PIERRE DE BÉRULLE

DISCOURSES ON THE STATE AND GRANDEURS OF JESUS

THE INEFFABLE UNION OF THE DEITY WITH HUMANITY

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Discourse 5

On the Communication of God in This Mystery

The more excellent things are, the more the understanding of them is worthy and desirable. It is better, says the great philosopher, to know a little about great things than to know much about lesser things.[1] Let us not be reluctant, therefore, to spend a little time going further into the secrets of our mysteries and knowing the greatness of this one that is God's masterwork, the secret of his secrets, the one that epitomizes and recapitulates all his mysteries—and which is an eternal mystery; in its faith the earth is occupied and in its sight heaven is blessed. For, in contemplating it, there are many great and high points that would all be indeed worthy of most particular consideration. The first that is encountered in the eyes of faith and the Church is the Word that is made flesh. The second is this flesh and humanity that is united with the Word. The third is this Word's subsistence, which is the bond of this oneness. The fourth is this Word's nature, which is the divine essence and which, in and through this person, is united with human nature. The fifth is that in this divine essence that has plurality of persons, the Word alone among the divine persons is the sacred, substantial, and personal bond uniting God with man. But it will be enough for us in this discourse to contemplate the divine Word, both in himself and in this work whose principal part he is—so to speak, for indeed he is as its

1. Cf. Aristotle, *Parts of Animals* 1.5 (644b), vol. 1, p. 3. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1.1.5, "Whether Sacred Doctrine Is Nobler Than Other Sciences," vol. 1 p. 3.

whole. He is the deep and everlasting source of all its excellences and grandeurs, he is the firmament of all its powers and privileges, he is the influencing cause of its gifts, graces, and preeminences, and he is the wondrous bond of this divine mystery's supreme state.

The eternal Word is produced and producing in the Most Holy Trinity. This belongs to him alone. He has his source, life, and rest in the oneness of the eternal Father, who alone is this Word's Father and principle. He receives from him, in his generation, the oneness of his essence; he is the only Son of the eternal Father, as though spending all of his Father's power to beget. He produces with him the third person of the Trinity, not in difference but in oneness of principle (which is ineffable). In this production of his, he has his endpoint in the oneness of the Holy Spirit, in whom the unmoving movement of the divine emanations ceases and rests as in a center of love and oneness.[2] This oneness, proceeding from the Father and the Word, unites this Word again with the Father by a kind of oneness that is distinct from earlier kinds. For this oneness that is produced is the oneness of the Holy Spirit, implored in all our invocations and prayers: he who in the property of his person is the bond, the love, and the oneness of the Father and the Son.

By these truths, which are not subtle but secure and are all articles of the faith in the doctrine of the most high mystery of the Trinity, we see that the divine Word is wholly encompassed within the divine unities. We adore him in their midst, as on a throne where he has from all eternity his being and life, his rest and glory. We confess him as being most fittingly the principle and subject of the highest mystery of oneness that the divine goodness, power, and wisdom can perform.

To understand this better, let us consider that the eternal Word occupies the middle between the Father and the Holy Spirit in the order of the divine persons. Like the Holy Spirit he receives the oneness of the divine essence, and like the Father he produces the oneness of the Holy Spirit. These two unities are distinct in power and are both to

2. Cf. Gregory Nazianzen, Oration 29, "Third Theological Oration, On the Son": "There Unity, having from all eternity arrived by motion at Duality, found its rest in Trinity. This is what we mean by Father and Son and Holy Ghost." In *Select Orations and Letters*, 301.

be observed in the person of the Word. One is in his essence, and the other is in his person, whose principle he is. The one is original and inherent (for all unities have their relation to the oneness of the divine essence, as to the first), and the other proceeds and is originated. The one is neither produced nor producing, but the other is produced, and it constitutes within the Trinity a divine person, who is produced as uniting the other two persons together by a bond worthy of their being and greatness, by an eternal, divine, and personal bond.

It was said of an Ancient that he painted what was impossible to paint, and that he achieved his works so well that he gave life and motion to his brushstrokes and animated what is inanimate.[3] So much did they want to claim him as excellent in rising above art, nature, and oneself. What they ascribed to this famous painter with immoderate words is rightly and truly fitting to the only Son of God, on a much better basis and in a very different subject. For as the Son of God contemplated himself, he wanted by a will and power shared by the divine persons to depict himself in a living and natural way. As the best painter in the universe and the most excellent artist, he wanted to depict what seems impossible, by forming and representing in this mystery the first, most vivid, and express image of the eternal Father. For as the Word beheld himself rightly as the image that the Father formed of himself within himself, he wanted to depict and represent himself in a work of his hands. This is shared by the Father and the Holy Spirit, but I attribute it to the Word by a kind of ascription that is founded in the singularity of this mystery. As the Son is, in the Godhead, the living image and perfect idea of his Father, he desires in this work of his to be as the living and perfect image of himself. According to the preceding discussion, since there are two unities that are distinct in power and that regard him and have so particular a relationship to him—the oneness of essence that he receives, and the oneness of person that he eternally produces—he wants to honor these two unities of his in one work and one counsel of singular oneness. He desires, as it were, to paint and depict them vividly in this matchless work of his, and he desires that

