but beyond and above them was the sovereign grace of God, changing lives and equipping them with inner spiritual resources which found visible expression in what seems to the casual observer to be an impossibly heroic life. How else can one account for the transformation of a Saint-Cyran from a selfish and worldly schemer to a Christian whose only thought, despite a lifetime of physical illness and suffering,³

1 Jansenists made a careful study of early monastic asceticism. cf. Le Nain de Tillemont, Mémoires pour Servir à l'Histoire Ecclésiastique des Six Premières Siècles, (1690 ff.), giving a detailed history of the Eastern monks; and Robert Arnauld d'Andilly, Les Vies des Saints Pères des Déserts et de quelques Saintes (1699.

2 Bernard Amoudru, op. cit., p.45.

3 v. Jean Orcibal, Les Origines du Jansénisme: II, p.592, note 2.

was the life of self-mortification? Surely the explanation of Sainte-Beuve, himself a stranger to the faith, is valid:

Ce fut le Christianisme seul, un rejet de l'arbre de la vraie Croix qui, greffé au coeur de cette nature un peu sauvageonne, l'adoucit à la longue, l'humanisa, la mûrit et lui fit porter finalement ces fruits acquis, tardifs, mais d'une si savoureuse fermeté. ¹

Nothing short of the divine impact on the whole personality can ultimately account for Jansenist asceticism.

¹ C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., II, p.41, note 2, ut per Jean Orcibal, Les Origines du Jansénisme: II, p.659, note 2.

CHAPTER VII

THE NUNS OF PORT-ROYAL

Quand par un volontaire & dévot esclavage,
En faisant de saints Voeux l'on perd sa liberté;
Et qu'on donne ses biens, son corps, sa volonté
Pour rendre à l'Éternel un plus parfait hommage;
Peux-tu sans l'offencer parler avec mépris
Du zèle humble & fervent de ces chastes esprits
Qui pour leur seul trésor réservent l'innocence?
Peux-tu croire sans crime estre prédestiné
En te mocquant de ceux dont la reconnoissance
Donne tout à celuy qui leur a tout donné?

Robert Arnauld d'Andilly,
"Des Voeux",
Oeuvres Chrestiennes, (1634), p.119.

A. Jansenist Veneration of Monastic Asceticism.

The most salient feature of the asceticism of French Jansenists is their profound veneration of the traditional monastic life of Roman Catholicism, an inescapable fact which at once separates them from their ultra-Protestant brethren across the Channel. No student of the life and thought of Jean Duvergier de Hauranne, Abbé de Saint-Cyran, who was the inspiration of the movement in the seventeenth century, can miss this unmistakable emphasis. His letters abound in praise of the religious life; ¹ he was in close relation with

1 v. e. g. Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), I, pp.134, 296, 739, 742.

almost all the strict monastic orders in the France of his day;¹
 and of greatest significance, it was the convent of Port-Royal
 which became the citadel of his reform movement. It was the will
 of Christ, he claimed, to have in His church "des corps des plus
 excellens chrétiens pour représenter en eux et en leur vie sa
 parfaite pauvreté, & ensemble sa parfaite chasteté & obéissance
 ...".² His disciples not only defended him against the unfounded
 charges of his enemies that he was undermining monasticism,³ but
 further emphasized the orthodoxy of the Jansenist cause by severely
 condemning Protestantism for rejecting the religious life. Antoine
 Arnauld, Saint-Cyran's first lieutenant, directed his heaviest guns
 on that

... hérésie toute sensuelle, toute de chair et de sang, qui
 poussant les hommes dans l'assouvissement de leurs passions,
 leur promettoit en suite le Paradis; ... qui ruinoit tout
 ensemble la pénitence des pécheurs, la virginité des Vierges,
 les voeux des Religieux, le célibat des Prestres, les jeunes
 des Fidelles, les bonnes oeuvres de toute l'Église. ⁴

French Jansenists, on the contrary, hailed the nuns of Port-Royal
 not only as the living embodiment of their own doctrines but also
 as the supreme example of the life of perfection which monasticism
 had always represented and which they, as loyal members of the
 Church of Rome, wholeheartedly supported.

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- 1 v. Jean Orcibal, Les Origines du Jansénisme: II, pp.405 ff.
 Saint-Cyran directed young men to the Carthusians, the Capuchins,
 and the Bare-footed White Friars, while he himself had wished to
 become a monk. cf. [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., II, p.181.
- 2 Saint-Cyran, Pensées Chrétiennes sur la Pauvreté, (MDCLXX), p.29.
- 3 [Antoine Le Maistre], Apologie pour feu M. l'abbé de St.-Cyran,
Contre l'Extrait d'une Information prétendue que l'on fit courir
contre luy l'an 1638 ..., (1644), Part II, p.62. Antoine Arnauld,
 though not its author, published this work five years after it
 was written.
- 4 Antoine Arnauld, De la Fréquente Communion, p.51.

The formal religious state was therefore the highest stage of Christian asceticism as viewed by the followers of Saint-Cyran. But they did not labour under the illusion that merely to be under vows was tantamount to perfection. Many choice souls, as Arnauld recognized, had fallen from grace despite the support of a common rule and common vows; and many orders, as he regretfully admitted, had fallen prey to the very spirit of the world which they were designed to combat.¹ Saint-Cyran himself, while directing many toward the monastery, was ever at pains to point out that although the religious benefited immensely by their complete withdrawal from the world, they must be on constant guard against the sins to which those in their station were particularly prone, especially spiritual pride against which no convent wall could afford protection.²

The nuns of Port-Royal, moreover, while exalting the conventual life and constantly attempting to orientate their young pupils toward it,³ were ever concerned lest the spirit of laxity and apostasy should penetrate their ranks and dishonour the life of perfection to which they were called. And although their community

1 Antoine Arnauld, De la Fréquente Communion, p.100.

2 Saint-Cyran, Pensées Chrétiennes sur la Pauvreté, pp.269-70; cf. Lettres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCCXLIV), II, p.44.

3 The complete spiritual affinity of these leaders was apparent from their first meeting in 1620 and especially after 1635 when Saint-Cyran became the director of Port-Royal. Mère Angélique wrote that God had granted her "la même idée de la véritable dévotion & de la vie religieuse" as He had vouchsafed to her revered director. Mémoires pour Servir ..., I, p.345. In the great abbess Saint-Cyran saw a perfect embodiment of his doctrine of grace; in him, Mère Angélique discovered a spiritual director perfectly suited to her needs and spiritual experience - the divinely sent guide who would confirm the reform she had begun. cf. [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., I, pp.344 ff: "Récit particulier de la manière dont les Religieuses de Port-Royal vinrent sous la conduite de M. de S. Cyran, & des bénédictions que Dieu répandit sur elles par son ministère".

held up to the age an example of all that was best in monastic piety, they believed, according to Racine, that God willed "non-seulement l'afermir dans le bien, mais la porter encore à un plus haut degré de sainteté ...".¹ It is necessary therefore to examine the manifestly lofty conception and practice of French Jansenists in the matter of monastic asceticism, with particular regard to Port-Royal des Champs and Port-Royal de Paris, the twin Cistercian houses with which the movement was so closely associated.

B. The Ascetic Life View of the Nuns of Port-Royal.

Both Saint-Cyran and Mère Angélique based their high esteem of monasticism on a pessimistic view of human nature and the possibility of salvation under the normal conditions of life in the world, and on an optimistic view of the transforming power of divine grace which led the elect out of a sinful world and prepared them for the infinitely precious life of the world to come. On the one hand there was the complete vitiation of human nature, body and soul, since the Fall. In Saint-Cyran's words,

... nos corps & nos âmes [sont] devenus plus fragiles que le verre par le péché, c'est à dire, par cette corruption naturelle, qu'on appelle la concupiscence, qui ne les quittera jamais durant cette vie²

As a result of the earthly delectation, concupiscence, man was not only corrupt but a dangerously corrupting influence, and hence the world at large was at every point contagious, an almost fatal obstacle to salvation. Concerning man Saint-Cyran wrote significantly:

Les philosophes payens ont bien conneu, qu'il estoit un abrégé du grand monde, & de toutes les beautez qu'il contient, mais ils ont ignoré que chaque homme fust un grand monde de corruption, & que tout ce qu'il y a d'infection dans la veue de toutes les créatures du grand monde, vient de l'abondance

1 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles ..., (Seconde Partie, MDGXLVII), p.33.

2 Jean Racine, op. cit., p.76.

de l'impureté qui est renfermée dans chacun de nous, qui sommes les uns à l'égard des autres ce monde corrompu, dont le commerce est si souvent contagieux; si les hommes sortis d'Adam n'estoient point dans la terre, il n'y auroit rien que de bon dans le monde. 1

Patently the natural world itself was good, but human corruption rendered life in society a perpetual hazard to eternal felicity.² A similar conviction runs through the voluminous correspondance of Mère Angélique who considered the world to be "une fumée de parfums agréables aux sens, qui s'évapore en un moment, sheer transitory vanity "qui ne mérite que mépris".³ Here is the exact equivalent of the Puritan "contempt of the world".⁴ On the other hand,⁵ Jansenists were altogether optimistic about the heavenly delectation, grace, which was irresistibly bestowed on the predestinate, revealing unto them their true end in God and in eternal bliss in the world beyond; the present life was meaningful only in terms of a constant two-world context. "La vie de ce monde est un vray hyver & le printemps & l'esté ne commenceront pour nos âmes qu'en l'autre siècle."⁶ The elect were therefore to regard themselves as pilgrims in this life whose every step must henceforth lead away from the meshes of the world toward God and heaven.

1 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), pp.725-6.

2 cf. ib., p.37: "Le monde n'est pas le Ciel & la terre que nous voyons qui ont esté créés de Dieu: mais c'est l'infection que le péché a respendue en eux & en toutes les créatures qu'ils contiennent."

3 Marie Angélique Arnauld, Lettres de la Révérende Mère Marie Angélique Arnauld Abbessse et Réformatrice de Port-Royal, (MDCCLXII-IV), Vol. I, p.301.

4 ib., III, p.354.

5 cf. supra p.63.

6 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles ..., (Seconde Partie, MDCXLVII), p.601.

7 Marie Angélique Arnauld, Lettres ..., I, p.312.

Mère Angélique and the nuns of Port-Royal, following Saint-Cyran in the belief that life in the world militated against their eternal welfare and was, in fact, "un vray exil à l'égard de nos corps, une vraye prison à l'égard de nos âmes, & un vray Enfer à l'égard des Démons qui y logent avec nous",¹ drew the logical conclusion that salvation could be found only in the religious life which made possible a complete and permanent break with the world. And here the self-ward concern was crucial. Away from the dangers and contagions of human society, those in whose hearts God had planted the seeds of eternal life could work out their salvation with singleness of purpose. Indeed, to the Jansenist mind the religious vocation was one of the surest marks of predestination. "Quelle consolation perpétuelle aurez vous estant Religieuse," wrote Saint-Cyran to a prospective nun, "puisque vous serez assurée, autant qu'il se peut en ce monde, que cette sorte de vie vous donnera le salut ..."² The nuns of Port-Royal believed that theirs was the life of perfection precisely because it was the only way in which they, as weak and corrupt human beings, could experience assurance of salvation. And if for the Jansenist this assurance could never be absolute since grace was at any moment revocable, the conventual life was held to be a paramount and divinely appointed means of effecting that sanctification which was essential to the salvation of the elect. Mère Angélique spoke for all the nuns of Port-Royal when she gave expression to this preference for the formal

1 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles ..., (Seconde Partie, MDCXLVII), p.33.

2 ib., p.111; cf. Saint-Cyran, Maximes Saintes et Chrestiennes, Tirées des Lettres de Messire Jean du Verger de Hauranne Abbé de Saint Cyran, (Seconde Édition, MDCLIII), pp.349-50.

religious life.

L'expérience de trente deux ans m'a fait voir qu'il n'y a point d'autre moyen de s'approcher de Dieu, qu'en se séparant des créatures, au moins pour les filles foibles comme moi, qui n'a jamais pu converser sans péché. 1

But if the self-ward dimension was basic, so too was the God-ward element in the asceticism of Port-Royal. At the very centre of the Cyranian spirituality which the nuns so clearly reflected in their pursuit of perfection was the conviction that ultimately the only acceptable motive for the mortified life was a genuine love of God which He alone could bestow. For,

... c'est inutilement pour nostre salut que nous vivons dans la séparation du monde, dans l'oraison, & dans le jeûne ... si toutes ces oeuvres ne procèdent de la charité & de l'amour répandus dans les coeurs par JÉSUS-CHRIST. 3

Saint-Cyran never tired of emphasizing the sinner's need of a new heart, by which he meant the radical transformation of the whole personality by divine grace, elevating the soul above the things of sense to the enjoyment of God alone. Henceforth the bent of the soul would be toward self-effacement and unreserved abandonment to God; in his terms, the watchwords of the religious life would be "suivre Dieu" and "flexibilité". In the case of the nuns, this meant initially that none should take the veil except in response to

1 Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., I, p.198.

2 Saint-Cyran, Oeuvres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles de Messire Jean du Verger de Hauranne, Abbé de S. Cyran, (Nouvelle Edition, MDCLXXIV), Vol. I, pp.497, 499.

3 Saint-Cyran, Considérations sur les Dimanches et les Festes des Mystères, et sur les festes de la Vierge et des Saints, (Deuxième Edition, MDCLXXI), Partie d'Este, ... Dimanches et Festes des Mystères, p.105.

4 Saint-Cyran, Oeuvres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, IV, pp.77 ff.

5 Saint-Cyran, Maximes Saintes et Chrestiennes, p.144.

6 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles ..., (Seconde Partie, MDCXLVII), p.293. cf. [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, pp.463 ff.

a decisive divine vocation, and that every act of self-denial and mortification thereafter must be the fruit of His leading.¹ That this was the goal and in large measure the practice of the religious of Port-Royal is evident in the case of Mère Angélique de S. Jean Arnauld, niece of the great Angélique, of whom it was said that

Toutes ses paroles & toutes ses actions ne respiroient que cette piété intérieure qui consiste à faire tout dans la vue de Dieu, à se dépouiller de la vanité de son propre esprit & de la corruption de sa volonté, à se mépriser soi-même & à n'estimer que les dons de Dieu en nous. 2

Confronted by the holiness of God and under conviction of their own sinfulness, the nuns thus forsook a wicked world to live for God alone, and to prepare themselves for eternal communion with Him. This preparation, they believed, entailed a life of unremitting struggle. For even after God had visited His elect, creating the new heart which was essential to salvation, a multitude of evil inclinations, desires, and affections remained to be mortified. In order that Jesus Christ might make His abode in the new man, the old man must be harassed and destroyed "en embrassant tout ce qui déplait & contredit la nature & le propre jugement ...".³ As Saint-Cyran put it, "Il est impossible d'aller au Ciel, selon Jésus, qu'en faisant des violences",⁴ and this was not only the burden of his letters and of those of Mère Angélique, but was in fact the foundation of the systematic ascetic life of all the nuns of Port-Royal. The goal of their striving was not merely the flawless

1 For Saint-Cyran's views on vocation, v. Oeuvres Chrésiennes et Spirituelles ..., I, pp.156, 162-3, 237-8, 241, 329.

2 Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de Port-Royal, III, p.552.

3 Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., I, p.219.

4 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrésiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCCXLIV), II, p.606.

observance of the rules and exercises of the conventual life but the more elusive perfection of inward mortification. The old law, it was claimed in the Constitutions de Port-Royal, "arrestoit le mal qui estoit dans le coeur afin qu'il ne parût point au dehors ...".¹ The new law, on the other hand, "ne se contente pas de le réprimer à l'extérieur mais elle le combat intérieurement pour en arracher les racines."² To those who strove sincerely to uproot the evil lodged within their very nature God would give the necessary grace to wage war successfully on their most deeply entrenched corruptions and to overcome their most unruly desires.³ Thus, typical of the counsel given to the nuns by their confessors was that of M. de Sacy who exhorted each one to pay constant attention

... à tout ce qui peut servir à votre salut, soit que Dieu vous le découvre par lui-même ou par ses ministres, & de vous appliquer toute entière à veiller sur vous-même dans la vue de Dieu, & à vous corriger de vos défauts 4

Although perseverance in the ascetic struggle was taken to be the surest sign of election, the possibility of falling from grace served as a perpetual reminder to the nuns that it was to God alone and not to personal merit that their salvation was due. Whatever

1 [Agnes Arnauld], (La R. M. Jeanne-Catherine-Agnès de Saint-Paul), Les Constitutions du Monastère de Port-Royal du S. Sacrement, (MDCLXV), p.278. These were drawn up by Mère Agnès in 1647 after nearly 40 years of reform at Port-Royal. Lancelot described them as "le fruit des Instructions de M. de S. Cyran ...". [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., I, p.423. Although they were based on the practice of the nuns, the latter laid no claim to having achieved the perfection therein described. As Besoigne pointed out: "Les Religieuses avoient trop d'humilité pour le penser, mais c'étoit à quoi l'on tendoit & le but qu'on se proposoit, & qui en effet s'exécutoit en bonne partie par ces vierges pleines d'émulation pour le bien & zelées pour leur perfection." [J. Besoigne], op. cit., II, pp.472-3.

2 ib.

3 Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., I, p.220.

4 Louis-Isaac Le Maistre de Sacy, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles de Messire Isaac Louis Le Maistre de Sacy, (MDCXC), Vol. I, pp.697-8.

degree of perfection they achieved, it derived from Him and not from their own strength. In the Constitutions the nuns were therefore urged to put their ultimate trust in God and not in their own works.¹ But this was an incentive rather than a deterrent to the struggle because successful efforts to mortify the self testified to the triumphant power of grace. For, the Constitutions explained,

... c'est peu de sçavoir que les efforts de la créature sont foibles & impuissans sans le secours de JÉSUS-CHRIST, & que celuy qui plante & qui arrose n'est rien; si en même temps on ne s'efforce non seulement en priant, mais aussi en agissant & en observant avec humilité les divers moïens que Dieu & les Saints nous ont enseignez pour obtenir ce secours de Dieu si nécessaire, se souvenant de ce que dit S. Augustin, que nous devons travailler à combattre nos vices par des efforts continuels & par des prières ardents, reconnoissant en même temps que nos efforts aussi bien que nos prières, s'il y a rien de bon, sont des effets de sa grâce, ... & que lors que nous nous glorifions, nous ne nous glorifions qu'en luy seul. 2

Such is the spirit which pulses through the Christian asceticism of the ardent souls of Port-Royal. For them, although the struggle was difficult, the yoke was ever light because God Himself was bearing the burden and would in the end win the victory.³ Moreover such a faith alone was capable of that realism which comprehends the impossibility of complete perfection under the limitations of human sin and finitude and which accepts in gratitude and without impatience the degree of perfection granted at any given moment. The nuns' constant sense of unworthiness, despite their heroic struggle, prevented pride in achievement, while the concomitant sense of divine grace precluded the feeling of futility;⁴ and however earnestly they strove for perfection, however anxious they were

1 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., p.269.

2 *ib.*, p.273.

3 *ib.*, pp.269-71.

4 *ib.*, pp.409, 398.

about their salvation, in the last analysis serenity was possible because eternal felicity was the gift of Almighty God and not the reward of one's all too paltry efforts. Mère Angélique could gratefully testify: "Par la miséricorde de Dieu je ne suis nullement troublée, puisqu'enfin il est tout-puissant, & que rien ne nous peut arriver qu'il ne le veuille."¹

In the asceticism of Port-Royal a further factor which can be appreciated only against the foregoing background was the constant desire to do penance. Although the merits of Christ, who had made satisfaction for sin, were applied to the elect, it was nevertheless the will of God that the redeemed sinner who was still beset by the corruptions of the flesh should show due penitence for his sinfulness throughout this mortal life.² Presenting his works of penance to God out of pure love for Him (contrition), the struggling Christian thus participated in the merits of Christ and avoided the eternal woes which all the sons of men deserved.³ In this way satisfaction was made to God and works of penance were meritorious, not because of intrinsic worth, but because they were the effects of grace. Writing therefore of Mère Angélique's reform of Port-Royal, Besoigne, the most important chronicler of the life and history of the nuns, said: "On peut dire que l'âme de la réforme étoit la pénitence, que la Mère se proposoit de faire pratiquer dans sa maison de la manière la plus parfaite."⁴ This tendency was confirmed under the direction of Saint-Cyran who viewed every aspect of the ascetic life in terms

1 Mère Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., III, p.524.

2 Saint-Cyran, Considérations ..., Partie d'Hyver, Considérations sur les Dimanches et les Fêtes de l'Année, pp.279-80.

3 Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., I, p.571.

4 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., I, p.42.

of voluntary penance for sin and of inward response to the divine initiative. In his words,

... la vraie pénitence & conversion de l'âme ne consiste pas seulement en paroles, ... mais en un renouvellement de coeur causé par la grâce, qui produit de plus en plus les vrais fruits de pénitence, qui sont le renoncement du monde, les bonnes oeuvres & les souffrances. 1

The nuns were the living embodiment of this teaching, ever anxious to make whatever satisfaction they could for the sins by which so often they had offended God.² The Constitutions leave no doubt as to the vital importance of this motive in their conventual life.

Stating that novices should choose the religious vocation specifically in order to do penance, they go on to say that

... elles feront toutes leurs actions par ce mesme esprit, estimant peu toutes leurs oeuvres & se réputant des servantes inutiles qui ne peuvent jamais satisfaire à Dieu pour l'expiation de leurs péchez, ny assez travailler pour combattre & pour diminuer la concupiscence qui s'oppose toujours à l'esprit: ce qui doit éloigner de leur esprit la pensée de jamais se relascher de leur pénitence, c'est-à-dire des sentiments d'humilité, d'anéantissement d'elles mesmes, & de gémissement continuel devant Dieu 3

It is at this point in the piety of Port-Royal that fear tended to outweigh love of God as a spur to ascetic action. Saint-Cyran kept returning to the terrible reality of divine justice and to the inescapable necessity of appearing before God.⁴ But in practice the conviction was inculcated that a troubled conscience accompanied by perseverance in perpetual and rigorous penance was itself an encouraging sign of election.⁵ Consequently, as Pourrat suggests,

1 Saint-Cyran, Considérations ..., Partie d'Hyver, Considérations sur les Festes de la Vierge et des Saints, pp.130-1.

2 [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., I, p.353.

3 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., pp.213-14.

4 v. e. g. Saint-Cyran, Pensées Chrétiennes sur la Pauvreté, pp.17, 40, 95-6, 98.

5 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCCXLIV), I, p.183.

L'important pour chacun est donc de faire pénitence afin d'assurer sa propre prédestination. Être de plus en plus pénitent, c'est le principal de la vie chrétienne, c'est la pratique de la perfection. 1

The radical seriousness of purpose of the nuns of Port-Royal was continually expressed in the desire to imitate the Saviour. Many have criticized them for the seeming extremes to which their struggle for perfection led them; but as a modern critic has written concerning the greatest of them all, Mère Angélique,

... ce qu'ils ne pourront qu'honorer c'est la sincérité, c'est la grandeur morale de ce dévouement, d'un coeur qui croit n'avoir jamais assez fait pour le Maître divin, à cause de la grâce qu'il a reçue de lui. 2

In this again one discerns a clear reflection of the thoroughly Christocentric piety of Saint-Cyran who held that the only way to arrive at the vision of God was constantly to companion with Christ and to allow oneself in every way to be conformed to Him, for only those who had shared His humiliation and renunciation in this life would reign with Him in heaven. 3 The imitation of Christ was especially held up to the religious because it was believed that our Lord Himself had been the first of their number, establishing for all time the pattern of absolute self-abnegation and perfect commitment to the service of God which was to be the true monastic ideal. 4 The correspondance of Mère Angélique reveals how completely she appropriated this radical commitment in her personal piety, and

1 P. Pourrat, La Spiritualité Chrétienne, Vol. IV, Les Temps Modernes, Deuxième Partie; Du Jansénisme à nos Jours, p.33.

2 A. Maulvault, Répertoire Alphabétique des Personnes et des Choses de Port-Royal, p.10.

3 v. e. g. Saint-Cyran, Considérations ..., Partie d'Hyver, Considérations sur les Festes de la Vierge et des Saints, p.29; Lettres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCCXLIV), I, p.35.

4 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), p.295.

how faithfully she fostered it in her community. She urged her nuns to follow the way of the cross which led unto life everlasting in the knowledge that the struggle would be arduous but that it would be unbearable only if "Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ n'y marchoit pas avec nous, n'y portoit pas sa Croix devant nous, & s'il ne portoit pas les nôtres avec nous."¹ And she reminded those under her charge that to share the glory of the risen Christ they must ever be mindful of His passion, seeking to share His suffering and to die unto sin by perpetual voluntary mortification. For one must either be united with the crucified Saviour or else be the servant of His enemy, the devil.²

G. Bodily Mortifications.

A conspicuous feature of the asceticism of the nuns of Port-Royal was the constant practice of bodily mortifications which, Saint-Cyran contended, had been proven by the saints to mark the beginnings of great virtue.³ As for the body, Jansenism, at one with most contemporary religious thought, tended to regard it as a miserable liability, the loss of which would be to the soul's advantage.⁴ This is evident in the nuns' instructions to their pensionnaires. "On les exhorte", runs the "Règlement pour les Enfants" in the Constitutions de Port-Royal,

... à se peigner & s'habiller le plus promptement qu'elles peuvent pour s'accoutumer à donner le moins de temps que l'on peut pour orner un corps qui doit servir de pasture aux vers⁵

1 Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., III, p.486.

2 ib., I, p.465.

3 Saint-Cyran, Considérations ..., Partie d'esté, Considérations sur les Festes de la Vierge et des Saints, p.204.

4 J. Paquier, Le Jansénisme. Étude Doctrinale d'Après les Sources, p.340.

5 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., p.426.

Too frequently the body was regarded as mere corruption, a clog on the soul, an object of mortification only. In seeking to understand this attitude and the austerities to which it gave rise, it is necessary to remember that in the seventeenth century in France widespread sensuality and immorality seemed to call for a visible rebuke in the form of severe and often extreme physical discipline. In addition, universal ignorance of sanitary laws and a low esteem of cleanliness¹ tended to mitigate in contemporary minds what are now regarded as austerities. And if some nuns went to extremes, it was the ideal of moderation which Saint-Cyran endeavoured to foster at Port-Royal. "Dieu hait & désapprouve autant ceux qui font plus qu'il ne faut pour mortifier le corps, que ceux qui font moins qu'il ne faut."² His rule in fasting and all physical disciplines was for each individual to proceed according to his own strength and needs,³ preserving health but at all times putting first a genuine concern for the soul.

Immediately following Mère Angélique's experience of saving grace, austerities were introduced at Port-Royal, and indeed, in all the convents which this great abbess reformed. "Elle avoit aussi un attrait singulier pour la mortification," writes Besoigne, "& son exemple étoit d'un grand poids pour la faire aimer à ses filles."⁴ She wore a rough serge skirt said to be more irritating than those made of hair; she slept in an attic room on a crude straw mattress

1 Ethel Romanes, The Story of Port-Royal, p.34.

2 Saint-Cyran, Considérations ..., Partie d'Hyver, Considérations sur les Festes de la Vierge et des Saints, p.224.

3 v. e.g. Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles ..., (Seconde Partie, MDCXLVII), p.331.

4 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., I, p.40.

on which water dripped frequently from a leaky roof, turning to ice on cold winter nights; and as an added austerity, when a sick nun became delirious, crying by day and by night, Angélique had her sleep by her own bedside while the sickness lasted.¹ She restored the rigorous practice of fasting and of abstinence from meat, and all the other mortifications of the rule of Saint Benedict.² All these were means of destroying not the body but concupiscence which, as Saint-Cyran taught, was like a sea which could scarcely be contained.³ In this connection, one of Mère Angélique's strongest convictions was that cleanliness was a vice rather than a virtue, a sign of flesh-pleasing and not of the ascendancy of the spirit. It was entirely opposed to the conventual vow of poverty and to the imitation of a Saviour who was born in a dirty stable. Within the bounds of the respect due to one's neighbour, this carnal vanity must therefore be mortified; "on doit désirer toujours le pire & le moins net"⁴ was to be the rule. With regard even to the sick, no pampering of the senses was allowed. They were to be treated lovingly, like our Lord Himself, but this treatment meant only the necessary relief of pain, "& non pas des raffinemens pour flatter la sensualité."⁵ Sickness was considered to be a work of God, a divinely sent mortification,

... une des dernières pénitences que Dieu leur impose pour
suppléer à celles qu'elles avoient à faire durant le cours de

1 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., I, p.40.

2 Jean Racine, op. cit., pp.5-6.

3 [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., II, p.313.

4 Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., I, p.382.

5 Jean Racine, op. cit., p.248. Saint-Cyran believed that sickness should be esteemed because it was the only ill which our Lord did not suffer and which it was the privilege of His disciples to endure. [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., II, p.315.

leur vie, & qui doit server à perfectionner l'oeuvre de Dieu en elles, & les rendre toutes pures & toutes nettes des taches de péché. 1

Far from providing an excuse for relaxing one's discipline of the body, sickness was looked upon as a further opportunity for crucifying the flesh.

There is little doubt but that the nuns went to un-Christian extremes. The Jansenists themselves, though not admitting this openly, were not unaware of the danger. Du Fossé, writing of Mère Angélique de S. Jean, says significantly:

Son amour pour la pénitence étoit tel qu'elle ne trouvoit rien de trop rude, ni dans les jeûnes ni dans les autres austérités. Si son zèle n'avoit pas été modéré, elle eût pu en cela être accusée d'aller trop loin. 2

There is also evidence that some of the nuns came to regard the sensitive faculties as in themselves evil. Soeur Suzanne de Ste. Cécile Robert, who died in 1669 during the Paix de l'Église, used to weep over her lack of mortification, "parce qu'elle prenoit pour des péchés la sensation toute simple du plaisir naturel & involontaire que le goût trouve dans l'usage des alimens." 3 She indeed, was possessed from her earliest days of what must be called a psychopathic desire for mortification and was terribly emaciated by the time she entered Port-Royal. 4 But as a novice she continued to give herself over to the heaviest tasks and to austerities, and soon found herself in a state of exhaustion through overwork and undernourishment. Another example of similar extremes was that of Soeur Marie-Claire Arnauld, who, having been firmly attached to the direction of the

1 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., p.254.

2 Mémoires pour Servir à l'Histoire de Port-Royal, III, p.552.

3 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, p.9.

4 ib., p.7.

predecessor of Saint-Cyran before the introduction of the latter to Port-Royal, was one of the last to yield to the new director. The feeling of guilt which later burdened her conscience in this matter led her to severe mortifications which again suggest psychopathic tendencies. What Jaccard has aptly called "le désir de se consumer" took possession of her, among the manifestations of which were the abandonment of her cell in order to sleep under a staircase, mixing refuse from the refectory with her food, undertaking unbearable drudgeries, and refusing to allow anyone to be concerned about her health.¹ Four years of such torment brought a merciful death.

