

## CHAPTER IV

*The Distribution of the Divine Decrees into Instants, Declaring that which in Each One God Determined to Accomplish by His Communication Ad Extra.*

35. I understood this order should be distributed into the following instants. The first instant is that in which God knew his divine attributes and perfections, together with the propensity and ineffable inclination to communicate Himself outside Himself. This knowledge of God as being communicative *ad extra* comes first. His Highness, beholding the condition of his infinite perfections, and the power and efficacy which in Himself they possessed in order to accomplish magnificent works, saw that such consummate kindness was most proper in his equity, and as it were due and an obligation, to communicate Himself in order to work according to his communicative inclination, and exercise his generosity and mercy, distributing outside Himself with magnificence the plenitude of his infinite treasures enclosed in the Divinity; for being entirely infinite, it is much more natural for Him to give gifts and graces than fire to ascend to its sphere, the stone to descend toward its center, or the sun to shed its light. This profound ocean of perfections, this abundance of treasures, this impetuous infinity of riches, all is directed to communicate itself by his own inclination, and by the desire and knowledge of God himself, who comprehends them and knows that to give gifts and graces by communicating them is not to diminish them, but to increase them in the manner possible by releasing that inexhaustible fountain of riches.

36. God saw all this in that first instant following the communication *ad intra* by the eternal emanations. And seeing this He found Himself as it were obliged by Himself to communicate Himself *ad extra*, knowing it to be holy, just, merciful and compassionate to do so; hence nothing could prevent Him. According to our way of understanding we can imagine God was not entirely serene nor at rest in his own nature until He reached the center of his desires, the creatures, where and with whom He takes his delights (Prov. 8:31) by making them participants in his divinity and perfections.

37. Two things regarding this knowledge and light I possess amaze me, and enthrall and melt my lukewarm heart, leaving it annihilated. The first is that inclination, urgency, and force of his will I see in God to communicate his divinity and the treasures of his glory. The second is the inexpressible and incomprehensible immensity of the goods and gifts which I realized He desires to distribute, as if pointing them out and designating them for this purpose, and yet remaining infinite as if He gave nothing. In this desire and inclination which His Majesty displayed, I knew He was disposed to sanctify, justify, and fill with gifts and perfections all creatures together and each one for itself, giving to each one more than what is possessed by all the Angels and Seraphim together. Even if the drops in the ocean and the grains of sand on their shores, the stars, planets, elements, and all irrational creatures were capable of reason and of his gifts, they would receive them if on their part they disposed themselves and had no obstacle to impede them. O dreadfulness of sin and its malice, which alone is capable of holding back the impetuous torrent of such eternal goods!

38. The second instant was to confirm and decree the reason and motives of this communication of the Divinity, that it would be for his greater glory *ad extra* and the exaltation of His Majesty by the manifestation of his grandeur. This his own exaltation God saw in this instant as the purpose for communicating Himself and making Himself known in the generosity

of pouring forth his attributes and utilizing his omnipotence in order to be known, praised and glorified.

39. The third instant was to recognize and determine the order and arrangement or manner of this communication, in the way which would achieve the most glorious end of accomplishing such an intricate determination; the order there must be among the objects; and the manner and difference in communicating the Divinity and his attributes to them, so this movement of the Lord would have an honorable motive and proportionate purposes, and among them would be found the most beautiful and admirable arrangement, harmony and subordination. In this instant was decreed in the first place the divine Word would assume flesh and become visible; the perfection and composition of the most holy humanity of Christ our Lord was decreed and formed in the divine mind. In the second place was decreed the rest of men in imitation of Him, the divine mind forming the harmony of the human nature with its adornment and composition of an organic body and a spiritual soul, with its faculties to know and enjoy its Creator, to discern between good and evil, and with a free will to love that same Lord.

40. I understood this hypostatic union of the second Person of the most holy Trinity with a human nature was as it were necessary for it to be the primary operation and object to which the divine intellect and will would first issue forth *ad extra*, for most exalted reasons which I cannot fully explain. One of these reasons is that God, having known and loved Himself, the best order was to know and love what was most immediate to his divinity, as is the hypostatic union. Another reason is the Divinity, having communicated Himself *ad intra*, was also to communicate Himself substantially *ad extra*, so the divine intention and will could begin its works for the most exalted purpose, and his attributes would be communicated with the most beautiful order. The fire of the Divinity would first work all that is possible upon that which was closest to it, namely the hypostatically united humanity, and would first communicate his divinity to whom would attain the most exalted and excellent degree after Him in the knowledge and love, operations and glory of the Deity itself; for God (according to our lowly manner of understanding) would not put Himself at risk of failing to attain this end, since He alone could possibly possess the proportion and as it were the justification for such a wondrous work. It was also appropriate and as it were necessary that if God desired to create many creatures, He would create them with such harmony and subordination as would be the most admirable and glorious within the reach of possibility; in accordance with this they must have one who would be head and supreme over all, and as far as possible next to and united with God, that all could pass through Him and come to his divinity. For these and other reasons (which I cannot explain) only in the Incarnate Word could the dignity of the works of God be satisfied, and through Him there would be the most beautiful order in nature, which without Him would not be possible.