3. The reference may be to Apelles. Cf. Pliny, *Natural History* 35, trans. H. Rackham, *LCL* 330. Clement of Alexandria at *Exhortation to the Greeks* 4 mentions Apelles as a master painter. See *Exhortation to the Greeks*, trans. G. W. Butterworth, *LCL* 92, p. 141.

this mystery of his, in its state and circumstances, might be like a kind of honorary tribute to them. So just as we see in the Eucharist that he is himself the representation and image of himself at Calvary, and that by his presence established in this religious sacrament and sacrifice on the Church's altar he continually honors the great sacrifice that he made of himself on the altar of the cross, so also, in this precious work (the first and supreme of his mysteries), he wants to be, as it were, the living image of himself in eternity. He wants to himself honor and represent his being and state in the Godhead in the new being and state that he deigns to take on in our humanity.

This is why, just as he proceeds in eternity and is the first who proceeds from the Father whom St. Dionysius calls the fount and source of Deity, so also does he want to be as though proceeding in the fullness of time.[4] He wants to take on and have here a new being, in honor of the uncreated being that he receives from his Father. He wants to produce a mystery in himself, in which he himself might honor and regard the mystery of his eternal procession. He wants to consecrate in honor of the first divine emanation the first, greatest, and most untellable of his works and mysteries. And just as he is distinct here in the property of the divine emanations—as it belongs to the emanation of the Word to be begotten of the Father, to proceed from him as Father and begetter, and to be constituted by birth and eternal sonship in the order of the divine persons—so also therefore does he will to be begotten in time. He wants to come into the world by birth, not by another way that would seem to be more appropriate to his greatness. He wants to be truly Son of man, as he is Son of God. He wants to receive from his Mother on earth a temporal essence and to preserve it to himself eternally, in honor of the eternal essence that he receives from his Father. And because this essence is one in the Trinity of the persons, he unites himself to one single essence in kind and number, so that he might honor within the order of created things, and imitate within the oneness of this nature deified in him, the oneness of essence that is in the Godhead. So that just as there is but one divine essence, so also there may be but one deified essence that honors by this new state and perfect relationship

4. Cf. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Divine Names* 2.7, p. 64.

the oneness of essence that subsists within the Most Holy Trinity. And if we contemplate the Word, not only as God but as God produced and begotten (that is, in the property of his person), we will acknowledge that he is properly, substantially, and personally living, and that by the power and quality of his procession he is produced as living, or rather as life, and as the life that is the source of life in regard to the person of the Holy Spirit who proceeds from him. For this Word proceeds from the living God as his living Son, as receiving from him his own life, and as producing with him the life and love of the Holy Spirit. The Word, then, according to his own understanding, is life, the principle of life, and he is the principle of the life of love. This is why he willed to live by a new life just as he lives by an eternal life. Uniting himself with our humanity, he wanted to constitute by himself, with it and in it, a mystery of life, love, and oneness and to be himself a new life in the universe just as he is life in the bosom of his Father. He wanted to be a new principle of the Spirit of grace and love within time, just as he is the principle that continually produces the Holy Spirit within eternity.

Let us take this thought further and see in this work how the Son of God wanted to reflect again upon himself—that is, upon his matchless and intimate work in eternity, which is the production of the Holy Spirit. For, seeing that this person produced is the bond of the divine persons, he wants his person producing to be the bond of both the divine and human being. This Holy Spirit, this person, who proceeds from him in the Holy Trinity, is the bond that so unites the two divine persons that they are perfectly united in the oneness of the Holy Spirit and yet persist in their personal distinction and plurality. Thus, he wanted his own person to be the sacred bond uniting the two natures in such a way that they persist in their natural distinction and properties and are perfectly united in oneness of person, without confusion and without any division, as the holy councils say. So just as in the first of our mysteries we have and adore one divine person uniting two persons together, so also in the second of our mysteries we have and adore one divine person uniting two natures together: one divine and the other human. It adores, imitates, and regards the oneness of the Holy Spirit, who is the third person in the order of the Holy Trinity and whose property it is to be the eternal bond of the two persons from whom he

proceeds and whose personal love and sacred oneness he is. Let us conclude, then, and say that when we contemplate the divine Word, in his emanation or in his person or in his eternal production (that is, in all the points in which we may contemplate him within the Godhead), we see him singularly expressed and vividly represented by the state and the qualities of this divine mystery, which has a perfect relation with what is ineffable in eternity and is a portrait of God as he is.

