



LUKE 10: 31-42

The Gospel of Luke

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For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

Luke's gospel is a compilation of various interviews with eye-witnesses and close followers of Jesus (Luke 1:1-4). The author, Luke, probably did not become a Christian until several years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He is first mentioned (implicitly) in Acts 16:10 (Acts is another book of the New Testament which Luke wrote). He did not, therefore, meet Jesus in the flesh and he himself was not an eye-witness.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Continuation of Luke 10: 31-42

Ver. 31.—*And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.* By chance, humanly speaking, but really by the providence of God, for all things are foreordained by Him. Passed by on the other side, “ἀντιπαζήλθεν.” The priest, terrified at his appearance, turned away from him, and went by on the other side. Christ here draws attention to the perversity of the priests of that day, who were zealous in carrying out all the outward observances of the law, but were utterly wanting in true religion and in showing mercy and pity. For this priest left his fellow-countryman and neighbour in his direst distress without even a word of consolation or comfort.

Ver. 32.—*And likewise a Levite when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.* The Levite amongst the Jews, like the deacons in the Church, assisted the priest in his ministrations. He was therefore of one mind with the priest, for as the priest so is the Levite, as the prelate so the deacon, as the

master so the servant, as the teacher so the disciple. And so he also passed by on the other side.

Ver. 33.—*But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.* A Samaritan one of an entirely different race and religion, and therefore, as a heretic and schismatic, more hateful to the Jews than any other of the Gentiles. Yet this despised Samaritan had pity on the poor traveller who had, been abandoned by both priest and Levite. Hence we learn that not only our friends but also our enemies are our neighbours, and Christ holds up this Samaritan as an example of brotherly kindness and love, because he had compassion on one who was hateful to himself and his people.

Ver. 34.—*And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine.* Went to him, got off the horse or the ass on which he was riding, and poured into the wounds the oil and wine which he carried with him as refreshment for the way.

The order is inverted. He first, in accordance with the practice of the physicians of that day, washed the wounds with wine; for wine (1.) removes the coagulated blood; (2.) arrests corruption; (3.) closes the wound and strengthens the nerves against the effects of the bruises.

Then he anointed the wounds with oil—(1) To sooth their smart; (2.) to allay the pain; and (3.) to help forward the cure.

Hence S. Gregory says (*lib. xx. chap. 8, Moral*), By wine we may understand the gnawings of conscience; by oil the healing influences of religion—and so mildness must be mingled with severity if we would heal the wounds of the soul, and rescue sinners from the power of sin. But S. Chrysostom considers the wine to be the blood of the Passion, the oil the unction wherewith we are anointed, *i.e.* the unction of the Holy Spirit. Interlinear Gloss.

And set him on his own beast. On his ass. Syriac.

Allegorically. S. Augustine explains the beast to mean the flesh of Christ, and to be set thereon, to believe in the incarnation. S. Ambrose says, He places us on His beast whilst He bears our sins; and Theophylact, He made us to be His members and partakers of His body.

And brought him to an inn. εἰς πανδοχεῖον, in stabulum. Vulgate. The resting-place built for the accommodation of all—the stabulum, where travellers stopped or stood to rest,

And took care of him. Providing everything which his case required.

Ver. 35.—*And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence—i.e.* not two pence in the ordinary signification of the words, but sufficient to supply the wants of the wounded man until his return. S. Augustine says, “The two pence are the two precepts of love, which the apostles received for the evangelising of the world, or the promise of this life, and of that which is to come.”

And gave them to the host, &c. Learn hence how great was the love of the Samaritan, for he provided everything that was needful for the poor traveller’s cure.

Allegorically. The traveller is Adam wounded, and all but dead in trespasses and sins. For Adam went from Jerusalem to Jericho when he fell from grace into the power of Satan. For the thieves are the evil spirits who tempted Adam and Eve to sin, and corrupted the souls of all with the lust of concupiscence. The priest and Levite represent the ancient law, which was unable to remedy the consequences of Adam’s fall.

The Samaritan is Christ, by whom men are rescued from sin and promised salvation. The beast is his human nature, to which the divine is united, and on which it is carried and borne. The inn is the Church, which receives all believers. The wine is the blood of Christ, by which we are cleansed from sin. The oil represents his mercy and pity. The host, who is the head of the inn, *i.e.* of the Church, is S. Peter. So S. Ambrose, Origen, and the Fathers.