41. The fourth instant was to decree the gifts and graces which were to be conferred upon the humanity of Christ our Lord, united to the Divinity. Here the Most High extended the hand of his generous omnipotence and attributes in order to enrich that most holy humanity and soul of Christ with the abundance of gifts and graces in the plenitude and degree possible. In this instant was determined what David said afterwards: *The stream of the river of the Divinity maketh the city of God joyful* (Ps. 45:5), directing the flow of his gifts upon this humanity of the Word, communicating to it all infused and beatific knowledge, and all the grace and glory of which his most holy soul was capable, appropriate for one who was both true God and true man, and Head of all creatures capable of grace and glory, so that impetuous current would flow upon them in the order which followed.

42. Accordingly to this same instant, and as it were in the second place, belongs the decree and predestination of the Mother of the Incarnate Word; for here I understand that pure creature was ordained before there issued any other decree to create any other. Thus She was first conceived in the divine mind before all other creatures, as and how it pertained to and was proper for the dignity, excellence and gifts of the humanity of her most holy Son; immediately then was directed upon Her the entire impetus of the river of the Divinity and his attributes, according to the capacity of a mere creature to receive it, and as appropriate for the dignity of the Mother of God.

43. In the understanding I had of these exalted mysteries and decrees I confess admiration enraptured me, carrying me out of myself. Recognizing this most holy and most pure creature conceived and formed in the divine mind *ab initio* and before all the ages, with joy and jubilation I magnify the Almighty for the admirable and mysterious decree He issued of creating for us such a pure, grand, mystical and heavenly creature, more to be admired with praise by all the rest of creatures than to be described by anyone. In this admiration I can say with St. Dionysius the Areopagite,\* that if faith did not instruct me, and the understanding of what I am seeing did not make me know, that it is God who is forming Her in his mind, and that only his omnipotence could and does form such an image of his divinity, if all this were not shown to me at one time, I might begin to doubt whether the Virgin Mother contains in Herself divinity.

44. O how many tears flowed from my eyes, and what sorrowful astonishment my soul experiences, to see this divine prodigy not acknowledged, and this wonder of the Most High not manifest to all mortals! Much is known of Her, but much more is unknown, because this sealed book has not been opened. I remain in awe in the knowledge of this tabernacle of God, and acknowledge that her Author is more admirable in her formation than in all the rest of creation, which is inferior to this Lady, though the diversity of creatures manifests with admiration the power of their Creator; yet in this Queen of all creation alone are enclosed and contained more treasures than in all other creatures combined, and the variety and the preciousness of her riches magnify their Author above all other creatures together.

45. Here (according to our understanding) the promise was given to the Word, and as it were the contract made, regarding the sanctity, perfection, and gifts of grace and glory which She would possess who would be his Mother, and the protection, shelter and defense which would be provided for this true City of God, in whom His Majesty contemplated the graces and merits which this Lady would acquire for Herself, and the fruits She would gather for her people by the love and return She would give to His Majesty. In this same instant, and as it were in the third and last place, God determined to create a place and abode where the Incarnate Word and his Mother could dwell and converse. Primarily for and because of them He created heaven and earth with its stars and elements, and all that is contained in them. The secondary intention and decree was for the members of whom He would be Head and the vassals of whom He would be King, so with royal providence everything necessary and suitable was provided and arranged beforehand.

46. I move on to the fifth instant, although I have already found what I sought.<sup>†</sup> In this fifth instant was decreed the creation of the angelic nature which, being more excellent and corresponding to the spiritual being of the Divinity, their creation was first foreseen and decreed, and their and admirable arrangement into nine choirs and three hierarchies. The primary

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\* *S. Dion, in epist. ad Paulum* [Most Rev. Samaniego]

<sup>†</sup> i.e. the place held by Our Lady in these decrees; cf. par. 33 [Ed.]

intention for their creation was for the glory of God, to attend upon his divine grandeur, and so they might know and love Him; subsequently and secondarily they were decreed so they might assist, glorify and honor, reverence and serve the deified humanity of the eternal Word, recognizing Him as Head, and his Mother most holy Mary as Queen of these same angels. Commission was given to them to bear them up in their hands in all their ways (Ps. 90:12). In this instant Christ our Lord earned for them by his infinite merits, present and foreseen, all the graces which they would receive; and He was established as their Head, Exemplar and supreme King, of whom they would be vassals. Even if the number of angels had been infinite, the merits of Christ our Good would be abundantly sufficient to earn their grace.

