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LA CHRONIQUE "QUAE IN POSTERUM"
DE BERNARD D'AMBRONAY

par JEAN PICARD

HEINRICH VON KALKAR, *THEORIA METRICA*.

von A.P. ORBÁN

THE CARTHUSIANS, INTERMEDIARIES FOR THE
TEACHING OF JOHN RUYSBROECK
DURING THE PERIOD OF EARLY REFORM
AND IN THE COUNTER-REFORMATION

by KENT EMERY, JR.

GIORGIO BELTRUTTI'S *LA CERTOSA DI PESIO*

by JAMES HOGG

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Mediaevalists and Catholic theologians considerably esteem John Ruysbroeck. However, as mediaevalists well know, this esteem was in some jeopardy, primarily because of Jean Gerson's criticisms of Ruysbroeck's teaching. In the centuries after his death, Gerson was considered a type of solid, Catholic orthodoxy, even by Ruysbroeck's preeminent advocates, the Carthusians.¹ Therefore, Gerson's attacks on Ruysbroeck were not dismissed lightly.

Modern scholars most often judge this controversy negatively, as something from which Ruysbroeck must be liberated. In large part this attitude is just, for Gerson raised several misleading questions concerning Ruysbroeck's doctrine. However, this point of view also risks distortion, since it obscures the truth that Catholic thinkers in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries admired Ruysbroeck perhaps even more than he was admired in his own time. Furthermore, they did so whilst taking Gerson's criticisms very seriously. In fact, Gerson's specific criticisms had a positive effect, for they produced among Ruysbroeck's later followers a worthy speculative effort to comprehend, not the mysti-

¹V. Gerz-von Büren, *La Tradition de l'oeuvre de Jean Gerson chez les chartreux: la Chartreuse de Bâle* (Paris, 1973), pp. 7-11, 118-123.

cal experience itself, which is above reason, but the theological *ratio* for it. Today, scholars who wish to withdraw Ruysbroeck completely from the criteria of scholastic thought, and prefer to read him in terms of modern philosophies, slight these speculative efforts.² Does not this approach, however, itself risk distortion, or at least anachronism?

As we have said, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Gerson was a great authority for reform-minded Catholics;³ thus his opposition to Ruysbroeck was formidable. Among these Catholic reformers, however, Gerson's authority was balanced by another one, that of the Carthusians, who during the general decline of the late Middle Ages had determinedly adhered to the one thing necessary.⁴ It was the Carthusians who most promoted Ruysbroeck. They did so under the authority of their fifteenth-century theological master, Denis of Ryckel (+ 1471), or Dionysius the Carthusian.

Denis the Carthusian's celebration of Ruysbroeck is especially significant, for Denis was not only a great authority for spiritual writers in the Counter-Reformation, but was also erudite

²J. Alaerts, 'La Terminologie 'essentielle' dans *Die Gheestelike Brulocht*', and 'la Terminologie 'essentielle' dans *Die Gheestelike Brulocht et Dat Rijcke Ghelieven*', *Ons geestelijk Erf*, XLIX (Antwerp, 1975), 249-330, 337-365. P. Mommaers, 'Benoît de Canfeld: sa terminologie 'essentielle'', *Revue d'histoire de la spiritualité*, XLVII (Paris, 1971), 421-454, XLVIII (1972), 27-68; 'Benoît de Canfeld et ses sources flamandes', *Revue d'histoire de la spiritualité*, XLVIII (1972), 401-434, XLIX (1973), 37-66.

³A. Renaudet, *Prêrêforme et humanisme a Paris pendant les premières guerres d'Italie (1494-1517)* (2nd ed. Paris, 1953), pp. 7-11, 74-76. J.-P. Massaut, *Josse Clichtove: l'humanisme et la réforme du clergé I* (2 vols., Paris, 1968), pp. 115-128 et *passim*.

⁴Renaudet, *Prêrêforme*, pp. 178, 436; Massaut, *Josse Clichtove I*, pp. 135-136, 166-167.

in every mode of theology, including scholastic. Thus, he read and approved Ruysbroeck in the full context of mediaeval Catholic thought.