With these thoughts taken at the source of life and the very being of the eternal Word, we contemplate him as on his throne and in his greatness, and we follow him in spirit as he comes down to our humanity. But we observe that the other divine persons remain in heaven and in glory; he alone humbles himself to earth, so that he alone may be clothed in human nature. This is not without foundation in the conditions corresponding to his person, for we have expressly pointed out not only that he proceeds in eternity, which he has in common with the Holy Spirit, but that he is the first who proceeds, which is distinct and particular to him. Since in this position he is the first to receive the deity that is to be communicated to the world, he also wants to be the first to come and give it to us. And we see that he is the first to come down from heaven in borrowed dress to give himself to the world. The Holy Spirit does not come down to earth to exercise a visible and manifest power until after this mystery and after the Son of God has consummated on earth all the ways in which he wanted to give himself to us by the many mysteries of his life and cross. As in a holocaust, it pleased him to be consumed in the outpouring of his love, to be reborn like a phoenix into a new life—a heavenly and immortal life, a life that prepares us for immortality.[5] As therefore the eternal Word is the first to receive this deity that is to be communicated to the world, he is the first to come and give it to the world. And just as he is the one alone who both receives and gives it in eternity, so also does he want to be the one

5. The earliest extant mention of the phoenix as a symbol of long life or immortality is found in Hesiod, *Precepts of Chiron*; see also Herodotus, *History* 2.73, p. 162. The phoenix as a type of Christ's Resurrection was first suggested by Clement of Rome, *Epistle to the Corinthians* 25–27, in *Epistles of St. Clement of Rome and St. Ignatius of Antioch*, trans. James A. Kleist (New York: Newman, 1946), 24–26, then by Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 13, *ANF* 3, p. 554.

alone who gives it substantially, in giving himself personally to our humanity. Thus, this mystery is founded in the conditions corresponding to the eternal Word. Thus, by himself and not only by his Father's will, the Word is brought to give himself to the world in a way so precious and singular. Thus, he deigns to regard our frailty, to bear it up; our lowliness, to exalt it; and our humanity, to espouse it.

Just as he abases himself to us and our wretchedness, so also ought we to rise up to him and his grandeurs, so that we might know and adore them. Let us not be reluctant therefore to spend time considering the grandeurs of the only Son of God, since he seems to take no thought of them so that he might humble himself in our humanity. For his grandeurs—eternal grandeurs—are his by birth; let us consider then, in a spirit of honor and love toward him, this primacy of birth and origin that are fitting to the Word. For it says something great and incomprehensible to man, and it is adorable by every created spirit and fundamental to this mystery. It sets a distinction, a reality, a wondrous property in eternity and in the pure and simple being of God. It constitutes an eternal person in the Godhead. It conveys power that produces the third divine person, which makes fitting the serious and profound words of the great St. Hilary: *Divinitatis sacramentum, nativitatis natura consummat*.[6] This birth, forming the circle of the internal emanations, comprehends God's fertility and seals and encompasses the mystery of the Trinity in the efficacy of his production. For just as his procession is the first of the processions, so also is his production the last of the divine productions.

These things are worthy of deep consideration to the one who knows how to understand them, and they would indeed deserve a longer discussion. But let us pass beyond and approach our mystery more closely. Let us say that this birth of the eternal Word gives him the right to many uses, offices, and actions on earth and in heaven, in time and eternity. It regards this high mystery of the Incarnation as its representation and image and as a new state in which the Son of God is made *primogenitus in multis fratribus*, as St. Paul says.[7] This is a new

6. Hilary, *The Trinity* 7[.41] (original marginal note). "The nature of the birth completes the mystery of the Godhead." Hilary, *The Trinity*, 271.

7. "Firstborn among many brothers." Rom 8:29.

primogeniture, which imitates, adores, and regards his primacy of birth in the order of the divine emanations. It is an eternal primacy, honored in a hidden and first way in the state of nature and of law by the preeminences that are established in favor of those who are firstborn. For the Author of law and of nature aims only at great things within these base things; he thinks of spiritual things in a law that is gross and carnal. He thinks of divine and eternal things in what is human and temporal, and as he always dedicates his works and laws to himself, his purpose is to express and honor, by these rights and privileges of the children of men, the powers and grandeurs of his only Son. And it seems to me precisely according to the eternal Father's hidden intentions that these rights and benefits that are assigned to the eldest, on the human plane, are so many marks of honor and so many tributes that human birth renders to the divine birth. This is because the eternal Father, who contemplates and looks only upon his Son, or in his Son as in his Word and one mirror, looks upon and honors the birth of God in that of man and causes imperfect law and mute nature to acknowledge tacitly in the things of God what they are not worthy of knowing distinctly. And by the will of its author and legislator to fill up what its incapacity lacks, in this way the human birth renders honor and homage to the primacy of birth and origin that is fitting to his only Son within eternity.

So that all things work together for the honor of what is so high, this only Son, acknowledged and honored by nature and law in this way, also receives various names in holy Scripture that variously describe the greatness of this untellable birth and procession, according to the saying of Isaiah, *Generationem eius qui enarrabit?*[8] Thus, in the prophets he is called the Dayspring,[9] for he is a Sun as well as his Father is—and a Sun emanated from a Sun[10]—of whom he is called the Son

8. Is 53[:8] (original marginal note). "Who will explain his generation?"

9. Lk 1[:78–79] (original marginal note). The French noun *orient* is translated as "dawn," "dayspring," "east," or "rising sun." It denotes the rising sun, dawn, or daybreak; the quarter of the sky in which the sun rises; or the eastern part of the world. Thus, in this passage and in discourse 10, Bérulle remarks that "all that is dawn owes tribute and homage" to him who is the Dawn, as does the eastern orientation of our churches and the catechumens who "turn themselves toward the east as a sign of their homage and cleaving" to him.