But it would be unfair to assume that Port-Royal, however great its emphasis on bodily mortifications, directly encouraged such extremes. Despite her own austerities, Mère Angélique taught that one must spare the health of the body, which was a gift of God essential to the fulfilment of one's duties.² While recommending constant control of one's appetite for food, she took care to note that "Dieu n'a mis du plaisir dans le manger, qu'afin que nous puissions conserver notre vie & notre santé ...".³ Health and the sense of taste were good in themselves, as the nuns realized upon reflection; it was excess in eating and a disordered appetite which were to be avoided because both were enemies of bodily and spiritual health alike. Physical austerities were but one effective means of mortifying the flesh and so strengthening the spirit, of destroying pride and renouncing self; they were the visible signs of profound

1 L.-Frédéric Jaccard, op. cit., pp.196 ff.

2 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., I, pp.463-4.

3 Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., III, p.502.

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inward penitence.

The bodily mortifications of the nuns exhibit the three dimensions of genuine Christian asceticism. Manifestly there was a strong self-regarding tendency, for they believed that in order to train their souls for eternal life they must rigorously keep under the flesh, and its special agent, the body and all the sensitive faculties. But more than that was involved. Mère Angélique and all who followed her closely believed they must perform austerities only when it was God's will for them to do so. There was always a strong God-ward dimension; and whenever it was felt to be lacking, mortifications were condemned. Many there were, Mère Angélique reminded Soeur Suzanne, who had given themselves without reserve to physical disciplines, but who had nevertheless incurred the displeasure of God and had been rejected by Him because they had merely followed² their own wills rather than seeking and obeying the will of God. At Port-Royal, devotion to bodily disciplines was inculcated only in response to the divine leading and from sincere love of a crucified Christ. Under those conditions, however, perseverance in them was taken as evidence of the power of grace in action.³ Moreover, although it is frequently missed, it is not difficult to detect a very considerable measure of man-ward renunciation. For it was by the radical denial of self fostered by their austerities that the nuns were capable of the miracles of self-giving involved in their

1 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, p.10.

2 Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., I, pp.465-6.

3 cf. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, pp.94-7, who seeks to justify to a Protestant audience a feature of Catholic asceticism which it is always difficult for the Protestant mind to appreciate.

magnificent charity. As Sainte-Beuve cogently expressed it: "Tout s'y tient; la charité sort de l'austérité et y ramène."¹ Here then, save for certain extremes that were deplored not only by their enemies but by Jansenists themselves, were well-tried disciplines which authenticated radical Christian discipleship.

A further means to the same end was the manual labour in which the nuns engaged. The Constitutions exhorted them to delight in work in a spirit of penitence, reminding them that labour was the first punishment of sin, and that now through grace it provided yet another way of working out one's salvation, of not merely providing one's daily bread but of winning the true bread of life.² Thus, the self-regarding dimension was ever present. So too was the element of self-transcendence, for in their work the nuns were to avoid all attempts at excelling one another and were to practise mortification by a studied simplicity. Through all their tasks there also ran the God-ward dimension of the imitation of Christ who Himself had laboured at a trade.³ And the man-ward element of service also loomed large in their conception and practice of manual labour, for in addition to making their own clothing, footwear, and linen, they also made the ornaments and candles for the church, and performed such tasks as washing, spinning, baking bread, binding books, fashioning useful articles of wrought iron such as lanterns, preparing herbal remedies, and making bandages.⁴ Actually the nuns were divided into two groups, professed choir nuns

1 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, p.104.

2 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., pp.146, 148.

3 ib., p.146.

4 [Augustin Gazier], Port-Royal des Champs, Notice Historique à l'Usage des Visiteurs, p.15.

whose chief duty was to sing the offices and who therefore spent relatively little time in manual labour, and the lay sisters or working nuns who performed most of the regular services about the abbey. Certain sisters became "officières", with specific responsibilities, as for example the keeper of the linen, the mistress of the infirmary, the bursar, and the gate-keeper.¹ But all regarded manual labour as a valuable discipline and as an opportunity for systematic mortification.

D. Aesthetic Sensibilities
and Human Affections.

Another aspect of the life of renunciation to which the nuns of Port-Royal were committed is to be found in their attitude to the aesthetic facet of human experience. There is evidence that they were not devoid of aesthetic sensibilities or opposed without qualification to everything beautiful. Although very strict in the observance of their rule, they were permitted the decoration of parlours and refectories with portraits of nuns, confessors and solitaries, and of the church and chapter house with religious paintings. Many of Philippe de Champaigne's most celebrated works were commissioned for these purposes.² And the visitor to the Musée de Port-Royal des Champs may still see some exceedingly beautiful manuscripts executed

1 Augustin Gazier, Histoire Générale du Mouvement Janséniste, I, pp.138-9.

2 Augustin Gazier, Philippe et Jean-Baptiste de Champaigne, pp.44 ff. Champaigne's portraits were mostly done from plaster or wax moulds after the death of the subjects, thus obviating the necessity of posing for them. Two of Champaigne's daughters were pensionnaires at Port-Royal des Champs, one of whom died at an early age, while the other became a nun, Soeur Catherine de Sainte-Suzanne.

by the nuns which prove they were far from aesthetic bankruptcy.¹

But it is none the less true that their general attitude was one of suspicion, if not of open hostility to beauty. Here again they showed themselves to be the spiritual children of their director, the Abbé de Saint-Cyran. Altogether absorbed in the reality of the spiritual world, he regarded this world as nothingness and its beauties as obstacles to eternal life. "Tout ce qui est dans le monde me semble un pur néant."² In harmony with this conception, he counselled:

... voyant ainsi ... la deffailance du monde, mesprisez toutes les choses qui par des beautez apparentes donnent des illusions à vos yeux, pour n'aymer à l'avenir que celles que vous ne voyez point³

He was not insensible of the beauty of the flowers of spring or of the fruits of autumn, but it was their transience and their relative worthlessness in comparison with the high ends of the spiritual life which engaged his attention.⁴ Above all, in the worship of God extreme caution was to be exercised, lest the satisfaction of the senses should become a substitute for communion with God. For this reason singing and music, beautiful vestments and costly adornments of the altar were all to be shunned; and as for the images so dear to the Catholic heart, those of the very

1 e. g. "Livre de piété manuscrit, exécuté par la soeur Catherine de Ste. Suzanne Champaigne", and "Manuscrit des Constitutions de Port-Royal exécuté par la Mère Elisabeth de Sainte Agnès Le Féron". This small museum which may be reached by bus from Versailles, is of no small interest to the student of Jansenism for its collection of Jansenist books, its autographed letters of Mère Angélique, Le Maistre de Sacy, Antoine Arnauld, Robert Arnauld d'Andilly, Pierre Nicole, Jansen and others, and the death mask of Mère Angélique.

2 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), p.245.

3 ib., p.106.

4 Saint-Cyran, Pensées Chrétiennes sur la Pauvreté, pp.51-2.

least aesthetic appeal were most highly recommended.¹

The ideal and practice of the nuns in these matters were completely consistent with Cyranian teaching. The central point of their conception was that the senses must be mortified lest they lead the soul astray. "Cette règle est générale pour toutes choses," wrote Mère Angélique, "que plus on ôte aux sens, plus on donne à l'esprit. Tout le plaisir qu'on prend aux choses visibles diminue autant la vie de la Grâce."² The severest criticism of the conventual life at Maubuisson, a convent which Mère Angélique and later Mère Marie des Anges-Suireau, the aunt of the great Racine, succeeded in reforming was that it manifested "une piété molle & agréable aux sens ...".³ The contention of the Port-Royal nuns was not that pleasure experienced through the senses was in itself bad, but rather that it involved the very real danger of inducing a love of pleasure for pleasure's sake, and of the object that caused it in and for itself. The Constitutions speak of "cette excellente règle du Christianisme qui permet bien de passer par le plaisir quand la nécessité y oblige, mais non pas de s'y arrêter ...".⁴ Corrupt human nature was prone to voluptuousness, preferring the enjoyment of the sensual and the temporal to that which was eternal and spiritual. To find enjoyment and peace in what was creaturely was to be guilty of sensuous idolatry.⁵ The remedy was to be on constant guard to preserve one's state of grace, to avoid being deceived by

1 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCCXLIV), II, pp.315-16; cf. Jean Orcibal, Les Origines du Jansénisme, II, p.598, note I, and p.607, notes 5 and 6.

2 ut per André Hallays, Le Pèlerinage de Port-Royal, p.161.

3 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., I, p.224.

4 [Agnès Arnould], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., p.214.

5 ib., pp.214-15.

one's corrupt senses. "Car l'abus de la gr¹âce reçue nous rend plus criminels que nous n'étions auparavant ...".

The bearing of such convictions on the practice of the nuns was very marked. While all kinds of necessary labour were carried on, a strict prohibition was placed on such purely artistic pastimes as embroidery or the making of artificial flowers.² Further, although Champaigne did not concur in the order, any paintings that came to the abbey - and they were to be few in number - were to be done in simple distemper.³ Religious music, when allowed, was to consist of extremely simple plainsong without the accompaniment of the organ or any other instrument.⁴ When the church of Port-Royal de Paris was being reconstructed and enlarged, Mère Angélique insisted on simplifying the plans of the celebrated architect Le Pautre which called for a church of considerable elegance; and despite that concession, she later wrote to the Queen of Poland: "Notre église est presque achevée, et si jolie que j'en ai de la confusion."⁵ In addition, she steadfastly refused to allow the church to be adorned with gold or silver or precious stones, or to make use of embroidered linens.⁶ Decency, cleanliness, and simplicity⁷ were to be the criteria of church decoration. The same principles

1 Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., I, p.196.

2 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., p.146.

3 Augustin Gazier, Histoire Générale du Mouvement Janséniste, I, pp.157-8.

4 ib., p.158.

5 ib., p.55.

6 [J. Besoigne], I, pp.36-7.

7 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., pp.225-6. It was permitted to put perfumed sachets among the church linens but they were to be of mediocre quality and only "pour oster la mauvaise odeur que le linge pourroit avoir & non pas pour le parfumer." p.226.

were also applied in minutest detail to the everyday lives of the nuns. When beautiful material was brought to her for clothing because of a scarcity of the usual rough serge, Mère Angélique ordered it to be made into shoes and stockings, "parce que la beauté de ces étoffes n'avoit aucune conséquence dans cet emploi où elles ne paroissent pas ...".¹ On another occasion when a room was being hung with a fine tapestry, she ordered it to be placed on the wall face down, "trouvant cette invention de satisfaire à la nécessité, & de supprimer en même tems la beauté."² In every conceivable way the nuns of Port-Royal sought to avoid the snares of sensuous idolatry, and by constant watching and discipline to preserve their souls unto the life everlasting to which God, in His grace, had called them. To them, as to those English Puritans from whom they would have protested to be so widely separated, the transient beauties of this world were as nothing compared with the enduring joys of the supernatural life of the soul.

A similar policy of caution was applied by the nuns to human affections, which in like manner might become dangerously misleading and a substitute for fellowship with God. While Saint-Cyran had exhibited a capacity for deep and tender affection, especially toward children, he believed that Christians in the last analysis must reserve their love for God alone,³ and it is evident that Mère Angélique shared this conception. Explaining her disappointment at being unable to receive the visit of a sister abbess as she had

1 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., I, p.36.

2 ib., p.38.

3 v. Saint-Cyran, Maximes Saintes et Chrestiennes, pp.343 ff; cf. Considérations ..., Partie d'Esté, Considérations sur les Dimanches et Fêtes des Mysteres, p.57.

planned, she adds:

... mais il ne faut désirer en ce monde que ce qui plaît à Dieu, & il y a toujours plus de bien & de consolation dans la privation de nos satisfactions que dans la jouissance. Cherchons Dieu de tout notre coeur, ma très chère Mère: nous le trouverons, & avec lui toutes choses. 1

In order that God might be all in all to the soul, no renunciation was deemed to be too severe. This is not to say that the nuns were lacking in warm human affections. Returning to Port-Royal des Champs from Paris in 1648 Mère Angélique was met in the yard of the abbey by a large band of poor folk from the neighbourhood who, gratefully remembering her former kindnesses, crowded around her and embraced her joyfully, while she in affectionate response "les embrassoit à son tour avec une tendresse incroyable ...". 2 This action was in perfect harmony with an injunction in the Constitutions which urged the nuns in their exercise of charity to love genuinely and sincerely, to the point of tenderness. 3 Nevertheless the aim of the nuns in their inter-relations was to mortify their affections as much as possible, that they might love one another only in God. The mistress of the novices was to see to it that none of her wards clung to her from personal fondness, and if any such sentiment were detected, the girls concerned were to be treated less favourably than the others in order to remove this manifest stumbling-block to their spiritual perfection. Typical of the practice of the nuns as a whole is a revealing description of the character of Mère Angélique at this point. "Elle est aimante", writes Maulvault, "et cependant, quant aux démonstrations, elle demeure réservée: elle est sobre de

1 Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., II, pp.332-3.

2 [J. Besoigné], op. cit., I, p.284.

3 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., pp.284-5.

paroles, simple, intérieure."¹

Another much emphasized form of mortification at Port-Royal, and an integral part of the policy of reserve and self-restraint, was the rigid observance of silence. Saint-Cyran had said that the tongue was the channel through which the corruption of the heart was spread abroad,² and this teaching was faithfully reflected in the conventual life of those whom he directed. The Constitutions ruled that silence was to be observed at all times in the choir, the cloister, the dormitory and the chapter, and at other times only necessary communications were permitted, "parce qu'il est escrit, que celuy qui use de beaucoup de paroles, blessera son âme."³ Because the tongue was apt to be the occasion of sin, it must be mortified even in cases of legitimate conversation in order that vain and frivolous words might never be uttered.⁴ It was believed that if God thus closed the mouths of the nuns it would be "pour ouvrir leur coeur au goust des choses solides & spirituelles."⁵ For silence was to be no purely external discipline, but must betoken an inward quietude and meditateness proceeding from a radical mortification of all vain curiosity and leading the soul to dwell on God Himself.⁶ As such, it was a further valuable means of training the soul for its high destiny. And that it was maintained in

1 A. Maulvault, op. cit., p.16.

2 Saint-Cyran, Considérations ..., Partie d'Hyver, Considérations sur les Dimanches et les Festes de l'Année, p.230.

3 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., p.47.

4 ib., pp.47-8.

5 ib., p.219. Note the use of the oft-repeated word "solide", as pertaining to the genuinely spiritual, that which contributed to one's eternal welfare. cf. supra p.67, on the use of the same word in Puritanism.

6 Saint-Cyran, Considérations ..., Partie d'Hyver, Considérations sur les Dimanches et les Festes de l'Année, p.101.

practice at Port-Royal as well as esteemed in theory is attested by the fact that even dix days after the miracle of the Holy Thorn, by which Mlle. Périer had been cured of an eye disease, there were nuns¹ at the monastery who had not even heard of it.

E. Spiritual Exercises.

The observance of silence was a form of mortification and therefore largely negative in tone. Actually however, it was closely connected with a number of positive spiritual exercises which marked the asceticism of the devout souls known to the world as the supreme examples of Jansenist piety. According to the Constitutions, the religious life was regarded

... comme un estat parfait en soy parce qu'il enferme la vie active & la contemplative; l'active à cause des ouvrages extérieurs, & la contemplative dans tous les exercices spirituels, & mesme dans le silence qu'elles sont obligées de garder dans leur travail, & qui leur doit servir à s'élever sans cesse à Dieu, & à demeurer toujours en sa présence. 2

As for systematic devotional methods, Saint-Cyran's policy had distinctly been to discourage them. In Jaccard's words,³ "sur le plan cyranien, la pratique, c'est l'absence de pratique ...". Humble self-abandonment to God was his guiding principle, the basis of the simple "prière du pauvre"⁴ which involved a quiet waiting of the soul upon God. But in addition to short frequent prayers of this kind, he recommended the reading of Holy Scripture, the works of the Fathers and other books of piety as means of elevating the soul God-ward.⁵ To these should be added constant vigilance and the

1 Jean Racine, op. cit., p.50.

2 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., p.281.

3 L.-Frédéric Jaccard, op. cit., p.212.

4 v. [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., II, pp.36 ff.

5 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles ..., (Seconde Partie, MDCXLVII), pp.146 ff.

regular examination of conscience by which the soul could be kept from evil or purged of impurity.¹

In their conception and practice of spiritual exercises the nuns again closely followed the direction of Saint-Cyran. The most important qualification for a novice, according to the Constitutions, was that she should be inclined to prayer and solitude and ever seeking an opportunity to practise them, for they were regarded as "les élémens de la vie Religieuse sans lesquels elle ne peut subsister, parce que c'est une vie spirituelle qui doit estre entretenue par des exercices spirituels ...".² The prayers of the nuns were preferably to be short and frequent, as best contributing to the ideal of continuous prayer which Mère Angélique in true Cyranian fashion conceived as a constant and habitual desire to wait on God and to be free from all distractions.³ The religious were also to have frequent recourse to the saints and the Virgin.⁴ They were further urged in the Constitutions to engage in the valuable spiritual exercise of self-examination, in the fervent hope that God would deliver them from the evils thus discovered in their hearts.⁵ Mutual encouragement in the struggle for perfection was received in the "conférences" or informal gatherings held daily

1 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), pp. 314, 331, 341, 347-8, 352.

2 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., p.282.

3 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., I, p.32.

4 On the specifically Catholic piety of the nuns, as for example their use of images, worship of the saints and devotion to the Virgin, v. Jean Racine, op. cit., pp.81 ff; Blaise Pascal, Lettres Provinciales in Oeuvres Complètes, (Edited by Fortunat Strowski, Paris, 1926-31), Vol. II, p.122; Augustin Gazier, Histoire Générale du Mouvement Janséniste, I, pp.142-3.

5 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., pp.282,

after dinner, in which the nuns exhorted one another to perseverance¹ in the life of penitence, mortification, poverty and humility.

But the chief source of spiritual sustenance was found in the Holy Sacrament, each nun as a rule being permitted to communicate three or four times weekly.² Although perseverance and regularity were highly cherished³ in all their spiritual exercises, these disciplines were not to be regarded as ends in themselves, but as means of leading the soul upward into the presence of God.

L'on préfère toutes ces choses à la satisfaction des sens & l'on se prive de toutes les autres consolations pour mériter d'avoir part à celles-là; mais on sait pourtant qu'elles ne sont pas nostre dernière fin, encore qu'elles nous y conduisent. 4

Such was the truly ascetic conception behind the network of spiritual disciplines which were woven into the conventual life of Port-Royal.

In addition to their personal devotional life, the choir nuns passed the greater part of their time chanting the several offices of the church with unvarying regularity. Their day was spent in this manner: having retired at 8 p.m., they rose at 2 a.m. to sing matins in the choir; retiring afterwards, they rose again at 5 or 5.30 and at 6.30 sang prime, followed by terce at 8.30, and immediately after, conventual mass at which certain nuns specified by the abbess would communicate; at 10.45 sexte was sung, followed by dinner at 11.30, or at 12 noon on fast days; from 12.45 to 1.45 p.m. was spent in "conférence", after which the nuns retired to

1 [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., I, p.354. A. Gazier described this spiritual exercise as a "sorte de récréation pieuse". Histoire Générale du Mouvement Janséniste, I, p.140.

2 Augustin Gazier, Histoire Générale du Mouvement Janséniste, I, p.142, refutes the still repeated calumnies of the nuns of Port-Royal on this point.

3 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., I, p.35.

4 "L'Esprit du Monastère de Port-Royal", in [Agnès] Arnauld, Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., p.408.

their cells to rest, read, write, or work with their hands; at 2.30 nones were sung and at 4 vespers; at 5.30 supper was eaten, and the day ended with the singing of compline at 6.30.¹ In this way the nun's life was spent in constant spiritual exercise and to the glory of God.

F. Qualities of the Ascetic Life of the Nuns.

Outstanding amongst the qualities of life produced by the Christian asceticism of the nuns of Port-Royal were those directly associated with their religious vows. Saint-Cyran had given Mère Angélique every support in her effort to restore to Port-Royal a sense of the dignity and solemnity of the conventual life.

Le désir qu'il avoit que les âmes s'avancassent dans la voie de la perfection fit qu'il n'oublia jamais rien pour inspirer à Port-Royal les maximes de l'ancienne discipline Monastique, en ce qui regarde la pauvreté, la solitude, la séparation du monde, la pénitence 2

As a result of the rigid interpretation of their vows, the nuns gave themselves over in the first place to a life of extreme solitude. Not only was the virtue of chastity held to be a sacred obligation - a principle axiomatic to monasticism but in contemporary practice far from being universally honoured - but from the Journée du Guichet onward, when Mère Angélique refused admittance to the convent even to her own family, the closure was strictly enforced in order to ensure the greatest possible seclusion for the nuns.³ The religious

1 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., pp.110 ff. cf. Augustin Gazier, Histoire Générale du Mouvement Janséniste, I, p.140.

2 [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., I, pp.356-7. cf. Saint-Cyran, Pensées Chrétiennes sur la Pauvreté, pp.30, 254, 270-1; and Lettres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles ..., (Seconde Partie, MDCXLVII), pp. 212 ff.

3 The Journée du Guichet was in 1609. During the ten-years Paix de l'Eglise after 1668 the coming and going of the faithful from the world to Port-Royal exceeded the bounds which the rigorist Jansenist mind was disposed to set, but later the closure was strictly re-enforced. cf. G.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., V, pp.269-70.

life must be kept inviolate by the studious avoidance of every contact with the outer world. Consequently the nuns could go to the parlour only in cases of absolute necessity, and then before entering it were to kneel in prayer, beseeching God to preserve them from the spirit of worldliness.¹ The glory of a monastic vocation was precisely the constant opportunity it afforded for soul-solitude, for that undisturbed communion with God which was so essential to spiritual growth.

A further and closely allied quality of the ascetic life of the nuns was the insistence on evangelical poverty, to which a most radical interpretation was given.

Le vray pauvre ne parle qu'à Dieu, ne regarde & n'aime que Dieu, ne désire que Dieu, ne se nourrit que de Dieu, ne se réjouit & ne se repose qu'en Dieu ... La pauvreté parfaite ... ne laisse aucun bien dans la main, ny aucun désir de bien dans le coeur, c'est à dire ... est exempte de toute affection, & de toute possession des biens 2

So wrote Saint-Cyran in a lengthy treatise solely devoted to a consideration of this vital theme. Poverty, he taught, must be the hall-mark of every aspect of the life of a nun, whose supreme vocation was to have but one possession, the presence of God in her soul. A sentence from the Constitutions de Port-Royal urging the duty of maintaining true poverty reveals a similarly radical conception.

Cette pauvreté consiste à n'avoir aucuns biens extérieurs, & n'avoir de désir d'en avoir; au contraire d'avoir de la joye de n'en avoir point, & à n'avoir aucune attache aux choses mesmes nécessaires dont on se peut passer. 3

In order to set a salutary example to a land where avarice and

1 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., I, p.35; cf. Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDGXLV), p.69.

2 Saint-Cyran, Pensées Chrétiennes sur la Pauvreté, pp.187, 79.

3 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., p.123.

cupidity were so widespread, the nuns were genuinely to regard poverty itself as a priceless treasure. This contributed not a little to the seeming anti-aestheticism which has already been observed. For to be concerned for fine buildings or ornaments or clothing was to be untrue to the religious vow of poverty which, as Mère Angélique pointed out, made it necessary to renounce the beautiful and the sumptuous.¹ This great abbess, whose "passion dominante", says Besoigne (excusing himself for using such an expression), was a love of poverty, would not wear new clothes but insisted on giving them to a poorly dressed nun whose cast-off clothing she herself would wear.² A more significant index of the love of poverty in Port-Royal was the frequent refusal to accept financial aid, especially in the form of nuns' dowries, a fact which won the respect of Pascal when his sister Jacqueline was taking the veil. A true vocation and not the ability to contribute heavily to the financial position of the abbey was consistently the basis upon which novices were accepted at Port-Royal, even if the result were to be further impoverishment and hardship for all.³ In short, during the whole century one of the most edifying features of the ascetic life of the nuns was their poverty, a fact which led the young Lancelot to remark that "n'étant riches qu'en vertus, elles menaient une vie toute céleste ...".⁴

1 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., p.138. cf. [J. Besoigne], op. cit., I, p.39, and Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., I, p.277.

2 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., I, pp.35-6.

3 When Mère Angélique left the rich convent of Maubuisson she demonstrated her "sainte hardiesse" by taking with her to the relatively poor Port-Royal thirty sisters regarded at Maubuisson as financial liabilities. v. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, pp. 202 ff.

4 [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., I, p.36.

Inseparably bound up with the vow of poverty was the devotion to charity which reigned at Port-Royal. Mère Angélique insisted on extreme self-denial not only for the love of God and for the sake of the nuns' own spiritual welfare, but because by depriving itself of much the community was able in turn to do much for the wretched¹ poor who were in such dire need in seventeenth century France. She claimed that every Christian was under a sacred obligation to make great sacrifices in order to serve the poor, and that for those who had the advantage of religious vows to shirk this responsibility by personal indulgence was to commit a heinous sin in the sight of God.² According to the Constitutions the obligation of subordinating self-interest to the service of others was a basic spiritual discipline.³ And the record of self-denial man-ward on the part of the religious of Port-Royal is most impressive. Hundreds of poor folk were given work by the two houses, and in addition to their pay, were frequently fed out of the nuns' slender resources. During their meals a devotional book would be read to them, in order to provide for their spiritual as well as their physical needs. But the latter were given ample attention, for doctors were maintained to look after the poor, and when this was no longer possible, the nuns themselves tended the sick. They made clothes for destitute women and children, and often went without necessities in order to carry on these and other works of charity. Mère Angélique, it has been said,

... exhibited a princely spirit of munificence - nourished and sustained by the most severe and self-denying economy. She and

1 On the inter-relationship of the poverty and charity of the nuns, v. Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., I, pp.277-9.

2 *ib.*, p.278.

3 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., pp.284-5.

her sisterhood reserved for themselves little more than a place in their own list of paupers. 1

In such a tribute one discerns the true measure of the Christian asceticism of the nuns of Port-Royal.

Closely associated with their love of poverty and charity was the serious cultivation of the quality of humility which involved a ruthless warfare on every form of pride. For the Jansenist's struggle for perfection, as Saint-Cyran took pains to indicate, was of a totally different nature from that of the Stoic, which led to self-sufficient pride in the attainment of virtue. In the words of the director of Port-Royal, "aux uns se trouve le plus haut degré de vanité, & aux autres le dernier degré d'humilité ...".² Instead of inflating the ego, the constant need of ascetic mortification served as a perpetual reminder to the Jansenist of his own wretchedness and creatureliness and of the contrasting glory and omnipotence of God. This sense of humility was intensified by the fact that assurance of salvation was impossible in this life and that at all times weak human nature was totally dependent on divine grace. Saint-Cyran taught that in all one's good works one should humbly seek to do only the will of God, rather than rushing headlong into the execution of plans of one's own devising. And having performed the works required by God, "Il faut faire comme mourir les bonnes oeuvres en Dieu, en se retirant dans la solitude ...".³ All glory belonged to God alone; the part of man was to obey and be humble.

1 Sir James Stephen, Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, Vol. I, p.469.

2 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), p.400.

3 ut per Henri Brémond, op. cit., IV, p.158; cf. Saint-Cyran, Pensées Chrétiennes sur la Pauvreté, pp.117, 184.

Again the teaching of the director was faithfully reflected in the piety of the nuns. Believing pride to be "la source & la racine de tous nos maux",¹ Mère Angélique constantly struggled for humility by way of self-mortification in order to be freed of self-love and so enabled to love God and the neighbour ever more deeply.² And in this she was emulated by the nuns under her charge. By some of these the sense of humility was carried to extremes of self-abasement, as for example in the case of Soeur Suzanne, who was gratified at being assigned some rough task while the office was being sung, believing herself to be so wretched as to be fit only for the services normally required of beasts of burden.³ But normally the cultivation of humility exhibited the three dimensions of true Christian asceticism, stemming from the overpowering urge of the *Imitatio Christi*, curbing the self-asserting tendency which destroyed the freedom of others, and giving promise of escape from the wrath of God which would be visited upon the proud.⁴ And whoever reads the Vies Intéressantes, the Nécrologes, or the other lives of the saints of Port-Royal will be impressed both by the tremendous emphasis placed by the nuns on humility and by the many noble achievements of their ideal.⁵

Among the qualities most highly esteemed in the character of the nuns was a readiness to obey superiors and confessors according

1 Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., I, p.192.

2 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., I, pp.45 ff, 465 ff.

3 ib., III, p.9.

4 v. e. g. [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., p.416; Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., III, pp.258, 486.

5 v. e. g. the life of Mère Marie de Saint Magdeleine d'Angennes du Fargis, Nécrologe de l'Abbaie de Notre-Dame de Port-Royal des Champs ..., (1723), pp.216 ff.

to one's religious vows.¹ Again, the lives of the saints abound in edifying examples of self-denying obedience. Soeur Anne-Eugénie Arnauld had a natural inclination to prayer and solitude, but M. de Saint-Cyran, who became her director, saw that by nature she had something of the proud independence of spirit of the Arnaulds. Accordingly for fifteen or sixteen years she was directed to the teaching of children, a task which by nature was repugnant to her,² but which she carried out in love and obedience. Similarly, in the early years of the reform many nuns were required to go to other convents for the purpose of restoring conventual discipline, which was a difficult and most distasteful task. But as Sainte-Beuve writes, "Les religieuses envoyées en mission y répugnaient par humilité, y couraient par obéissance, se mettaient à l'oeuvre incontinent ..."³ To obey those who were charged with their spiritual welfare was considered to be an essential part of the training of the souls of the elect for their God-given destiny.

But if obedience was incumbent on all who were struggling for perfection, the history of Port-Royal makes it plain that the ultimate submission of the nuns was yielded to God and not to man. In Saint-Cyran's words: "Dieu est le principal conducteur des âmes qui se donnent à luy, ... Car il les conduit par le dedans, & par

1 For the stress laid on this principle by Mère Angélique and for her personal adherence to it, v. Mémoires pour Servir ..., I, pp.389 ff. For a catalogue of the confessors and directors of Port-Royal from 1630 to 1706 v. Nécrologe ... de Port-Royal ..., pp.LXXI f., the more famous of whom were Saint-Cyran, his nephew Martin de Barcos, Antoine Singlin, Louis-Isaac Le Maistre de Sacy, and Sébastien le Nain de Tillemont. For the pre-Jansenist period, v. [J. Besoigne], III, op. cit., pp.341-3.

2 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, pp.181 ff.

3 ib., p.188.

des mouvemens secrets qu'il forme luy-mesme dans les coeurs ...".¹

The supreme duty of those who would inherit eternal life was to learn to obey the voice of God. It was this principle which marked the asceticism of the nuns throughout the stormy period of the Jansenist controversy. One of their number, writing to justify herself for her failure to sign the Formulary condemning the propositions attributed to Jansen, stated that the superior of the convent to which she had been removed would have assumed the responsibility for her action, had she been obedient and signed; thus, it was claimed, any guilt attaching to the act would have fallen on the superior rather than on herself. This Roman Catholic conception of obedience, however, was not acceptable to the nun, who could not believe "que ce principe fût appuyé sur aucune autorité suffisante pour y fonder l'assurance du salut, & pour en hazarder la perte en signant contre les lumières de ma conscience."²

Life was a training ground for eternal communion with God, who alone was the sovereign of the soul. Consequently obedience was interpreted in terms of following the dictates of conscience³ and of defending divine truth. The nuns failed to see that this principle undermined the authoritarianism on which the Roman Catholic church built its whole superstructure. In a letter written in 1655 Mère Angélique affirmed their submission to the pope, claiming that

... des personnes qu'on appelle Jansénistes ... ne sont autres

1 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), pp.16-17.