Denis makes his most important observations on the person of Ruysbroeck in a treatise on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Ruysbroeck is so extraordinary, Denis says, that one does not know how to name him, unless

in the same way that the venerable Hugh of St. Victor, because of his eminent knowledge, has been called another Augustine, so likewise that marvellous John, because of his most excellent wisdom, should be called another Dionysius the Areopagite. Indeed, I believe so, because if his books would have been translated in such a style as the books of the great Dionysius, they would not be easier to study than the books of Dionysius. Since therefore this man was of so great wisdom, worthily I call him the divine Doctor, because he had no instructor but the Holy Spirit. Indeed, he was otherwise illiterate and an idiot, in the same way, at any rate, that the archapostles Peter and John are reported to have been illiterate by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles. Whence he wrote his books in the vulgar tongue, the profundity and meaning of which, nevertheless, no one is now able to admire to the full. And thus, since I am certain that man was taught by the Holy Spirit, therefore his authority is great with me.⁵

⁵Dionysius Cartusianus, *De donis spiritus sancti, Opera omnia* XXXV (ed. Carthusian monks, Tournai, 1908), 2.13.184:

Vir autem mirabilis, dominus Joannes Ruysbroeck: quem qualiter digne apellam ignoro, nisi ut quemadmodum venerabilis ille Hugo de S. Victore propter eminentem suam scientiam vocatus est alter Augustinus, sic Joannes iste mirabilis propter excellentissimam suam sapientiam nominetur alter Dionysius. Puto enim quia si libri ejus in tali essent stilo translati ut libri magni Dionysii, non essent faciliores studentibus quam libri Dionysii. Quoniam igitur vir hic tantae sapientiae fuit, merito eum apello Doctorem divinum, quia instructorem non habuit nisi Spiritum Sanctum. Erat enim alias illiteratus ac idiota, eo utique modo quo Petrus et Joan-

One should note several things in this remarkable text. Denis upholds the tradition of Ruysbroeck's divine inspiration which so disturbed Gerson.⁶ In doing so, he asserts Ruysbroeck's "illiteracy" in a way far less qualified than does John of Schoonhoven (+ 1432), Ruysbroeck's first public defender.⁷ Since Ruysbroeck was divinely inspired, Denis calls him *Doctor divinus* in the scholastic fashion. The adjective in such names delineates either a man's authority on a particular topic, or the manner in which he taught. Naming Ruysbroeck *Doctor divinus*, Denis bestows upon him the highest and most extensive authority. Ruysbroeck is, in a sense, the generic doctor of divinity, in regard both to matter and manner.

Denis' belief in Ruysbroeck's divine inspiration is especially important, for throughout his works, Denis greatly emphasizes personal authority, particularly in determining speculative, theological questions. In the above text, Denis associates Ruysbroeck's authority indirectly with the apostles, and directly with pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, who reputedly received his teaching from St. Paul. Denis' other name for Ruysbroeck, *alter Dionysius*, creates subtle effects. Based on the pseudo-Dionysius' classification of his own works, mediaeval spiritual writers

⁵ (cont'd) *nes archiapostoli a Luca in Actibus Apostolorum illiterati fuisse narrantur. Unde et libros suos in vulgari conscripsit: Quorum tamen profunditatem atque sententiam nemo ad plenum mirari jam valet. Quoniam itaque certus sum virum istum a Spiritu Sancto instructam, propterea magna est ejus auctoritas apud me.*

⁶Combes, *Essai sur la critique de Ruysbroeck par Gerson* II (4 vols., Paris, 1945-72), pp. 67-68, 84-98. A. Ampe, *Ruysbroeck: Traditie en werkelijkheid* (Antwerp, 1975).

⁷John of Schoonhoven, *Epistola responsalis* in Combes *Essai* I, pp. 727-731. For Denis the Carthusian see Ampe, *Ruysbroeck*, pp. 359-362.

developed a threefold scheme for the modes of theology, that is: symbolic theology, through sensible signs, intelligible theology, through spiritual similitudes and abstract contemplation, and mystical theology, affective and above all knowledge.⁸ These spiritual writers customarily personified the different modes with eminent theologians and mystics. In this threefold order, pseudo-Dionysius invariably represents the highest mode of theology, Augustine usually the first or second.⁹ Denis the Carthusian praises Hugh of St. Victor's *scientia*, but Ruysbroeck's *sapientia*. In the traditional order of the contemplative gifts of the Holy Spirit, isomorphic to the three modes of theology, *scientia* is surpassed by *intellectus*, and *intellectus* by *sapientia*.¹⁰ In the context of the three modes of theology, therefore, Denis the Carthusian again confers upon Ruysbroeck the highest authority.

This threefold division of theology, and even of all knowledge, was ubiquitous in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹¹

⁸K. Emery, 'Benet of Canfield: Counter-Reformation Spirituality and its Mediaeval Origins' (doctoral dissertation, Univ. of Toronto, 1976), pp. 148-249.

⁹See e.g. Rudolph of Biberach, *De septem itineribus aeternitatis* in *Opera omnia sanctae Bonaventurae*, VIII (Rome, 1586-96), 4.4.163-168, 6.6.182-186. Saint Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (ed. with trans. P. Boehner, Saint Bonaventure, N.Y., 1956), pp. 42-43: *De reductione artium ad theologiam* (with trans. by E. T. Healy, Saint Bonaventure, N.Y., 1955), pp. 26-29. Hugh of Balma, *De mystica theologia* in *Opera omnia sanctae Bonaventurae*, VII (Rome, 1586-96), pp. 703-704, 722.