47. To this instant also belongs the predestination of the good angels and the reprobation of the wicked; in it God saw and knew by his infinite knowledge all the works of both in their respective orders, in order to predestine by his free will and generous mercy those who would obey and reverence Him, and to reprobate by his justice those who would rise up against His Majesty in pride and disobedience due to their disordered self-love. In the same instant was also the decree to create the empyrean heaven, where He would manifest his glory and in which He would reward the good; the earth and the rest for the other creatures; and in the center or abysses of the earth hell for the punishment of the bad angels.

48. In the sixth instant was decreed the creation of a people and congregation of men for Christ, who was already predetermined in the divine mind and will, and in whose image and likeness was decreed the formation of man, so the Incarnate Word would have brethren similar but inferior to Himself, and a people of his own nature over whom He would be Head. In this instant was determined the order of the creation of the entire human race, which was to begin from one man and one woman, and propagate itself until the Virgin and her Son in the order in which they were conceived. The graces and gifts to be given to men were ordained by the merits of Christ our Good, as well as original justice if they desired to persevere in it; the fall of Adam was seen, and in him that of all others except the Queen, who did not enter into this decree;\* the remedy was ordained, and that the most holy humanity would be capable of suffering; the predestined were chosen by free grace, and the foreknown were reprobated with righteous justice. All that was necessary and proper for the conservation of human nature, and for obtaining this purpose of the Redemption and predestination, was decreed, leaving men their free will; for this was most in accordance with their nature and the divine equity. No injustice was done to them; for if by their free will they could sin, by grace and the light of reason they could refrain from it. God would not force anyone to serve Him, just as He does not deny anyone what is necessary.† Since his law is written in the hearts of all men (Ps. 4:7), nobody has an excuse for not knowing and loving Him as the highest Good and Author of all creation.

49. In the understanding of these mysteries I know with great clarity and conviction the exalted motives mortals have to praise and adore the grandeur of the Creator and Redeemer of all, for which reason He manifested and magnified Himself in these works. I also know how negligent men are in the acknowledgment of these obligations and in making proper return for such benefits, and the grievance and indignation of the Most High due to this forgetfulness. His Majesty commanded and exhorted me not to commit such ingratitude, but to offer Him a sacrifice of praise, and to sing to Him anew, and magnify Him in the name of all creatures.

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\* cf. Esther 15:13 [Ed.]

† cf. Jn. 1:9 [Ed.]

50. My most high and incomprehensible Lord! Who would have the love and perfections of all the Angels and just in order to profess and praise worthily thy grandeur! I acknowledge, great and mighty Lord, that I, as a most lowly creature, cannot merit the momentous benefit of giving me this revelation and such clear light concerning thy most high majesty, at whose sight I also see my littleness, which before that felicitous hour I was unknown to me, and I was unaware what the virtue of humility was which is learned in this science. I do not desire to say I now possess that virtue, yet neither do I deny I knew the certain way which leads to it; for Thy light (O Most High) illumines me, and thy lamp teaches me the paths (Ps. 118:105) by which I see what I have been and what I am, and fear what I may become. Thou hast enlightened, most high King, my understanding, and inflamed my will by the most noble Object of these faculties. Thou hast subjected me entirely to thy love; and thus I declare to all mortals so they may forsake me, and I them: I am for my Beloved, and (though I am unworthy) my Beloved is for me (Cant. 2:16). Encourage me then, O Lord, in my weakness, that I may run after the odor of thy ointments (Ib. 1:3), and running attain Thee, and attaining Thee not let Thee go\* or lose Thee.

51. I am very brief and stammering in this chapter, for of this matter many books could be written; yet I remain silent, because I do not know how to speak and I am an ignorant woman, and because my sole intention has been to declare how the Virgin Mother was formed and foreseen in the divine mind *ante saecula* (Ecclus. 24:14). Hence regarding what I have further understood of this most exalted mystery I turn inward, and in silence and admiration praise the Author of these wonders with the canticle of the Blessed, saying: *Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts* (Is. 6:3).

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\* cf. Cant. 3:4 [Ed.]