Hear also Origen more particularly: “A certain preacher thus interprets the parable. The man who went down from Jerusalem is Adam. Jerusalem is Paradise, Jericho the world. The thieves are the powers which are against us. The priest is the law, the Levite, the prophets. The Samaritan is Christ. The beast whereon he sat, the body of the Lord, *i.e.* His humanity. The inn the Church. By the two pieces of money we may understand the Father and the Son, and by the host, the head of the Church, him to whom its governance is committed. The return of the Samaritan is the second coming of the Lord;” and this interpretation seems reasonable and true.

Again the Fathers and Theologians teach from this parable that Adam was stripped of those gifts and good things which were of grace, but wounded in those things which were of nature, not indeed in his nature pure and incorrupt, for nature is the same after sin as before, but in his nature established by grace, cleansed and renewed by justification imputed by God. For in a nature of this kind all the appetites and passions as well as the lust of concupiscence are subjected to the understanding, so that a man does not wish or desire anything but that which is right. For deprived through sin of original justification we experience in ourselves, unwittingly and contrary to our will, evil desires. This is the wound which nature has received.

Ver. 36.—*Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?* The true meaning of the passage is this, Which of these three seems to thee to have acted as neighbour to the wounded man? and in this sense it was understood by the lawyer who answered, “He that showed mercy upon him.” Christ asked the lawyer which of the three by his actions showed that he looked upon

those who are in error, caring for the sick, and in ministering to the necessities of all, specially to the necessities of those committed to our trust. But he who would lead a life of contemplation must ever keep in mind the love of God and of his neighbour, and refraining from acting on this love, look with the longing expectation of a heart wholly fixed on heaven for the glory which shall be revealed.”

Hence S. Thomas says, “The contemplative life, although mainly intellectual, originates in the affections, inasmuch as it springs out of the love of God, and the end of such a life is like the beginning, for delight at the sight of that which we love increases our love for it.”

The contemplative life therefore causes a man to rise superior to the world, its trials and temptations, and to count all things as valueless in comparison with God, and gives perfect peace, because, S. Bernard says, “God wrapt all things in a holy calm, and to gaze on Him is to be at rest.” But this life of contemplation is preceded by an active life of mortification and self-denial, for as the fruit follows after the flower, so from a monk does a man become a hermit. Therefore S. Basil and other ascetics say that the monastic life is a fitting preparation for that life of contemplation to which the hermits are devoted.

And so the Church has rightly appointed this portion of scripture to be read on the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin because she rendered to Christ the service both of Martha and of Mary, and chose that good part, of which she will never be deprived.

* Taken literally the following is the better interpretation: “I foresaw that by your preaching the power of Satan should be quickly broken,” or what amounts to the same thing, “Whilst you were absent preaching and working miracles in obedience to My command, I saw the power of Satan growing weak, and Satan, as it were, cast down from heaven.”

but was wont to spend whole nights in prayer, and following his example thus did also the Baptist and the Apostles.

Which shall not be taken away from her. Because to hear, like Mary, the word of God, and to meditate thereon, is spiritual food which will support her soul until it comes to appear in the eternal presence; but to minister, as Martha, is to choose that part which endures but for this present life. S. Augustine and others. Hence S. Gregory. “The part which Mary chose will never be taken away from her, because a contemplative life is unlike an active life, its joys gain strength from death.”

Hear also S. Augustine: “That which thou hast chosen, Martha, will be taken from thee, that something better may be given. For in place of labour thou shalt have rest. Thou hast not yet reached thy journey’s end, but thy sister is in the haven.” And a little before he says, “Martha was troubled how she might feed the Lord, Mary anxious to be fed by Him.” And again, “Carefulness for many things passes away, but the love of one thing lasts for ever.” And Laurentius Justinianus says, “An active life is an anxious one, but a life of contemplation possesses a lasting joy. The one obtains a kingdom, while the other perceives only. In the one the world is despised, in the other God will be manifest, for ‘My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.’” Isaiah xxxii. 18.

Again S. Gregory writes, “The active life ends with this world for in the next who can give bread to the hungry where there is no hunger—or drink to the thirsty where there is no thirst. But the contemplative life begins here on earth, to be perfected in heaven; for the fire of divine love which is kindled here, burns brighter in the presence of God, who is its object.”