¹⁰See e.g. Rudolph of Biberach, *De septem donis spiritus sancti* in *Opera omnia sanctae Bonaventurae*, VII (Rome, 1586-96), 251-252, 264-272. Dionysius Cartusianus, *De donis spiritus sancti* 2.175-206, 3.224-232.

¹¹M. de Certeau, 'Mystique' au xvii^e siècle: le problème du langage 'mystique' 8, *L'homme devant Dieu*, II (Paris, 1964), 266-291.

It was in Lefèvre d'Étaples' 1512 edition of Willem Jordaens' (c. 1360) Latin translation of the *Spiritual Espousals* that Ruysbroeck's teaching circulated among early sixteenth-century reformers in France, whose ideas and programs influenced the particular quality of the later French Catholic renewal.¹² Significantly, Lefèvre d'Étaples' publication of Ruysbroeck's text was not a random effort, but part of a large program of intellectual reform, consistent with Lefèvre's interests in humane letters and the philosophy of Aristotle. In his own particular variation of the three modes of theology, Lefèvre includes Ruysbroeck in that group which represents the most exalted mode of knowledge, alongside such neo-Platonic Christian thinkers as pseudo-Dionysius, Ramon Lull, and Nicholas of Cusa.¹³ The Carthusian translator of Ruysbroeck, Surius, uses a simpler twofold classification of the modes of theology, related to the first scheme however,¹⁴ in order to deflect Gerson's criticisms. Not desiring to discredit Gerson, Surius nonetheless points out that Gerson was a *theologus scholasticus*, but not comparable to Ruysbroeck in *mystica theologia*.¹⁵

Denis the Carthusian quotes Ruysbroeck, by way of translation, most extensively in his treatises on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the theology of which is fundamental to Denis' own contemplative

¹²*The Prefatory Epistles of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and Related Texts* (ed. E. F. Rice Jr., N.Y., 1972), pp. 276-280. The text to Book 3 of Jordaens' translation, *De ornatu spiritualium nuptiarum*, may be found in Combes, *Essai I*, pp. 595-615.

¹³Renaudet, *Préréforme*, pp. 366-376, 410-420, 505-515, 597-600, 661-664, *et passim*.

¹⁴See e.g. Hugh of Balma, *De mystica theologia*, pp. 726-730.

¹⁵J. Ruysbroeck, *Opera omnia* (trans. L. Surius, Cologne, 1552, repr. Farnborough, Hants., England, 1967), *ad lectorem admonitio*.

teaching.¹⁶ According to Ruysbroeck's doctrine, as Denis understands it, the highest gift, the gift of wisdom, unites the soul immediately with the spirit of God. From it, as rivers from a source, all the other gifts flow into the faculties of the soul. The gift of wisdom, through love, assimilates the soul to God. It renders the human spirit "simple, reposed, without images (*indēpictum*), stable, free, and without care" for things other than God. The gift causes one to die to himself and live in God.¹⁷ Denis judges it necessary to comment upon the series of effects produced by the gift of wisdom. He remarks that, according to Aristotle, knowledge is the assimilation of the knower to the thing known. In order to be assimilated to God, to be "deified", the human mind must transcend all earthly things and be "suspended" or "fixed" in the divine. Hence the intellect must be simple, not dispersed among many things, and *indēpictus*, "that is, purified from the memories and phantasms of corporeal things, lest the interior intuition of the divine truth be clouded over".¹⁸

The tradition of contemplation without images is long. Thus, Denis the Carthusian's comments are not extraordinary, except that he relates such contemplation to an Aristotelian principle of knowledge, and uses, not the term "taste", which one might expect, but "intuition" of the divine. Denis' words are not careless, for he knew scholastic theology well. He was well-versed in the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, having composed a sum-

¹⁶A. Stoelen, 'Denys le Chartreux', *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, III (Paris, 1957), 430-439.

¹⁷Dionysius Cartusianus, *De donis spiritus sancti* 2.13.185.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

mary of the *Summa theologiae*.¹⁹ However, whereas Denis the Carthusian often follows St. Thomas, he frequently abandons him to follow others whom on certain points he judges to be more faithful to ancient tradition. This is particularly noticeable when Denis treats those speculative questions which touch contemplative doctrine most closely.