2 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., II, p.113. The nun in question was Soeur Angélique de Saint Jean Arnauld d'Andilly.

3 v. [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., p.276, the article entitled "Fidélité à sa Conscience".

que très Catholiques & très affectionnés au Saint Siège: [et] que s'il daigne leur commander quelque chose pour son service & celui de l'Église, il connoîtra avec quelle soumission & obéissance ils s'y porteront, sans prétendre autre chose que sa sainte bénédiction. 1

The most common attack on the nuns, nevertheless, is directed specifically at their lack of obedience to the dictates of the pope. Pride and divisive individuality are claimed to be their distinctive traits.² "Pures comme des anges, orgueilleuses comme des démons", the famous mot of M. de Péréfixe, epitomizes this conception.³ But viewing the conduct of the nuns from outside Roman Catholic orthodoxy, one sees in their defense of truth, at least in its highest and best form, not unmortified pride but self-denying, long-suffering obedience to the will of Almighty God as He, in His grace, had revealed it to them.⁴ Through their struggle one also detects an earnest desire to serve both the true interests of the church and their own eternal welfare. That obstinacy did creep in may be granted; but that it was the heart of the matter, as has so often been suggested,⁵ seems to be an unwarranted exaggeration. Rather, it is possible to identify here, as in other points in the history of the nuns of Port-Royal, the three dimensions always discernible in Christian asceticism.

1 Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., II, p.621.

2 v. J. Laferrière, Étude sur Jean Duvergier de Hauranne, Abbé de Saint Cyran (1581-1643), p.108; cf. Mgr. Ricard, Les Premiers Jansénistes et Port-Royal, pp.266 ff, 460.

3 Mgr. Ricard, op. cit., p.266.

4 v. Jean Racine, op. cit., p.238.

5 A bitter critic of the nuns, Mgr. Ricard, op. cit., p.460, expresses the mingled feelings of most orthodox historians. "Et pourtant le sentiment qui domine, c'est la commisération, et l'on n'a que des larmes pour ces filles, que l'orgueil a perdues, et qui auraient pu être l'une des plus belles parures de l'épouse de Jésus-Christ, si l'humilité avait guidé leur vertu dans les sentiers de l'obéissance."

A concomitant of this conception of obedience was a readiness to suffer affliction and persecution with patience, which was regarded as an essential discipline in the preparation of the soul for glory. This was a corollary of the basic Cyranian principle of dependence on God which, as shown above, involved the imitation of Christ and the sharing of His cross.¹ In the Jansenist view, the most effective means to this end was the patient acceptance of the afflictions with which God visited His elect. In fact, as Saint-Cyran taught, there was no more encouraging evidence of one's predestination than these divine visitations together with the enablement by grace to bear them with tranquility.² This was not to say that the Christian was to emulate "la stupidité des bêtes, & ... la vanité des Stoïques ...".³ Christian perfection did not involve passive insensibility but a joyful response to genuine suffering. And in the eyes of all Jansenists none had more faithfully lived by these principles than the prisoner of Vincennes, who, refusing to accept the arrangements of his friends who would have snatched him from the hands of Richelieu, preferred to become a martyr for truth's sake, to accept suffering and restraint in this life in the knowledge that the life to come would bring joy and freedom without measure.⁴

In the nuns Saint-Cyran again had worthy disciples. Typical of their attitude is a sentence which he himself might have written, but which in fact came from the pen of Mère Angélique.

Il y a à souffrir partout & beaucoup: ceux-là sont bienheureux

1 v. Jean Orcibal, op. cit., II, p.678; cf. supra pp.229-30.

2 Saint-Cyran, Oeuvres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, I, p.471; cf. L.-Frédéric Jaccard, op. cit., pp.273 ff.

3 Saint-Cyran, Oeuvres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, I, p.411.

4 v. L.-Frédéric Jaccard, op. cit., pp.121-2.

qui le font pour Dieu, & qui ne cherchent en tout que sa gloire, méprisant la leur en toute sorte d'intérêt pour l'amour de lui. 1

The greatest penance, she taught, was humbly to accept divinely sent affliction, as true servants of a Master who had suffered patiently every sort of anguish and torment. 2 The chief ordeal of the nuns was the persecution to which they were subjected in their defence of Jansenism and their continuing refusal to sign the Formulary. Describing the testing experiences of Mère Magdeleine de Sainte Agnès de Ligni, who became abbess of Port-Royal in 1661, the *Nécrologe* says:

Mais Dieu, qui aide les siens avec plus d'efficace, quand tous les secours humains leur manquent, la soutint d'une manière extraordinaire dans un tems si perilleux, & lui augmenta ses forces à mesure du besoin qu'elle en avoit. 3

Such accounts are legion in the annals of the saints of Port-Royal and make manifest the ascetic reaction of the nuns to suffering. It may be true that the severity of their persecution has been exaggerated, although incarceration in cells without windows or fire and protracted deprivation of the sacraments were not meant to be taken lightly. 4 It may also be true that they had an excessive love of martyrdom. 5 But that they submitted patiently to the hand of God for whose truth they believed they were suffering, and that theirs was the traditional attitude to affliction taken by Christian ascetics through the ages are conclusions supported by a great weight of evidence. 6

1 Marie Angélique Arnauld, op. cit., III, p.245.

2 ib., I, pp.387-8.

3 *Nécrologe de l'Abbaïe ... de Port-Royal ...*, pp.193-4.

4 v. R. A. Knox, op. cit., p.177, who speaks of the "drawing-room persecution" of the Jansenists; cf. Frances Martin, *Angélique Arnauld, Abbess of Port-Royal*, pp.325-7, for a radically different estimate.

5 v. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., IV, p.150.

6 v. ib., pp.153-7 for Sainte-Beuve's account of Mère Angélique's last days.

In the practice of what to the modern mind seems an excessively austere ascetic piety, the nuns experienced an inward peace and joy which by many have been underestimated. Mgr. Knox writes:

Overlooked in its cradle by the mournful faces of St. Cyran and Mother Angélique, Jansenism never learned to smile. Its adherents forget, after all, to believe in grace, so hag-ridden are they by their sense of the need for it. 1

That the nuns were perpetually concerned about their spiritual condition and regarded it with the utmost seriousness is altogether true; but it is only one side of the matter. They faced a life of interminable toil and struggle with joy because God was constantly upholding them by His grace, and because in the life to come they had the promise of eternal glory. In his capacity as director, Saint-Cyran was ever encouraging them to joyfulness. To one nun he wrote:

... je ne sçay comment il est possible que l'on ne soit pas dans une joye perpétuelle, lors que par une Grâce si extraordinaire de Dieu, on a passé d'une malheureuse demeure en une retraite aussi heureuse que celle ou vous estes. 2

Obviously such a letter was occasioned by the melancholy mood through which his correspondent was passing, and this is far from surprising in the light of the vicissitudes of life at Port-Royal. But Saint-Cyran too had drunk deeply of the cup of affliction, and yet his letters abound in expressions of joy deriving from the love of God which brightened his every moment and filled him with expectant hope concerning the life to come. ³ And that his experience was shared by the nuns who were so radically influenced by his life

1 R. A. Knox, op. cit., pp.212-13.

2 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), p.544.

3 v. e. g. ib., pp.166, 233, 274.

and teaching cannot be doubted. Soeur Anne-Eugénie Arnauld related how from the day of her profession she had been filled with happiness and that once, when alone, she could not refrain from dancing for joy, adding that the sight of the conventual veil ought to cure any nun of sadness.¹ And one could scarcely find a more revealing expression of the felicity attendant on the rigorous ascetic life of a religious of Port-Royal than that written by Mère Agnès and contained in the Constitutions.

Car elle sent enfin une joye souveraine dans les travaux qu'elle se donne pour se surmonter elle mesme; elle trouve une paix parfaite dans la guerre continuelle qu'elle fait à ses passions; & à force de pratiquer la justice avant que de l'aimer parfaitement, Dieu luy donne enfin pour salaire un amour si pur & si fort pour la justice que son coeur en est tout rempli, & pour comble de bonheur, la possession de ce royaume contient le sacré gage qu'elle est déjà du nombre des citoyens des saints & des domestiques de Dieu; le véritable justice, la paix de l'esprit, & la sainte joye du coeur estant le commencement du paradis des justes, comme les vices des pécheurs sont le commencement de leur Enfer. 2

Such was the heartfelt joy which nothing could destroy, and which fed on spiritual exercise and mortification and affliction. No need was found for diversion on the part of those whose very happiness consisted in what they called "les choses sérieuses & solides, qui conservent la vigueur & la gravité religieuse ...".³ Thus what appeared on the surface to be unrelieved austerity was in reality grounded in the deep joy of the spirit.

In concluding this phase of Jansenist piety, it must be re-emphasized that the struggle for perfection of the nuns of Port-Royal, far from constituting a sterile egocentric moralism as has sometimes been supposed, exhibits the three dimensions of all genuine Christian

1 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, p.184.

2 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., pp.298-9.

3 ib., p.55.

asceticism. Incontestably the self-ward dimension was everywhere manifest, and was in fact quite explicit in the Constitutions, which urged the nuns to consider everything in their rule "comme des moyens très - puissans non seulement pour faire leur salut, mais pour acquérir l'excellence des vertus & de la gloire qui en est le comble & la récompense."¹ The thought of eternity was seldom far from their minds and to be prepared for death was a constant motive of their ascetic life.² But the self-transcending man-ward dimension was also conspicuous. Their service of one another and their charity to the poor, sick, and the repentant led the nuns along the path of self-denial and renunciation, while in addition to working out their own salvation they demonstrated through their prayers³ and their defence of truth that they were urgently concerned for the salvation of others. And supremely, theirs was a devotion to the will of Almighty God in gratitude for His love and grace. To seek and to follow Him every moment of life was their consuming passion; to achieve such an aim, no sacrifice, no renunciation, could be too great. All three dimensions stand out clearly in Lancelot's epitome of Mère Angélique's lifelong toil which, he said, had always been directed to the glory of God, the honour of the church, the reform of her order, the perfection of her nuns, and her own sanctification.⁴ Such was the genuine Port-Royal spirit.

1 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., p.270.

2 v. [Agnès Arnauld], L'Image d'une Religieuse Parfaite et d'une Imparfaite, (1693), p.443.

3 Their task in relation to the world, they felt, was: "s'intéresser au salut du monde ... en attirant sur lui la rosée du ciel par l'ardeur & la continuité de ses prières." Vies Intéressantes et Edifiantes des Religieuses de Port-Royal, et de plusieurs Personnes qui leur étoient attachées, (MDCCL), Vol. I, Preface, p.5.

4 [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., II, p.319, note (3). cf. Racine's eloquent summary of the ascetic piety of the nuns of Port-Royal; Jean Racine, op. cit., p.61.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOLITARIES

Lors que d'un trait divin la blessure secrète
Te fait avec douleur ressentir tes péchez,
Et t'ouvre les replis qui les tenoient cachez,
Cherche, au moins pour un temps, une sainte retraite:
En vain pour ton salut ce secours t'est donné,
Si tu ne veux quitter un air empoisonné
Pour rendre ta santé parfaite & vigoureuse:
Ne crains point de céder pour mieux combatre un jour;
Dans un si grand péril la fuite est généreuse,
Et fait que le Démon prend la fuite à son tour.

Robert Arnauld d'Andilly,
"De la Retraite",
Oeuvres Chrestiennes, (1634), p.132.

- A. The Propensity to Withdrawal in Jansenist Asceticism. In giving its unqualified support to the formal monastic life, seventeenth century French Jansenism appeared to be subscribing to the traditional double standard which, reserving for a few choice souls the life of perfection based on the evangelical counsels, was content to foster among the masses an inferior brand of Christianity based on the precepts alone. And on the surface, the fact that Saint-Cyran and Mère Angélique insisted steadfastly that only those with a clear divine vocation to religion should be encouraged to take vows, seemed to confirm that impression. On closer scrutiny, however, such an assumption proves to be invalid. For the school of spirituality

rules themselves were not to be translated wholesale into the daily practice of Jansenists in the world, but their inner spirit of renunciation and mortification was urged as a universal norm, so that the Constitutions "s'arrestent moins à prescrire ce qu'il faut faire, qu'à marquer les dispositions de grâce avec lesquelles tous les chrestiens doivent faire de semblables actions."¹ The ascetic struggle which had formerly been the preserve of the religious was now incumbent on those who laboured in the world without the advantage of vows and all the safeguards of the spiritual life which they entailed.

That Jesuit casuistry would be more successful in permeating society than Jansenist asceticism was patent from the start. Not only were the ideals of the former easier of fulfilment, but the heroic standard which the latter held up to the world was, on the grounds of Jansenist theology itself, almost a counsel of futility. For as shown above,² the adherents of this revived Augustinianism regarded the world as a vast potential threat to salvation. In the words of M. de Sacy, one of the early solitaries of Port-Royal,

Il faut avouer qu'il y a un effroyable abîme de néant, de misère & de bassesse, dans tout ce qui paroît de plus grand & de plus magnifique dans le monde. ... Car plus on le sonde & on le veut pénétrer, plus on y trouve l'enfer & tous les démons cachez sous les apparences d'un paradis terrestre & d'un palais enchanté.³

Yet even in such a contagious environment, the mass of the faithful were to do constant battle with the devil, the flesh, and the world. It is little cause for wonder, consequently, that among those

1 [Agnès Arnauld], Les Constitutions ... de Port-Royal ..., Preface, unpaginated.

2 cf. supra pp.220-2.

3 Louis-Isaac Le Maistre de Sacy, op. cit., II, p.72.

Jansenists who felt no vocation to the formal monastic life, the most zealous should draw the logical conclusion that the only possible way of attaining the high moral standard required of them was to withdraw from the world to some suitable retreat and there, at least temporarily, to work out their salvation in fear and trembling. That it was almost impossible to save one's soul in the world was the profound conviction of Saint-Cyran. For him, withdrawal from the world was "la fondamentale vérité de l'Évangile".¹ Without reservation he could affirm: "C'est dans la solitude que l'homme trouve Dieu, sans lequel, quelque force qu'il ait d'ailleurs, il ne sauroit se deffendre des tentations les plus ordinaires."² And the sentiments of the master were faithfully echoed by his disciples. In his Histoire Générale de Port-Royal, Dom Clémencet remarks that virgins living in the world could be greatly edified by observing the nuns of Port-Royal and especially by emulating as far as possible their complete withdrawal, and adds:

Lorsqu'on a goûté dans la retraite combien le Seigneur est doux, le monde le plus réglé paroît si imparfait & d'ailleurs si rempli d'écueils & de tentations, qu'on craint de lui confier sa foiblesse. ³

If one were committed to the serious practice of Christianity, retirement from a wicked world was a blessing devoutly to be desired. In effect, the arduous ascetic life which Saint-Cyran and Arnauld and their followers constantly recommended was a live possibility only for the hermit. Hence, paradoxically, among the highest examples

1 Nicolas Fontaine, op. cit., I, p.49.

2 Saint-Cyran, Considérations ..., Partie d'Hyver, Considérations sur les Festes de la Vierge et des Saints, p.92.

3 Dom Clémencet, Histoire Générale de Port-Royal, Depuis la Réforme de l'Abbaïe jusqu'à son entière destruction, (MDGCLV-LVII), Vol.I, p.XIV.

of the piety of a movement which aimed at reforming church and society by extending the standards of the monastery to the faithful in the world were precisely those pious recluses who had themselves forsaken the ideal they were attempting to inculcate. The life of perfection, though incumbent on all, was not compatible in its purest form with the necessities of everyday life and the conditions of normal society; as M. Strowski observed, "les élus ne seront plus le sel du monde, n'appartiennent plus au monde, sont impropres a la société humaine; de la société humaine à la société divine, il y a la distance de l'enfer au ciel."¹

The inherent illogicality of the Jansenist position is evident in the writings of Pierre Nicole, Arnauld's chief assistant in the defence of Augustinianism. While recognizing that the pursuit of perfection should be universal, he believed that the life of withdrawal was not the divine will for all men. "Que deviendrait le monde, si tous les gens de bien s'en séparoient?" he asked.² To remain in the world and to avoid its corruptions was thus the vocation of many Christians. "Il faut donc allier nécessairement ces deux choses, si l'on ne veut pas périr en demeurant dans le monde: la chose est bien difficile, mais elle n'est pas impossible."³ But in the last clause Nicole betrayed the typical Jansenist suspicion of the world and its snares. The difficulties involved in fulfilling one's Christian obligations in the world weighed

1 Fortunat Strowski, op. cit., I, pp.272-3.

2 L'Esprit de M. Nicole (ou Instructions sur les Vérités de la Religion, tirées des Ouvrages de ce Grand Théologien, tant sur les Dogmes de la Foi et les Mystères, que sur la Morale), (MDCCLXV), p.423.

3 ib., p.424.

heavily on his mind. The exacting task of waging war on one's sinful nature in order to wean it from the creature, he argued on reflection, seemed after all to necessitate on the part of those living in the world some measure of solitude, "au moins une retraite dans leur coeur parmi le tumulte des affaires."¹ The confusion in the Jansenist mind is evident. The spiritual director, Nicole admitted, scarcely knew what advice to give his penitents.

On ne sait à quoi on doit les porter. Ils sont trop foibles pour suivre l'avis de renoncer absolument à leurs emplois, & ils sont encore trop foibles pour vivre dans ces emplois, d'une manière chrétienne, & qui puisse contribuer à la guérison de leur âme. 2

The continuous struggle for salvation in the world was violent and required every ounce of energy one could muster. How much safer to renounce the world entirely! In the end, it seemed to Nicole, the surest remedy after all was to seek some sort of retreat.

Il s'ensuit de tout cela qu'il faut toujours se procurer une retraite pour faire son salut, parce que c'est là que Dieu parle au coeur, & que c'est un moyen de se sanctifier. 3

The Jansenist, demanding perfection of all, was inescapably led to the life of withdrawal as the only adequate means of giving effect to this high calling.

This hovering between the world and the hermitage was personified in the life of the courtier-recluse Robert Arnauld d'Andilly, the brother of Mère Angélique and the close friend of Saint-Cyran. Although in him one can detect the contradictory elements of the Arnauld character - the talent and ambition on the one hand, the penchant for profound piety on the other, for years

1 L'Esprit de M. Nicole ..., p.425.

2 ib., p.426.

3 ib., pp.426-7.

he led an exemplary Christian life in society, bringing to bear on the life of his times the much needed impact of true religion. The Bishop of Grenoble testified that M. d'Andilly had been "un des premiers qui s'est déclaré chrétien sans rougir. Avant lui, ou l'on ne l'étoit point de bonne foi, ou l'on n'osoit l'avouer."¹ Yet despite this salutary influence, the director of Port-Royal was not satisfied, so that before Saint-Cyran's death, d'Andilly had promised in typical Jansenist style to forsake the world in order² to lead the radical Christian life encouraged by the movement. Actually the severance was made slowly over a period of nearly two years, the successful courtier somehow managing to make haste slowly in disengagement from the society of men. And after joining the penitents of Port-Royal his solitude was far from unbroken since he continued to keep a carriage and to receive his old friends from the world. He sweetened his ascetic existence with the delights of gardening, sending presents of fruit to the queen. The world was never entirely out of his sight and for him it was less of a jolt than for the other solitaries of Port-Royal when, following the persecutions, he was forced to leave his hermitage. For five years he lived a pleasurable but pious life at Pomponne, and when the storm had subsided, he was presented, an octogenarian, to Louis XIV. But in order that he might die in the full odour of piety, his Jansenist friends and the members of his family among the nuns and solitaries of Port-Royal, insisted that he completely forsake the world and return to the genuine life of perfection in retirement. Only in the end did he fully yield to the Jansenist spirit which,

¹ ut per C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, V. p.16, note 1.
² L.-Frédéric Jaccard, op. cit., p.235.

demanding radical Christian warfare, could never satisfactorily accommodate itself to life in the world.

B. A Unique Community Without Vows.

It is now evident that absolute withdrawal from the world, though without benefit of monastic vows, constituted the second stage of Jansenist asceticism. In order best to understand this form of piety it is necessary to picture the distinctive manner and quality of life of its most classic examples in the seventeenth century, the famous solitaries of Port-Royal. Although comparisons have been made between them and the Franciscan Tertiaries, the Brethren of the Common Life, the Oratorians, and above all the Carthusians, with each of whom they had certain traits in common,¹ this fluid society of semi-professional ascetics, both lay and clerical, represented a quite unique manifestation of the ascetic impulse. Gathered together away from society in order to devote their undivided energies to the cultivation of the spiritual life and the defence of Augustinian doctrine and piety, these men, as Mlle. Cécile Gazier has observed, "qui n'ont été ni une société, ni une congrégation, ni quelque chose d'organisé, ont formé un groupement tout à fait à part, et qui ne relève d'aucune classification."²

A conspicuous feature of this ascetic community is that it came into being through the instrumentality of Saint-Cyran and that

1 cf. Jean Orcibal, op. cit., II, p.681; H. C. Barnard, The Little Schools of Port-Royal, p.11; [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, p.513; Pierre Pascal, op. cit., passim.

2 Cécile Gazier, Ces Messieurs de Port-Royal, p.V. The solitaries themselves sought to imitate as far as possible the early desert monks. cf. Augustin Gazier, Histoire Générale du Mouvement Janséniste, I, p.75.

his spirit profoundly animated its piety.¹ It was under his direction in 1638 that two nephews of Mère Angélique, the brilliant young lawyer Antoine Le Maistre and his soldier brother M. de Séricourt, turned their backs on promising careers and retired from the world to a house built for them by their mother beside Port-Royal de Paris. Through his agency others gradually joined these original solitaries, including the humble Antoine Singlin who had been accepted as the first instructor in what were to be known as the Petites Écoles de Port-Royal; Claude Lancelot who had been a member of the seminary of Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet and was to become one of the greatest of the Port-Royal schoolmasters; and later Antoine Arnauld, the indefatigable champion of Jansenism throughout the century. On the arrest of Saint-Cyran in May 1638 the solitaries were forced to leave Paris, but resumed their retreat at Port-Royal des Champs,² where they continued their rigidly ascetic life, except for the interruptions caused by the dispersions of 1656, 1661, and 1679.³

In strict accuracy, among the many penitents who swelled the ranks of the original solitaries and became known as "ces Messieurs de Port-Royal",⁴ three separate categories traceable to the ever

1 v. Nécrologe de l'Abbaie ... de Port-Royal ..., p.395. "Les Religieuses & les Solitaires sont enfans de ce même Père" says the Histoire de l'origine des Pénitens et Solitaires de Port-Royal des Champs, (1733), p.26.

2 At first they lived in the convent buildings, but on the return of the nuns from Paris in 1648, moved to "Les Granges", a farm on the hill overlooking the valley in which the convent was situated.

3 v. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., III, p.172.

4 For a list of solitaries and Messieurs for the period 1637 to 1660, v. Augustin Gazier, Histoire Générale du Mouvement Janséniste, I, pp.72-3. Only ten or twelve were at Port-Royal at any one time.

present influence of Saint-Cyran are discernible.¹ There were the "saints solitaires" - lawyers, priests, doctors, simple workmen - with no specific task beyond working out their own salvation and setting an edifying example to the world. Of these, Antoine Le Maistre, acting under Saint-Cyran's direction, was typical. Secondly there was the succession of superiors, directors, and confessors of the nuns, representative of whom was the self-effacing Antoine Singlin who, much against his natural inclinations, had been appointed confessor by Saint-Cyran. This, rather than the purely solitary life, was to be his form of ascetic penitence. And finally there were the famous theologians beginning with Antoine Arnauld, whom Saint-Cyran had required to proceed with his studies as a spiritual discipline and form of penitence rather than following the steps of his nephew, M. Le Maistre, and renouncing his talents. The connection with Port-Royal was complete with the solitaires and the confessors, while with the "défenseurs de la vérité", especially in the second and third generation, it was more and more tenuous because of the persecutions of Jansenist controversialists. Arnauld, for example, spent the years from 1648 to 1655 and from 1669 to 1679 at Port-Royal where, as Besoigne remarks, "il se tenoit retiré le plus qu'il pouvait";² but for many years he was forced to live in hiding or in exile. However, as the numerous works of Jansenist hagiography clearly demonstrate, all categories of "ces Messieurs" were united in their love of the solitude of Port-Royal and in their absolute devotion to the life of Christian asceticism which had first been learned at the feet of Saint-Cyran.

1 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, p.340.
 2 ib., V, pp.360, 449.

Although for the most part characterized by the type of ascetic life associated with classic Catholic monasticism, the solitaries in no sense constituted a new religious order. They were bound by no vows, owed allegiance to no official leader,¹ and indeed, despite their common loyalty to Port-Royal, were not under the limitation of obligatory residence. M. Le Maistre, whom Sainte-Beuve called "le chef des solitaires",² clearly set forth the solitaries' own conception of their retreat. He wrote:

On n'y fait ni profession ni voeux, quoique d'ailleurs on les honore & on les respecte dans ceux que Dieu y engage & qu'il conduit dans les Monastères. Il n'y a aucun établissement de discipline particulière, ni aucune stabilité de demeure, nulle règle que l'Évangile, nul bien que celui de la charité catholique & universelle, nul intérêt ni en particulier ni en commun, que celui de gagner le Ciel. Ce n'est qu'un lieu de retraite toute volontaire & toute libre, où personne ne vient que l'esprit de Dieu ne l'y amène, & où personne ne demeure que parce que l'esprit de Dieu l'y retient. ³

All that was claimed for the solitaries therefore, was that they were an association of pious souls working out their salvation together⁴ apart from the world. Because they were not an officially sanctioned order, they were constantly suspected of subversive political activities and unorthodox religious

- 1 Saint-Cyran, as their spiritual father, had no official status. On his death in 1643 leadership passed to "Le Grand Arnould".
- 2 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, pp.391-2, referred to Le Maistre as "un grand pénitent, le premier de Port-Royal, à ce titre, et le chef des solitaires. Par sa priorité de conversion, par sa constante et infatigable ardeur, par je ne sais quoi d'irrégulier qu'il garda toujours sous la discipline, il les domine tous."
- 3 Antoine Le Maistre, "Mémoire justificatif des Solitaires", in [J. Besoigne], op. cit., IV, p.394.
- 4 Because "ces Messieurs" did not live in strict solitude, the word is a misnomer.

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sentiments; but Le Maistre, protesting their sole motive to be unreserved spiritual earnestness, claimed that if to turn one's back on the world were a crime, it was the crime of the early Christians. 2

In addition to the basic concern for salvation, two other important ascetic motives seem to have figured in their rejection of formal vows. One clue to this somewhat perplexing problem is given by Besoigne, who suggests that the very instability of the life of the solitaries, compared with that of the monastic orders, entailed greater penitence and abnegation and called for greater perseverance. 3 To live under the perpetual threat of being dispersed by hostile authorities and consequently of suffering the loss of edifying companions was the supreme test of the Christian warrior. And secondly, the uniqueness of the new ascetic community would cause its example to a woefully corrupt church and society to be all the more arresting and fruitful. Thus a strong man-ward consideration was involved. Before the eyes of a brilliant but godless age, indeed almost on the doorsteps of Versailles itself, the solitaries would live in a distinctive way the austere Christian life. When Saint-Cyran allowed his newly converted penitent,

1 An English translation of a contemporary French satire asserted: "They admit of no Moncks, but like well of Nuns, without letting a man know wherefore", and continued: "That they may be esteemed more Religious, they have some Demy-Anachorets, who are neither Moncks nor Seculars ...". Lewis Fountaine, A Relation of the Country of Jansenia, (1668), pp.54-5, 59. cf. Max Weber, op. cit., p.255, note 178; and pp.253-4, note 170, who sustains the point that "true asceticism is always hostile to authority", especially that of Rome.

2 Antoine Le Maistre, "Mémoire justificatif des Solitaires", in [J. Besoigne], op. cit., IV, pp.394-5.

3 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., IV, p.159.

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Antoine Le Maistre, to become the first of the solitaries, this thought could not have been far from his mind. Other earnest ascetics would soon follow; all would be living examples of the revived Augustinian doctrines, and as such, vehicles of the moral and spiritual reform so dear to the hearts of French Jansenists. Moreover, informal community life served the cause of reform by allowing some members freedom to write in defence of truth, in combination with the rigorous practice of asceticism; and in Saint-Cyran's mind the two were inextricably bound together.

Dieu ne se sert jamais pour ses grands ouvrages des hommes quoi qu'innocens & ornez de quelque talens, sans les avoir purifiez auparavant dans la solitude par de longs exercices de pénitence sans lesquels ils seroient impurs & disproportionnez aux grands services qu'il demande d'eux. 2

In sum, in the complete disregard of the principal convention of traditional Roman Catholic monasticism one discovers the virility of the ascetic struggle of the solitaries which, as thoroughgoing as that of the monk, was undertaken not with the disciplinary benefit of vows or with the mutual aid of an organized community so bound, but solely as a continual, voluntary, personal response to the overpowering grace of God.

1 Le Maistre had to beg Saint-Cyran to take him under his direction, and even then the Abbé urged the young man and his brother de Séricourt to become Carthusians, sending them to spend a few days in the house of that order in Paris. That Saint-Cyran influenced his penitents in their decision to become solitaries in a sinister effort to foment schism is therefore not supported by the facts. But he could not have been displeased at their own refusal to become Carthusians, for as he must have hoped, it confirmed their divine vocation to the informal semi-eremitic life, making it possible for them to become models to the world of Jansenist spirituality. v. Jean Orcibal, Les Origines du Jansénisme: II, p.544, note 2; cf. Pierre Pascal, *op. cit.*, p.239.

2 Saint-Cyran, Considérations ..., Partie d'Hyver, Considérations sur les Dimanches et les Festes de l'Année, p.219.

C. The Ascetic Life
View of the Solitaries.

Normally the solitaries left the world as the result of a decisive conversion experience which they regarded as the work of God by which irresistibly He bestowed His grace on the elect. In Saint-Cyran's words: "Il donne souvent des Royaumes aux meschans qu'il hait, & ne donne sa grâce & la persévérance dans la grâce, qu'à ceux qui sont dans son élection éternelle ...".¹ M. Orcibal has recently demonstrated beyond doubt that Saint-Cyran's own life may be divided into two distinct periods marked off from one another by a profound moral and spiritual crisis which occurred at the time of his ordination in 1618. Thereafter he was to wage a continual and, by the power of grace, amazingly successful battle with his fiery and stubborn nature, weaning it ultimately from its two most deeply ingrained vices, self-centred ambition and intellectual pride.² For the next twenty years he lived, not indeed in absolute solitude,³ but as a striking example of an ever deepening Christian piety. And in the manner of their spiritual father, the solitaries of Port-Royal embarked on the ascetic life following a completely transforming conversion. Antoine Le Maistre, observing Saint-Cyran's simple but tremendously moving spiritual direction of his dying aunt, Mme. d'Andilly, was seized by an influx of divine grace which was radically to alter the subsequent course of his life and to issue in his abrupt

1 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), p.242.

2 v. Jean Orcibal, Les Origines du Jansénisme: II, pp.215 ff, 247-8.