10. Mal 4[:1–2]; Is 60[:1–3] (original marginal note).

of light even by those who had only a simple intimation and most obscure understanding of him, and also by those who, being his children, are called children of light in his Scriptures, to whom it pleased him to reveal and manifest himself.[11] But by this emanation, it is singular of him that although he is a Sun as his Father is, he is a rising Sun, which his Father is not. This sun that we see rising and setting daily is only his intimation and representation, whereas this Sun that shines in our darkness and rises in our hearts, according to St. John, is the true Dayspring whom we ought always look to and adore.[12] Toward him also, from the time that his birth was made known to the world, our temples are directed, which are the public and solemn places of our adoration. Thus, he is the Dayspring in the Godhead; he is the Dayspring in eternity. He is so much the Dayspring that he is without beginning, a Dayspring therefore eternal, but he desires also to be our Dayspring in the fullness of time. And thus, as a new Dayspring in our humanity, he comes to take his setting in our mortality.

Similarly, he is called Flower and Shoot, that is, the flower and shoot of the Godhead. This is the name that the Hebrew language gives him in Isaiah and that is preserved for him in the rich and blessed version of the Church.[13] This is the term that St. Dionysius calls him by in his *Divine Names*, which corresponds to him rightly and justly.[14] For the flower is the first ornament that the sun gives to nature when its course raises it over our hemisphere and brings it closer to us. The flower is what the tree, by its fertile power, first sprouts and produces in the amenity of spring, when the earth begins to be covered and laden with its offspring. The flower is the first of nature's productions and what the womb of the earth first germinates and unfolds by the heavens' gentle influences. So also the Word is the first emanation of God; he is the one whom the bosom of the Father first conceives and produces in eternity. He is the one who first proceeds from this sacred stock. That he is the firstborn of God even the Platonists say, for they learned this from our sacred writings, in which we read that he is the first fruit of the divine

11. Lk 16:8; Jn 12:36; Eph 5:8; 1 Thes 5:5.

12. 2 Pt 1:19; Rv 22:16.

13. Is 11[:1]; Is 4[:2] (original marginal note).

14. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Divine Names* 2.7, p. 64.

fertility.[15] He therefore also wanted as first fruit—first fruit not of the earth but of the very Godhead—to be offered to the Godhead and to put himself in the state of being presented to God as the first fruit of all that is and ever will proceed from God. I call him flower, shoot, and fruit together, for what is scattered and divided in created things is brought together in God. The Word is fruit as to his procession's perfection and maturity. He is flower as to beauty, which rightly accords with his person and is ascribed to the Word not only by our teachers but even by the Platonists, our imitators, who perceived the intimations of our mysteries in their representations and saw something of their greatness in our prophets' figures of speech. And he is flower and shoot as to his power to produce a second person of the Godhead, because just as fruit comes from the flower and shoot, so also from the Son comes the Holy Spirit, who is the second person proceeding in eternity.

Now, from this comes a noteworthy distinction between the two persons who proceed, which is relevant to our discussion and causes us to come down precisely on our mystery's point and center, teaching us one of the principal reasons for which the Word, and not the Holy Spirit, enters into the work of the Incarnation to accomplish it by his hypostasis. Because the Word is the living source of the Holy Spirit who proceeds from him as well as from the Father, and who is called, from this point of view, the Spirit of the Son and the Spirit of truth, he dedicates to the Father both himself and this Spirit as being emanated from him. For it is his distinctive feature and his state in eternity to be an eternal and substantial relation of himself, and, as a result, of all that proceeds from him, toward the eternal Father as toward the principle and source of his being and of all original being. By contrast, the Holy Spirit, who is produced and not producing in the Godhead, does not

15. According to a teaching that began among Alexandrian Jews and was taken up by the early Church, Plato is said to have received his wisdom from Moses. This idea was revived by the Renaissance humanists. An associate of Bérulle, Pierre Coton, wrote that the Septuagint was in fact the second Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures: "The first was that which Plato had, before the Macedonian monarchy, which Clement of Alexandria refers to." Coton, *Institution catholique* (Paris, 1610), 316–17, quoted in Dagens, *Bérulle et les origines de la restauration catholique* (*1575–1611*) (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952), 25.

have the right to dedicate the Son to the Father nor give him to the world. If he had united himself with a created being, he would not have been able to employ and apply the work of the Word as something his own in this high and singular manner. For the Word is produced from the Father alone, he is sent by his Father alone, and he works by him alone, just as he receives from him alone his being and his life.