Moreover, in speculative matters, Denis the Carthusian defers to a rigid hierarchy of authority. For example, in his commentary on the *Sentences*, in the midst of sorting out a welter of opinion concerning the divine ideas, Denis turns first and foremost to Dionysius the Areopagite, of whom he comments:

Great among theologians is the authority of the great and divine Dionysius, since (he was) taught by most holy men, by apostolic men and the Apostles themselves, chiefly the apostle Paul, and indeed (he was) most abundantly appointed, illumined, and inflamed by the Holy Spirit.²⁰

Later, Denis adds that Dionysius' authority "is not less among theologians than Aristotle's among philosophers".²¹ In light of Denis' association of Ruysbroeck with the pseudo-Dionysius, and the similarity of the formulas he uses to describe both men, it is likely that Ruysbroeck's contemplative teaching directed Denis in many of his speculative determinations.

Indeed, on crucial speculative questions Denis adopts positions which Ruysbroeck's contemplative doctrine would seem to require. Thus, Denis rejects the argument that the soul is es-

¹⁹Dionysius Cartusianus, *Summa fidei orthodoxae, Opera omnia*, XLII-XLIII (Montreuil, 1899-1900).

²⁰Dionysius Cartusianus, *Liber primus sententiarum, Opera omnia*, XX (Tournai, 1902), 1.36.402.

²¹*Ibid.*

entially the form of the body, arguing instead that it is a separate, spiritual substance, because, for among other reasons, it can be elevated to an "intuition" of the highest spiritual things.²² It is noteworthy that another fifteenth-century disciple of Ruysbroeck, the Franciscan Henry Herp, or Harphius (+ 1477), stresses this point as essential for understanding contemplative teaching. He makes a distinction, traditional among spiritual writers, which he borrows from the *De spiritu et anima* long attributed to St. Augustine. The soul as a separate spiritual substance he designates *spiritus*; he designates the same soul *anima* in so far as it operates as the form of the body.²³

Having judged that the soul is essentially a separate, spiritual substance Denis the Carthusian further concludes that it is not necessary for all intellectual acts to originate in phantasms, since a creature's mode of knowing conforms to its mode of being.²⁴ Thus, whilst conceding that most acts of knowledge begin in the senses, Denis grants the soul a potency for knowledge through species purely intelligible in origin. This notion would seem necessary for Ruysbroeck's teaching on the gift of *intellectus*, which Denis quotes in his own treatise on the gifts.²⁵

A yet more remarkable conclusion follows these. Although hesitant in the end, Denis partly confirms that in this life an "intuitive cognition" of God's nature is possible. Certainly, we

²²Dionysius Cartusianus, *Elementatio philosophica, Opera omnia*, XXXIII (Tournai, 1907), 44.56-57.

²³Harphius, *Theologia mystica* (Rome, 1586), 3.720-721. *Liber de spiritu et anima*, PL.40.785.

²⁴Dionysius Cartusianus, *Elementatio philosophica* 45.57-59.

²⁵Dionysius Cartusianus, *De donis spiritus sancti* 2.25.196-197.

cannot see God's essence clearly and perfectly through species as we shall in heaven. Nonetheless, one is able to understand that God is pure act, uncreated being, infinite and other such like which cannot be verified in reference to created objects. Clearly, one understands something by these terms. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that the "sharp point" of the intellect is somehow "fixed" in its divine object by a spiritual "intuition".²⁶

Denis the Carthusian's positions on these questions suggest that he was prepared, in strictly speculative terms, to accept what, from a Thomist perspective at least, are more daring inferences to be drawn from Ruysbroeck's writings.

Alluding to Ruysbroeck's *Perfection of the Sons of God* in his *De Contemplatione*, Denis makes another interesting elucidation of Ruysbroeck's cryptic words. Ruysbroeck says, in Denis' words, that in order for the contemplative to be elevated supernaturally, he must sense that the "foundation of his essence or being is unsearchable", and that he ought to possess it. Denis explains that "the unsearchable foundation of the essence or being" of the soul may be understood in two ways. Firstly, these terms refer to God, who is the causal foundation of all beings, founding, supporting, and conserving them in existence. The contemplative must desire to possess this cause totally, even though he knows it is impossible. Secondly, the "unsearchable foundation of the essence or being" of the soul refers to the soul's *esse fundamentale*, or proper nature, elevated above itself through the singular grace

²⁶Dionysius Cartusianus, *Elementatio theologica, Opera omnia*, XXXIII, 11.120-121.