3 "L'Oracle du Cloître Notre-Dame", as Saint-Cyran was known from his place of residence, was in touch not only with the great leaders of the French Counter-Reformation but with many of the lights in the worlds of literature and scholarship, the aristocracy and the court. In all these contacts he remained faithful to his new spiritual insights. *ib.*, pp.377 ff.

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withdrawal from the world. Hearing of this conversion, his brother, Le Maistre de Séricourt, was likewise the subject of a sudden divine transformation which was to lead him to the hermitage and to the struggle for Christian perfection. A certain Étienne de Bascle, interviewing Saint-Cyran on an entirely secular matter, "se sentit sur le champ touché de Dieu",² with the result that he too found his way to Port-Royal. And so it was with many more of "ces Messieurs". The divine action initiating and setting the tone of their asceticism is adequately conveyed in words which, though pertaining to Saint-Cyran, are descriptive of all the solitaries. It was Le Maistre who wrote that

... il a pleu à Dieu ... d'estouffer dans son coeur toutes les prétensions de ce monde, & toutes les pensées de la terre, pour n'y laisser plus d'ambition que pour le Ciel, & de passion que pour sa gloire, & pour le service de son Église. 3

The experience of conversion immediately begot a burning desire to do penance. The "pénitens solitaires de Port-Royal", to use Fontaine's apt and accurate phrase, "croient tous avoir besoin de pénitence, ... [et]⁴ la font tous selon l'étendue de la grâce que Dieu leur donne ...". The truly penitent spirit was itself the gift of God, and although none of the solitaries had been guilty of grave misdemeanours before their conversion,⁵ their subsequent passion for penance was regarded as a sign of grace and, as was the

1 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, pp.506-7.

2 As the devout Jansenist historian Besoigne put it, ib., p.357.

3 [Antoine Le Maistre], Apologie pour feu M. l'abbé de St.-Cyran ..., Part I, pp.3, 4.

4 Nicolas Fontaine, op. cit., I, "Récit de la conduite & des exercices des pénitens solitaires de Port-Royal des Champs ...", p.XXV.

5 v. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., II, p.477, note 1. For this reason Mgr. Knox superficially calls the solitaries "synthetic penitents". R. A. Knox, op. cit., p.211.

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case with the nuns, animated their whole ascetic mode of life. Its first manifestation was their complete withdrawal from the world to the "desert" solitude of Port-Royal des Champs. "Se retirer, pris d'une façon absolue," wrote Sainte-Beuve, "c'est l'expression consacrée dans ce style de pénitence."² And having forsaken all, in continuing penitence they strove to maintain a maximum degree of solitude and undisturbed repose in which the soul could commune with God. Le Maistre was dissatisfied with his Parisian retreat because of the noise of the city, whereas Port-Royal des Champs, "ce lieu qui n'étoit plus habité que par des serpens"³, provided a more natural habitat for a penitent solitary. There was, indeed, in the location of Port-Royal a certain peaceful remoteness which, as all its penitents found, stimulated their love of retreat and solitude. Saint-Cyran had written that

... la première marque que l'âme est vraiment retournée à Dieu après le péché, c'est quand elle ayme la retraite, le repos, & le silence, faisant pénitence dans quelque lieu qu'elle aura choisi pour cela, sans en sortir que le moins qu'il luy sera possible. 4

At Port-Royal this penitential theory was practised exactly as Saint-Cyran had intended, and by the publication of works by the solitaries which reflected their practice, such as M. Hamon's⁵ treatises on penance and solitude, was made known to a much wider circle of the faithful.

A notable feature of the piety of the Jansenist penitents is

1 cf. supra pp. 227-8.

2 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., II, p.18, note 1.

3 Nicolas Fontaine, op. cit., I, p.50.

4 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), p.327.

5 v. Jean Hamon, Recueil de Divers Traitez de Piété, (Seconde Édition, 2 vols., MDCLXXV); Jean Hamon, De La Solitude, (Seconde Édition, MDCCXXXV).

the prominence of the self-regarding dimension. The world had been renounced in order that they might give themselves over without distraction to the one thing that mattered, the salvation of their souls. Since this life was viewed entirely as a prelude to eternal felicity in the life beyond,¹ their energies were constantly directed to preparation for death. Explaining the motives of his retreat to his father, Antoine Le Maistre said: "je me retire dans une maison particulière, pour vivre sans ambition, & tâcher de fléchir par la pénitence le Dieu & le juge devant qui tous les hommes doivent comparoître."² His soldier brother, M. de Séricourt, declaring his allegiance to his new general, Jesus Christ, described Him significantly as "le chef & le prince des pénitens & de tous ceux qui se sauvent par la pénitence",³ a statement which leaves no doubt about the self-ward concern. And M. de Bascle, as the *Nécrologe* points out, likewise escaped from the storms of the world to the haven of Port-Royal, "pour y trouver son salut dans la pénitence ...".⁴ The world had made shipwreck, but no matter; "sauve qui peut" was the motto; the world was to be left to its own devices. Once in the shelter of port moreover, the solitaries wished to work out their salvation in the relative safety afforded by limited numbers, for nothing must be allowed to interfere with their one vital purpose, to achieve which they had forsaken everything they held dear. Besoigne, thinking to praise their spiritual earnestness and single-mindedness, stated the situation bluntly.

1 v. Histoire de l'origine des Pénitens et Solitaires de Port-Royal des Champs, (MDCCLXXXIII), p.16.

2 Nicolas Fontaine, op. cit., I, p.39.

3 ib., p.82.

4 Nécrologe de l'Abbaie ... de Port-Royal ..., p.183.

Ils pensoient que n'étant chargés que d'eux seuls & de leur sanctification personnelle, ils ne devoient pas s'exposer à perdre pour eux les avantages d'une vie bien fervente, en voulant trop la communiquer à d'autres & la partager. 1

Over and over again as one studies the lives and the writings of the Jansenist solitaries, one is confronted with this patent self-regarding dimension of their ascetic piety.

It would be fatally easy however to allow this fact, so distasteful to the Protestant mind, to obscure the existence of the God-ward dimension which permeated and often transformed the exaggerated self-concern. It is true that at times one has the impression that even God was regarded merely as a means of effecting the salvation of the individual. As Hamon wrote,

Il n'y a que Dieu qui puisse estre nostre refuge, & qui puisse nous délivrer de la corruption qui est dans nous-mesmes & dans le monde que nous sommes obligez de fuir. 2

It was to God that the penitents turned, but to a God who had the gift of salvation. But it is also true that despite the indications of fear of punishment, the concern for salvation, and the psychology of "proof", they were not only conscious that from God alone came their strength but were often carried beyond themselves to offer their all freely to Him. In Saint-Cyran's own writings the self-ward element was disproportionately large, but he insisted that solicitude for one's salvation was legitimate only "quand nous ne désirons rien pour nous, que parce que Dieu veut que nous le désirons, & pour accomplir en nous sa volonté." ³ The ultimate ground of their piety was in the will of God, for love of whom they submitted

1 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., IV, p.157.

2 Jean Hamon, De La Solitude, p.386.

3 Saint-Cyran, Théologie Familiale ou Brève Explication des Principaux Mystères de la Foy ..., (Seconde Edition, MDCXXXII), p.68.

to a life of rigorous discipline, and in whose strength they were able to persevere. Fontaine wrote,

... en aimant Dieu plus que nous-memes & notre prochain pour Dieu & comme nous-memes, nous accomplissons toute la loi & rendons à Dieu qui n'est qu'amour le seul culte qu'il aime, qui est l'amour. 1

Singlin testified that in his every action he followed the leading of God, and that he was ready at any moment to alter his course if God should require it.² And since without grace no good work could be accomplished, in the last analysis it was to grace and not to personal merit that the spiritual progress of the solitaries was due. "Et qui suis-je pour mériter d'être aimé de vous?" wrote de Tillemont. "Non Seigneur, je ne le mérite par aucun titre. Mais si vous n'aimez que ceux qui le méritent, en quel état seroient tous les hommes?"³ The ascetic life of the solitaries must be viewed not solely in terms of the self-ward dimension but as a grateful response to the love of God which had been freely bestowed upon them.

In order to glorify God and to win the pearl of great price the Jansenist solitaries, acutely aware of their radical sinfulness,⁴ committed themselves to a life of the most arduous struggle. Although not bound by vows, as were the nuns, they were nevertheless convinced that their salvation was as intimately connected with an

1 Nicolas Fontaine, op. cit., I, "Récit de la conduite ... des pénitens solitaires ...", p.XXVI.

2 Nicolas Fontaine, op. cit., I, p.77.

3 Vie de M. Le Nain de Tillemont, avec des Réflexions sur divers sujets de morale, et quelques lettres de piété, (1711), pp.211-12.

4 It was this almost overpowering sense of the need of unceasing struggle on the part of all who were in earnest about their salvation which, to a considerable extent, accounts for the rooted antipathy of Jansenism to Quietism.

effort to follow the evangelical counsels as was that of the religious. One of their number, M. Pallu, after a typical conversion à la janséniste, expressed the conviction of them all when he said that "nous ne pouvions trop faire pour nous sauver, ni négliger les conseils que Dieu nous donnoit pour cela ..."¹ Now the incessant striving for perfection which this entailed frequently led to an excess of scrupulosity. Since, as Saint-Cyran taught, perfection consisted in never believing that one possessed it and in never ceasing to work to attain it,² it was inevitable that tender consciences would sometimes be stretched on the rack of anxiety. M. Le Maistre, "cet implacable tourmenteur de lui-même en Jésus-Christ",³ could never do enough to conform to the divine will and to separate himself from the creature. When Saint-Cyran forbade him conversation with certain saintly women at Ferté-Milon, to which he had gone during one of the dispersions, Le Maistre went one step further and determined to enforce upon himself a policy of total silence,⁴ in an effort to maintain a good conscience. Similarly M. de Séricourt, in the practice of austerities, "craignoit toujours de n'en pas faire assez, & de ne pas faire tout ce qu'il devoit."⁵ Pascal and de Tillemont exhibited the same fault.⁶ But despite this evidence it is essential to note that among the solitaries there was never any trace of despair arising from the never-ending nature of the combat which was required of God's elect.

1 ut per C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., II, p.226.

2 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), p.490.

3 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, p.394.

4 Saint-Cyran dissuaded him from such extremes. *ib.*, pp.393-4.

5 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, p.535.

6 v. R.A. Knox, op. cit., p.217. It is an exaggeration, however, to say that "Port-Royal was a nest of scruples ...". *ib.*

On the contrary, genuine concern for the state of their souls was interpreted as a sign that God was working in them. For as Fontaine observed,

... S. Augustin leur a appris que Dieu fait long-tems soupirer la plupart de ses serviteurs dans les imperfections & les langueurs qu'il leur laisse pour les exercer dans ce combat & les tenir dans l'humilité. 1

D. Bodily Mortifications
and Other Penances.

Among the solitaries of Port-Royal, as amongst the nuns, a conspicuous feature of the ascetic struggle was the practice of bodily mortifications. Again it must be emphasized that Jansenists did not subscribe to a dualistic interpretation of the origin of evil. They believed, with Saint Augustine, that the body impeded the soul² but that this was the punishment and not the cause of sin, which in fact, was spiritual. The whole man, body and soul, was corrupt and impotent. Thus, as Quesnel explained, both the command to sustain the body and the desire to be free from its bonds came from God.

C'est Dieu, auteur de la vie, qui nous ordonne de vivre, et c'est Dieu, auteur d'une meilleure vie, qui nous presse de courir vers cette vie qu'on ne peut acquérir sans perdre la première. 3

This was the authentic Jansenist position, leading to the systematic mortification of the body in the true interests of the soul and for the sake of mastering concupiscence, but sustaining and not destroying the body because it was created by God. Among the solitaries the practice of austerities was entirely voluntary, and on the principle that the gifts of the spirit are diverse, varied according to the

1 Nicolas Fontaine, op. cit., I, "Récit de la conduite ... des pénitens solitaires ...", p. XXVII.

2 cf. supra pp. 230-1, 234-5 for the nuns' view of the body.

3 ut per C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., V, p. 341.

strength and fervour of the solitary and the discretion of the confessor. The general rule followed was that of Saint Augustine, which was to do what one could and to love in others what one could not do.¹ Saint-Cyran had set a moderate personal example in physical discipline for the benefit of the solitaries. Fasting, going on foot instead of riding, and enduring the cold were among his chosen means of mortification. As for his exposure to cold, he regarded it "comme une des choses qui peuvent le plus mortifier la concupiscence & la chaleur naturelle ...".² On the one point of fasting however, he had been excessive, with the result that he had developed a canine hunger which he was frequently obliged to satisfy, though with as much moderation as possible, in order to maintain health.³ After him, many solitaries went to much greater excess. M. de la Rivière's last illness was partly attributed to the extreme austerities which, during his twenty-two years as a recluse, he continually practised; and during this illness he refused to mitigate his rigours, and even insisted on increasing them by lying in such a way as to augment his pains.⁴ Others, if less severe, were by no means self-indulgent. M. Le Maistre deprived himself of heat even in the most rigorous of winters, but kept a log outside his door so that whenever he became too cold he could carry it up and down until the exercise had warmed him; this he did, in the words of the Nécrologe, "pour soumettre la chair à l'esprit & l'esprit à Dieu."⁵

1 Nicolas Fontaine, op. cit., I, "Récit de la conduite ... des pénitens solitaires ...", p. XXIV.

2 [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., II, p. 314. cf. pp. 297, 300, 309-14.

3 ib., pp. 310-11.

4 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., II, p. 407.

5 Nécrologe de l'Abbaie ... de Port-Royal..., p. 414.

M. Hamon slept on a plank in the middle of his bed, which no one discovered till after his death. He did not go back to bed after matins at one a.m., but began to write to prevent himself from sleeping. During the last twenty years of his life he ate alone, "afin de pouvoir pratiquer librement de grandes austérités" such as eating bran bread which he took from the dogs' food, eating only part of what was given him for his meal, and giving his white bread and the rest of his food to the poor.¹ The list could be extended indefinitely. But the hoary old age which many of the Messieurs de Port-Royal attained² indicates that the general tone of their mortifications was one of moderation in the use of all the usual techniques of Roman Catholic asceticism. In M. Brémond's apt phrase, "Certes, leur Thébàide n'était pas une Thélème, mais ce n'était non plus une Trappe."³

This contention is substantiated by Fontaine's account of the physical disciplines of the solitaries as a group, in addition to their personal mortifications.⁴ For eight months of the year they had only one ordinary meal a day, at noon, followed in the evening

1 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., IV, p.250.

2 e. g. Claude Lancelot who lived to the age of 80; Walon de Beaupuis, 87; Antoine Arnould, 82; Nicolas Fontaine, 84; and Pierre Coustel, 83.

3 Henri Brémond, op. cit., IV, p.247. Nothing could possibly have been further from Jansenist standards than Rabelais' fictional abbey of Thélème where the well-bred lived the cultured, gentlemanly life. The comparison with the austere abbey of La Trappe where no remnant of the natural man was tolerated, is more conceivable. cf. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., IV, pp.46 ff., who gives an account of a dispute between a moderate Jansenist, M. le Roi, and M. de Rancé, famous reformer of La Trappe, in which the former attacked what seemed to be the excessive mortifications supported by the "abbé tempête".

4 v. Nicolas Fontaine, op. cit., I, "Récit de la conduite ... des pénitens solitaires ...", pp.XXIII-XXIV.

by a light lunch, observing the perpetual temperance and abstinence which had governed the practice of the desert monks. They observed the fasts of the church rigorously, but because of lack of fish and eggs in their isolated location, were unable to "faire maigre", i. e., eat no meat, although they were sparing in their necessary indulgence. During Advent they ate only once in every twenty-four hours, after eight o'clock vespers. Most of the solitaries drank only water or cider, but one drank wine as well. As another common discipline, they slept on straw, depriving themselves of the comforts of normal bedding. Wearing a hair shirt or iron girdle and using the discipline¹ were also practised, though less uniformly. In each case the goal was the strengthening of their spiritual powers by the mortification of the body, looking forward to the consummation of their labours after death. Representative of all the solitaries in this respect was M. de Pontchâteau, of whom it was said:

La nécessité où il se croyoit de n'être pas un moment sans travailler pour son salut lui faisoit aspirer à l'heureux jour qui lui en assureroit la possession, et qui finiroit tous ses travaux 2

Among other forms of mortification and penance, two in particular are noteworthy. For those in holy orders who retired to Port-Royal, a common practice was the prolonged abstention from their sacerdotal functions, in order to live in absolute humility and to devote their full energies to the cultivation of their own spirituality. For example, M. Charles Du Chemin, a parish priest of Picardy, spent the last years of his life as a humble layman,

1 The discipline was a sort of whip made of fine chain or knotted rope, used as an instrument of mortification.

2 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., VI, Appendix, "Sur M. de Pontchâteau", p.349.

feeling that he was not worthy for the ministrations of the altar.¹ And secondly, for similar motives, temporary separation from the Holy Sacrament was practised by the solitaries as a means of penance for venial sins. This was in harmony with the teaching of Saint-Cyran. "Les Sacremens", he had written, "... sont des choses si éminentes, comme contenant JÉSUS-CHRIST & son Esprit, qu'ils ne peuvent estre receus dignement que dans des âmes préparées avec grand soin ...".² In his asceticism therefore, separation from communion was a salutary mortification and a welcome aid to perfection,³ and the solitaries were quick to follow his example. Lancelot relates how, for a long time, he believed that the only legitimate form of penance was the performance of physical mortifications, which his director would permit only in strict moderation, and goes on to describe his joy at the discovery of this new discipline.⁴ Through Antoine Arnauld's De la Fréquente Communion the experience of the solitaries found systematic expression, and as a result was to be reproduced by Jansenists far beyond the hermitage of Port-Royal.⁵

More in keeping with the traditional means of renunciation and humiliation employed by Catholic ascetics was the manual labour performed by the solitaries. It was their usual custom to work for

1 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., III, p.170.

2 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles ..., (Seconde Partie, MDCXLVII), pp.245-6.

3 v. Joseph Brucker, Saint-Cyran d'Après ses Lettres Inédites, (Recherches de Science Religieuse, Extrait du Tome IV, Paris, 1913), pp.372-3.

4 [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., I, pp.51-2. Lancelot goes on to describe the exaltation he experienced when next he communicated following this period of penance.

5 cf. infra pp.334 ff.

two hours in the morning and two more in the afternoon, but only on useful and necessary tasks such as the cultivation of the land,¹ draining the marsh about the convent, and repairing buildings. A solitary might be habitually occupied as locksmith, shoemaker,² carpenter, farmer, or gardener. But it is necessary to note that these tasks were not performed because manual labour was itself dignified, but precisely because it was regarded as a means of penance. M. Singlin condemned the building scheme that was undertaken following the first settlement in the "desert", on the ground that to see Christian solitaries mingling with workmen and tradesmen and neglecting the spirit of prayer in the hustle and bustle of daily toil was a most unedifying sight.³ And when Antoine Le Maistre began to spend too much time in manual labour and too little in prayer and study, Singlin, who was his confessor, persuaded him to adopt a more balanced ascetic life.⁴ But within reasonable limits manual labour was welcomed as a form of mortification, in the belief that "de vrais Pénitens ne trouvent rien de vil & de honteux que le péché; & rien d'honorable pour eux, que les exercices les plus humilians de la pénitence."⁵

E. Aesthetic Sensibilities, Recreation, Study. In all their discipline and renunciation the aim of the solitaries was the mortification of concupiscence which, according to Jansenist theology, included sensuality (libido sentiendi), pride in excelling (libido excellendi),

1 Nicolas Fontaine, op. cit., I, "Récit de la conduite ... des pénitens solitaires ...", p. XX.

2 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., IV, p. 152.

3 Nécrologe de l'Abbaie ... de Port-Royal ..., p. 384.

4 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, p. 353.

5 Histoire de l'origine des Pénitens ..., p. 15; cf. Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), p. 277.

and the passion for knowledge or intellectual curiosity (libido ¹ sciendi), all three of which were inextricably connected. They regarded as especially crucial the rigid control of the senses, for as a result of the libido sentiendi, man was given over passionately to sensual satisfactions and so contradicted his divinely endowed spiritual nature, sinking down to the animal level. The Christian asceticism inherent in this perpetual discipline is manifest in the words of Hamon:

La mort entre par nos sens, comme dit l'Écriture. Remplissons-les de la mort de JÉSUS-CHRIST, & nous luy fermons la porte. Nos sens estant mortifiez, & la croix estant plantée sur ce trône de nostre ennemy où il régnoit, la mort n'y entrera plus, car la mort de JÉSUS-CHRIST est le vray remède contre la mort. ²

The senses must be mortified because through them sinful man, fatally prone to take pride and pleasure in the creature and to find his ultimate satisfaction in that which was not God, was often seduced into bondage. Spiritual death was the penalty of this idolatrous exclusion of God; eternal spiritual life came by way of constant mortification and caution in conformity to His crucified Son.

These convictions were most conspicuous in the attitude of the solitaries to aesthetic pleasures. These were held in suspicion not because the objects which caused them were evil, but because they threatened to usurp the supremacy of God and to obscure the all-important concern for salvation in the scale of values of fallen man. Many pleasures, though innocent in themselves, were to be renounced because of our fatal inclination "de nous éloigner de Dieu, pour nous porter vers les créatures", ³ as Saint-Cyran put it. Having

1 v. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., II, p.160.

2 [Jean Hamon], Recueil de Divers Traitez de Piété, I, p.293.

3 Saint-Cyran, Considérations ..., Partie d'Hyver, Considérations sur les Dimanches et les Fêtes de l'Année, p.280.

given their lives over to penance, and conscious of their former abuse of the creature, the solitaries determined to give up even legitimate pleasures in order to avoid further evil, and in so far as possible to separate themselves from everything which might wean them from God.¹ "Comme j'ai abusé des choses légitimes", wrote M. Pallu,² "il faut aussi que j'en souffre la privation volontaire ...". Moreover in the last analysis sensible delights were as nothing in comparison with the joys of the spiritual life, and so were scarcely missed by the solitaries. For these reasons "ces Messieurs" sought to control their enjoyment of the beauties of nature, seeing in them not a revelation of God but a potential cause of estrangement from Him. M. Hamon was much inclined to emphasize the fact that everything which surrounds us is not only useless but often an impediment to the life of grace. M. de Pontchâteau studiously mortified³ an innocent penchant for picking and enjoying beautiful flowers. Similarly in the matter of clothing, where both the libido sentiendi and the libido excellendi were involved, a policy of restraint was practised. The solitaries were dressed, as the Histoire ... des Pénitens relates, "comme des hommes du monde qui sont modestes, sans aucune affectation de forme ou de couleur particulière d'habits."⁴ As for music, they concurred in its strict limitation in worship at Port-Royal and it is probable that they omitted singing instruction in the Petites Écoles.⁵ In sum, in relation to the enjoyment of beauty of any kind, their object was

1 cf. Saint-Cyran, Considérations ..., Partie d'Hyver, Considérations sur les Dimanches et les Festes de l'Année, p.291.

2 ut per C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., II, p.226.

3 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., V, p.260.

4 Histoire de l'origine des Pénitens ..., p.24.

5 H. C. Barnard, op. cit., p.69.

to keep the senses in close check, preferring the purely spiritual satisfaction of personal communion with God.

These same principles were applied in two other areas of the life of the solitaries, namely, the expression of affections and the use of recreations, where the rule was one of "détachement" in the higher interests of the spiritual life. Again Saint-Cyran had given the lead which was to be followed by the penitents of Port-Royal. According to him, "Il faut se deffaire ou détacher de quelques plaisirs peut-estre innocens qui ne font autre mal, sinon qu'ils remplissent le vuide du coeur, que la grâce voudroit & devoit remplir."¹ Following this precept, the solitaries mortified their natural affections in subordination to the prior claims of God upon the soul. M. Pallu admitted that the greatest temptation to him to break his life of solitude and penitence was caused by the love he bore his family and friends, and other solitaries made like testimonies.² But costly though the renunciation involved might be, this love had to give way to the higher ends of the spiritual life. Here then was but another occasion for discipline and mortification on the part of pilgrims and sojourners making their way toward their heavenly home. And similarly with regard to recreations, it was felt that while these might be harmless in themselves, a policy of restraint would conduce to a more thorough cultivation of the supernatural life of the soul,

parce que la chaleur de l'Esprit de Dieu se conserve & s'augmente autant dans la solitude & le silence comme elle se refroidit souvent dans les divertissemens, & devient moins fervente pour l'oraison & moins féconde en affection pour Dieu & en désirs

1 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles ..., (Seconde Partie, MDCXLVII), p.536.

2 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., II, pp.226-7; cf. VI, p.354.

pour les biens du ciel. 1

The ideal of the solitaries was to be so completely consecrated to God as to be constantly taken up with the arduous task of spiritual training and with the mortification of pernicious and ever present concupiscence.

In waging this warfare the Jansenists realized that not only the senses but also the intellect catered to human pride and vanity, seducing the soul from the pursuit of its high destiny. Thus a final province of human activity which called for perpetual discipline and renunciation was that of the exercise of the intellectual powers. The libido sciendi must also be mortified. Following the monastic tradition, the solitaries regarded intellectual labour as a form of penitential discipline and many of "ces Messieurs", notably Antoine Arnauld,² devoted themselves tirelessly to the life of study, producing translations of the Fathers and works of piety, logic, education, philosophy, and theological debate. But as spiritual heirs of Saint-Cyran, they could not forget the dangers inherent in intellectual activity.

Souvent la grandeur de l'esprit n'est pas un moindre empêchement pour le salut que celle des passions, ni un moindre obstacle à ce que nous pourrions faire pour notre avancement particulier, ou pour celui des autres. 3

This position was based on Saint-Cyran's personal experience. The

1 Nicolas Fontaine, op. cit., I, "Récit de la conduite ... des pénitens solitaires ...", p.XVII.

2 A measure of Arnauld's indefatigable intellectual labours may be taken in the range and voluminousness of his writings. His complete works fill 42 large quarto volumes dealing with Holy Scripture, dogmatics, polemics against the Protestants, the defence of Jansenism, moral theology, ecclesiastical history, philosophical subjects and belles-lettres.

3 [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., II, p.142.

besetting sins which for years had hampered his spiritual progress had been a passion for learning and intellectual pride, and his early works published before his conversion were marked by an unbounded faith in reason and by an overly ornate literary style.¹ At the time of his conversion he renounced profane studies and took a more serious attitude to sacred learning, but it was only following the "crise de conscience" brought on by his arrest in 1638 that he won his lifelong struggle to mortify his pride in scholarship. The pain he then felt at the loss of all his papers and their distribution to his enemies finally convinced him that in his passion for knowledge he had sought a substitute for God and that his intellectual endeavours had not proceeded from a divine vocation but from sinful vanity. In future he would encourage an Antoine Arnauld to a life of deep and serious study, but unwearingly he would inculcate the principle that learning for learning's sake was fatal to one's growth in grace and that scholarship was acceptable in the sight of God only when it was inspired by love of Him and was devoted to His service.² Like any other human activity, study was regarded as a natural means to a supernatural end, and if this end were forgotten and concupiscence were allowed to go unmortified, the result would be disastrous. Only if it were interspersed with prayer and works of charity and were put out of mind as soon as the study period ceased could the Christian avoid "une attache trop humaine à ce qui

1 v. Jean Orcibal, Les Origines du Jansénisme: II, pp.156 ff., 162-3, 182 ff., 196. v. [Saint-Cyran], Question Royale et sa décision (1609); [Saint-Cyran], Apologie pour Messire Henry Louys Chastaigner de La Rochepozay Evêque de Poitiers ..., (MDCXV).

2 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCCLIV), II, p.515.

est de notre goût."¹

As for the human reason, the solitaries of Port-Royal believed that it too had been corrupted by the vitiation of personality consequent on the Fall. Through grace it could become the agent of the divine purpose, but only on the condition of rigid mortification and discipline; otherwise intellectual gifts would inevitably lead to soul-destroying pride. Among the impediments to the action of grace in the soul Saint-Cyran had listed "les grands raisonnemens, & les discussions trop exactes des véritez divines par les efforts, les contentions & les disputes de l'esprit humain."² This teaching was interpreted by Singlin, de Barcos and others of the first generation of solitaries as a radical suspicion of the reason itself. If one really believed that grace alone could save, then obviously the role of reason was minimized.³ Later Jansenists however, adopted a somewhat less austere position best expressed in Knox's statement that "Port-Royal distrusts the human reason as an appetite, but not as an instrument."⁴ This was the attitude of Arnauld, Pascal, Nicole, and de Tillemont, all of whom constantly utilized their intellectual faculties in God's service, but all the while were careful to subordinate their reason to God, and to mortify intellectual pride. A strict ascetic discipline was required in relation to their task of defending truth. As a concomitant of learning there must be humility, which could be achieved only by renouncing self-

1 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, p.535. cf. Jean Laporte, La Doctrine de Port-Royal: Essai sur la formation et le développement de la doctrine. I. Saint-Cyran, pp.28 ff.

2 Saint-Cyran, Considérations ..., Partie d'Hyver, Considérations sur les Festes de la Vierge et des Saints, p.200.

3 A. Feugère, Le Mouvement Religieux dans la Littérature du XVII^e Siècle, p.50.

4 R. A. Knox, op. cit., p.221.

seeking and the vain illusion of being able to arrive at truth merely by intellectual effort, and by following the leading of the Holy Spirit in one's vocation as a thinker. Thus, in the annals of Jansenism Le Nain de Tillemont, whose scholarship is universally celebrated, is renowned especially for his intellectual humility. Of him the Nécrologe says:

Il étoit véritablement savant de la science des Saints, qui leur apprend à connoître la grandeur de Dieu, le néant de l'homme, & le peu d'estime qu'ils doivent faire de toutes les sciences qui ne contribuent à les faire croître en charité. 1

In him the libido sciendi and the libido excellendi were ever mortified in single-minded obedience to the will of God, to the point of readiness at any time to renounce his scholarship should it become a stumbling-block to salvation. Among the solitaries learning was always subordinate to piety.

The authentic ascetic attitude is manifest in the famous conversation of Pascal and M. de Sacy on the subject of Epictetus and Montaigne. Though finding much to praise in both philosophers, Pascal strongly condemned the Stoic's belief that man could discover truth by the exercise of his rational powers, and welcomed the Pyrrhonist's scathing attack on proud reason. M. de Sacy went even further, accepting Montaigne's attack on the power of reason, but condemning the brilliant reasoning of Montaigne himself as betraying an utter lack of mortification and humility and submission to God. Addressing Pascal, he said:

Vous êtes heureux Monsieur, de vous être élevé au-dessus de ces docteurs plongés dans l'ivresse de la science, & qui ont le

1 Nécrologe de l'Abbaïe ... de Port-Royal ..., p.20.

2 v. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., IV, p.99, note; cf. Henri Brémond, op. cit., IV, p.266.

coeur vuide de la vérité ... Il [Dieu] vous a rappelé de ce plaisir dangereux 1

The two men were agreed that the reason as well as the other faculties stood in need of regeneration by grace, and this was a perpetual cause of humility. In true Jansenist fashion, Pascal recorded in his *Mémorial*: "Dieu d'Abraham, Dieu d'Isaac, Dieu de Jacob, non des philosophes et des sçavants."² But that there were solitaries who took a more severely ascetic attitude than Pascal is revealed by the fact that his brilliant defence of the common cause in the *Lettres Provinciales* was severely censured by some on the ground that such efforts were marked by a vain confidence in reason and revealed a lack of simplicity and mortification.³ If this judgement was unduly harsh, it is nevertheless true that the later "Messieurs de Port-Royal" were much more favourable to the employment of reason in the service of truth than Saint-Cyran might have wished. It is doubtful, for example, whether on strict Cyranian principles Arnauld's favourable reception of Cartesianism or Nicole's clever theological distinctions could be justified.⁴ But as between the two camps, the basic ascetic principle was not at stake. For the intellectual efforts of all the solitaries were daily offered to God in humility and in the spirit of self-renunciation; it was not reasoning as such but vain confidence in autonomous reason, pride in learning, and study for its own sake which were unconditionally abandoned. "La sauvegarde ici," wrote Sainte-Beuve, "consiste dans

1 Dom Clémencet, op. cit., IV, p.541. The whole interview is reproduced on pp.532-50. cf. J. Tulloch, *Pascal*, pp.179 ff.