But since the only Son of God is the Holy Spirit's principle and source, he has power to dedicate him to the Father. He has power to give him to the world and to send him upon his apostles. He has power to apply him to the work of this mystery of his and to employ his work there as something whose origin is his own, which is the foundation of all that the Son works by the Holy Spirit insofar as he gives and communicates to him the power and deity by which he works. This removes all impropriety and imperfection in these lofty words and strong expressions that we have used in describing the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Son in his holy workings, since what is only imperfect in created things is found, by a great marvel, to be without imperfection in divine and uncreated things. For it is marvelous that in the oneness and simplicity of God, there is plurality: plurality without division. It is marvelous that there is procession: procession without sequence. It is marvelous that this procession is without majority and superiority in the one and without minority and inferiority in the other.[16] And it is also marvelous that this sending, this application, this activity among the persons is without subordination; but it is founded in the greatness, singularity, and deity of their principle and origin. To encounter so many marvels is so worthy of God, so fitting to God, so natural to God that it is no longer marvelous that there be so many marvels together in the being of an infinite majesty—the being that is the principle of all being and the source and fullness of so many marvels.

Let us conceive of divine things therefore according to their divineness and not according to our baseness. Let us conceive of these uses, actions, and words without the imperfection of human reason. Rising up above ourselves, let us go from marvel to marvel and enter into wonder

16. *Majority* and *minority* are to be understood here in the sense of status according to age.

as we see that in the greatness of our mysteries and the sublimity of our faith we have and acknowledge two eternal and divine principles: not as the Manichean does, the one good and the other evil, the one in direct opposition to the other, but both good, both sources of divine goodness. The one first, the other second, but both equal, both divinely bound together, both regarding and loving each other mutually, and each in perfect sympathy with the other. The one subsisting in the Godhead only, and the other subsisting in the Godhead and humanity both. The one producing from all eternity, and the other producing for all eternity. The one is the eternal Father, the Principle-without-any-principle, alone producing and not produced, in whom we adore an authority (to speak according to the great teacher of France)[17] and a majesty that produces all that is produced beyond the Godhead and even within the Godhead. The other is the only Son of God, the father of the age to come, the true principle of life in the fullness of time through the sacred mystery of the Incarnation, and who is furthermore, in eternity, the principle of a divine person, but a principle that itself originates in another person, and who is, to speak according to the Council, "God from God, light from light."[18] He is God both producing and produced, which is incomprehensible, and in him we adore an infinite authority and dignity. He divinely dedicates to the eternal Father himself and everything without exception that proceeds from him, as his Holy Spirit, or proceeds and is dependent on him, as all that is created. Thus, it belongs to the Word in his eternity to be constantly dedicating to his Father the persons proceeding from his Father (that is, himself and the Holy Spirit) and to thus be worthily and divinely regarding, loving, and honoring, in the relation of himself and of all that proceeds from him, the most high and sublime majesty of the eternal Father, whom those who are nothing do not want to acknowledge, serve, and adore on earth.

As we contemplate the birth, greatness, and office of the eternal Word, we adore his being, his life, and his state in God his Father and his power that produces a divine and uncreated person within eternity.

17. Hilary, *The Trinity* 9 (original marginal note). Hilary discusses the Father's authority, and Christ's relationship with it, throughout this ninth book.

18. Nicene Creed, set forth at the First Council of Nicaea (325 AD). See Percival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, 3.

We marvel at his birth and primacy in the order of the divine emanations, by which he dedicates to God the Father in eternity both himself and the Spirit who emanated from him. We acknowledge his right, by the condition of this birth of his, to place himself in a divine mystery, in which he may divinely, substantially, and personally dedicate to God's homage all that is created, just as in the Godhead he dedicates to God his Father all that proceeds and is uncreated. In this way, he is led and prompted by himself, that is, by his personal properties and perfections, to enter into a new state to his Father's glory and to accomplish this new mystery. For he is the first to emanate from God, and he desires to be in a state and condition by his human nature to be offered to him as first fruits, in recognition of all that universally proceeds from him. He is the one alone who has emanated from the Father alone, and he wants to be the one alone who constitutes by himself this new mystery. He wants to be the one alone who adores divinely and personally in his humanity the sole Principle-without-any-principle of all things, who is his eternal Father, the one whom St. Dionysius calls the origin and principle of all deity. He is the living image that the eternal Father produces in contemplating himself, and he wants to be, in a new manner, an image that lives and speaks of God's grandeurs and that by a divine power restores in us the image and likeness of the Godhead that was impressed on our nature and effaced by sin. He is the imprint of the Father's substance, and the Father gives and communicates his own substance to him by impression. He wants to be the seal and imprint impressing his own essence and subsistence on human nature.[19] In honor of his Father who impresses him on himself and who eternally gives him being, he desires to give us this being. He wants to apply and impress himself on created nature like a divine imprint. He is the uncreated Word by whom all things were formed, and he wants to be the incarnate Word by whom they may all be re-formed and raised to a greater dignity. He is the only Son of the Father, and he wants to create for him by his power, beget for him by his love, obtain for him by his merits, and give to him by his spirit many children who long for his glory. He wants to make his own natural sonship a living source of adoptive sonship. This makes him

19. Cf. Hilary, *The Trinity* 8.44, p. 310.

father and principle in the order of grace and of glory. It gives him glorious titles, rights, and privileges and gives us most glorious teachings. We must summarize these teachings before we go further, and from the Son of God's state in regard to his Father we must learn what our state toward him is meant to be. In the high and sublime life of the only Son toward the Father we must contemplate the life that we are to begin on earth and consummate in heaven, drawing the first brushstrokes and features of our perfection upon so accomplished a model, and forming ourselves in the life of the Spirit and in all virtue upon so divine a life and so precious and excellent an example.