See also Cassian, who says amongst other things, “In the future world all will pass from the many distractions of life and from actual work, to be absorbed in the love of God and in the contemplation of the Deity.”

Observe, as against Calvin, that Martha is the type of the active life, and that Mary, sitting silently at Jesus’ feet, insensible to what was going on around because of her rapt attention to the words of Christ, a type of the contemplative. S. Bernard and others.

But what is contemplation? S. Augustine (or whoever else may be the author of the treatise *De Spiritu et Animo*) answers, “It is the joyful admiration of a manifest truth.” But S. Bernard defines contemplation as “the uplifting of the mind to God, whereby we gain a foretaste of the joys of happiness eternal.” Others again say, “It is the sure intuition of the soul or its undoubted apprehension of the truth.” But Gerson, following Hugo says, “It is to be dead to all carnal desires, and to taste how sweet the Lord is. As David rejoiced in the living God (Ps. lxxxiv. 9), and declared God to be his portion for ever.” Ps. lxxiii. 25.

S. Gregory also (*hom. 14 in Ezek.*) thus describes the duties of each kind of life:—“The active life consists in giving bread to the hungry, in teaching the ignorant, reclaiming

the wounded man as a neighbour. For neighbour is a correlative term, and a man can only be a neighbour to a neighbour, just as a man can only be compassionate to one who needs pity.

Hence Christ indicates the one by the other, and thus answers the lawyer’s inquiry. Christ inverted His answer, in order to give an example of the perfection of brotherly love, so that the lawyer and all men might learn to imitate the Samaritan. Hence Jesus said, “Go and do thou likewise,” v. 37.

So also in the parable of the two debtors, Christ asks, “Which of them will love him most?” See chap. vii. 42. S. Augustine, Bede, and all the Fathers.

Ver. 37.—And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. Hereby we understand, says S. Augustine, “that he is our neighbour to whomsoever we must show compassion, if he need it, and would have shown it if he had needed it.” Hence it follows that even he who must in turn show us this duty is our neighbour. For the name of neighbour relates to something else, nor can any one be a neighbour except to a neighbour.

Hence it is clear that to no one, not even to our enemy, is mercy to be denied. And S. Augustine very appositely adds, “What more remote than God from men? For God possesses two perfections, righteousness and immortality. But man two evils, sin and death. God was made man, and so like unto us, yet not like us, for He was without sin, and by bearing the punishment, but not the guilt of sin, He abolished both the guilt and the punishment.”

Isidore of Pelusium assigns the cause. Relationship is reckoned according to nature, not virtue; in essence, not by worth; by compassion, not by place; by the manner of treatment, not by neighbourhood. For we must account him as a neighbour who is most in need of our aid, and be willing at once to render him help.

Ver. 38.—Now it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. As they went preaching the Gospel, v. i. “A certain village:” probably Bethany, where Martha dwelt.

The servant, says S. Augustine, by reason of His condescension, not His condition, received her Lord, the sick the Saviour, the creature the Creator, one to be fed in spirit, Him who must be fed in the flesh.

The hospitality of Martha is praised, for she received Jesus, who was hated by the chief priests and scribes, and in receiving Him she received God, who blessed her and her house, and after death received her into glory.

Thus Abraham entertained angels unawares. See Heb. xiii. 2.

Hence Christ appeared to Martha as she lay dying, and as a reward for her hospitality invited her to His heavenly kingdom, and it is added on the authority of S. Antonine, that the Lord Himself was present at her burial. Thus He honours those who honour Him.

Ver 39.—*And she had a sister called Mary, surnamed, Magdalene. They were sisters, says S. Augustine, not only by their parentage but in religion, for both were followers of Christ, and both served Him present in the flesh—blessed in such a guest.*

Which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word. The word “also” shows that at the very time when Mary might have been assisting her sister in her household cares, she was sitting at Jesus feet showing her diligence and zeal in hearing, and the great reverence which she had for Christ.

As by sitting at Jesus' feet she had made the better choice, says S. Augustine, so she received the greater benefit. For water collects in the low-lying valleys, but flows down the acclivities of the hills.