2 H. F. Stewart, *Pascal's Pensées with an English Translation, Brief Notes and Introduction*, p.362.

3 v. Fortunat Strowski, op. cit., III, pp.206-7, 214-15.

4 v. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., V, pp.349, 354 ff.; IV, p.418.

cette règle unique, partout appliquée: In lege Domini ...¹ toute leur vie, nuit et jour, rangés et ramassés sous la Croix!" Reason could be used in the service of God, the solitaries believed, providing always there was unconditional submission to His spirit in conformity to a crucified Christ whose only aim was to do the Father's will. The school of Port-Royal was to uphold these principles to little avail against the ever rising tide of rationalism which from the sixteenth century had been threatening to engulf France.²

A further problem confronting those at Port-Royal whose task was the defence of truth was that of literary style and eloquence, to which again they brought the attitude of Christian ascetics. For here the intellect, the senses, and personal vanity were all involved, necessitating the mortification of three-fold concupiscence. To the Jansenist the theory of art for art's sake in literature was abominable, because it contributed to demonic pride and, by appealing to the senses, frequently made untruths seem attractive. And so, according to de Sacy, Montaigne's beauty of style was a snare and a delusion, since he was merely serving poisonous meats on handsome platters.³ The purpose of literature was not to amuse but to convey truth which, being beautiful in itself, needed no vain ornamentation to recommend it. "Il n'y a rien de beau que ce qui est vrai; ce qui retrancherait des discours une infinité de vains ornements et de pensées fausses."⁴ As authors, the solitaries subordinated style to

1 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., II, p.421.

2 v. Ethel Romanes, op. cit., p.484, note IX.

3 Dom Clémencet, op. cit., V, p.542.

4 La Logique de Port-Royal (Édition Nouvelle ... par Alfred Fouillée, Paris, 1877), Part III, p.282.

virtue, endeavouring to make themselves understood rather than admired. They could not tolerate the idolatry of form which reflected a proud unmortified spirit. Arnauld and Nicole, indeed, seem to have had the itch to write, and on occasion one even discovers the former defending eloquence as an aid to preaching;¹ but to that extent they were departing from the thoroughly ascetic attitude of Saint-Cyran and, as the stricter Port-Royalists would have said, failing to profit from his hard-won experience of the perils to salvation inherent in the "passion des paroles". Typical of the original conservative outlook which demanded continual mortification of the proud ego was Jean Hamon, who rigorously denied himself the advantages of style.² And the warning in the preface of the Histoire ... des Pénitens that "il ne faut pas chercher dans cette Relation la beauté du stile, ni les autres agréments qui amusent les Lecteurs curieux",³ represents the normal Port-Royalist view. The tremendous volume of writings produced by the solitaries is ample proof that their protest was not directed against literature as such but against the pride and idolatry to which men had so often yielded. Fontaine's appraisal of de Sacy's poetic gifts demonstrates that with proper caution and a clear grasp of vital spiritual ends, the Christian could make valuable use of literary forms. He wrote:

La poésie devenue toute profane devient toute sainte entre ses

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- 1 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., V, pp.469-70. On these grounds, Henri Brémond, op. cit., IV, p.10, attempts to blast Sainte-Beuve's thesis of "un groupe d'écrivains nés, renonçant héroïquement au plaisir de bien écrire, visant à rester médiocres, mortifiant leur imagination, leur sensibilité et même leur goût ...". The evidence is not convincing; and in any case, Arnauld and Nicole were only two of the body of solitaries, to whom as a whole the thesis still applies.
- 2 v. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., IV, p.305.
- 3 Histoire de l'origine des Pénitens ..., Preface, unpaginated.

mains. Il l'a arrachée en quelque sorte à l'idolâtrie, à la volupté, à l'erreur, à la débauche, pour la faire servir à la piété. D'instrument qu'elle est au démon pour perdre les âmes, il s'en est servi pour les sauver. 1

Obviously the studious mortification of literary taste and talents, in the belief that these were dangerous to sinful men unless consciously controlled and employed to promote their growth in grace, hampered the free expression of creative literature.² But to the Jansenist ascetic no renunciation or discipline was too great which was required in the service of God and in fitting the soul for His holy presence.

F. Spiritual Exercises:
Contemplation and
Meditation.

So far attention has largely been given to the predominantly negative and renunciatory aspects of the solitaries' ascetic piety, but they did not neglect the more positive field of spiritual disciplines. In this connection, one is confronted with both a mystical and a more severely ascetic emphasis at Port-Royal, i. e., with contemplation and meditation.³ As shown above, Saint-Cyran had patently inclined to the former. In Lancelot's words, "il étoit tout-à-fait opposé aux grandes méditations, qui ne sont que des efforts de l'esprit humain ...".⁴ Accordingly, the early solitaries favoured the practice of contemplation, the simple waiting of the soul upon God until He should fill it like an empty vase.⁵ Lancelot opposed all method and striving in prayer, claiming that God would grant His spirit to the elect who simply followed His leading in prayer. Books on methodical meditation could however be of use to those who found concentration difficult and who seemed incapable of the childlike

1 Nicolas Fontaine, op. cit., I, p.91.

2 Augustin Gazier, Histoire Générale du Mouvement Janséniste, I, p.157.

3 cf. supra pp.244-5.

4 [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., II, p.37.

5 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCGXLIV), II, p.669.

and single-minded "état de pauvre". In any case there was no merit in wearing oneself out in the struggle to make use of certain prescribed methods.¹

Among the later solitaries the emphasis on contemplation did not vanish, but there was far more toleration of meditation, of methodical devotion. Here too there was a precedent in the life of Saint-Cyran. For although he had championed contemplation and had refused to prescribe general rules for the devotional life, he had personally made use of most of the standard Roman Catholic techniques, the regular recitation of the breviary, the rosary, the offices of the Virgin and saints, and other "petites formules d'adoration ...".² In addition to these he also recommended the practice of copying verses of the Psalms or other pious thoughts for devotional use.³ Following this example, Hamon believed that while contemplation was altogether desirable, it would come only after the exercise of more systematic meditation. "La vérité est beaucoup voilée dans la lecture; elle l'est moins dans la méditation; elle commence de se dévoiler dans la contemplation", he wrote.⁴ And M. de Tillemont, while honouring contemplation and the inner piety of the adoring soul in union with God, believed that perfection in this was possible only in the life to come when the passions and imagination which now distract the creature would be silenced and one would see God alone.⁵ Formal meditation received a double share of honour because of the Jansenist opposition to the

1 [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., II, pp.56-62.

2 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, pp.354-5.

3 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), I, pp.281-2.

4 ut per C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., IV, p.322.

5 ib., p.94.

Quietist movement which had advocated the contemplative "prayer of attitude"¹. This is by no means to say, as Brémond contended, that egocentrism had replaced the earlier Cyranian theocentrism, for it was never a case of attempting by the vanity of human effort to lift oneself heaven-ward. On the contrary, it was because of the deep-seated conviction of human impotency and corruption that the Jansenists opposed the growing mystic tendency which seemed to assume that the natural man, unmortified and undisciplined, was capable of perfect communion with God. Meditation and devotional methods were called for because it was normally impossible to find God without serious discipline on the part of fallen man; and they were utilized by the solitaries as the result of an overpowering sense of God and the desire to fit the soul for His majestic presence.

Among their devotional exercises, the reading of scripture was held in particular esteem. "C'est là qu'ils prennent tous les points de leur méditation, lisant ces paroles divines avec une profonde révérence"², wrote Fontaine. Despite his enthusiasm however, the Bible was not the only spiritual source book, for meditations were taken from the Fathers and from many other inspirational treatises including those of the Port-Royal authors themselves. Other specific exercises of piety were the observance of silence, engaging in mutually edifying conversations, and the regular examination of conscience. All spiritual disciplines were regarded as variations of the prayer life and were calculated to stimulate and animate it. Fontaine explained it thus:

1 v. R. A. Knox, op. cit., pp.245 ff.

2 Nicolas Fontaine, op. cit., I, "Récit de la conduite ... des pénitens solitaires ...", p.XV.

Enfin ils diversifient leur oraison pour la rendre, s'il se peut, continuelle, en priant tantôt par pensées & par mouvemens, tantôt par paroles, tantôt dans l'office, tantôt en disant leur Chapelet ou en méditant sur le saint rosaire, tantôt par actions en consacrant leurs ouvrages à Dieu & les faisant pour lui seul, tantôt par souffrances en pâtissant pour son amour; & au défaut de toutes ces prières, par l'humble exposition de leur pauvreté & de leur misère en la présence de Dieu 1

Such was the profound Christian ascetic attitude underlying the spiritual disciplines of the solitaries of Port-Royal.

The feature of their piety which most closely linked these illustrious penitents with traditional monastic spirituality was their love of regularity, which they believed to be a very useful technique for maintaining vigour of soul.² While still in the monastery of Port-Royal des Champs, their daily routine was as strenuous as that of any monk.³ Awaking at 3 a.m. they went through certain acts of morning adoration before, during, and after dressing, including prayers to our Lord, the Virgin, St. Joseph, and other saints, and the use of holy water.⁴ Proceeding to a small chapel in the church, the solitaries assisted the chaplain in matins and laudes according to the Breviary of Paris, "sans chant & sans notes, mais en récitant avec attention & dévotion."⁵ They then returned to their chambers to perform further devotions such as the reading of scripture while kneeling. At 6.30 prime would be recited in the church, followed at 9.30 by terce and attendance at mass. Sexte was

1 Nicolas Fontaine, op. cit., I, "Récit de la conduite ... des pénitens solitaires ...", pp.XVIII-XIX.

2 ib., p.XVIII.

3 ib., pp.X ff.

4 The Roman Catholic tone is very marked throughout, but the Jansenist proclivity is also discernible, as for example in the prayer: "Faites-moi la grâce, ô mon Dieu, d'être du petit nombre de vos élus." ib., p.XI.

5 ib., p.XII. On solemn holy days, music was used.

said at 11.30, after which came an examination of conscience. Dinner was eaten in silence, and during the simple meal which was served in plain earthenware vessels, a chapter of the New Testament and a passage from the life of a saint would be read. The solitaries might then go for a walk, or retire to their chambers, or do some manual labour. At 2 p.m. they recited nones, at 4 vespers, and at 6 had a light lunch. At 7.15 they were back in the church for compline, followed by other prayers and litanies and a further examination of conscience. Withdrawing in silence, they performed further personal devotions before retiring at 8 o'clock. By this regular routine the solitaries disciplined their corrupt and slothful natures in order to set their affections on things above, and trained their souls to delight in the narrow way prescribed for the soldier of Christ.

G. Qualities of the Ascetic Life of the Solitaries.

The qualities of life produced by the ascetic piety of the penitents of Port-Royal, profoundly influenced as it was by the example of Saint-Cyran and grounded in Jansenist theology, were in close harmony with those which have been seen to characterize the nuns. Above all, radical humility and self-denial stand out, based on the voluntary submission of the total personality to God. This was the conception in the mind of Jean Hamon when he spoke of "la vraye & parfaite humilité, qui est tellement soumise à Dieu & à ses ordres, qu'elle n'y a aucune ré¹pu¹gnance, & n'en ressent aucune peine." And more than a mere conception, it was reflected in the lives of all the great solitaries. In humility Claude Lancelot never passed the order of sub-deacon

1 Jean Hamon, Recueil de Divers Traitez de Piété, I, p.5.

but was content to train children for the advancement which he denied himself.¹ Likewise M. Charles Du Chemin, a priest of no little learning who spent thirty-seven years in retirement at Port-Royal, hid his identity and passed for ignorant during that whole period.² In this same spirit M. de Pontchâteau lived in obscurity, chose to do the meanest of tasks, hid his works of charity from the eyes of men, and yet when old was known to lament that he had not begun to serve God.³ This was no proud spiritual élite but a group of men seeking humbly to mortify their sinful natures in the power of the undeserved grace bestowed by God on His elect.

Further signs of this spirit were the poverty and charity of the solitaries. Frugality marked every detail of their existence - clothing, food, living quarters, furniture. Everything was plain and often shabby, in the conviction that the true love of poverty in the heart would be given visible expression in one's mode of life.⁴ And as a result of their personal self-denial they were enabled to love the neighbour in very tangible ways. In this they had been set an edifying example by Saint-Cyran, whose generous and frequent alms-giving was proverbial in Jansenist circles.⁵ In like fashion M. de Sacy, though loving silence and solitude, never allowed this inclination to diminish his love of the neighbour; none was more courageous or indefatigable than he in visiting the sick

1 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, p.418.

2 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., IV, p.120.

3 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., VI, Appendix, "Sur M. de Pontchâteau", p.347.

4 Jean Racine, op. cit., p.17.

5 v. [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, pp.355-7, 413-15, 446; [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., II, pp.204-5, 214-16. Saint-Cyran aided orphans, unmarried mothers, exiled English Catholics and many poor folk. cf. Jean Orcibal, Les Origines du Jansénisme: II, pp.608-10.

of the district, whatever the risks or hardships this labour of love involved.¹ Second to none in this regard was M. Hamon who continued to ply his medical profession, riding about the countryside on his donkey, reading his Bible as he went, and ministering joyfully to the physical and spiritual needs of the poor. And despite the marked self-concern inherent in withdrawal from the world, "ces Messieurs de Port-Royal" spent themselves freely to uphold the truth of which, as they felt, men were in such sore need, proving in this way that their asceticism was far from devoid of a man-ward dimension.

The virtue of obedience was also cultivated as an essential discipline in the struggle for perfection. Accordingly all the solitaries submitted themselves to a spiritual director.² This often occasioned severe self-discipline as, for example, when Antoine Le Maistre was required to accept as his confessor his younger brother, M. de Sacy; or again, when Claude Lancelot acknowledged the authority of his director and against his every inclination relaxed his physical austerities, although believing them to be the chief means of perfection.³ But both yielded in the belief that through surrender to the director they were submitting to the guidance of God and to His chastening, purifying spirit. Despite this fact, the most usual charge against the solitaries, as against the nuns, has been that of stubborn self-will, on the ground of their continued disobedience to the Holy See. Considered as Roman Catholics, they were obviously guilty of the charge; but

1 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., IV, p.543.

2 Usually the director of the solitaries was the confessor of the nuns.

3 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, p.393; Nécrologe de l'Abbaïe ... de Port-Royal ..., p.179.

considered as Christian ascetics - for it is not the polemics as such but the polemical spirit which is of interest here - a different conclusion seems to be warranted. During the long years of controversy they believed themselves to be submitting to the will of God by defending His truth, and as they valued their eternal¹ salvation, found it impossible to deny this sacred obligation. It seems more reasonable to believe that on the part of thoroughly consistent Christian ascetics whose very life was continual discipline, renunciation, and self-denial, the theological war was waged not out of sheer stubbornness of spirit but in single-minded obedience to Almighty God.²

This interpretation is strengthened by the willingness of the solitaries to suffer patiently the chastisements of God. M. Hamon, in his "De la Vie de la Foy dans les grandes afflictions", makes it clear that this disposition to suffer for truth was not mere obstinacy but an integral part of the total Christian asceticism of the solitaries. "Apprenons donc ... à respecter la volonté de Dieu," he urged, "& à nous y soumettre avec joye, comme estant la seule cause de nostre bonheur."³ But this was not the only circumstance in which divinely sent affliction was to be welcomed for the eternal good of the soul. Earnest disciples of a crucified Christ were called to share His cross and so to glorify God, edify the neighbour by steadfast example, and give proof of their election

1 v. Antoine Arnauld, Oeuvres ..., XXV, p.22.

2 Arnauld had roundly condemned what he called "l'engagement à soutenir quelque opinion à laquelle on s'est attaché par d'autres considérations que par celle de la vérité ...". La Logique de Port-Royal ..., p.274.

3 Jean Hamon, Recueil de Divers Traitez de Piété, II, p.38.

by glad acceptance of every visitation of God.¹ It is that characteristic spirit of authentic Christian spirituality which alone gives meaning to the whole story of the solitaries, with its record of daily uncertainty, repeated dispersions, and ultimate defeat of a long and dearly cherished cause.

M. Brémond has described the religion of the solitaries as manifesting "une auguste sécheresse, une tragique majesté, une simplicité grandiose et triste."² But their life was no less brightened than that of the nuns by the conviction that God had elected them to eternal salvation and was supplying His grace for the earthly pilgrimage which was the arduous prelude to final bliss. Every ascetic act which fitted the soul for its high destiny encouraged them to persevere in the struggle and heightened their joy in anticipation of victory. When Lancelot became a solitary he was so filled with ecstasy because of his new life that, as he tells us, he was frequently inclined to burst into gladsome laughter.³ M. de Saint-Gilles, although wearing himself out with austerities, had to the last a reputation for gaiety.⁴ And the lives of the solitaries abound in such seeming incongruities on the part of men who viewed their every action in terms of the life beyond. In the Histoire ... des Pénitens especially one encounters this joyfulness, and with it, the ascetic outlook from which it issued. There one reads:

La grâce les ayant guéris des passions les plus violentes, des

1 Jean Hamon, Recueil de Divers Traitez de Piété, I, pp.284, 378.

2 Henri Brémond, op. cit., IV, p.179. Brémond did not fail to note, however, the joy of the solitaries in many of their penances and spiritual exercises. ib., pp.247-9.

3 [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., I, p.36. cf. p.52.

4 [J. Besoignē], op. cit., IV, pp.111-12.

désirs des biens, & des honneurs qui font souffrir aux hommes une si dure servitude, ils ne cherchent plus que Dieu; ils jouissent d'une tranquillité d'esprit admirable, & ils sont remplis d'une sainte joie, qui fait juger que l'esprit de Dieu habite en eux: aussi ont-ils avoué ingénument que si leur solitude est triste, les Solitaires en récompense ne le sont pas. ¹

To this inner contentment they managed to cling through all the dark nights of the soul.

¹ Histoire de l'origine des Pénitens ..., p.16.

CHAPTER IX

JANSENISTS IN THE WORLD

Si de la Vérité l'Oracle est véritable,
Tu ne peux d'un seul coeur faire un présent à deux;
Il est du Dieu Vivant l'esclave bien-heureux;
Ou du Tyran des Morts l'esclave misérable:
L'un t'offre des travaux, mais couronnez de fleurs;
Et l'autre des plaisirs, mais suivis de douleurs;
C'est à toy de choisir lequel tu veux pour Maistre:
Serois-tu si cruel contre ton propre sort,
De vouloir préférer à l'auteur de ton estre,
L'auteur infortuné d'une éternelle mort?

Robert Arnauld d'Andilly,
"On ne peut servir à deux Maistres",
Oeuvres Chrestiennes, (1634), p.131.

A. A Continuing Propensity to Withdrawal.

Although the inherent logic of

Jansenism, requiring all Christians to strive for perfection, inevitably led the serious penitent to withdraw from the world, it is self-evident that the vast majority of those who were attracted by the movement were unable to go into permanent seclusion. For them the normal ties of work and family precluded the possibility of following the example of the nuns of Port-Royal by taking religious vows, or of emulating the solitaries by experimenting with a kind of lay monasticism. Consequently theirs was the infinitely more arduous task of leading the rigorous ascetic life of which Port-Royal was the centre and the inspiration,

in the midst of what they believed to be a contagious world. This third stage of Jansenist piety constituted to some extent at least a compromise with the principle of absolute renunciation of the world which characterized the movement and was exemplified in the first two stages already examined. Yet in the heroic pursuit of perfection which it called for under adverse circumstances, it most closely approximated the pattern of holiness established by the first Christians.

Despite the fact that by precept and example Saint-Cyran and his most consistent followers exalted the life of withdrawal in the belief that social life in seventeenth century France was an almost fatal enemy of sanctity, as hopeful reformers of church and society they taught that it was the calling of many Christians to promote their eternal welfare in that station of life in which God had placed them. Saint-Cyran stated the position thus:

Il n'y a point de plus courte voie pour devenir riche selon Dieu, que de se tenir en la condition où il nous fait naistre, & d'y travailler dans l'ordre prescrit par la nature & par la raison. 1

The authors of Port-Royal, writing for the faithful in the world, reiterated that the Christian should fulfil every obligation of the vocation in which God willed that he should serve.² Arnauld championed the idea that under the limitations of an occupation in society men could live an earnest ascetic life, not necessarily of the same outward form as in monasticism, but issuing from the same inner spiritual impulse.³ Besoigne voiced a similar conviction, claiming that God did not call all his elect to embrace the state of perfection, but that it was His will for men to serve Him in

1 Saint-Cyran, Pensées Chrétiennes sur la Pauvreté, p.192.

2 v. Pasquier Quesnel, op. cit., I, pp.213-14, 248.

3 Antoine Arnauld, De la Fréquente Communion, pp.16-17.

many walks of life and to reach the level of perfection proper to their particular condition.¹ Similarly a Jansenist convert, the Duchesse de Luines, wrote that perfection for any individual consisted in doing the specific will of God for him in this life, whether the vocation were marriage or chastity, the world or the monastery, on the ground that grace was given in proportion to the needs of each calling. In her words,

Dieu veut sauver les hommes dans toutes les conditions pour former sa cité & son Royaume céleste. ... Il faut bien distinguer l'état de la plus grande perfection de la perfection même.²

In fact however, as Honigsheim's able analysis of the social teaching of French Jansenism has evinced, these concessions did not involve a doctrine of the calling similar to that of Puritanism, which regarded diligent productive work in the world, in contrast to irresponsible withdrawal, as the divinely ordained means of giving proof of one's election.³ For the view of grace as the all-important factor in life, and of the world as a source of infection and a mortal danger to the soul, combined not only to produce the mentality of monastic asceticism but to vitiate the whole outlook of the movement to the normal problems of daily living. As Honigsheim put it, "der Jansenismus hatte seinem ganzen Wesen nach, ... etwas ausgesprochen passives an sich. Er wollte nicht die Welt erobern."⁴ As already demonstrated, the surest sign of saving grace was a sudden conversion followed by escape from the noxious

1 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, p.550.

2 ut per ib., I, p.325.

3 v. Paul Honigsheim, Die Staats- und Sozial-Lehren der französischen Jansenisten im 17. Jahrhundert, pp.120-1, 139 ff., 143.

4 ib., p.8.

atmosphere of the world. Saint-Cyran himself had written that it was lamentably true that nearly all the professions and occupations of French society in his day were so corrupt as to constitute an almost insuperable barrier to salvation.¹ For this reason it was impossible for many not to forsake them entirely; and those who were forced by circumstance to continue to ply a trade were advised to regard their labour as a form of penance, and in so far as possible to follow the path of mortification which was the duty of all Christians. The Jansenist doctrine therefore was that it was possible, indeed it was necessary, to lead the strict ascetic life even if one had to remain in the world; but work in a calling was not regarded positively as a zestful opportunity for developing the sinews of the soul, and so was not of the essence of the asceticism of the movement.

Basically Saint-Cyran's teaching could afford little genuine encouragement to the Christian whose lot was to struggle not only against the flesh and the devil but also against the world. Amid its seductions, he asserted, there were few who would work diligently to seek the straight way leading unto life; of those who sought it, fewer still would find it; of those who found it, fewer would embrace it seriously; of these, even fewer would forsake all, continue without looking backward, and persevere under great difficulties; and fewest of all would labour to the end and receive the crown of glory.² The number of the elect living a normal life in society was in consequence discouragingly small. Moreover the common existence

1 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCCXLIV), I, p.199.

2 *ib.*, I, pp.201 ff.

of men was further undermined by interpreting it in monastic terms. All the faithful, and not just the religious, were bound by vows, namely, the sacred vows of baptism, the only difference being that¹ beyond the walls of a monastery it was harder to keep them. And so Antoine Arnauld, following the great director of Port-Royal, could write: "nous sommes tous Religieux de la Religion générale que Jésus-Christ a instituée, & obligez à l'observation de sa règle² ...".

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that a prominent feature of the ascetic piety of Jansenists in the world was, paradoxically, a propensity to withdrawal whenever this was feasible. The ideal was to have as little contact with society as possible, to spend the maximum amount of time in the privacy and solitude of one's own home, and periodically to make short retreats³ for the purpose of reviving one's spiritual energies. Writing to a lady of quality, Saint-Cyran asserted that there was no better way of setting an edifying example and of satisfying divine justice "que de voir une personne de vostre condition aymer la solitude de son logis pour travailler dans le repos à la perfection de son âme", and he recommended that she venture forth only for the purpose of worshipping God or to perform the works of charity which seemed essential to her.⁴ The hagiographies of Jansenism provide case after case illustrating that this advice was often put into practice. Typical was Mme. du Fossé who, following her conversion, began

1 Saint-Cyran, Oeuvres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, I, p.128; Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), pp.131-2.

2 Antoine Arnauld, De la Fréquente Communion, p.706.

3 v. e. g. Louis-Isaac Le Maistre de Sacy, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, I, p.52; II, pp.51, 100, 145, 162.

4 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), p.466.

immediately to leave off her former worldly pursuits and diversions and to spend most of her time in exercises of piety in her own home and in the house of God. Soon she was sending her sons to the Petites Écoles de Port-Royal and her daughters to the nuns' convent school, while she and her husband retired to a house in the country.¹ True Jansenists in the world shunned society to the extreme limit which circumstances would permit, approaching very closely to the ideal of Port-Royal which was ever before their eyes.

This tendency was accentuated by the general attitude of the movement to marriage. While the married state was sanctioned and on occasion even praised, there was no adequate conception of it as a positive good. Quesnel indeed wrote that the marriage bond reflected the union of Christ with His church, and that although it was an² institution that was easily abused, it was nevertheless sacred. But as a Roman Catholic, and more especially as a Jansenist, he could not refrain from expressing his admiration of celibacy. This way of life, he admitted, was "de conseil & de perfection, non d' obligation & de précepte."³ It might even prove a disadvantage in the spiritual warfare of some Christians who, through weakness or lack of divine vocation, would find in it either a subtle temptation to pride or an impossibly heroic standard.⁴ But these reservations made, Quesnel followed St. Paul's line of argument, speaking of the advantages of virginity and the disadvantages of the married state. The spiritual guide must show the flock the way of perfection, the

1 Nécrologe de l'Abbaïe ... de Port-Royal ..., p.430.

2 Pasquier Quesnel, op. cit., II, p.126; VI, p.478.

3 ib., VI, p.473.

4 ib., pp.476-7.

evangelical counsels, or be untrue to his sacred calling, i. e.,
 "manquer à Dieu & aux âmes."¹ For, Quesnel continued,

Ce n'est pas un avantage médiocre de pouvoir être à Dieu sans partage ... Mais combien grand celui de ne pas connoître un plaisir dont le sentiment est inévitable, la modération difficile, le péril certain, la tentation violente, & l'attachement criminel.²

Despite its sanctity, the consequences of marriage were so often disastrous that everyone should be aware of them and be given the opportunity of choosing the higher state. Those for whom this was³ impossible could yet honour God by observing conjugal chastity. Above all neither state was to be regarded as an end in itself but as a means of glorifying the Creator and promoting one's eternal spiritual welfare. The ascetic life was incumbent on all Christians.

In effect, the only significant difference between the married and the unmarried Jansenist in the world was that the former had a companion with whom to share the ascetic life, whereas the latter did not. Describing his impression of a good spouse, Nicole listed as virtues "de n'être pas prévenu des maximes du monde, ni possédé de l'amour des divertissements, de l'éclat des vanités; d'aimer la retraite, le travail & la vie réglée";⁴ to marry a partner who did not possess such qualities was the equivalent of deliberately assuming a double burden of concupiscence.⁵ As a result of Jansenist influence many married people followed a pattern of conduct which closely approximated that of the monastic orders. For example, soon after her marriage to a good and respected

1 Pasquier Quesnel, op. cit., VI, p.473.

2 ib., p.474.

3 ib., p.477.

4 L'Esprit de M. Nicole ..., pp.581-2.

5 v. Victor Du Bled, La Société Française du XVI^e siècle au XX^e siècle, (1^e Série, XVI^e et XVII^e siècles), p.305.

husband, a certain Marie Bignon was converted in the Jansenist manner and, giving her heart wholly to God, felt compelled to "retourner à lui dans un entier détachement du monde."¹ She immediately took up the ascetic life with its cultivation of humility, simplicity of dress, liberality to the poor, scorn of vanity, honour, and riches. But still fearful of the corruption in the world and forgetful of the obligations of marriage, she prayed God to call her to Himself that her high ideal of Christian perfection might be fulfilled,² and the Nécrologe records that this prayer was shortly answered. Another woman, the wife of Henri de la Guette, Seigneur de Chazai, lived penitently in the married state for thirty years and succeeded in inspiring her husband with "un grand mépris des biens du monde & du faste du siècle; beaucoup d'amour³ pour les pauvres; l'éloignement des compagnies mondaines." Her household was regulated as nearly as possible like a monastery, husband and wife setting the example of rigorous asceticism in fasting, spiritual exercises and works of charity. Their rooted conviction of the danger of the world and of the inferiority of marriage was evidenced by the fact that the wife prayed against the proposed marriage of her son, and that his subsequent illness and death were the occasions of less grief than had been the projected marriage. At best the Jansenist position is seen in the sermon pronounced by Antoine Arnauld at the marriage in 1677 of his grand-niece, Catherine Agnès Le Maistre, and Augustin Thomas, in which he blessed such a union entered into with the purpose of living as

¹ Nécrologe de l'Abbaïe ... de Port-Roïal ..., p.182.

² ib.

³ [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, p.13.

serious Christians, but adding the familiar warning that this life was "a place of temptation and combat, where we must work out our salvation in fear and trembling."¹

B. The Ascetic Interpretation of Life for the Faithful.

The ascetic piety of the faithful

Jansenist living under the limitations of society was therefore, as far as possible, to be a replica of that of the solitaries and even of the nuns. Since all Christians were to aim at perfection, the same quality of life was expected from the two spheres, the world and the monastery; and the Nécrologe repeats in almost identical terms the same virtues of renunciation and penance, whether on the part of those under vows, in the hermitage, or in secular callings. As for the inner nature of the discipleship required of the rank and file of the faithful in the many Jansenist writings designed for their edification, it was conceived and described in the now familiar context of sin and grace, struggle and eternal glory which animated the piety of Port-Royal. Reduced to its simplest form, Saint-Cyran expressed the common conception when he said:

Ce sont les deux points, auxquels se réduit tout l'Évangile, & tous les Mystères de JÉSUS-CHRIST, d'apprendre à ses Disciples à vivre en ce monde dans une parfaite séparation du monde, & dans la recherche des biens du Ciel. 2

It was to the elaboration and illustration of this theme that future generations of Jansenist theologians, memorialists and hagiographers were to dedicate themselves in an effort to propagate the spirituality of the movement.