of sublime contemplation, and drawn into union with God.²⁷

I think one should relate these comments of Denis to Ruysbroeck's teaching on the natural union which the soul possesses with God, and to the famous and controversial text in Book 3, chapter 4 of the *Spiritual Espousals*. Here Ruysbroeck speaks of the being of the soul in the full context of his trinitarian exemplarism. In this text, Ruysbroeck speaks of the unity of the divine persons, and of the eternal generation of the Son:

and through this eternal generation of the word all creatures, before they were created temporally, have gone forth from eternity, and God saw them and knew them distinctly in himself in some otherness under living reasons, not nevertheless in every way different. Indeed, whatever is in God, is God. Truly, this eternal going forth and eternal life, which from all eternity in God we have and we are outside our selves, is, I judge, the reason of our temporally created essence; and our created essence depends upon our eternal essence, and is one with it according to essential existence. Moreover, the eternal being and eternal life, which according to the ideas in the eternal wisdom of God we have and we are, is similar to God; indeed, it remains perpetually within the divine essence without difference: and also, through the eternal generation of the word, it perpetually emanates in a certain otherness, according to the eternal reason or idea... The wisdom of God, his image and similitude, is indeed our form and exemplar: in it, God beholds himself and all things as in a mirror. And in this divine image all creatures as in their eternal exemplar live perennially according to the idea: and to that eternal image and this similitude we were created by the holy Trinity. Therefore, God wishes and requires, that we go outside ourselves into this divine light, and that we try to attain, supernaturally, this image or our proper life, and pos-

²⁷Dionysius Cartusianus, *De contemplatione, Opera Omnia*, XLI (Tournai, 1912), 2.9.247-248.

sess with him in eternity eternal beatitude, both actively and in fruition.²⁸

On this text Gerson finds his charge that Ruysbroeck teaches the soul to desist and be converted into its *esse ideale*.²⁹ Denis the Carthusian dismisses this accusation as "most rude and most foolish", insisting that Ruysbroeck teaches, not the soul's mutation into the divine being, but rather a "melioration" of its mode

²⁸Ruysbroeck, *De ornatu spiritualium nuptiarum* (trans. Surius) 3.4. 370-371:

per hanc aeternum verbi generationem creaturae omnes, antequam creatae essent temporaliter, ab aeterno egressae sunt, viditque eas Deus & agnovit distincte in seipso in alteritate quadam sub vividis rationibus, non tamen omnimoda alteritate. Quidquid enim in Deo est, Deus est. Hic vero aeternus exitus & vita haec aeterna, quam ab omni aeternitate in Deo habemus & sumus absque nobisipsis, ut arbitror, ratio est temporaliter creatae essentiae nostrae: & creata essentia nostra dependet ab essentia aeterna, & unum cum illa est secundum essentialem existentiam. Porro esse aeternum & vita aeterna, quam secundum ideas in aeterna Dei sapientia habemus & sumus, Dei similis est: etenim perpetuo in divina essentia sine discretione intus permanet: atque etiam per aeternam verbi generationem perpetuo emanat sub discreta alteritate secundum rationem aeternam sive ideam... Est enim DEI sapientia, illius imago & similitudo, & nostra forma ac exemplar: in eaque Deus & omnia velut in speculo contuetur. Et in hac divina imagine creaturae omnes tanquam in suo exemplari aeterno perennialiter vivunt secundum ideam: atque ad istam ipsam aeternam imaginem & hanc similitudinem a sacrosancta trinitate conditi sumus. Quam ob rem exigit & vult Deus, ut extra nos ipsos in hoc divinum lumen exeamus, & imaginem hanc ceu propriam vitam nostram supernaturaliter assequi conemur, & cum ipso in aeterna beatitudine active pariter & fruitive possideamus.

²⁹Combes, *Essai* II, pp. 108-121. The text of Gerson's first stricture is printed in *Essai* I, pp. 618-619.

of being through "extraordinary and pre-eminent imitation".³⁰

I have translated from the Carthusian Surius' Latin translation, the text in which Ruysbroeck was best known in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, it is worth comparing the translations of Surius and Jordaens on the crucial terms of our discussion. Jordaens translates Ruysbroeck's *eewigh Wesen* and *ghescapen wesen* with *esse aeternum* and *esse creatum*, whereas Surius renders these terms *essentia aeterna* and *essentia creata*.³¹ These differing translations reflect the inherent ambiguity of the Dutch *wesen*.³² Denis the Carthusian would seem to have it both ways, for in speaking of the soul's unsearchable foundation, we shall remember, he repeatedly uses the term *essentia vel esse*.

To a large extent, understanding of Ruysbroeck depends upon one's interpretation of these difficult terms.³³ Clearly, these terms referring to the soul's "being" or "essence" involve questions concerning the divine ideas and the creature's ontologic relation to the creator. Denis the Carthusian, we have seen, defines the soul's ultimate foundation in God in terms of the creator's efficient, preserving causality. His locution, *essentia vel esse*, applied to both the soul's foundation in God and in its proper being, may simply reflect the ambiguity of Ruysbroeck's *wesen*. On the other hand, it may represent the conviction that these two

³⁰Dionysius Cartusianus, *De contemplatione* 3.25.288.

³¹Jordaens, *De ornatu spiritualium nuptiarum*, p. 605; Surius, *De ornatu spiritualium nuptiarum*, p. 370; Ruysbroeck, *Die Geestelike Brulocht, Werken I* (2nd. ed., Ruysbroec-Genootschap, Tiet, 1944-48), p. 245.