For, just as the eternal Word proceeds in his divine being and has God for Father, so also do we proceed in our supernatural being (although in another way) and must acknowledge the Son of God as our father, from whom we all take our being and the life of grace. For this reason, he is given the name "father of the age to come" among the titles and qualities that were foretold in the oracle of his coming. Just as the Word and eternal Son of God always regards his Father because he is his Father, so also ought we to have a perpetual regard toward the Son, because he is our father. This regard of ours toward him should be one of supreme honor, most powerful love, and entire and absolute submission, desiring that our whole being might be eye and spirit so that we might be wholly devoted and occupied in this spiritual and divine regard toward the resource and new principle of our being. Just as the only Son of God has a constant relation toward his Father of all that he is, and his being and life consist in this relationship—even, to speak precisely, his life is nothing but a life that is substantially and personally relative of what he is, toward his sole principle—so also the use of our being and life should be totally devoted to the complete and absolute relation of all that we are, in the order of nature and of grace, by his eternal mercies. In the works of profane writers, fabled loves transformed people into other substances. How much more ought we to desire that the power of him who truly transforms things in their nature might be employed upon us, and that by virtue of his powerful love our being's substance might change its state and condition so that we might be blessedly converted in a pure relation toward him, in homage, love, and imitation of his personal substance, life, and subsistence

that is wholly relative toward the eternal Father. Just as the Son of God so proceeds from the Father, regards the Father, and dedicates himself to the Father, that he is, notwithstanding this, most intimate in his Father and resides in him—*A matrice excessit, non recessit*, as the learned Tertullian says—so also should we be inseparably joined with the Son of God as the vine shoot is to the vine and as he himself is inseparably joined with his Father.[20] We should be and remain perpetually in him, just as he is and remains in his Father. We should always be living and working by him and for him, just as he lives and works by his Father, for he is both the principle and the end of our being and our life.

And finally, as the only Son of God beholds himself as unchangeable in his being, he wills to change his condition for his Father's glory and be made man so that he might live a kind of life in which he might suffer and work, which he cannot do in the Godhead. He even wills to preserve this new being always, to honor God his Father not only by his works and sufferings during the course of his pilgrim life on earth but also by a new and permanent state in heaven and eternity. Following his example, then, we should change our life and condition, and, to the glory of him who makes such a striving over his greatness, we should make a striving over ourselves, our activities, and our passions. We have two ways of serving him: one by actions alone and the other by state. We should choose this way that is abiding, secure, and permanent. We should embrace a manner of life that may of itself honor God's majesty and be the origin of many holy and virtuous actions, in honor of the state and life that the Son of God enters into by the sacred mystery of the Incarnation and in which he continues in the heavens eternally. All of these points and singular relationships are well worthy of exercising Christian thought and piety. They are like so many secure foundations, which establish the relationship that we should have and claim to have with the Son of God by the humble state of servitude that we vow to him, in honor of the relationship that he has with his

20. Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* (original marginal note). "He went forth from the bosom, he did not withdraw from it." The text, *A matrice non recessit, sed excessit* is found in Tertullian, *Apology* 21: "He did not withdraw from the bosom, but went forth." See *Apology*, trans. Sydney Thelwall, *ANF* 3, p. 34. Tertullian does write on a similar theme in *Against Praxeas* 8, p. 602.

Father by the wondrous state of his divine and eternal sonship. But it is enough to point this out here in passing; the practice and breadth of it is addressed elsewhere.

Let us continue the thread of this discussion in honor of the eternal Word, and let us observe that as we form ourselves like this in the practice of these divine relations, we honor the only Son of God by expressing his life and state within our own. By honoring him we honor his Father in him, who has given him to us through the outpouring and abundance of his love. It is a chain of love and honor, binding us to the Father and to the Son and causing us to imitate and adore the mutual love and honor that is between them. For the Son of God loves and honors his Father in looking upon him as his origin, and the Father loves and honors his Son in communicating to him his being and life and by impressing these on him. These two divine persons honor one another with an eternal honor, a mutual regard, and a mutual love. The life of the Father and the Son is therefore a life of honor, love, and contemplation, truly worthy of the greatness, dignity, and deity of these two eternal lovers. As these two divine persons contemplate, love, and honor each other in eternity in this mutual way, they also honor one another by a new way of honor in the new mystery of the Incarnation, which, to speak precisely, is a mystery, state, and exercise of mutual honor and love of the Father toward the Son, of the Son toward the Father, and of the Father again toward himself. For just as the eternal Father honors his Son in the Godhead in giving him divine being and life, so also does he honor him in our humanity, in various ways. He honors him by proclaiming him by the law and his prophets to be the sovereign, salvation, and light of the world. He honors him by employing the effects of his power and his greatest marvels so that he might be acknowledged as his only Son and as his equal in power, greatness, and majesty. He honors him by setting him forth as a visible god upon the earth and by manifesting his divine greatness under the veil of his mortality.[21] He honors him by appointing him within the ages as the principle of life, grace, and glory, just as he himself in eternity is the