Of great importance in this connection in the last quarter

1 H. T. Morgan, Port Royal and Other Studies, p.73.

2 Saint-Cyran, Considérations ..., Partie d'Este, Considérations sur les Dimanches et Fêtes des Mystères, pp.116-17.

of the seventeenth century was the famous Réflexions Morales¹ by Pasquier Quesnel, which was an ascetic commentary on the whole New Testament designed as a work of pure edification and practical piety, and widely disseminated among the laity for the purpose of extending the Port-Royalist spirit beyond the bounds of the citadel of the movement. The conception of the Christian life put forward in this Jansenist manual, which may be taken as representative of a host of similar works, rests squarely on the fundamental antithesis of sin and grace. In the biblical drama, Quesnel tells his readers, there are really only two characters, the sinner and the Saviour,

... l'homme-Dieu, anéanti pour nous, ce grand objet de notre foy, de notre confiance, & de notre amour: l'homme pécheur, que nous portons en nous-mêmes, & qui doit être le sujet de notre confusion, de notre crainte & de notre haine, comme l'héritier de l'iniquité & de l'orgueil d'Adam. 2

In the weakness of the sick in the Gospels, in the pride, hypocrisy and vanity of the Pharisees, every reader will recognize his own humiliating portrait. "Nous avons tous dans nous-mêmes le principe de tous ces vices."³ On the other hand there is the fact of transforming divine grace. Sin will indeed reign in human hearts "si la grâce de Jésus-Christ ne nous prévient puissamment";⁴ but when that grace irresistibly takes possession of the soul, then the sinner is given power to mortify his corrupt nature, to follow the

1 First published in 1671 under the title La Morale de l'Évangile, this work subsequently went through many enlarged editions until, following the renewal of Jesuit hostility in the last years of the century, 101 propositions extracted from it received the official condemnation of the church in the Bull Unigenitus of Clement XI in 1713. The history of the opposition to this Bull is the history of French Jansenism in the eighteenth century. v. A. Maulvault, op. cit., pp.226-31 for a résumé of the involved history of this work.

2 Pasquier Quesnel, op. cit., I, Preface, p.XVIII.

3 ib., p.XXI.

4 ib.

path of self-abnegation, and to become identified with the crucified Saviour.

Hence the principle of struggle is introduced into the life of every Christian. God supplies grace to His elect that they may become holy, a task which involves a long and arduous process of purification and discipline in His strength.

La grâce chrestienne est une grâce de course & de combat, & d'un combat continuel. ... Ces combats sont rudes, cette course est fatigante, ces coups sont douloureux. Mais c'est vous, Seigneur, qui combattez, qui courez, & qui souffrez en nous. 1

In the first instance, all Christians must strive valiantly against the arch enemy of their salvation, the devil, against whom even the slightest gap in their spiritual armour renders them fatally vulnerable.² Moreover, whether in the world or in retreat, of all sinful men is required the interminable inner struggle with fleshly concupiscence. The uprooting of ambition and avarice, false pleasure and passion, is a work of genuine crucifixion which is terribly costly, even with the indispensable aid of Christ. But if one is prepared to allow a surgeon to remove a limb to preserve life, knowing that in any case death will follow sooner or later, how much more imperative it is to lay hold of divine grace for the necessary mortification of the unruly passions in order to live eternally.³ And lastly there is the combat with the treacherous and double-dealing forces of the world. Writing to those for whom this battle was a stark reality, Quesnel urges radical lifelong vigilance and the maximum avoidance of intercourse with the world.⁴ Perpetual

1 Pasquier Quesnel, op. cit., VI, pp.490-1.

2 ib., VII, p.45.

3 ib., II, pp.126-7; VI, p.676; I, p.45.

4 ib., I, p.330; II, pp.180, 9.

striving was, in Jansenist spirituality as in the practical piety of Puritanism, the lot of all the faithful.

In both cases too, life is pictured in a marked two-world context. Quesnel portrays the Christian as a soldier fighting the battle on earth which will be crowned with victory in heaven, and as a pilgrim in an alien land making his way to his eternal home beyond. In his words,

... un chrétien doit être toujours disposé à faire la volonté de Dieu, comme un serviteur fidèle & vigilant; à combattre comme un soldat de J. C., contre le péché & contre les ennemis du salut; à changer de pays comme un voyageur & un étranger sur la terre. 1

The concern for salvation, the self-ward appeal which marks all Christian asceticism, is a conspicuous feature of this conception. The true disciple must wean himself from the love of the world if he would not play false with his soul; he must discard the tinsel and vanity of earthly treasure in order to store up treasure in heaven. 2 For of the two worlds, the one visible and material, the other invisible and spiritual, the latter is to be prized more highly because of the eternal felicity it ensures.

Les perfections & les beautés du monde visible, abandonné aux enfans d'Adam, ne sont qu'un crayon & qu'une figure grossière de celles du monde invisible destiné aux élus. Le mépris, le dégoût, & le détachement du premier est le prix de la jouissance du second. 3

This other-worldliness, it is obvious, is not based on a suspicion that the created order is evil, 4 but on Jansenist pessimism with

1 Pasquier Quesnel, op. cit., III, pp.244-5.

2 ib., I, pp.248-9, 62.

3 ib., VI, p.475; cf. VIII, p.103.

4 "Qui regarde les créatures comme mauvaises en elles mesmes, non seulement fait outrage à la bonté du Créateur; mais est ingrat envers le Sauveur qui les a délivrées de la servitude, & nous en a mérité l'usage par son sang ...". Pasquier Quesnel, op. cit., VIII, p.177. cf. supra pp.221, 281.

regard to human nature. Man's duty is to discern the greatness of God in His creation, but because he is so vitiated by sin, he cannot use the creature without fear of idolatry. And so Quesnel, while counselling the faithful to use and not to abuse the visible tokens of God's love, emphasizes that men should above all give thought to the things of the spirit and to everlasting bliss beyond the grave.¹

The life of the Christian in the world, struggling to work out his salvation under adverse conditions, is viewed as a continual process of penance. "Tout l'évangile se réduit à la pénitence. Jésus la joint à l'espérance du ciel, comme l'unique moyen pour y arriver."² The elect, conscious of their sin and impelled by the *Imitatio Christi*, embark on a course of works of satisfaction by which they appropriate the merits of the Saviour and voluntarily share in His suffering.³ The particular form of one's mortifications will be conditioned by individual circumstances, but in all cases bodily disciplines are essential. The body, though a piece of exquisite workmanship because made by God, has through the Fall become a potential threat to the infinitely more precious life of the soul and must be kept systematically in its properly subordinate place.⁴ It is absolutely true, says Quesnel, that bodily exercises performed in a legalistic or pagan spirit are of no value in themselves, but when performed in a spirit of obedience and penitence they are valuable means of demonstrating one's love for God, of edifying the neighbour, and of training the soul and preparing it

1 Pasquier Quesnel, op. cit., III, p.241; I, pp.213-14.

2 ib., II, p.6.

3 ib., II, p.3; I, p.214.

4 ib., III, p.239; I, p.120.

to receive the incorruptible crown of which the apostle spoke.¹
 Consequently fasting and temperance should form an important part
 of the rule of life of every earnest disciple.

Quesnel also emphasizes the positive value of spiritual
 exercises in the piety of the faithful in society. His rule in this
 regard is simple: "Persévérons, parce que Dieu veut estre importuné."²
 Striving and exercise strengthen the soul and are God's chosen means
 of rewarding His diligent servants. Quesnel thus offers his
Réflexions Morales to furnish subjects for systematic meditation
 upon the truths of Holy Scripture.³ And as a true son of Saint-Cyran,
 he lays great stress on the prayer life. He points out that the
 injunction to pray without ceasing in its broadest sense means to
 love God and the neighbour constantly,⁴ but he also shows that it
 has a specific meaning in practical piety. It involves prayer every
 morning and every evening as well as at other regular times, even
 though this necessitates the interruption of one's occupation in
 order to perform one's duties to God. The finest example in almost
 continuous prayer was set by the early Christians who even arose
 during the night to commune with their heavenly Father. The basis
 of such a satisfying spiritual life, says Quesnel repeating a
 Cyranian sentiment, is for men to understand that they are "les
 pauvres de Dieu dans la prière", and that prayer is a form of divine
 almsgiving in which the soul is filled with the power and love of
 God.⁵ This being the case, to perseverance in the regular exercise

1 Pasquier Quesnel, op. cit., VII, pp.177-8; I, p.61; VI, p.490.

2 ib., VII, p.107.

3 ib., V, Preface, p.7 verso.

4 ib., VII, p.138.

5 ib., VII, p.107.

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of the soul must be added serious application, vigilance, humility
of heart and gratitude.

As for the qualities of life which Quesnel believes should
characterize the genuine follower of Christ, love of God is regarded
as the most fundamental and the source of all virtue.

Dieu ne couronne que la charité: qui court par un autre motif,
court en vain. ... C'est la manière de faire l'oeuvre qui
la rend agréable à Dieu, & non pas l'oeuvre mesme. 2

It is only a desire to deny the self out of a deep love of God which
is ultimately meaningful in the ascetic pilgrimage. In addition to
this God-ward element there must be love of the neighbour, or man-
ward self-denial. Every walk of life is a vocation in which charity
may fitly be expressed, both in the form of good works on behalf of
the poor and of a passionate effectual desire for the salvation of
the neighbour's precious soul. While cupidity is the mark of a sick
soul, charity which is ever active betokens spiritual health. 3

Above all there is the quality of humility with its manifest self-
transcending dimension, without which love of God and the neighbour
are illusory. But the self-regarding dimension is also apparent.
For as Quesnel tells his readers, to attempt to foil the devil without
cultivating humility and simplicity is in fact to fall into his
hands and to lose the spiritual battle. 4 Everything the ascetic
does is a temptation to pride - his bodily mortifications, his alms-
giving, his struggle for virtue - and only if he seeks in radical
humility to mortify ostentation, presumption and vain confidence will

1 Pasquier Quesnel, op. cit., VII, p.107.

2 ib., VI, p.490; cf. pp.675-6.

3 ib., I, p.247; II, pp.163, 12.

4 ib., VII, p.45.

he truly promote the welfare of his soul.

Such, in résumé, are the broad features of the practical piety recommended to the faithful in one of the most popular devotional manuals of seventeenth century Jansenism. In the interpretation of human existence as a struggle between the forces of sin and grace, this world and the world to come; in the radical seriousness demanded of the elect in bodily and spiritual disciplines; and in the qualities of life and the God-ward, man-ward, and self-ward dimensions of the growth in grace, are discernible all the elements of a virile Christian asceticism which called for the utmost in love and diligence on the part of men in every walk of life. "Estre disposé à se priver de tout pour gagner tout, pour mériter la couronne éternelle",¹ Quesnel advised, epitomizing the universal ascetic rigorism which was the standard of the Jansenist struggling for perfection in the hurly-burly of everyday life in the world.

C. Amusements and the Arts.

That which in actual practice most clearly distinguished the Jansenist from other Frenchmen in the general social scene was his attitude and conduct in the matter of amusements, aesthetic pleasures, and cultural pursuits, to which on the whole he reacted in the same way as his seventeenth century Puritan counterpart. The principle by which he was guided was succinctly stated by one of the foremost authors of the movement, Pierre Nicole.

C'est un principe de la Religion chrétienne, qu'un Chrétien dans le Baptême ayant renoncé au monde, à ses pompes & à ses plaisirs, ne peut rechercher le plaisir pour le plaisir, ni le

1 Pasquier Quesnel, op. cit., VI, p.490.

divertissement pour le divertissement. 1

The only true end of man was God Himself; the Christian must ever be on his guard against the enjoyment of anything except in conscious subordination to this one great end. One of the most obvious consequences of this conviction was the cultivation of simplicity in food, clothing and furnishings, which Saint-Cyran was the first to recommend² and which was re-echoed in later Jansenist writings, and ultimately in the lives of the faithful in the world. In an effort to avoid vanity and pride and to renounce luxuries in order to provide the neighbour with necessities, those who were influenced by the movement sought to observe simple modesty and decency in their mode of life.³

In the matter of amusements the Jansenist could again be recognized by his caution and restraint. In a day when vulgarity and ungodliness were frequently associated with popular pastimes, these were boycotted to the greater glory of God, the welfare of His holy community the church, and the salvation of souls.⁴ The dance came under a particular ban by the Jansenist clergy as being one of the chief means employed by the devil for the destruction of souls. As Nicole put it, a ball was a spectacle "qui flatte les sens, qui remplit l'esprit, qui amollit le coeur, & qui y fait entrer doucement & agréablement l'amour du monde & des créatures."⁵ This attitude was reflected in the refusal of Jansenist preceptors to educate the

1 L'Esprit de Nicole ..., p.194.

2 Saint-Cyran, Pensées Chrétiennes sur la Pauvreté, p.135.

3 v. [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, p.13; Nécrologe de l'Abbaie ... de Port-Royal ..., p.189; cf. L'Esprit de Nicole ..., pp.174-180; Pasquier Quesnel, op. cit., II, p.3.

4 Antoine Arnauld, Oeuvres ..., Vol. XXXVI, pp.474 ff.

5 L'Esprit de Nicole ..., p.198.

young Duc de Rohan in the arts of dancing, fencing and riding,¹ believing these to savour of the spirit of the world. Confronted with prevalent laxity, Jansenists would not jeopardize their spiritual welfare but maintained a consistent, rigorous position.

The reading of novels and play-books and attendance at the theatre also evoked the normal response of the Christian ascetic. Besoigne related with satisfaction that Mme. de Saint-Ange, while living in the world, had never read a novel, although she was no enemy of innocent amusement.² Nicole, writing with a view to the edification and sanctification of the faithful, attacked on definitely ascetic grounds the reading of novels and other "livres de curiosité". For through them, he argued, the mind and the imagination were led to wander in forbidden paths, and the perpetual³ duties of vigilance and waiting upon God were thwarted. The Christian could not afford to run the risk of losing sight of first things - one's duty to God and the neighbour, one's own eternal welfare - and of spending oneself in worse than useless vanity. Similar arguments were applied to the theatre, a fact which incurred the wrath of Racine against his former masters in Port-Royal. The theatre, Nicole claimed, was a school of vice, and to frequent it was to demonstrate one's lack of loyalty to Christ who had redeemed His own at such great cost.⁴ Besoigne summed up the attitude of the adherents of the movement to such amusements when he affirmed that "on n'est pas encore bien avancé dans la voie du Salut, quand on aime

1 Augustin Gazier, Histoire Générale du Mouvement Janséniste, I, pp.60-1.

2 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., II, p.387.

3 L'Esprit de Nicole ..., p.197.

4 ib., pp.197-8.

les divertissemens du siècle."¹

In the sphere of intellectual endeavour the rule was to avoid vain curiosity and pride of learning, and to set an edifying example by subordinating the claims of art to those of morality and religion. When Racine joined the company of learned (and worldly) poets, loaned his talents to the theatre, and became a member of the Académie Française, he had yielded to the seductive charms of the age. But when he renounced the profane muse to consecrate his verse to subjects worthy of a Christian poet, he again became an esteemed representative of Jansenist asceticism in the world.² In the matter of sacred learning and literature, it was believed that to study for pleasure or for prestige or without a specific orientation to supernatural ends was altogether wrong. In harmony with this conception, in the seminary of Nicolas Pavillon, the Jansenist bishop of Aleth, the clergy who were under training for future service in the parish ministry were carefully preserved from indulging in insatiable curiosity in their studies, and were trained to obtain only the knowledge which made wise unto salvation.³ Similarly the laity were encouraged to approach their study of the scriptures solely with a view to their spiritual development, seeking to avoid the restless craving for mere knowledge which was one of the principal signs of the disorder of the soul.⁴ For it was the simple and the

1 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., IV, p.443.

2 Nécrologe de l'Abbaïe ... de Port-Royal ..., p.166.

3 The Life of Nicholas Pavillon, (chiefly translated from the French by a Layman of the Church of England, Oxford, London, 1869), pp.82-3. This work is based on the three volume "Vie de Pavillon" which appeared in 1738.

4 Le Nouveau Testament de Nostre Seigneur Jésus-Christ, (Mons), Preface, unpaginated.

humble who would be rewarded with salvation, and who in addition would receive the wisdom which was withheld from the vainly curious and the proudly wise. Indeed, the faithful were told, biblical truth was mysterious and hidden precisely because it was in the divine plan to keep men in perpetual humility, that they might be conscious of their dependence on the Holy Spirit and of their need to keep struggling for enlightenment, "à frapper long temps à la porte ...".¹

The Jansenist sympathizer also took an ascetic view of the fine arts. With regard to painting, this was particularly conspicuous. To appreciate the beauty of form and colour per se was not permissible; art was a vehicle of the spiritual and the moral, a positive good only if contributory to the well-being of the soul. Thus, two hours before her death, a repentant Mme. de Liancourt summoned her chamberlain to obtain from him a promise that he would see to the alteration of those of her portraits which she considered to be immodest.² The celebrated painter, Philippe de Champaigne, deeply imbued with the spirit of the movement, further illustrates its characteristic approach to art. He has been accurately described as an artist "pour qui la somptuosité n'existe pas, qui n'a laissé que très peu de portraits féminins, qui n'accepte jamais de chanter un hymne à la nudité de la femme ...".³ In the reproduction of pagan festivals, the beauties of nature, the pomp of the court, he was always cold and unfeeling compared with the warmth and sensuousness of a Rubens or a Titian. But in his portraits of the nuns of Port-Royal his moral and spiritual earnestness found fitting expression.

1 Le Nouveau Testament de Nostre Seigneur Jésus-Christ, (Mons), Preface, unpaginated.

2 v. Victor Du Bled, op. cit., p.284.

3 Henri Perruchot, Port-Royal, p.74.

In all his paintings there is a noble restraint, an absence of calculated appeal to the senses.¹ For the Jansenist, art was beautiful only when it contributed to the highest ends of human life, and not when it thwarted them.

D. Direction and Discipline.

In order that the "amis de la vérité"

scattered throughout France might follow the straight way of ascetic rigorism enjoined by Saint-Cyran and his disciples, it was essential that adequate direction and discipline should be provided. As in England, this task was severely hampered by the persecutions which plagued the movement from its earliest days. In fact the Jansenist priest living in the land of "lettres de cachet", working in an authoritarian church, and opposed by the powerful Society of Jesus, found it even more difficult than the Puritan minister to remain free to exercise the pastoral function. Representative was M. Matthieu Feydeau, a known Jansenist² "qui n' avait d'autre tort que d'être trop strictement chrétien" and who, before and after the so-called "Paix de l'Église" when Jansenism was tolerated, was forced to lead the fugitive life despite the ardent support of the common people whose spiritual interests were his sole concern. The parallel with the Puritans is striking. But the provision of effectual guidance for the laity was vitiated in the French movement for several other reasons. In the first place, because its mentality was so largely moulded by monastic asceticism, Jansenism was not disposed to give the same whole-hearted attention to the laity in the world as was Puritanism, with its single-minded

1 Henri Perruchot, op. cit., p.70. cf. Mabilie de Poncheville, Philippe de Champagne, p.55.

2 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., VI, Appendix, "Sur M. Feydeau", p.280.

intra-mundane emphasis. Again, there was the widespread tendency for priests to renounce their pastoral function in a spirit of penitence. Saint-Cyran had taught that a priest should be very cautions in his contacts with his people. "On a esté autant séparé par la vocation à la prêtrise du commun des fidelles, comme on l'a¹ esté par la vocation du baptesme du commun des hommes infidelles." The upshot was that many priests went one step further and abandoned their charges, withdrawing to Port-Royal or some other suitable² retreat. Finally, direction was restricted because of the passionate antipathy to casuistry. Wherever the Jansenist was called to labour, he was outraged to find that the ubiquitous Jesuit was doing the devil's work by means of the infamous laxism which Pascal so mercilessly derided. Unlike the Puritans who made good use of casuistry in guiding the individual in his race of righteousness, the Jansenists excluded from their practice a science which in their own country had been shamelessly degraded, and refusing to adapt moral principles to particular circumstances, took the unqualified stand that the absolute demands of the gospel were required of all men. In a case of conscience this always involved the choice of the most difficult and least culpable course of action on the part of pilgrims in training for eternal life. It is this universal counsel of perfection without regard to individual circumstances which has been criticized³ as the chief flaw in the moral guidance of the movement, and it is obvious that those who were genuinely perplexed by concrete problems were in need of more adequate leadership.

1 Saint-Cyran, Maximes Saintes et Chrestiennes, p.346.

2 cf. supra pp.284-5.

3 v. J. Paquier, op. cit., p.333; R. A. Knox, op. cit., p.210.

Despite these handicaps, however, spiritual direction was by no means neglected. Probably most effective in the edification of the people was the example of the clergy who had been influenced by the spirit of Port-Royal but had remained in their parishes, believing that they did not have a vocation to the life of withdrawal and perpetual penance. To these Saint-Cyran had urgently recommended the continual remembrance of the sanctity of their high calling, the mortification of avarice and ambition, and the diligent practice of piety, believing that such personal example was a foremost means of conducting souls to heaven.

Mais on peut dire hardiment à un Prêtre vertueux & sincèrement détaché de tout: l'esprit de Dieu qui reluit dans votre vie & dans l'abandon que vous avez fait de tous vos biens & de toute la vanité du monde, conduit & convertit les âmes & non pas vos discours, quelque efficace & persuasion qu'ils semblent avoir. 1

Subsequent leaders of the movement laid even greater stress on this point than did its founder. Quesnel insisted that the shepherd of souls was personally to be the model of the Christian life in which he must direct his flock, that by example as well as precept he might offer that earnest, painstaking guidance which was so essential to their sanctification. "Comment peut-on prétendre d'établir le Royaume de Dieu dans les autres, si on néglige de l'établir dans soy-mesme"²? he asked the Christian pastor. Nor were these counsels unheeded. As one should expect, the highest examples of Jansenist asceticism in the world were the bishops and priests who were devoted to the cause. Of the former the most saintly was Nicolas Pavillon of Aleth, who had come late into the camp of the reformers

1 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCCLXIV), I, p.220.

2 Pasquier Quesnel, op. cit., VII, p.181.

but who was indefatigable in the defence of revived Augustinianism until his death. His personal piety was the perfect reflection of his doctrine and the inspiration of all the clergy and laity in his diocese.¹ He exhibited great mortification in his diet which consisted of the simplest fare. The spirit of poverty was evident in the plainness of his wearing apparell and living quarters. His self-giving, at all times exemplary, was especially notable in time of famine or epidemic when his charity was boundless. He strove for patience under all circumstances, and as a further discipline would not permit himself a moment's idleness. His assiduity in performing the offices of the church had a most salutary influence among a decadent clergy. In short, the greatest single instrument of the reform of his diocese and the sanctification of his people was the personal holiness of this Jansenist prelate.

The movement gave further attention to the growth in grace of the faithful by providing specially qualified spiritual directors whose chief concern was the counselling of select individuals. "Le Prêtre est comme le canal par lequel l'eau du Ciel passe & coule dans les âmes."² This statement of Saint-Cyran applied particularly to the specialist in ailments of the soul. In the struggle for perfection such a guide was not indispensable, for ultimately the Christian life was a dialogue between the soul and God.³ But if a person aimed to become "solidement Chrestienne",⁴ the aid of a director who could steer one away from the shoals on which others had been

1 v. The Life of Nicholas Pavillon, passim; [Claude] Lancelot, op. cit., II, "Relation d'un Voyage fait à Alet", pp. 385 ff.

2 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCCLXIV), I,

3 v. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., IV, p. 154.

4 Saint-Cyran, Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCCLV), p. 2.

shipwrecked was invaluable. In this capacity Saint-Cyran had exerted a tremendous influence in spreading Jansenist ascetic piety, and had set the standard for later directors. His purpose was not to awaken faith but to guide the elect to heaven. Direction was only justified, therefore, by a resultant increase in virtue, and this in turn was taken as proof of election. Primarily the director must be motivated by love of God, and secondly by love of the souls under his charge, whose individual needs he must seek to understand. Above all he must seek to follow the divine will, knowing that it was by grace alone that spiritual progress was made.¹ On these principles Saint-Cyran directed many individuals outside Port-Royal, particularly by way of correspondence during his five years of imprisonment in the Château de Vincennes; and many were to follow him in utilizing this means of promoting profound Christian spirituality.

Manifestly the usefulness of the director was limited to certain "âmes d'élite", so that for the mass of the faithful other methods had to be employed. Of these one of the most important was the provision of a large number of works of piety, to which many of the solitaries devoted themselves with singular energy. Spiritual letters, lives of the saints, devotional treatises and biblical commentaries were produced to meet the need for assistance in leading the rigorous ascetic life in the world. A further aid, as in Puritanism, was the practice of catechizing on which Jansenist priests laid emphasis. In the parish of Saint-Merry, M. Feydeau,² "le modèle du catéchiste et du curé selon Port-Royal", made a

1 v. Henri Marschal, Étude sur l'Abbé de Saint-Cyran (Directeur Spirituel), pp.14, 17, 19-25 et passim.

2 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., VI, Appendix, "Sur M. Feydeau", p.280.

regular practice of catechizing his parishioners, young and old, with the result that many who were eager for instruction would take up their¹ places in the church hours in advance of the time appointed for it. Here was a conspicuously successful means of building up the faithful in the doctrines and practice of Christianity. M. Du Guet likewise found the exercise of this function amongst the poor of Saint-Rémy to be very rewarding from the pastoral point of view, although in later years he gave it up because he feared his growing popularity would make him proud.² Equally vital in extending the moral influence of Jansenism was fervent preaching, which Saint-Cyran had regarded very highly, "car c'est par elle qu'on engendre et qu'on ressuscite les âmes à Dieu ...".³ He himself preached frequently and with great effectiveness,⁴ and following him the confessors of Port-Royal de Paris preached regularly to large numbers of Parisians, including dignitaries of church and state as well as common folk. Great throngs came to hear the exposition of Augustinianism by Antoine Singlin, and many were the conversions⁵ which resulted. Although the pulpit of Port-Royal was the greatest single centre of influence on behalf of the ascetic spirituality of the movement, throughout the country there were many Jansenist preachers inculcating the doctrines of grace and sanctification, and encouraging a more sober practice of religion, in the belief that God

1 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., VI, Appendix, "Sur M. Feydeau", p.284.

2 Andre Hallays, op. cit., p.236.

3 ut per C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, p.449.

4 v. Jean Orcibal, Les Origines du Jansénisme: II, notes 3, 4, 5, p.601.

5 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., IV, pp.74, 173 ff., 188 ff. Other effective and popular preachers at Port-Royal were MM. de Sacy, Le Tourneux, and de Saint-Marthe. The news value of the sermon in the seventeenth century was also important.

had chosen this means of effecting the holiness of His elect.¹
 Finally, as a concomitant of all these aids to the spiritual life, there was an emphasis on the sacrament of the Eucharist by which the earnest disciple of Christ received divine sustenance for his soul. For as Saint-Cyran had written, demonstrating clearly his orthodox Catholic sentiments, "Elle est le principe du renouvellement journalier [sic] de nos âmes, leur fournissant les grâces nécessaires, nouvelles & quotidiennes, dont elles ont besoin ...".²
 In all these ways Jansenism sought to guide and sustain the faithful in the world for their arduous conflict with the forces of evil.

A most significant feature of the concern for the spiritual welfare of the church at large was the attempt of the Jansenist reform movement to revive ecclesiastical discipline and the serious administration of the sacrament of penance. At the heart of the piety not only of the nuns and solitaries but also of all who sought to emulate them, was the desire to do penance, to work out their salvation by the serious expiation of their sins. The pitfall of legalism had been avoided by the Cyranian doctrine of contrition which held that love of God alone could make acts of penance acceptable to Him and so warrant the absolution of the penitent. But Saint-Cyran had also been a deadly opponent of laxism, for he insisted that mere repentance was not enough but must be accompanied by expiatory acts as a penalty for sin. This involved the exercise of discipline by the spiritual director, with a view to preparing the soul under his charge for restoration to the state of grace.³

¹ Albert de Meyer, op. cit., pp.76-7.

² Saint-Cyran, Considérations .., Partie d'Hyver, Considérations sur les Dimanches et les Fêtes de l'Année, p.440.

³ v. Jean Orcibal, Les Origines du Jansénisme: II, pp.530 ff.

These doctrines were made known to priests and people throughout France by the publication of one of the most widely discussed books in the whole seventeenth century ecclesiastical scene, namely, Antoine Arnauld's De la Fréquente Communion. Although Saint-Cyran's influence is marked in every section of this work of his disciple, Arnauld lays greater stress on the acts of penance and less on the love of God inspiring them than his master.¹ Lashing out at Jesuit laxism, he champions an absolute rigorism which demolishes the hope of an easy road to heaven for Christians in the world. The two forms of penitential discipline with which he is most concerned are suspension from communion² and the delay of absolution, both of which are designed to chasten and purify the soul. In the case of venial sins, separation from communion and other penances may be undertaken voluntarily; as for mortal sins which quite extinguish the light of the Holy Spirit, the requisite penance is valid only if imposed by a priest.³

In this latter connection, Arnauld pleads for a revival of serious ecclesiastical discipline and denounces imperfect confessions, hurried absolutions and sacrilegious communions. He supports his rigorist position by a dazzling array of citations from the tradition of the church illustrating the time-honoured imposition of public penance and the ancient exercise of the power of excommunication.⁴ He especially urges the church to profit from the revival of discipline brought about by Saint Charles Borromeus who, in order

1 Jean Orcibal, Le Premier Port-Royal: Réforme ou Contre-Réforme?, (La Nouvelle Clío: Revue Mensuelle de la découverte historique, May, 1950), p.272.

2 cf. supra p.285.

3 Antoine Arnauld, De la Fréquente Communion, pp.355, 380.

4 ib., p.364.

to restore the ancient rules of penance, had composed a new corps of Canons Penitential which covered all mortal sins, public and private, allotting systematic satisfactions for each. Among these were a wide variety of ascetic disciplines such as temporary abstinence from meat and wine, sleeping on the ground and wearing a hair shirt, working for a period in a hospital, feeding and caring for the poor, visiting and consoling prisoners, and making a temporary retreat in a monastery. Those who were particularly negligent in the matter of prayer were assigned specific devotional exercises, while others who had been enticed by the amusements and pleasures of the world were directed to renew their baptismal vows and to declare again their perpetual warfare with evil on certain appointed days.¹ In short, Arnould approved in its entirety this restoration of the sacrament of penance and of church discipline, and the asceticism of spiritual disciplines, bodily mortifications, and charity which it involved for the penitent.

In dealing with mortal sins, the required procedure which Arnould sets forth consists of a full confession to a priest arising from genuine penitence, a demand for the imposition of adequate penance and the achievement of purification, and finally the reception of absolution followed immediately by communion.² Especially significant is the crucial role of the priest, who is held to be of the greatest importance in the spiritual development of the ordinary Christian.