³²Alaerts, *Ons Geestelijk Erf*, 249 n.3.

³³See the study, with bibliography, by A. Ampe, 'Jean Ruysbroec', *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, VIII (Paris, 1974), 659-698.

terms, in reality, signify the same thing. Since, whether he understood St. Thomas, or whether he was actually reacting to Giles of Rome³⁴, Denis rejected a real distinction between *esse* and *essentia*, and adopted Henry of Ghent's (+ 1293) solution to the problem. Again it is worth considering if Denis rejects Thomas' position on the metaphysical question for the sake of contemplative doctrine. It is interesting that Henry of Ghent's treatment of the question sheds light on the relation between the creature's actual, created existence and its eternal presence in the divine Word, the point of controversy in Ruysbroeck's text from the *Spiritual Espousals*.

Two points from Henry's discussion, as summarized by Denis, are especially relevant to our immediate concern. Firstly, Henry distinguishes two conceptions of the creature's participation in being. Some conceive the creature's created essence as a certain "substratum", which receives its act of being as, for example, a white body is said to receive the form of whiteness, or to use an analogy, as the obscure medium of the air is filled with clarity and light by the sun. Such conceptions are the product of "fantastic imagination". More truly, one may understand the essence of a creature as what is abstracted by the intellect, indifferent to being and non-being. The essence of the creature does not have its own being, but nevertheless it has

a formal idea in God, through which it has a certain being in God before it becomes a being in proper nature and species, in whatever way a thing has being in God (as is said: What has been made, in himself was

³⁴E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (N.Y., 1955), pp. 420-427. Bibliography in notes of pp. 740-750. Denis recognizes a difference between St. Thomas' teaching and other proponents of the distinction.

life), and then becomes a being in act, when God produces it according to the similitude of the idea of the thing which he has in himself; and in this way it is said to participate in being, which is the similitude of the idea expressed in the effect, because the essence of the creature in so far that it is the effect of God, is a certain similitude of him. The similitude of God impressed on the thing, by which the creature participates in being, is not however something other than the essence of the creature, or really distinct from it.³⁵

Thus, the creature's act of being "superadds" nothing to its essence, which is the creature's form as "ideated" in the mind of God, except a certain relation to its efficient cause.

This "intentional" distinction, whereby the intellect considers the creature under different aspects of the creator's causality, is the basis of the second point in this argument relevant to our discussion. Denis the Carthusian follows Henry of Ghent in distinguishing between the creature's *esse essentiae* and its *esse actualis existentiae*. These two are one and the same

³⁵Dionysius Cartusianus, *Elementatio philosophica* 38.51:

Secundo intelligi potest, quod essentia creaturae accipiatur ut quid abstractum per intellectum, indifferens ad esse et non esse, quod de se est non ens, habens tamen formalem in Deo ideam, per quam est in Deo ens quoddam antequam fiat ens in propria natura ac specie, quemadmodum quaelibet res et ens in Deo (juxta illud: Quod factum est, in ipso vita erat) et tunc fit ens in actu, quum Deus eam producit ad similitudinem ideae quam habet de re illa in se; et quod ex hoc dicitur participare esse, quod est illius ideae similitudo expressa in effectu, quia essentia creaturae in quantum est effectus Dei, est quaedam similitudo ipsius. Non autem similitudo Dei impressa rei qua creatura participat esse, est aliquid praeter essentiam creaturae realiter distinctum ab ea.

See Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibeta* (Paris, 1518; repr. Louvain, 1961), quod. I, q.9, fol. VII v-r.

thing in the creature but they differ in the intention through which the creature is known. The *esse essentiae* is the creature considered in relation to its formal, exemplary cause, by which it is determined in its specific nature. The *esse actualis existentiae* is the creature considered in relation to its efficient cause, as it is produced *ad extra*. Frederick Copleston expresses well the relation in Henry's teaching between *esse essentiae* and *esse existentiae*. "The essence considered merely as possible is an *exemplatum* and depends on the divine knowledge, whereas the actualised or existent depends on the divine creative power... Through the first relationship *by itself* the essence does not exist 'outside' God; by the second relationship it exists as an actualised essence."³⁶

Henry of Ghent's widely known distinction seems well-suited

³⁶Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, I, 2 (Westminster, Md., 1950), p. 194. See Henry of Ghent, *Summae quaestionum ordinariarum* (Paris, 1520; repr. St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1953), a.21 q.4, fol. CXXVIII v:

Essentia enim ut dictum est, dicitur res ex respectu ad deum, in quantum ab ipso exemplata est ab aeterno. Dicitur autem existens ex respectu ad deum in quantum ipsa est effectus eius ex tempore. Unde nec dicitur esse hoc aliquid rei essentiae additum, quia ipsa essentia rei in quantum est effectus creatoria, in se formaliter habet esse.