And heard His word. Christ here teaches His disciples how they ought to behave in the houses of those who receive them, for, says S. Chrysostom (S. Cyril in the Catena), “They should not remain idle, but rather fill the minds of those who receive them with heavenly doctrine.” That no time may be without fruit, but that they may everywhere sow the seeds of religion, and excite men to virtue and to the love of God. Thus did Peter Faber, the first companion of S. Ignatius Loyola, who spent his whole life in journeying amongst his fellowmen, and in his will left us this salutary advice, that when we enter a house we should recite the hours, or take part in religious discourses, to show the reality of our profession. For thus a stop is put to improper conversation, and religion is the gainer. Thus he more than once by his discourse moved those whom he was entertaining to repentance, and received from them confession of their sins. Thus also did S. Francis Xavier, who sailed throughout the East, and won converts as much by his life as by his preaching.

Ver. 40.—*But Martha was cumbered with much serving, πεζισπᾶτο πεζι πολλήν διακονίαν, was drawn aside and distracted, i.e. was anxious that nothing should be wanting for the entertainment of such a guest. Hence the Arabic, Martha was diligently serving to the utmost of her power.*

And came to Him, and said, Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. Came to Him: Greek, ἐπιστάσα, standing by Him.

Dost Thou not care? Does not it displease you? Arabic.

Martha spoke thus partly from her wish that all things should be properly prepared for Christ, partly from her knowledge of His consideration and kindness. Lord, my

There are three persons in the Godhead, and these three are one, so the nearer you approach to perfect unity, the higher you draw to God; and Christ Himself prays the Father that His disciples “may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.” And again, “The glory which thou gavest Me have I given them; that they may be one, even as We are one.” See S. John xvii. 21 *et seq.*

Hence to choose the good part, is to give up all care of earthly things, and to devote oneself entirely to the service of God.

Hear Richard de S. Victor on Cant. viii: “Mary chose the better part, because she saw that the contemplation and the love of God included all things; but her sister was occupied about things which, though many, are limited to this world: hence by comparison Martha was troubled about few things. But the one thing necessary, and to be preferred before all, is to love God with the whole heart, and to show love and charity to all men.” And Suarez (*De Oratione Mentali*) says, “Mary made the better choice, because mental prayer brings about blessedness in this life, because it is the commencement of that beatific vision which will be the happiness of the saints in heaven.”

Hence the joy of Magdalene was real and lasting. So S. Bernard says, “It is impossible to enjoy here on earth a sweet and happy life, since the earth itself is subject to constant change; but there is a joy lasting in its happiness, which arises out of a pure conscience. For the mind which is purified from earthly affections and entirely fixed on the contemplation of heavenly things, fears no threatenings, knows no fear, conceives no false hopes, but, void of all offence, rests in perfect peace.” Hugo Victorinus accounts for this perfect peace thus: “A conscience is quiet and void of offence when it is kindly affectioned to all, and bears ill-will to none: when it regards a friend with kindness, an enemy with patience, and seeks to do good, if possible, to all men.”

Allusion is here made, says Maldonatus, to the manner in which the ancients divided an inheritance. It was customary for the eldest son to divide the property into as many parts as might be requisite, and for his brothers to have the first choice, so as to ensure an equal division. Seneca (*lib. vi., Declamatio 3*).

Thus Christ was the inheritance, which Martha as the elder sister divided into two parts, to hear Christ and to serve Him. Mary the younger chose the better part, *i.e.* to hear the words of Christ, for the Hebrew *חֵלֶק* chelec, *i.e.* part, in Scripture signifies the lot of one's inheritance. Thus, “The Lord is my portion,” Lam. iii. 4. See also Psalm xvi. 5.

But the active and the contemplative life combined tend to perfection, for the one controls and directs the other. So Christ taught the people by day,

Wherefore David says, Ps. xlii. 2, “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?”

Symbolically, unity is the beginning and end of all numbers, for every number commences and ends in it—whilst it is independent and indivisible.

So God is the beginning and ending of all things, the Alpha and Omega (Rev. xxi. 6), who shutteth and openeth all things, before whom and after whom there is nothing. Who was from all eternity, through whom and by whom all things exist. Hence Plato says, “All things spring from the divine unity, and retain the trace of their origin, by means of which they are recalled to this unity, and perfected in it;” and considers unity to be God, in whom all things exist as branches from the root.

Again, where sin is there is division; but where virtue, there oneness—where love, there unity. Therefore let him who seeks after virtue love one thing, and seek also for unity. For Christ, the teacher of unity, wills to join us together in one Church and unite us to Himself.