Le Prestre après avoir jugé du fond de sa conscience par la

1 Antoine Arnould, De la Fréquenté Communion, p.557.
2 ib., pp.392, 746.

confession qu'il luy a faite, luy ordonne la pénitence, qui n'a point de vertu ny de grâce, si elle ne la prend de son imposition, & du pouvoir de son Ministère. 1

During the period of the fulfilment of his required satisfactions, the penitent must depend on the priest as does an invalid on his doctor; but by his doctrine of contrition, Arnauld leaves no doubt that discipline must be accepted voluntarily in order to be valid. Moreover, like Saint Charles, Arnauld envisages a serious but not unduly harsh reform. The extremely rigorous measures of the ancients, such as fasting for years at a time, must be moderated "selon la condition, l'age [sic], le sexe, la foiblesse, la grandeur de la contrition du Pénitent ...".² He admits, too, that there may be reasons for not making penance public, but suggests nevertheless that where severe ascetic discipline is required, the same exercises should be performed in private as would previously have been exacted in public.³ What in fact Arnauld was pleading for was the restoration, in a reasonable form, of what had proven to be a notable aid in confirming the beginnings of virtue and in healing the wounds of the soul. Submission to the chastening of the church at the hands of a learned, experienced, and spiritually minded servant of God was a divinely ordained means of working out one's salvation in fear and trembling. No serious disciple of Christ would neglect this opportunity

... pour se réconcilier avec Dieu par les fruits d'une solide & véritable pénitence pour estre faits citoyens de la cité céleste & divine, pour entrer dans la joye de l'éternelle félicité 4

These principles of discipline which the Jansenist movement

1 Antoine Arnauld, De la Fréquente Communion, p.42.

2 ib., p.565.

3 ib., p.551.

4 ib., p.410.

upheld throughout the century were widely acclaimed in the French church. The Fréquente Communion appeared with the approbation of five archbishops, twenty-two bishops and twenty-four doctors of the Sorbonne, ran through three editions in less than six months, and was never censured by Rome.¹ One result was that the majority of the curés of Paris and Rouen had printed as their future guide the "Instructions" of Saint Charles Borromeus on penance, which Arnauld had so highly recommended.² Certain ardent Jansenists carried out their theories to the point of reinstating the ancient practice of public penance, as for example Henri Du Hamel,³ the parish priest of Saint-Maurice in the diocese of Sens, and later of Saint-Merry, whose penitents performed their satisfactions with eagerness, and stood at the door of the church not daring to enter the sacred place until they had received absolution and could be re-admitted to the sacrament. "Sancta sanctis", the motto inscribed on the title page of Arnauld's renowned work, had become the rule of their lives. Here, as in English Puritanism, one perceives that deep spiritual earnestness on the part of Christians living in the world, which moved them to embrace a disciplinary system which would aid them in the process of purification so essential to the welfare of their immortal souls, the glory of God, and the edification of the whole church.

Illustrative of the highest Jansenist standards in the provision of direction and discipline for the faithful were the heroic efforts

1 Jean Orcibal, Le Premier Port-Royal . . . , pp.269-70.

2 v. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, *op. cit.*, II, p.189; III, pp.204-5, 210, 214-15.

3 *ib.*, II, Appendix, "Sur M. Du Hamel", pp.543-4.

1

of Nicolas Pavillon in the diocese of Aleth. This prelate fixed his residence in the centre of his district so as to be able to look after the spiritual welfare of his flock. He established catechizing and religious instruction for the edification of his people, and in addition published and distributed devotional works among them. He organized special preaching and evangelical missions to confirm the struggling soul and to convert the careless. A system of pastoral visits to every family in the diocese was instituted, in order to keep a finger on the spiritual pulse of the people, and Pavillon himself carried out a routine of dignified and salutary episcopal visitations. He restored church discipline for the consistently impenitent, including the imposition of public penance, but he employed interdiction or excommunication only when all other means of suasion had failed. Delay of absolution was practised until penitence justified its administration.

His love for souls, and earnest desire for their salvation, forbade him extending this benefit to the impenitent, which would be but a mockery; and, out of truest charity, he prohibited it to those unconvinced of sin; nor could he, before he was persuaded of their sincere and genuine conversion to God, pronounce peace in His Name. 2

Here is the true Jansenist ascetic impulse working itself out on the level of the parish in the midst of a lax society.

In addition to all these means of aiding the soul in its growth in grace, the bishop of Aleth endeavoured to train an able diocesan priesthood, the better to minister to the spiritual needs

1 The Life of Nicholas Pavillon, pp.35 ff. Much of Pavillon's pastoral and disciplinary reforms had been effected before the appearance of the Jansenist manifesto, De la Fréquente Communion, which he whole-heartedly embraced as a reproduction of his own spiritual and moral experience. cf. ib., p.157.

2 ib., p.43.

of the people. He established fortnightly conferences for the instruction of all his clergy, at which subjects such as the duties and responsibilities of priests and parents were discussed, and the conclusions reached became the pivot of the whole reform, being used as the basis for sermons in all parishes of the diocese. A school for the training of the clergy was opened to provide for a permanent supply of earnest spiritually-minded priests. By convening an annual synod of his clergy, Pavillon maintained that intimate personal contact upon which their religious welfare, and indirectly that of the people, was so dependent. In all the labours of this saintly prelate whose "single aim was the sanctification of his people"¹, one may discern at its highest the earnestness of which Jansenism was capable in providing guidance for the crucial spiritual struggle of the faithful in the world. And a significant indication is given of the pattern of direction and discipline which might have obtained generally had the movement won its struggle in France as Puritanism did, if only temporarily, in England.

E. The Extent and Depth of Jansenist Piety in the World.

Since local Jansenist history is still far from complete,² it is difficult to assess

with accuracy the extent to which the asceticism of the movement spread through France, but the welcome accorded to the rigorist doctrines of the Fréquent Communion in the second half of the century indicates that but for official opposition, animated chiefly

¹ The Life of Nicholas Pavillon, p.82.

² Monographs such as those of L. Mahieu are filling the gap, as for example, Jansénisme et Antijansénisme dans les Diocèses d'Arras et de Cambrai, (Lille, 1944); Jansénisme et Anti-Jansénisme dans les diocèses de Boulogne-sur-Mer et de Tournai, spécialement dans la région lilloise, (Lille, 1948).

by the Jesuits, it might have become more deeply and permanently entrenched than it did. There were, as is already apparent, many reasons for its expansion - the correspondence of Saint-Cyran,¹ Mère Angélique and other leaders; the publication of the Lettres Provinciales and other tremendously popular works on the theology of grace and rigorist morality, including those of Arnauld; the example of the nuns and solitaries; the coming and going between Port-Royal and the world during the "Paix de l'Église";² the preaching and direction of Jansenist confessors and priests at Port-Royal and in various French parishes; the conversion of an individual through any of these agencies and the resultant development of a pocket of Jansenism wherever that individual resided.³ Thus the spirit of Port-Royal found many new foyers - Rouen, Clermont-Ferrand, Bordeaux, Bayonne. As Besoigne wrote:

On étoit de P. R. sans y être: on en étoit étant ailleurs, étant en Religion, étant en ménage, étant en charge dans le siècle: ... ce n'étoit qu'une conformité de piété entre un grand nombre de personnes dispersées de tout côté: lesquelles souvent ne se connoissoient même pas, & n'étoient liées que par le levain de grâce 4

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- 1 Saint-Cyran had friends particularly in Bayonne, Poitiers, Louvain and Paris.
 - 2 Cécile Gazier, Ces Messieurs de Port-Royal, pp.53-4.
 - 3 The radical conversion in 1641 of M. Guillebert of Rouville, for example, resulted in a religious revival around Rouen by his diffusion of Augustinianism and ascetic morality. L.-Frédéric Jaccard, op. cit., pp.175-6. cf. Fortunat Strowski, op. cit., II, p.201.
 - 4 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., IV, p.158. While many of the common people were affected, the chief support of the movement came from the upper-middle class or lesser aristocracy, mainly from influential families friendly with the Arnaulds. (C.-A. Sainte Beuve, op. cit., I, p.16; II, p.231). Of the French bishops, Angers, Beauvais, Aleth and Pamiers constantly sustained the theology and asceticism of the movement, while among the lower clergy many parish priests as well as priests of the Oratoire and Saint Vincent de Paul's institutions were attracted by Cyranian piety.

Between the monastery and the world, something of the radical nature of Jansenist piety was frequently lost, especially in the case of the laity. It is obvious that those who lived in the world did not have the same love of retreat, penance, and detachment from the things of earth as the genuine Port-Royalist. Too often the movement won influential friends rather than thoroughly committed ascetics - mere "indifférents favorables" who set themselves something less than the absolute standards of Jansenism.¹ For example, many fashionable ladies of the nobility such as the Duchesse de Longueville, the Duchesse de Liancourt, and the Princesse de Guéméné, were attracted by the new spirituality and became identified as Jansenist adherents. But the asceticism of these "Belles Amies",² as they are known, was superficial indeed compared with that of the nuns and solitaries, or of the godly cleric Pavillon. Of some of these it has been said with no little degree of accuracy that in effect they were "making devotion a phase of their aesthetic life ...".³ Following her conversion at the time of Saint-Cyran's imprisonment, Mme. de Sablé retired to a house near Port-Royal de Paris, and later even occupied apartments in the convent itself. Yet despite this authentic trait of Jansenist asceticism, she failed to forsake her worldliness with the completeness demanded in that school, living a divided life, "un pied dans le monde, un oeil sur le cloître ...".⁴ That her conversion was sincere and that she lived a pious life cannot be

1 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., III, p.70.

2 For a thorough account of eight of these women, v. Cécile Gazier, Les Belles Amies de Port-Royal.

3 H. T. Morgan, op. cit., p.2.

4 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, p.55.

doubted, but there is a difference between piety and the profound asceticism of Jansenism. In her semi-retreat, Mme. de Sablé continued to receive all her favourite friends from the world, made herself the centre of a brilliant coterie who came together to discuss theology, read the latest books, continued to make the best soup in all Paris, and was ever concerned about her health, terrified of germs, and afraid of death.¹ This is not the portrait of the serious Jansenist ascetic. Another of these great ladies, Mme. de Longueville, seems to have gone further along the ascetic path, giving herself over to the life of mortification and penance including the wearing of an iron girdle and taking the discipline, to such an extent that her confessors were obliged to restrain her.² In addition, she devoted herself to works of charity. But as M. Singlin realized, it was the inward spirit of humility and self-abnegation of which she had greatest need. This wise director "s'attaqua au point délicat, à l'esprit, à cet esprit d'orgueil, d'élévation, de raffinement superfin, à ce besoin d'exceller et de se distinguer...".³ In her very asceticism she had betrayed the libido excellendi which lay at the heart of concupiscence, failing to understand the implications of the standard of perfection held by Jansenists to be the goal even of those in the world.

Yet, as shown above,⁴ the annals of the movement demonstrate that among those who risked the taints of human society there were many men and women who exemplified the more profound ascetic piety

1 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, p.55.

2 ib., pp.123-4.

3 ib., p.125. cf. Nicolas Fontaine, op. cit., II, pp.226 ff.

4 cf. supra pp.311 ff.

associated with the Port-Royalists. A case in point is the Prince de Conti who, after a somewhat sordid career, was suddenly touched by divine grace. As a result he put himself under the direction of M. Pavillon and began to lead the life of a penitent, following a strict regime of spiritual disciplines and physical austerities.¹

As a man-ward self-denial, he attempted to assume the onerous responsibility of making reparation for the losses incurred by the civil wars of which he had been a prime instigator. And of fundamental significance, he especially struggled to mortify his pride, and in humility was never satisfied with his progress.

"Il ne croit jamais avoir assez mis le pied sur cet amour-propre qui, comme le vif-argent, ne se disperse que pour se rejoindre tout aussitôt."² Following her husband, the Princesse de Conti took up

the serious practice of Christianity, sold her jewellery to make necessary restitutions, and with him made several retreats from the world. But Pavillon would not allow them to give up their public obligations, believing it to be a greater penance and spiritual discipline to use their wealth and talents as stewards in society, despite their new-born hatred of the world.³ This is one of the closest parallels to the Puritan conception of intra-mundane asceticism.

For final evidence of the zeal with which the Jansenist ideal for the faithful was pursued by certain individuals, and for an adequate summary of its features with which to conclude this study, perhaps no more fitting source could be consulted than the biography

1 C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., V, p.28.

2 ib., p.34.

3 ib., pp.37-8.

of the Duchesse de Luines. Renouncing all the pleasures of the age, this pious woman confined herself largely to her own household where she submitted herself to a strict rule of life. She arose early and spent the morning in prayer and other religious exercises such as hearing mass, reading scripture, and reciting the breviary, and in visiting the sick among the nearby poor. The afternoon was allotted to work among the girls of the household, the whole period being interspersed with prayers and, as Besoigne writes, "sanctifié par une présence de Dieu continuelle."¹ The character of this young noblewoman is also worthy of the pattern of Port-Royal. Through self-discipline she came to love silence and retreat and to have a horror of curiosity, vain conversation and flattery. Her humility was evident in her conduct toward her servants, the unobtrusiveness of her works of charity, her detachment and self-denial with regard to worldly honours, and the quiet acceptance of rebuffs from persons of her own rank. Although she loved her husband dearly she attempted a moderate mortification of her affections. Obedience to her spiritual director and to her husband was ever a virtue in her. In her modesty and simplicity of dress she avoided the self-indulgence both of ostentation and of studied negligence.² In this there was a marked man-ward dimension, for having had her husband put her on a strict personal allowance, she was able to use the money thus saved to clothe the poor. By Jansenist standards, her life was even more edifying towards its close, for with her husband she finally decided to withdraw from the world altogether, and only death at the

1 [J. Besoigne], op. cit., I, p.316.
 2 ib., p.322.

premature age of twenty-seven prevented the execution of this design. This short life constitutes one of the most thoroughgoing examples of Jansenist asceticism in the domestic context which the movement affords, illustrating both the marked affinity with monastic piety and the ineradicable propensity to withdrawal. The three dimensions of such Christian spirituality are evident in these sentences from her epitaph:

Tendre & pieuse envers Dieu, compatissante & charitable envers le prochain, dure & austère à soi-même, elle avoit regret au bien & au tems qu'elle ne pouvoit entièrement consacrer au service de Dieu & du prochain. Dans le mariage elle conserva l'esprit des vierges, & au milieu du grand monde le recueillement des solitaires. 1

No more apt epitome of the ascetic spirit of French Jansenism could be desired.

1 Nécrologe de l'Abbaïe ... de Port-Roïal ..., pp.373-4.

CHAPTER X

CRITICAL CONCLUSION

À travers les formes diverses de communion et la particularité des moyens, ... chez tous ceux qui en ont offert de grands et de vrais exemples, l'état de Grâce est un au fond, un par l'esprit et par les fruits. Percez un peu la diversité des circonstances dans les descriptions ... il y a là un véritable esprit, fondamental et identique, de piété et de charité, entre ceux qui ont la Grâce, même quand ils se sont crus séparés. ... qui est, avant tout, d'amour et d'humilité, de confiance infinie en Dieu, et de sévérité pour soi accompagnée de tendresse pour autrui.

C.-A. Sainte-Beuve,
Port-Royal, Vol. I, pp.105-6.

A. A Brief Summary of
Puritan and Jansenist
Ascetic Outlooks.

For present purposes the facts are now
marshalled and the documentation is complete;

two patterns of seventeenth century Christian asceticism have emerged and await final evaluation. But before this concluding assessment is undertaken, it may not be without value to return briefly to Protestant England and to Roman Catholic France in order to recapitulate the broad features of the religious outlooks which have been seen to characterize the important reform movements at present under investigation.

Viewing life through Puritan eyes, one is immediately confronted with the now familiar but, to the modern mind, arresting antitheses of sin and grace, this world and the world to come, in relation to

which all the facts of human experience are to be interpreted. On the practical level, the logical outcome of such distinctions is quite clear. Only two courses of conduct are open. A man may either sign his own death warrant by following the sinful inclinations which since the Fall have plagued the human race, or he may respond to the chastening and healing touch of a redeeming God and devote himself with singleness of mind and heart to the zestful pursuit of godliness which in this life identifies the chosen of God. Surveying the contemporary scene, the Puritan laments that men have chosen to follow the former path leading to destruction and, spurning divine guidance, are treading the treacherous paths of sin and worldliness. He describes the forces of wickedness in battle array in a profligate court; in an apostate church exercised about the observance of indifferent rites and ceremonies, substituting beauty for holiness, and careless of the godly life of her clergy and people; and in the profane immoral lives of the masses. Moreover, shifting his gaze inward away from the world, he again shrinks back in dismay at the disclosure of the blackness of his own soul with its sinful greed and pride. The world, he discovers, is within as well as around him. But for the Puritan, the darkness of the human plight has been dispelled by the grace of a holy and loving God who has called His elect into fellowship with Himself. In Christ He has cancelled the debt of sin, and by His Holy Spirit He has set the wayward feet on the high road of righteousness leading to eternal life. Henceforth with God's Word as an unailing guide and in emulation of the steadfastness of the early church in an evil society, the Puritan will seek to be a faithful soldier of Christ and to take as the great ends of his life the purity and godliness without which none

will see God. As a sinner in a wicked world but redeemed by a mighty Lord, he bends every effort toward keeping the channels of communication open. As a steward of grace and a pilgrim in an alien land, he earnestly struggles so to spend his days as to avoid being the victim of the world with its seductive beauties and ensnaring pleasures, of the flesh with its lusts and corrupt affections, and of their common master the devil. This endless combat is all the more difficult since it is the will of God that it should be waged in the very midst of the world, in the normal callings in which God has placed His children. In order that this arduous but infinitely rewarding struggle may be crowned with ultimate success, the pilgrim will voluntarily respond to divine grace by the serious and persistent utilization of every means of assistance which God has provided - the regular spiritual exercises of his solitude and family circle, the manifold direction and discipline of the church of Christ, and the protective moral legislation of the Christian state. In taking advantage of these benign aids to godliness, the soul is trained for its divinely appointed destiny, the Redeemer is glorified, and by self-transcending service and edifying example, love of the neighbour is effectually expressed. Furthermore, it may be the will of God to use the holiness of His consecrated disciples as an instrument of moral and spiritual reform in church and nation at large. But come what may, the life of discipline, spiritual exercise, and mortification is fraught with inward peace and joy, since victory over sin is already in the hands of God, and because perseverance in bearing the yoke of Christ provides unshakable assurance of eternal salvation and communion with Him.

Crossing the Channel for a brief review of the ascetic piety of another minority group, this time in the proud Gallican church, one is confronted with a not unsimilar picture. Peering at life through Jansenist eyes, again the modern inquirer is overawed by a scene composed entirely of the starkly contrasting components of Augustinian spirituality - human sinfulness and guilt and a contagious world on the one hand, and sovereign irresistible divine grace calling the elect to glory on the other. Wherever he looks, the Jansenist recognizes the tokens of a fallen nature. They are evident in a vain and idle court making only a show of religion; in a church whose parish priests are pitifully unqualified for their high task of moral and spiritual direction, whose prelates are embroiled in statecraft and intrigue, and whose life is everywhere vitiated by the nefarious influence of Jesuitism; and in a people, like their mentors, serving two masters and given over to all ungodliness. Against all this decadence, how paltry are the efforts of the children of light who are seeking to witness to the way of the cross and to convey not only the love but also the demands of Christ to His church. Nor is one's pessimism dispelled by the realization of one's own utter depravity and inability, unaided by grace, to free oneself from the shackles of concupiscence by which the natural man is bound. The last word, however, is not with the forces of evil. For flooding the souls of the elect and establishing a link with the world beyond is the reality of transforming divine grace which introduces a radically new dimension into human life. By grace a holy God reveals Himself to the elect, and a thirst for fellowship with Him is created by which the vanities of a transient world are forever robbed of their power to charm. But more than that,

grace reinforces one's sense of guilt for sin. In consequence, the sinner is moved in utter seriousness to enter upon the life of penance and mortification which is the sign of election and gives promise of eternal glory with Christ. And how better can this be accomplished than by escaping from the noxious atmosphere of the world, by retreating to a monastery or a hermitage away from this untoward generation? Having for the first time comprehended the depth of human corruption and the fatal consequences to wretched, weak humanity of contact with a seductive world, it is supremely by such an absolute break with society that an individual can fulfil his newly revealed spiritual destiny. Then once in solitude, the penitent must work out his salvation by taming the flesh through physical austerities, training the spirit by means of a routine of healthful spiritual exercises, and consciously directing his every thought, word and deed in humility, obedience, and love, to the glory of God and in harmony with His will. And if one has the vocation, there is the additional penance of serving the cause of reformation without personal stint by restoring to the Body of Christ its heritage of sound doctrine concerning sin and grace, and encouraging in the practice of Christianity the emulation of the primitive church in which the conception of an easy pathway to heaven was unknown. As for those who must remain in the world, of them too is required the same life of renunciation, mortification, discipline and humility which must characterize those in the state of perfection. How essential, therefore, that they should be guided through the shallows and past the reefs of the world's troubled seas. They must ever be aware of the perpetual and mortal danger in which they live, and be protected from it by the safeguarding of the administration of the

sacraments of the Eucharist and penance, and all the gracious means of moral and spiritual direction at the disposal of the church.

Thus whether in withdrawal or in society, the elect can find life meaningful and inwardly joyful because perseverance in the long and exacting struggles of the penitent life and in the humble sharing of the sufferings of Christ leads to assurance of final triumph and to the life everlasting.

B. The Major Contrasts.

Between these two ascetic conceptions

certain basic dissimilarities are immediately apparent. There is in the first place the contrast between the thorough-going intra-mundane character of Puritan piety and the predominantly monastic nature of Jansenist spirituality. In line with its Calvinistic heritage, Puritanism held unequivocally that the Christian's place was in the world, attending faithfully to the duties of his calling, after the example of the primitive Christians. It required men universally to serve God, edify their fellows, and labour to give proof of their election by being in the world but not of it, by risking close contact with its corruptions and yet resisting infection. As shown above, the ascetic rigorism which resulted was beset by its own particular weaknesses, notably the violation of the voluntary principle inherent in its attempt to legislate righteousness, the propensity to legalism encouraged by the erection of a visible standard of perfection, and the tendency¹ of labour in a calling to conduce to an unsuspecting materialism. It has been demonstrated, however, that at its highest Puritan spirituality was able to withstand all these temptations, while

¹ cf. supra pp. 181 ff., 183 ff., 89 ff.

limited evidence to the contrary serves only to underline the original contention that the ascetic impulse is always subject to deterioration, whether in the monastery or in the market place.¹ The courage and consecration inherent in the immensely difficult task of applying the ascetic ideal to common life, on the other hand, constitute a substantial gain over monastic withdrawal and bespeak a sounder appreciation of the redemptive sovereignty of God in all areas of human endeavour.

By way of contrast, French Jansenists, as heirs of the double standard and the traditional Roman Catholic conviction that withdrawal was of the essence of the state of perfection, instinctively turned away from the world in their practice of asceticism. The mediaeval rather than the primitive pattern² won their first allegiance and to this extent, despite their unreserved commitment to the will of God and their earnest desire to suffer with Christ, they failed to exhibit that boundless faith in the power of grace to preserve from every defilement of the world, which was an essential element of early Christian piety. An equally grave defect from the ascetic viewpoint was the obvious tendency to neglect the man-ward dimension by which genuine Christian spirituality must, in part at least, be judged. For the ineradicable monastic proclivity entailed a basic irresponsibility in relation to the world's plight as far as personal involvement was concerned.³ Thus, as Puritanism had misunderstood the nature of this man-ward element by seeking to legislate godliness, the Jansenists went to the other extreme of ignoring the full

1 cf. supra pp.12, 29.

2 cf. supra pp.9-12.

3 cf. supra pp.276-8.

implications of loving the neighbour. It was not claimed, to be sure, that all men should retire to some peaceful monastery or retreat. Many were called to remain in society, there to live the life of mortification and self-denial which others must live in withdrawal. But what the movement granted in this respect it immediately discounted in another by its continuing insistence on the need for solitude and retreat. Manifestly this ideal was impracticable in the social context, and consequently Jansenist asceticism, in comparison with the thoroughly intra-mundane piety of Puritanism, was at a grave disadvantage in its prospects of effecting the reform of church and society which was so prominent in its thinking. The latter never considered the feasibility of withdrawing its ministers from the arena of combat, of asking its adherents to forsake their callings even temporarily, or of holding up as the supreme example of Christian discipleship either the technically "religious" or the lay ascetic in his hermitage. Having made these strictures, however, it is also noteworthy that the failure adequately to meet their obligations to the neighbour applied only to the initial action of the pious souls of Port-Royal. For once in withdrawal, nuns and solitaries alike gave themselves over with abandon to works of charity,¹ and in fact did much more in a tangible way for their fellows than the vast majority of Christians who remained in the world. And amongst the latter, the adherents of Jansenism were conspicuous for their active self-denial on behalf of their fellows.² Nevertheless, when all the facts are weighed in the

1 cf. supra pp. 250-1; 302-3.

2 cf. supra pp. 321, 343, 344.

light of the norm delineated at the outset of this study¹ one believes that Jansenist ascetic piety, despite its somewhat more dramatic witness to the transforming grace of God, tended to restrict the divine sway over common life by withdrawing men from society, and so was inferior to Puritan intra-mundane ascetic rigorism which required all men to glorify God in their callings.

A second major disparity between the ascetic pieties of these two contemporary movements, and one closely connected with the first, is discernible in the primary ideals which animated them. Common to both was the mystical ideal, the intense desire for fellowship with God both here and hereafter, which is a constant factor in all Christian asceticism.² But in addition to this there was in the case of English Puritans a compelling inner urge to righteousness, and among French Jansenists an irresistible impulse to do penance for sin. Puritan ascetic rigorism was therefore characterized by the disciplinary ideal, of which the central aim was the attainment of "godliness", while Jansenist asceticism reflected principally the sacrificial ideal, its cardinal motivation being that of "pénitence".³ Being in the Calvinist stream, the possibility of reparation for past sin was not open to the Puritans. Christ alone was the one perfect sacrifice and oblation for sin. Implicit in the new status of the elect, however, was the process of sanctification, so that godliness (God-likeness) was the token and constituted the life-purpose of the redeemed. The Jansenist, on the other hand, having

1 cf. supra pp. 24-30.

2 v. Kenneth E. Kirk's valuable book on this subject, The Vision of God.

3 cf. supra pp. 70-1, 227-8, 275-6, 319. On the major ascetic ideals v. O. Hardman, The Ideals of Asceticism, pp. 74-185.

been visited with grace, immediately became conscious of his sin and of the burden of his guilt, and in line with Roman Catholic doctrine at its highest, from genuine contrition determined through grace to express his heartfelt sorrow in acts of penance, both on his own initiative and as meted out by a director. By voluntary sacrifice he would imitate the crucified Christ and show forth His humble spirit. The Jansenist conception, while far removed from Puritan piety, did in fact avoid the usual pitfall of Catholic spirituality, namely, the view of penance solely as a means of averting the penalties of an intermediate state between this life and the next; while its doctrine of merit was presented in an attenuated form because of the rejection of the doctrine of attrition,¹ the insistence on the indispensable function of sovereign irresistible grace in any good work, and the central doctrine of election. But the occasions of intense scrupulosity to which it gave rise, though discouraged by the spiritual leaders of Jansenism,² show that although it produced a type of piety not altogether removed from the Puritan norm of "godliness", the latter came closer to New Testament standards. Each, indeed, was motivated by a vital religious experience in which the individual soul responded directly to Almighty God, but Puritan asceticism more clearly maintained the uniqueness of the sacrifice of Christ; and in addition, its positive ideal of godliness was both psychologically and religiously superior

1 Richelieu had championed this doctrine against Saint-Cyran. v. C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., I, pp.487-8.

2 Concerning the sense of guilt of an over-anxious penitent, Saint-Cyran wrote: "Tout cela est noyé dans le sang de Jésus-Christ, lequel vous n'estimez pas assez, quand vous repensez à vos fautes passées." Lettres Chrestiennes et Spirituelles, (MDCXLV), p.764, ut per L.-Frédéric Jaccard, op. cit., p.198.

to the predominantly negative Jansenist ideal of reparation.

In the third place the two forms of Christian asceticism differ with regard to their practice of bodily mortifications, the Jansenists inclining strongly toward those austerities which had been closely associated with monastic piety and with the sacrament of penance, while the Puritans largely restricted themselves to moderation or abstinence in food and drink. Both movements, insisting on subordinating the claims of the body to those of the spirit, failed by and large to grasp the psycho-physical unity of human personality, and in their piety tended to regard the body as a miserable liability.¹ But though neither Puritans nor Jansenists adequately conceived of the body as being of positive value in the divinely created order, they were united in holding ultimately that it was good because created by God. Nevertheless, this harmony of general outlook broke down in practice. The Jansenists went to extremes of bodily mortification which on occasion belied their affirmation of physical goodness, whereas the Puritans remained within the bounds of reasonable restraint. In order to destroy the flesh of which the body was the agent, some ardent Jansenists destroyed the God-given body as well, a propensity of Roman Catholic piety which English Puritans were always quick to condemn. Although these extremes were not the general rule, the contrast between Jansenist austerities such as the use of the hair-shirt, the iron girdle, and the discipline, and Puritan temperance, sobriety, and fasting, remains conspicuous.

The foregoing divergencies may be summed up in one basic antithesis, namely, that the ascetic piety of English Puritans was

1 cf. supra pp.93-4, 230-1, 234-5, 281.

distinctly Protestant, and more particularly, Calvinistic in tone, whereas that of French Jansenists was markedly Roman Catholic in form and outlook. The central emphases of Puritan ascetic rigorism - the universal duty of serving God in a calling and the systematically disciplined life of godliness thus necessitated, including the reasonable control of the body - were also basic elements of Calvinist teaching and of its practical reflection in the Genevan theocracy.¹ Jansenists on the contrary, exalting monastic withdrawal, insisting on penance as the spiritual climate of all ascetic acts, and practising manifold physical mortifications, exhibited to this extent Roman Catholic piety.² Their use of beads, rosaries, breviaries, prayers to the saints, and all the other techniques usually employed by Catholics as means of training the soul, serves to accentuate the gulf separating them from English Puritans who repudiated all the practices and trappings of Rome. Had it not been for the Jansenists' insubordination in matters of doctrine, despite their protestations of fidelity to the Holy See, there would have been little cause for the hostility shown by Rome to this manifestation of essentially Catholic piety.³ And it is precisely this Catholic

1 cf. supra pp.18 ff.

2 Many of the concomitants of Jansenist piety shock and revolt the Protestant mind. A case in point is the barbaric mutilation of the body of a departed saint in order to preserve relics for veneration. When Saint-Cyran died, Lancelot piously severed his hands to present to Mère Angélique, while his heart had been promised to M. d'Andilly if the latter would agree to retire from the world. v. [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, p.457.