In *Quod. V* q.9, fol. LXI r, Henry distinguishes the essence of a creature as it has being *in intellectu divino (esse essentiae)*, in an actually existing thing (*extra in rebus*), and in the mind of the human knower as a *res rationis*. In an actually existing creature, being and essence are not really distinguishable. The essence of the creature, as it exists in the mind of the human knower, is abstracted from the accidents of time and place, and thus in a manner reflects the creature's exemplary existence in the mind of God. We touch closely here Henry's theory of illumination, by which Denis seems also to have been influenced. See the following note.

for aiding interpretation of Ruysbroeck's words concerning the relation between the creature's eternal presence in the divine mind and its created existence. It would not be extraordinary if Henry's distinction, directly or indirectly, influenced Denis the Carthusian's understanding of Ruysbroeck on this point. Firstly, the distinction stresses, in terms not unlike Ruysbroeck's but more carefully defined, the creature's total, continual dependence on God for both the form and act of its being. Secondly as we have said, Denis was in the habit of using scholastic thought to elucidate mystical doctrines. Thirdly, Denis was influenced by Henry's speculative ideas on other points of contemplative teaching.³⁷ In this light, it is noteworthy that Henry's distinction resembles one, which we shall discuss presently, used by Harphius to clarify Ruysbroeck's doctrine.

Authorized by the sanctity and erudition of Denis the Carthusian, the Carthusians expanded Ruysbroeck's doctrine through Latin translation in the sixteenth century: Like their master Denis, they praised Ruysbroeck as an *alter Dionysius*.³⁸ Moreover, they promoted as well other writers associated with Ruysbroeck. Among these was Harphius. In the mind of the Carthusians, and sixteenth-century men generally, Harphius was inseparable from Ruysbroeck. The prior of the Cologne Charterhouse, Gerard Kalckbrenner (+ 1566), says in his preface to Surius' translation of

³⁷Jean Ribailier, "Henri de Gand", *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, VII (Paris, 1968), 197-210 (See 204); J. Beumer, "Theologie und mystische Erkenntnis. Eine Studie in Anschluss an Heinrich von Gent, Dionysius der Kartäuser und Josephus a Spiritu Sancto", *Zeitschrift für Ascese und Mystik*, XVI (1941), 62-78.

³⁸G. Kalckbrenner, prefatory epistle to Ruysbroeck, *Opera omnia* (Cologne, 1552). On the frontis-page of this edition, the name *alter Dionysius* is given to Ruysbroeck.

Ruysbroeck, that if one were to remove from Harphius what he had borrowed from Ruysbroeck, there would be little left.³⁹

Indeed, Harphius' fortunes followed Ruysbroeck's in the Counter-Reformation. On the one hand, he partook of the special authority conferred upon Ruysbroeck by Denis the Carthusian. A mystical genealogy on the frontis-page of the 1538 edition of his works traces Harphius' lineage from Dionysius through Ruysbroeck, who had made "lucid" what the Areopagite "wrapped in obscure words".⁴⁰ On the other hand, Harphius was considered no less daring than his master. Thus, in his 1509 Latin translation of Harphius, *Directorium aureum contemplativorum*, the Carthusian Peter Blomeven (+ 1536) judged it necessary to introduce Harphius' doctrine in the context of Gerson's accusations against Ruysbroeck.⁴¹ In 1586, moreover, Harphius collected works underwent correction at Rome.⁴² This correction notwithstanding, Harphius' important role in transmitting Ruysbroeck's teachings during the Counter-Reformation is evident, especially if one remembers that a Carthusian edition of his works was dedicated to Ignatius Loyola, and that the French Capuchins looked upon him as their spiritual

³⁹Kalckbrenner, prefatory epistle.

⁴⁰Harphius, *Theologia mystica* (Cologne, 1538, repr. Farnborough, Hants., 1966), frontis-page.

⁴¹P. Blomeven, introductory epistle to Harphius, *Directorium aureum contemplativorum theologiae mysticae* printed in book 2 *Theologia mystica* (Rome, 1586), pp. 447-459. For the Dutch text of this work see H. Herp, *Spieghel der Volcomenheit* (ed. L. Verochueren, Antwerp, 1931).