21. Cf. Nicholas Copernicus, *On the Revolutions* 1.10: "[Hermes] the Thrice Greatest labels it [the sun] a visible god." Trans. Edward Rosen (Warsaw: Polish Scientific, 1978), 22.

principle of divine and uncreated life in the two persons proceeding from him. He honors him by emptying himself of all use and exercise of judging the world, in order to give this power to his Son, Son of God, Son of man, and to make him the universe's sole and sovereign judge. And finally, he honors him by filling his human nature with all the effects of deity and all the states of glory that can be communicated to him and that are properly owed to the man whose state is that of personal oneness with God himself. In this we must observe that in honoring his Son like this, the eternal Father honors himself, and that just as all proceeds from him, so also by a divine circle all returns to him, and the honor that he gives to his Son returns to himself. For in giving his Son the power, authority, and position of father toward us, and in making him our head and our second Adam, he gives to himself in a sense the new position of head of a subject as honorable as is Jesus Christ our Lord, who confesses and adores God as his Father and head—as his Father in his deity and as his head in his humanity, according to this divine oracle: *Caput Christi Deus*.[22]

We see clearly, then, as we follow so many divine relations and truths, that by an excellent means, a divine state, a new fatherhood, and an eternal mystery, God honors the divine and eternal being and name of Father that he has in regard to his only and eternal Son. It remains then to explain how, in the work of the Incarnation, the Son honors his Father. For it is evident that he honors him in honoring his own birth and eternal sonship, since it is in regard to it and it alone that he is father in eternity. He honors this birth by taking on a new birth and sonship in the world and by impressing his divine sonship on our humanity by his subsistence. He also honors his eternal Father by establishing himself in a state and singular mystery in which, being Son, he becomes the serf and slave of the Father, as is said elsewhere. In being made man, he wants to render tribute and homage to the eternal Father for all that is created, and honor for all that he has received from him in eternity. Still possessing the being of his deity, he offers God to God, since he offers himself who holds the rank of divine person in the Trinity. Being truly and perfectly God-Man and Man-God, he is

22. 1 Cor 11[:3] (original marginal note). "The head of Christ is God."

assuredly the most worthy subject that God's power may ever produce, and he prepares for him the greatest sacrifice, the most holy host, and the most wondrous holocaust that God's holiness will ever be able to receive.

Just as this mystery is most high in itself and in all that belongs to it, so also all is most singular, august, and divine in it, both in its causes and in its circumstances. The Holy Trinity as a whole is divinely and singularly occupied in establishing this work that is also distinctively his work. It treats of it in the highest and most secret of its councils, without admitting any other to this sacred council. As God, the eternal Father ordains it, and as Father he is the first principle of this divine work. For it is he who as Father, and as only Father, sends his Son alone to accomplish it. The only Son of God comes into the world, not through his gifts or through his effects as before, but in his own person and in a manner that is wholly new and unknown on earth and in heaven. In the time ordained by God, which the Scriptures call "the fullness of time"[23] (for reasons that will be explained another time), in the light of letters and in the flowering of the most powerful empire,[24] the Light and Power of the eternal Father willed to be seen and felt upon the earth. In the month, therefore, on the day, and at the moment chosen by divine wisdom, heaven opens and the eternal Word descends to the earth to accomplish this mystery himself. He comes into the world four thousand years after having created it, in order to be one of its inhabitants, to honor it by his coming, to sanctify it by his presence, to establish in it his power, to be the Center, Sun, and Savior of the world, and to cause the rays of his love, greatness, and mercy to shine in it forever. Each of the three persons of the Godhead makes this work his own by fitting and distinct operations. Thus, just as the Father sent his Son, so also, before descending to the earth to accomplish this great work that had not yet been and that will never have its peer, the Son sends the person of the Holy Spirit, as being his by origin. He does this to prepare, before his coming, this work that is his own work in so many respects and on such singular bases; so divine is this work in its

23. Gal 4:4.

24. Rome's military and cultural apogee occurred from the first century BC to the first century AD.

substance, principles, and circumstances. For the angel who announces it to the Virgin says specifically, *The Holy Spirit will come upon you*[25]—that is, if we follow this sacred word's specific meaning, not God simply in his deity that is common to the three persons, but this particular person who is emanated from the Word, this third person subsisting in the Godhead, this person who is called, in distinction to the others, the Holy Spirit. This Spirit of love and oneness, in his own person, contributes to this work that is also a work of divine love and oneness. By a special appropriation that is founded in his love and oneness, he arranges the matter that is to be actuated by the divine being, by drawing this body from the Virgin's substance, forming and arranging it, and rendering it capable of receiving not the power only but the person and subsistence of the Word. He wills to make him gloriously alive and consubsisting in his Godhead.