3 Joseph Brucker, op. cit., p.371, reluctantly writes that "Saint-Cyran prêche le plus souvent les vertus de l'ascétisme orthodoxe ...". M. Orcibal has recently demonstrated that Jansenism was not in the Protestant stream of reform but was a part of the Counter-Reformation, especially in its rooted belief in the persistence of the life of Christ in the Roman Church, its high conception of the sacraments and of the priest as Christ's chosen instrument, and its conviction of the necessity of satisfying divine justice in Christ. Jean Orcibal, Le Premier Port-Royal: Réforme ou Contre-Réforme? p.280, et passim; cf. Les Origines du Jansénisme: II, pp.672-3.

tone which forever distinguishes Jansenist asceticism from that of English Puritans.

C. The Similarities.

Regardless of these fundamental

differences of faith and practice, the investigator of these two ascetic pieties is not hard pressed to discover certain broad and important similarities which tend to render the contrasts insignificant by comparison. For here were two schools of spirituality nurtured on the New Testament, consciously aware of a rich and partly common Christian heritage, viewing human existence in Augustinian fashion as the drama of sin and grace and having in each case a strong doctrine of election, of which a holy life was held to be proof. Both were confronted with a church and society heedless of the profound claims of God on the human personality, and both were confirmed in their ascetic piety by reaction to this environment. And although in the one case this reaction frequently led men to forsake the world, while in the other it reinforced a sense of stewardship, even here a deep-rooted harmony is discernible. For Puritans found that it was not easy to be stewards in the world, because of the evil in their own hearts; and Jansenists discovered that it was extremely difficult to abandon the world, because its power to harm consisted precisely in the same inward corruption. Hence both were forced in upon themselves, with the result that they were at one in their lifelong struggle against the devil and the flesh, if not completely so against their third formidable enemy, the world.

The present writer therefore experienced no rude jolt as, in his reading and thinking about these two forms of Christian

asceticism, he was constantly under the necessity of travelling from Port-Royal to Kidderminster, and from Paris to London. In both situations he encountered the same profound commitment, though variously interpreted, to the exacting demands of the gospel. He realized he was in the same spiritual country; and although different ascetic dialects were being spoken by Puritans and Jansenists, theirs was unmistakably a common and powerful spiritual tongue - a Christian Esperanto comprehensible by disciples of the Master in all centuries. In their total outlook on life there was far more of mutual agreement than of exclusive difference. The sovereign transcendence of God; the two-world context in which this life was conceived as a training-ground for the life everlasting; the incessant spiritual warfare with its spiritual exercises and bodily disciplines; and the cultivation of the distinctive qualities of the ascetic life - perseverance in the pursuit of perfection, self-denial, humility, charity, patience in tribulation, the inner joy of fellowship with Christ - were constant factors in the piety of Puritans and Jansenists, all of whom were working out their salvation in the service of God and the neighbour in utmost seriousness and according to their several lights. In short, in each movement similar and in some cases identical features of profound Christian asceticism are in evidence.

Against this common background certain specific similarities stand out especially clearly. Most significant of all is the demand for universal perfection maintained by both ascetic groups. The Puritans, in the Calvinist tradition, held that every Christian and not just a select "religious" group must take to heart the command

of Christ to be perfect, and to the achievement of this goal, in grace, they gladly and freely dedicated themselves. In like fashion, French Jansenists also extended to the faithful in the world the ideal which, by the Roman church, had largely been confined to the monastery. This important modification of the double standard constituted a significant departure of Jansenism from the Roman Catholic norm, aligning the movement with its Protestant "enemies." For this reason it has been attacked for endeavouring to uphold an impossibly heroic level of conduct for the faithful,¹ in the same way that the "narrowness" of Puritanism, i. e., its insistence on purity in every facet of human life,² has evoked the censure of many critics. But in maintaining the universal standard of perfection, both movements, one believes, were fully justified, and for several reasons. In the first place, our Lord's "Be ye perfect" can never be disregarded by any earnest Christian, however impossible of attainment it may seem to be; in the light of the unequivocal claims of the gospel for total allegiance, nothing less than the utmost can be required of those who would serve Him. Thus, while there is a time for condemning the errors of the sons of Rome, one rejoices in the unstinted loyalty and profound spirituality exemplified by French Jansenists as well as by English Puritans. Again, the goal of universal perfection reflected in each case a confidence in the power of grace which commands respect, although only in Puritanism

1 v. e. g. Albert de Meyer, op. cit., p.80. But cf. [J. Besoigne], op. cit., III, p.489, who, speaking of the charge of harsh rigorism levelled at Saint-Cyran, wrote: "... accuser un tel homme de rigorisme, c'est se couvrir soi-même de la tache du relâchement."

2 v. e. g. G. G. Coulton, op. cit., p.230. But cf. Ethel Romanes, op. cit., p.182, who writes: "It is one thing to follow the Lord's example of tenderness and compassion to sinners who are outside, to those who do not know Him. It is a totally different thing to lower the standard of Christian discipleship."

was this confidence so complete as to warrant the extension of the ascetic struggle, without reserve, to the world. Furthermore, the universal rigorism of both movements can be understood only as a necessary reaction to the laxity and callousness of the times both in England and in France. Under such conditions it was essential that the fundamental truths of Christian living - the narrow way, the self-denial, the cross-bearing - should be proclaimed to an apostate church and a secularized society. Only what by prevalent Arminian and Jesuit standards could be called heroic ascetic action would have had any chance of bringing to bear on personal and corporate life the impact of divine sovereignty. The mistake of the Puritans, therefore, was not their insistence that the quest for perfection must apply to all men. Theirs rather was the grave error of expecting every Christian to attain the same degree of success in training the spirit and mortifying the flesh, and the same outward manifestations of holiness, failing both to understand the differing capacities with which God had endowed His children, and to allow any latitude in the pattern of godliness. Similarly the defect in Jansenist spirituality was not in its unyielding demands, but in the predominantly monastic form in which they were universally cast and which tended to vitiate their attainment. In both cases it was forgotten that even though nothing but the highest standard of discipleship can be accepted of those who would serve Christ, all men are not called to salvation in exactly the same way. It seems clear, however, that in their age their common error was preferable to that of the existing insensibility to the radical implications of being a Christian.

It is because the struggle for perfection in both Puritan and Jansenist asceticism was regarded as universally binding that the crowning glory of each movement is the depth and extent of personal sanctity which they generated. Long after the strife has ceased and the noise of battle has been silenced, the examples of saintliness which they produced remain as their enduring monuments, and as evidence that they drew on the deepest resources of the faith. Theirs was no dry and barren rigorism, no joyless terrifying moralism, but a companioning with a Saviour which bore rich fruit in Christian character. With the love of God in their hearts,¹ both Puritans and Jansenists could do no other than offer Him the sacrifice of undivided loyalty and unsullied lives, and although they were, as they lamented, by no means perfect, it remains true that the measure of victory they achieved over corrupt human natures is enough to shame and inspire the lukewarm disciples of any age and to demonstrate that an evil environment is ultimately no excuse for irresponsible moral action on the part of those who can claim the support of grace.

At one in their holiness, Puritans and Jansenists were also united in their generally negative response to the created order and to the spontaneous enjoyment of all but "spiritual" pleasures. Although in neither case is there evidence of a metaphysical dualism, it is nevertheless true that the central contrasts between the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of nature, the world to come and the present world, led to a faulty appreciation of the divine purpose

1 v. J. F. Thomas, op. cit., pp.97-8, and Jean Orcibal, Les Origines du Jansénisme: II, p.41, note 1, who refute the contention that asceticism is opposed to theocentrism.

in this earthly life. This was less pronounced in Puritanism than in Jansenism, for the former's doctrine of the calling had sanctified marriage and labour and the normal pursuits of men in society more wholly and profoundly than Jansenism. But to conceive of the physical as the vehicle of the spiritual, to experience an elevation of the soul to God by an affirmation rather than a denial of the created order on the part of fallen man were experiences seldom granted to the ascetics of either movement. Nature itself rarely became a primary interest, because at best it was neutral as far as spiritual growth was concerned, and at worst might wean the soul from God. For fear of desecrating the holy, neither movement was able to consecrate fully the natural and the secular. In the spirituality of each group it was largely to God the Redeemer rather than to God the Creator that honour and glory were given. Each failed to grasp the profound significance of the first article of the Creed, to understand that God was revealed in the world as well as in scripture and sacrament, and to realize that the Incarnation was crucial for faith not only because of its soteriological import, but because it stood for the redemption and potential sanctification of this whole earthly existence. It is a pity that more men in each movement did not share the insight of a great Puritan, Richard Baxter, when he wrote:

Our Redeemer's work is to restore us to the acknowledgment and Love of our Creator. And the commemoration of our Redemption fitteth us to a holy acknowledgment of the Almighty Creator in his works 1

In each case the predominant outlook inevitably led to a certain cultural narrowness. Although it has been shown that in both

1 Richard Baxter, The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day, p.96.

movements ascetic discipline was not always inimical to true art and that aesthetic sensibilities were not necessarily stunted, it is incontestable that the extreme spiritualization of life did not provide the most favourable climate for the expression of creative endeavour, and that the passion for direct communion with God tended to thwart a satisfying use of the aesthetic in divine worship. In Puritanism the perpetual ethical consideration, and in Jansenism the ever-present emphasis on renunciation in the spirit of penitence, thus constituted a severe limitation in the spirituality of each movement. For each failed to realize deeply that God is Lord of all and that therefore, given a proper sense of human creatureliness, the arts may be used to His glory and offered to Him in all their perfection.

In extenuation of both Puritans and Jansenists, it must again be recalled that in the seventeenth century England and France stood in more than usual need of their witness. Both groups were convinced that the aesthetic and the sensuous in worship had become ends in themselves, and that too frequently cultural media were being enjoyed as a substitute for God and were militating against the highest spiritual ends. Primarily their negative response to culture was a protest against abuses. The evidence has also shown that this outwardly negative and world-renouncing attitude was basically a positive affirmation of the primacy of spiritual values. Absorbed in these vital realities, little energy was left for other pursuits, especially when these might endanger the relationship of the soul to God. And further, is it not too much to expect that any

1 cf. Ralph Bronkema, The Essence of Puritanism, pp.187-8.

religious movement should perfectly embody the total implications of the faith for human life? The limited but significant role of these ascetic groups was to bring to the attention of their respective lands the truth that unswerving devotion to a holy and loving God, whose Son endured the cross to redeem sinful men, is a higher end than the love of beauty and the arts, and it may be forgiven them if they did not appreciate to the full that there need be no conflict between the two. They were saying simply that God was the only level of security for fallen humanity, and this central affirmation of the Christian faith is forever valid. With that in mind, one learns to judge the asceticism of Puritans and Jansenists not solely by its most manifest and frequently annoying signs - the condemnation of the theatre, the plain attire, the not uncommon hostility to painting and music - but as a total positive Christian life-view. The whole can not adequately be judged by any of its parts, however conspicuous they may be. Puritan and Jansenist asceticism were similar not only in their cultural narrowness, but in the consecrated discipleship inherent in the underlying Christian spirituality of which it was but one of the tokens.

The kinship between the two movements is further in evidence in their common estimate of the value of direction and discipline. Since in the spirituality of each the Christian life was interpreted as a struggle for perfection against the forces of evil, it is by no means accidental that each should have made abundant use of serviceable methods for the advancement of the soul in grace. Actually this was a less conspicuous feature of Jansenism with its propensity to withdrawal and its antipathy to casuistry than of Puritanism with its single-minded intra-mundane ascetic rigorism and its use of the

ultimate method of promoting godliness, moral legislation. In both cases however, ample provision was made for the guidance of the faithful in the world, who were encouraged for the sake of their own spiritual welfare to respond freely to the leadership given. In Puritan and Jansenist asceticism alike this included the saintly example of spiritual guides, the exhortations of earnest preachers and convincing authors of devotional manuals, catechizing, the sustaining grace of the sacraments for which careful preparation had been made, and the disciplinary systems which were designed to help them glorify God, edify the neighbour, and strengthen their souls for the lifelong struggle with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Each movement also paid close attention to the training of a holy clergy for the exercise of the high calling of the cure of souls. And in the pastor of Kidderminster and the Bishop of Aleth one sees two kindred souls whose chief concern was the sanctification of their people, and who symbolize the ascetic spirituality of the movements they represent.

Sufficient has now been said to demonstrate the large measure of harmony which existed between Puritan and Jansenist ascetics in the seventeenth century, despite their irreconcilable differences as members of bitterly opposed churches. Basically the spirituality of both groups may be reduced to the preparation of the soul for glory by an unending struggle with the forces of evil in voluntary response to the divine initiative. And although in each case the self-ward, man-ward and God-ward dimensions assumed their own particular forms, the hall-marks of what throughout this study has been described as Christian asceticism can be plainly identified. The original contention that the term "Christian asceticism" should not be

restricted to the "religious" life but should be extended to include a much wider area of similar striving and discipline embracing those in the world, seems therefore to have been warranted by the present comparative study. Jansenists in the convent, the hermitage, and the world, and Puritans in their callings in society can all be described with accuracy as Christian ascetics because all were engaged in the struggle with evil which consisted fundamentally in the inner conflict between the spirit and the flesh. The world was also an enemy only because of the evil within man. A monastery wall could make no qualitative difference to the essential nature of this piety of unceasing warfare,¹ and to regard it as a criterion of Christian asceticism is to establish an arbitrary and unnatural distinction. Because of its dynamic nature, this type of sanctity can never be the prerogative of an élite but is the property of all who willingly renounce the claims of self and in the power of Christ seek by discipline and renunciation to live for Him alone, thus fulfilling the divine will for their lives.

This view of the potential universality of Christian asceticism and of the essential homogeneity of its Puritan and Jansenist forms is substantiated by the known sentiments of seventeenth century English Puritans regarding French Jansenists of whom they had some knowledge.² The Puritans had attacked the Little Gidding experiment

1 If, as is right and proper, the distinction is to be made between the asceticism of the monastery and that of the world, the terms monasticism and intra-mundane ascetic rigorism may adequately be used, although as shown above (p.12), monasticism is not synonymous with asceticism.

2 For the most part Puritan attention was largely drawn to Jansenism because its quarrel with the Jesuits proved unequivocally that the seamless robe of Rome was a myth. v. Richard Baxter, A Key for Catholics, pp.52, 58 ff. cf. John Owen's preface to [Theophilus Gale], The True Idea of Jansenisme (1669).

in England and would have attacked the nuns and solitaries of Port-Royal on the grounds of their withdrawal from society. But there is evidence to show that they were in sympathy with Jansenist spirituality - with its moral earnestness, its emphasis on sanctification, in short, with its Christian asceticism as understood in this study. Edmund Calamy, the biographer of Nonconformity, was pleased to report after a visit to the Continent:

I have conversed with some of the Romanists, who are of the Jansenist sort, that appeared to me to have as good notions of many points in religion, and to be as sober in their lives and conversations, as any of the Protestants. 1

Baxter, having read the English version of the Lettres Provinciales called the Mysterie of Jesuitism warmly sided with the rigorist position of the Jansenists taken therein. In a passage condemning Jesuit laxity which might have been written by Pascal or Arnauld, he urged: "Let us not hearken in this case to flesh and blood that would advise us to remit the reins of Discipline, and to bend our Administration to some pleasing compliance with carnal minds."²

Most significant of all are the sentiments of the Independent Puritan Theophilus Gale who, having lost his preferments went to live at Caen, where he encountered a number of Jansenists and read the Augustinus, the Lettres Provinciales, the works of Saint-Cyran, and other Jansenist writings. In his True Idea of Jansenisme he shows himself to be enthusiastic about the piety of the movement. Although tending to protestantize Saint-Cyran and others of his party, his

1 ut per Ruth Clark, Strangers and Sojourners at Port Royal, p.145.

2 Richard Baxter, A Key for Catholicks, p.279. Baxter also agreed with Jansenist theology to a considerable extent. Of the doctrines of predestination, grace, and free will, he wrote: "For my own part, I scarce know a Protestant that my thoughts in these do more concur with, than they do with Jansenius, (that is indeed, with Augustine himself.)" *ib.*, p.366.

estimate of their spirituality is revealing. Of Saint-Cyran's letters he writes approvingly:

He exhorts much to self-emptines, spiritual povertie, humilitie, faith in Christ, and more especially to love God more than our selves, and our neighbours as our selves; ... He is very much in shewing the usefulness of afflictions; ... He also acquaints us with the Art and Skill of bearing Christ's Crosse, wherein he himself seems to have been familiarly and feelingly versed 1

Later on, in the same vein, Gale adds that the Jansenists, "especially the chief of them Jansenius and St. Cyran seem to have had a very deep, broad, spiritual light and insight into the Mysteries of the Gospel, and true Godliness ...".² The Puritan heart is strangely warmed by an ascetic piety so markedly in harmony with its own. Within the French Catholic church were spiritual brothers whose devotion to godliness was welcomed by English Puritans. The Jansenists, of course, would not have rejoiced in this friendliness on the part of heretics, and would have been the first to point out, as loyal Catholics, that Gale had grossly exaggerated their position vis-à-vis Rome. But the fact remains that the main traits of Christian asceticism - the discipline, renunciation, and struggle involved in the *Imitatio Christi* - were held in both movements to be of the essence of discipleship and in their practical piety constituted an unbreakable common bond. For Christian asceticism, so firmly grounded in the New Testament, is a permanent concomitant of the life in Christ and knows no barrier of social pattern or denominational loyalty.

The essential oneness and ever-living vitality of the ascetic spirituality of Puritanism and Jansenism is further evidenced by the fact that although both seemed to have been utterly defeated in the seventeenth century, each made a significant contribution to the

1 [Theophilus Gale], op. cit., pp.15-16.

2 ib., p.159.

Methodist revival of the eighteenth century. In the age of deism and shallow religion, when the ascetic view of life which had demanded the submission of the whole personality to the divine sovereignty had been submerged, John Wesley recognized in Puritan and Jansenist piety the spiritual earnestness of which his country stood in desperate need. The direct effect of the former on Wesleyanism is to be seen in Wesley's rules concerning the wearing of jewellery and expensive clothes, the antagonism to the theatre and the relative estrangement from the arts, the adoption of the Covenant Service, the importance attached to spiritual exercises for the promotion of the inner life, and the pronounced Sabbatarianism.¹ Wesley was especially influenced by Baxter's ascetic treatise on pastoral direction, Gildas Salvianus, The Reformed Pastor, and highly recommended its use to his preachers.² And it is not pure coincidence that Wesley was also a devoted student of Saint-Cyran and in several of his works³ reproduced Cyranian writings extensively. Although he excised all peculiarly Roman Catholic emphases,⁴ he re-echoed the stress on the greatness of God and eternity, self-denial and humility, the value of retreats, the narrow way, continual vigilance and perpetual prayer, the avoidance of excessive bodily mortifications and of vanity in learning, and the fundamental role of love of God in the performance of duties.⁵ In addition, the founder of Methodism

1 Duncan Coomer, The Influence of Puritanism and Dissent on Methodism, The London Quarterly and Holborn Review, October, 1950, pp.348-350.

2 Irvonwy Morgan, op. cit., p.87.

3 e. g. Christian Instructions, published at the end of his fourth volume of Sermons (1760), and A plain account of Christian Perfection (1766). v. Jean Orcibal, Le Premier Port-Royal: Réforme ou Contre-Réforme?, pp.273-4.

4 e. g. doctrines concerning the priesthood, merit, and the sacrament of penance. v. Jean Orcibal, Le Premier Port-Royal: Réforme ou Contre-Réforme?, pp.273-4.

5 ib., pp.274-80.

greatly admired Pasquier Quesnel, whose commentary on the gospels, as has been seen, was influential in establishing Jansenist asceticism in the social context.¹ In these ways Puritanism and Jansenism were to exert their powerful and abiding influence on the lives of Christians in succeeding generations.

D. The Sequel.

It is beyond the scope of this work to examine the ultimate contribution of these two ascetic movements. It must suffice to indicate its nature by giving the considered judgement of two able scholars. On Puritanism, Trevelyan's verdict may be cited:

Its influence brought seriousness of thought to thousands, and induced them to put restraint on their luxuries and that vigour into the performance of their duties, which all religions enjoin, but which few enforce against the dead weight of social custom. ²

And of the Jansenists Mlle. Cécile Gazier has written:

Ils ont mis dans la religion, dans la piété même telle qu'on la pratique chez nous, quelque chose de sérieux et de digne où s'estompent peut-être l'abandon léger, la confiance enfantine des autres pays latins; mais où s'affirment, en revanche, plus de conviction réfléchie, plus de fière solidité. ³

It has been the function of the present study to investigate the nature of the "seriousness" which Puritans and Jansenists brought to the practice of religion in their respective countries. And one believes that the facts revealed are sufficient to confute the caricatures of their piety which are still being brought before the

¹ Wesley had this commentary studied in his school at Kingswood. v. Ruth Clark, op. cit., p.262. cf. supra pp.315 ff.

² G. M. Trevelyan, England Under the Stuarts, p.63.

³ Cécile Gazier, Ces Messieurs de Port-Royal, p.254.

1 public. Despite the views disseminated by playwrights and hostile ecclesiastical parties, neither Puritanism nor Jansenism was a religion of gloom, unrelieved austerity and spiritual pride.² One therefore regrets that in English-speaking lands "Puritanism" has not yet lost its connotation of sour moralism, and that among the French, "Jansenism" has not ceased to be regarded as a synonym for scrupulosity and sobriety. For this study has demonstrated that the asceticism of both groups represents one form, if not the only form, of genuine Christian piety, rather than merely providing evidence of abnormal psychical traits; while in addition it may well raise such important questions as the relation between the world-affirming and world-denying elements in the gospel, the legitimacy of other-worldliness in a total spirituality, the validity of interpreting the Christian life in terms of discipline and struggle, and the role of personal holiness in the life and mission of the church. These, one submits, arise from virile Christian pieties and are worthy of serious consideration.

1 R. A. Knox's treatment of Jansenism in his recent book on Enthusiasm presents the usual picture of a dry and warped rigorism with which students of the subject are familiar in the works of orthodox critics whose judgement is formed before the trial opens. His study moreover, appears to be based almost exclusively on secondary sources and shows no intimate first-hand acquaintance with the spiritual writings of the great Jansenists. And among his secondary sources M. Brémond is regarded as most authoritative, while no mention is made of the monumental researches on Jansenism which M. Orcibal published as long ago as 1947-8 (destined to be the standard work on the origins of Jansenism), showing the extreme limitations of Brémond's analysis. For a work on Puritanism which completely fails to understand its essential piety, v. Sidney Dark, The Passing of the Puritan, pp.9, 12, 29, 30, et passim.

2 Percy A. Scholes, op. cit., pp.329 ff., 345 ff., 360, et passim, largely dispels the popular view of Puritanism and gives a good survey of the problem of anti-Puritan prejudice, although he falls into the opposite extreme of ignoring real defects. Especially valid however, is his contention that post seventeenth century primness and prudery have been uncritically confused with seventeenth century Puritanism. J. F. Thomas, op. cit., pp.8, 97-8, et passim, lays bare the usual calumnies of the Jansenists.

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APPENDIX

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH PURITANISM AND FRENCH JANSENISM

A PARALLEL CHRONOLOGY

<u>England and Puritanism</u>	<u>France and Jansenism</u>
1581	Saint-Cyran born
1602	Jacqueline-Marie Arnauld (later Angélique) appointed Abbess of Port-Royal des Champs, aged 11.
1603	Millenary Petition. Death of Elizabeth. Accession of James I.
1604	Hampton Court Conference. Whitgift died. Bancroft Archbishop of Canterbury.
1605	Ejection of some Puritan clergy on enforcement of Bancroft's Ecclesiastical Canons. Paul V pope.
1607	Angélique's conversion.
1609	Angélique begins to reform Port-Royal on rigorous lines. So-called Journée du Guichet.
1610	Commons' Petition of Right and Petition of Grievances. Bancroft dies. Murder of Henri IV. Reign of Louis XIII. Regency of Marie de Médicis.
1611	King James Bible Saint-Cyran and Jansen studying theology together at Louvain (1611-1615).
1615	Richard Baxter born

- 1618 Beginning of The Thirty Years' War. Declaration (Book) of Sports. Angélique goes to reform Maubuisson.
- 1620 Saint-Cyran introduced to Mère Angélique by d'Andilly.
- 1621 Gregory XV pope.
- 1624 Richelieu becomes supreme. Urbain VIII pope.
- 1625 Death of James I. Accession and marriage of Charles I.
- 1626 Nuns remove to Port-Royal de Paris, in Faubourg Saint-Jacques.
- 1628 Laudian Articles of Religion.
- 1631 Laud enforces conformity at Oxford and elsewhere.
- 1633 Abbot dies; Laud Archbishop; ordination of lecturers forbidden; chaplaincies restricted. Declaration (Book) of Sports re-issued. Angélique becomes Superior of the new Institut de l'Adoration Perpétuelle du Saint Sacrement, which lasted only six years.
- 1634 Laud enforces conformity, revives visitations.
- 1635 Saint-Cyran introduced into Port-Royal du Saint Sacrement as director, although previously known to Port-Royal.
- 1636 Singlin becomes confessor at Port-Royal. Angélique leaves Institut du Saint Sacrement, returns to Port-Royal.
- 1637 Star Chamber sentences Prynne, Bastwick, Burton, Bishop Williams. Le Maistre and brothers retire to house at Port-Royal de Paris built by their mother - i.e., first solitaries.
- 1638 Scottish National Covenant. Lancelot enters Port-Royal. Saint-Cyran arrested. School driven to Port-Royal des Champs, and thence to La Ferté-Milon. Later, solitaries moved to Port-Royal des Champs. Jansen died.

- 1639 School returns to Port-Royal des Champs.
- 1640 Long Parliament impeaches Stafford and Laud. Root and Branch Petition. Posthumous publication of Jansen's Augustinus.
- 1641 Laud imprisoned. Stafford executed. Sweeping parliamentary reforms. Scottish army withdrawn from England. Grand Remonstrance.
- 1642 Theatres closed, September 2. Death of Richelieu. Mazarin becomes first minister. Angélique elected abbess. Remains abbess until 1654. Bull of Urbain VIII against Augustinus.
- 1643 Solemn League and Covenant. Westminster Assembly; controversy over toleration. Saint-Cyran released (February 6). Saint-Cyran died (October 11). Arnauld's De la Fréquente Communion. Death of Louis XIII. Accession of Louis XIV.
- 1644 Scots enter England. Ordinance imposed Covenant on all adults. Schools dispersed to Le Chesnai. Innocent X pope.
- 1645 Laud executed. See of Canterbury vacant until 1660.
- 1646 Friction between Independents and Presbyterians. Westminster Standards (1646-7). Schools removed to Paris, (rue Saint Dominique) and organized. Nicole, Fontaine, d'Andilly enter Port-Royal.
- 1647 George Fox begins public ministry. Parliamentary ordinances for suppressing plays (1647-8). Baxter appointed lecturer at Kidderminster on sequestration of vicar.
- 1648 Leveller Petition. Army seizes king, enters London. Pride's Purge of Presbyterians. Arnauld becomes confessor to nuns of Port-Royal. Angélique and some nuns return to Port-Royal des Champs. Solitaries have to move out of monastery and build some additions to Les Granges.
- 1649 King's trial and execution. Condemnation of the Five Propositions by the Sorbonne.

- 1650 Engagement imposed. Charles accepts Scottish Covenant. Acts on Sunday observance, adultery, swearing, blasphemy. Baxter's Saints' Everlasting Rest.
- 1652 Proposals for national church with toleration.
- 1653 Instrument of Government establishes Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell.
- 1654 Reforms in law, manners, and education. Commission to examine clergy. Parliament restricts power of Cromwell and Council.
- 1655 Proclamation on religious liberty. Rule of Major-Generals.
- 1656
- 1658 Richard Cromwell Protector. Savoy Declaration.
- 1660 New Parliament recalls Charles II. Punishment of regicides. Legislation of Cromwell and Long Parliament regarded as void.
- 1661 Savoy Conference. Corporation Act. Anglican Catechism.
- 1662 Act of Uniformity. Revision of Book of Common Prayer. Secession of Saint Bartholomew's Day. Baxter leaves the Church of England, May 25.
- Schools dispersed into three groups. Hamon enters Port-Royal as a solitary. De Sacy becomes confessor of Port-Royal, retaining office for next thirty-four years.
- Innocent X declares the Five Propositions heretical in the Bull "Cum Occasione".
- Blaise Pascal enters Port-Royal. Formulary drawn up. Alexander VII pope.
- Sorbonne censures Arnauld. Miracle of the Holy Thorn. Dispersion of the Schools and the solitaries. Publication of Provinciales. Bull of Alexander VII, confirming that of Urban VIII.
- Final dispersion of schools (March 10).
- New dispersion of solitaries. Also, on king's orders, pensionnaires leave Port-Royal des Champs. Death of Mazarin. Beginning of personal rule of Louis XIV. Nuns refuse to sign Formulary imposed by the pope. Death of Mère Angélique.

- 1664 First Conventicle Act passed. Baxter imprisoned. Edict of king ordering signing of Formulary. Nuns forbidden the sacraments. Some removed from monastery. Persecutions most severe; virtual captivity of nuns.
- 1665 Five Mile Act. Four bishops oppose the Formulary - Aleth, Pamiers, Beauvais, Angers. Bull of Alexander VII imposing Formulary (Regiminis Apostolici).
- 1666 Separation of Port-Royal des Champs and Port-Royal de Paris.
- 1667 Mons New Testament published. Clement IX pope.
- 1669 Paix de l'Église. Port-Royal's period of greatest renown (1669-1679). Clement IX restores the privilege of the sacraments to the nuns of Port-Royal des Champs.
- 1670 Second Conventicle Act. Pascal's Pensées published. Clement X pope.
- 1672 Charles II's Declaration of Indulgence. Bunyan released from prison.
- 1673 Cancellation of Declaration of Indulgence. Test Act.
- 1676 Innocent XI pope.
- 1677 Baptist Recension of Westminster Confession. William Sancroft is Archbishop of Canterbury. Death of Pavillon, Bishop of Aleth.
- 1679 End of Paix de l'Église. Archbishop forces postulants and novices out of Port-Royal, and forbids new novices in future. Arnauld and Nicole in exile.
- 1685 Death of Charles II of England. Accession of James II. Baxter committed to King's Bench. Tried and imprisoned for eighteen months.
- 1687 Declaration of Indulgence issued.

- 1688 William of Orange enters London. Flight of James II. Fall of House of Stuart.
- 1689 Declaration of Right. William and Mary proclaimed King and Queen of England. Toleration Act passed. Alexander VIII pope.
- 1691 Death of Baxter. The Non-Jurors deprived of their benefices and sees. Tillotson Archbishop. Innocent XII pope.
- 1694 Death of Queen Mary. Death of Antoine Arnauld in exile at Brussels.
- 1696 Sylvester's Reliquiae Baxterianae.
- 1700 Clement XI pope (died 1724).
- 1702 Death of William IV. Accession of Anne. Affair of the Cas de Conscience.
- 1705 Bull of Clement XI, "Vineam Domini" condemning "respectful silence".
- 1707 Nuns deprived of sacraments.
- 1708 Bull of Clement XI for suppressing Port-Royal des Champs.
- 1709 Suppression of Abbey of Port-Royal des Champs. Dispersion of nuns.
- 1711 Exhumation of bodies buried at Port-Royal.
- 1713 Bull "Unigenitus" condemning 101 Propositions in Quesnel's Réflexions Morales sur le Nouveau Testament.
- 1715 Death of Louis XIV.