For unity imparts holiness to the mind, health to the body, peace and concord to countries and households, in short, all the virtue and strength of a nation arises out of its oneness with itself. But division is the cause of discord, schism, war, and countless ills. Hence Plato (*De Repub. lib. v.*) says, The worst evil which can befall a state is division, and its highest good subjection, if subjection makes it again one.

Hence S. Augustine says of the heavenly life, “There will be there no grudging because of unequal love, for one love will reign supreme in all;” and S. Gregory, “So great a love there unites all, that each rejoices that another rather than himself has received a blessing.” Life therefore reigns in love, *i.e.* in union; but death in hatred, *i.e.* in division.

Mary hath chosen that good part. The Syriac and Arabic add “to herself”—hath taken to herself. The Greek word ἀγαθὴν implies excellence, hence the Vulgate gives *optimam*. For Christ commends the one sister more than the other. “Thou, Martha, hast chosen well, but Mary better. Thou hast not chosen a bad part, but she a better.” S. Augustine. “Behold, Martha is not blamed, but Mary is praised.” Bede. And again, S. Augustine (*serm. 27 De Verbis Domini*), “Can we imagine that Martha was blamed for being intent on hospitable cares? How could she be rightly blamed for rejoicing over such a guest?” So also Ambrose and Cassian (*Collat. i., chap. 8*).

Theophylact explains, “By the action of the one, the body is nourished; by the action of the other the soul receives life.” And Euthymius, “It is good to be hospitable, but it is better to hear the word of God, for the one is of the body, the other of the spirit.”

S. Augustine gives another figurative interpretation: “Why was Mary’s the better part? Because she preferred the one thing to many. Many things were created, but there was but one Creator, and if the things created were very good, how excellent must He be who created them.”

sister sees me overwhelmed with care because of my desire to honour Thee, and yet does nothing to assist me. Out of kindness to me, bid her, therefore, share my labour. She will obey Thy word, but will not, I know, listen to my request.

Ver. 41.—*And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.* The repetition of her name, says S. Augustine, “is a sign of affection, or perhaps of a desire to arrest her attention more particularly to what He was about to say. For she was so entirely engrossed by her household cares, that His words might have been unheeded had she not been specially addressed by name.” S. Augustine adds, “Mary made no reply, because she preferred to commit her cause to her judge, and knew that Christ would, as He was wont, stand by her and support her. Hence Christ, who was appealed to as judge, became her Advocate.” Interlinear Gloss.

Thou art too anxious, Martha, and therefore thou art troubled. Thou desirest to prepare many things for me, whereas I need but few. Emmanuel Sa and all the others translate τυζβάζή, thou art confused, but the better rendering is, thou art troubled. For those who are anxious about many things experience much perturbation of mind—hence too much care and anxiety is the sign of excessive love or fear, and so they who love honour or riches, or any other thing too much, fear lest they may lose what they love, and become perturbed and anxious.

Ver. 42.—*But one thing is needfull.* The Greek has ἐνὸς δὲ ἑστίν χρεία; and this “one thing” Christ places in opposition to the “many things” about which Martha was troubled.

What then is this one thing which is needful? Luther, Bullinger, Melancthon, and other like innovators answer, Faith, *i.e.* to hear the Gospel and to believe in it. For this is what the Magdalene did. Hence they think that faith only is necessary for salvation. Only believe, they say, that you are saved through the merits of Christ, and you will assuredly obtain your salvation. But such a faith is rash and delusive. For blasphemers and evildoers might possess it. Hence, in addition to faith, hope, charity, and good works are necessary for salvation, as is clear from S. Matt xix. 17, 1 Cor. xiii., and Holy Scripture generally, and from the example of the Magdalene herself, who not only heard, but was obedient to the word of the Lord. See S. Luke vii. 43.

The truer and more orthodox interpretation seems to be that of those who understand by “one thing” one kind of food. Thou art anxious, Martha, to place before me many dishes, but to no purpose, for I require but one. I want not a rich banquet, but only ordinary food, for I am temperate, and a lover of humble fare. I do not blame, but praise your desire to do Me honour, yet I warn you not to be over careful for the things of this life, nor

to call your sister away from hearing My words. So Theophylact, S. Gregory, and others.