Here we are brought, by the perfections and conditions that are fitting to the Word, right into his work and mystery. By the properties and productions of the divine persons, we are brought to the production of this divine work. We have come to the blessed day, the remarkable day in our calendar, in which God, coming down from his greatness in his goodness and from his righteousness in his mercy, wills to unite himself with our humanity. Here we are at the moment, the precious moment in time and in eternity, the moment to which all our moments should be dedicated, the moment in which this great God, as though taking no thought of himself so that he might remember us, desires to be clothed in our mortality. Here we are at the point of the wondrous state in which God enters into our wretchedness and man enters into the grandeurs of God. For the Word is made flesh, God is made man, man becomes God, and God is made man in order to make men gods.[26] This is a great saying, expressing in few words mysteries that are most high, which thought cannot adequately adore nor tongue

25. Lk 1[:35] (original marginal note).

26. Ps 82:6; Jn 10:34. Cf. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* 8.54, p. 93; Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* 3.19, vol. 3, pp. 92–93; Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 1, p. 23; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.28, trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 146; Augustine, Sermon 166.4, in *Sermons 148–183*, trans. Edmund Hill, *WSA*, pt. 3, vol. 5, p. 209.

adequately express! What shall I say, readers, yet what shall I not say? I must say to you with one of the Church's oracles and in his words: *Suscepi tractanda divina homo, spiritalia carnalis, aeterna mortalis. Ubi aperitur, pascor vobiscum, ubi clauditur, pulso vobiscum*.[27] I knock therefore at the door of uncreated and incarnate Wisdom, and I ask him for his light and leading: *Ut loquar infirmus fortia, parvus magna, fragilis solida*.[28]

What is stronger than this mystery, which destroys sin, conquers the devil, overcomes God in his anger, and holds him captive willingly in love toward the one who offended against him? What is greater than this mystery, which draws man out of nothingness, resurrects him in glory, exalts him to heaven forever, and, in making men gods by grace—as he himself says, is brought to completion as though in its principal subject, in a Man-God, not by grace but by subsistence and in oneness of divine person?[29] What is more certain and sure than this mystery, since the sins that inundated the earth for four thousand years and rose up to heaven were not able to keep it from being accomplished? After it was accomplished, the horror of a deicide could not dissolve it—the horror, I say, of a deicide that covered the heavens with darkness, eclipsed the sun, disturbed the universe, and caused horror to insensible nature. For, despite this calamity and this merciless attempt that was made upon the life of a God, the state of this mystery remained subsisting and unalterable in the parts that were separated from the humanity, and it was made new in the reunion of the same parts and in the same humanity that was made new by the glorious resurrection. It was made new so that it might never again be altered or interrupted for a single moment. For at the point of the resurrection, the only Son of God gives this humanity a new life, a heavenly life, an immortal life.

27. Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 18.5 [18.1] (original marginal note). "I have spoken to you of divine things, I who am but a man; of things wholly spiritual, I who am carnal; of eternal truths, I who am subject to death. If the truth is opened to me, it nourishes me along with you; if it remains closed, I knock along with you." See *Tractates on the Gospel of John, 11–27*, trans. J. W. Rettig, *FC* 79, p. 125.

28. Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 48.10 [10.11] (original marginal note). "In my weakness, I set forth to you a strong doctrine; in my meanness, great teachings; in my fragility, firm truths." See *Tractates on the Gospel of John, 28–54*, p. 236.

29. Jn 10[:34]. *Ego dixi dii estis* (original marginal note). "I have said, you are gods."

He chooses it to be the companion of his glory, he sets it on his throne and at the right hand of his Father. He sets himself within it as on a throne, as on the most worthy throne, the most eminent and exalted there is, apart from the bosom and divine essence of the Father. God will dwell in this humanity eternally, in such a way that man will be God for as long as God is God, and the Son of man will be Son of God for all eternity. For such is the supreme Majesty's good pleasure, to give himself to man by an indissoluble and eternal union. And such must be man's good pleasure also, to give himself to God with such power and efficacy that no solvent in the world could be capable of dissolving and rupturing this union. We want this to be so, O Jesus my Lord, and we offer our vows and wishes to your infinite Majesty! Let us be yours, as you are ours! Let us be yours forever, as you are ours forever! Let us be your members and you be our head, as God himself is your head! Let us live in you and through you, as you live in your Father and through your Father! Let us be capable of you, filled with you, just as you are capable of God, filled with God in all fullness! Be our all, our sufficiency, our fullness, just as the fullness of the deity rests blessedly in you! And thus, living and established in you who are our life and our firmament, by your grace may we say forever, truly, in the spirit and words of your apostle, *Who will separate us from the love of Christ? etc.*[30]

30. Rom 8[:35] (original marginal note).