Hear also S. Basil. "There is need of few things, or rather of but one. Of few things as far as preparations are concerned, but of one object for the supply of our need;" and Titus, "We came not hither to fill ourselves with superfluous food, for nature is content with little." Similarly Theophylact says, "One thing is needful: we must eat something, but we need not varieties of food," *i.e.* according to the Arabic version, "That which is necessary for us we can easily obtain."

But in a higher sense, the one thing needful is the love of God, and the desire of salvation. This was the good part which Mary had chosen; and therefore, explaining the one thing needful, Christ goes on to say, "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

The meaning is, therefore, this: Thou, Martha, art troubled about many things, but I exhort thee to devote thyself to one thing alone, to seek to please God, and Him only, in every action of thy life, and to do everything out of love towards Him. So, not attempting that which thou art unable to perform, thou wilt be enabled to serve God quietly and without fear, and to accomplish whatsoever He would have thee to do. Bede, Euthymius, and others.

Hence S. Augustine and S. Gregory say, "This one thing is the end and chief good of men, on which their minds should be ever fixed;" and Cassian says, "The one thing needful is a mind which, regardless of all else, is fixed on God alone, and rejoices in the contemplation of His perfections." For although divine contemplation is not necessary for salvation it is necessary for the perfection of those who are united to God by a holy life. So the Psalmist says, Ps. xxvii 4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." And S. Paul, Phil. iii. 13, 14, "One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And again, Esther xiv. 18, "Thine handmaid hath never rejoiced since I was brought hither, unto this day, but in thee, O Lord, the God of Abraham."—Douay. For Christ saith, S. John xvii. 3, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

Wherefore, when S. Ægidius, a very holy man, one of the first followers of S. Francis, was asked the way to holiness and perfection, he answered, "Una uni." Let your whole mind be entirely given up to God, and one with Him. For unity is contrary to division, and God is one. Wherefore let him who seeks God return to unity with Him, for God must be sought by conformity of will, and by the union of the intellect and affections. S. Bernard (*serm. 7 in Cant.*)

Hence S. Augustine (*lib. ii, 18 De Ordine.*) proves by induction that all things tend to one, because, as he shows, "Unity or singleness is the first fruit of God, who is the first essential and uncreated unity, the origin and fount of all other unities;" and in a

later chapter he dwells upon the beauty of unity.

In short, the one thing needful is God. All other things contingent and immaterial, created by the good pleasure of God out of nothing; and as, to quote the proverb, he who pursues two hares catches neither, so he who strives to please God and the world fails to attain either object.

Figuratively, this "one thing" is to be acquired by meditation and prayer, for thus men are brought into communion with God. Hence he who would lead a religious life should seek this one thing only, so as to be thereby drawn into union with the Almighty. S. Dionysius and Climacus. "A monk is one who always has his soul lifted up to God; one who prays at all times, at all places, and on all occasions;" and S. Chrysostom says, "Prayer is the heart and soul of a perfect and religious life;" and S. Bonaventura (*De perfectione vitæ, chap. 5*), declares that "If any one who has taken the vows of a religious life omits frequent prayer, his soul is dead within him, or in other words he is like a body without a soul, having the outward form and religion, but lacking its inward grace." And again, "Without abundant prayer religion becomes languid and weak. Why, unhappy spirit, dost thou wander through many places, seeking rest and finding none? Set thy affections on Him, of whom are all things, and in Him thou wilt rest happy and content. For He will satisfy thee with good things, and give thee to drink out of His pleasures as out of a river."

Hear also what Epictetus says to Arrian: "All first principles must, as if the world were turned upside down, return to one—all beauty, truth, and everything which is good, to one origin—everything divine to one God, all unity to the Triune." For unity, the beginning of things, goodness, truth and God are the same, and therefore one. Hence we read, Cant. ii. 16, "My beloved to me, and I to Him," for the Bride makes entire surrender of herself to her spouse; and so the saints desire to put off the flesh, that their souls may be united with God. So S. Paul was willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. v. 8); and Simeon, "Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word;" and the Psalmist, "Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech." Ps. cxx. 5.

S. Basil speaks of some who abhorred this life, as if it were a dark prison, and with difficulty restrained their desire (*ὀζυγαίς*) for release, because their hearts were filled with the love of God, and eager to gaze upon the divine perfections: they longed for the time when they might for ever contemplate the loving kindness of the Lord.

So this blessed rest is to the wise a time of working, and the mind which has once been absorbed in the contemplation of the divinity, sustains itself on God and is sustained by Him.