⁴²A. Deblaere, 'Essentiel', *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, IV (Paris, 1960), 1360. L. Cognet, *La Spiritualité moderne* (Paris, 1966), p. 46. The major correction replaces the term "superessential" with the empty "supereminent". Somewhat strangely, "superessential" may be found throughout book 3 of this edition.

master.⁴³

One may characterize Harpius' works as an ample gloss on Ruysbroeck, whose obscurities he attempts to illuminate, and whom he assimilates to traditional affective writers such as Hugh of Balma. Modern scholars question Harpius' faithfulness to Ruysbroeck's doctrine. Harpius introduces a speculative element into Ruysbroeck's teaching which these scholars regret, but which Counter-Reformation contemplatives evidently found helpful. Harpius does not confuse speculation with contemplation itself; he constantly asserts in the traditional way that mystical theology is based on experience, above reason. Nevertheless, although such experience is above reason, it is not contrary to it. Thus, whilst it is the experience of the saints which establishes that union with God is true, it is appropriate to seek how such union can be true. In seeking a *ratio* for union with God, Harpius turns to the same questions we have investigated in Denis the Carthusian.

Like Denis the Carthusian, Harpius concerns himself with the ontological structure of the creature more or less obscure in Ruysbroeck's writings. Following an important chapter in Ruysbroeck's *Spiritual Espousals*,⁴⁴ Harpius, in his work called *Eden*, discusses three natural unities present in man. Harpius accentuates the notions of divine causality implicit in Ruysbroeck's text. Firstly, man's sensible faculties are united in the heart. Secondly, the intellectual powers, memory, intellect, and will possess a unity in the soul. Thirdly, man possesses a "unity of

⁴³L. Verschueren, 'Harpius et les capucins français', *Études franciscaines*, XLV (Paris, 1933), 316-329, XLVI (1934), 272-288.

⁴⁴Ruysbroeck, *De ornatu spiritualium nuptiarum* (Cologne, 1552), 2.3. 322-323.

essence" whereby he is united naturally to God as the first cause. From God the creature "emanated essentially" in its creation from nothing. Through God the creature is preserved in being. In god, in the mind of the divine artificer, the creature lives "ideally".⁴⁵ In other words, the soul is united to God by nature as an effect of the divine causality, final, efficient, and formal. Because of this natural union with its source, all men instinctively know good and evil, an instinct Harpius elsewhere names *synteresis* and identifies with the *apex mentis*.⁴⁶ Through supernatural grace, love, and the co-operation of his free will, man is called to "re-enter" this highest natural unity, "from which we emanated in the flowing forth of creation and in which we always remain essentially".⁴⁷

Thus, because of God's final, formal, and efficient causality, every soul is potentially united to God by nature. Harpius treats the supernatural actualization of this unity, through the gifts, graces, and virtues, in the same terms. The efficient cause of contemplative union is the Holy Spirit, who "touches" the soul's loving power and unites it, in its "supreme apex", immediately to God. This touch confers upon the soul subtle spiritual images of God's goodness, sweetness, fecundity etc. which in turn engender more love.⁴⁸ Harpius appropriates this union to the Holy Spirit. The formal cause of contemplative union is the gift of wisdom, which illumines the soul's intellectual power. This gift emanates from wisdom itself, which is the *imago patris*.

⁴⁵Harpius, *Eden (Paradisus contemplativorum)* printed in book 3 *Theologia mystica* (Rome, 1586), 5.647.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 17.720.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 5.648.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 19.732-737.

Therefore, Harphius appropriates this union to the Son, the divine Word. The divine Word is the soul's exemplar. The soul's relation to its divine exemplar is intimate, since from the beginning, as the mediaeval text of St. John says, all things which have been made, were life in him. Harphius uses a series of similitudes to explain this relation between the soul and its formal exemplar. As many rules of an art are one in the mind of an artist, many plants are contained in one seed, and infinite lines subsist in one point, so all creatures were in the Word "vitaly, uniformly, and causally" before they became in themselves "effectively".⁴⁹ The light of the gift of wisdom, then, elicits a desire in the soul to draw closer and closer to its divine exemplar, to purge in itself every dissimilitude. In this way, Christ enlightens every man coming into the world; in this way one may understand the psalm text, "in your light we shall see the light" (Psalm 35, 10).⁵⁰

The soul is united to its final cause in its memorative power. Harphius appropriates this union to the celestial Father, who is the "origin and principle of all creatures". Here, the soul does not contemplate in images, either of the divine properties or of the divine exemplar. Rather, Harphius says (in words which partly echo Denis the Carthusian), it has a "simple intuition" or "nude cognition" of the divine essence. By this intuition the soul does not see God clearly through species as it will in heaven, but rather in a simple light as "the principle and cause of all things having their origin in time or eternity", and as the subsistence conserving all things.⁵¹

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 20.739-740.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 20.737-743.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 21.744-746.

In these texts Harphius has introduced distinct notions of the divine causality in order to account for the soul's contemplative union to its trinitarian exemplar. Likewise, in developing a theological *ratio* for the soul's deification, Harphius introduces a distinction between the soul's *esse essenziale* and *esse actuale*.

Harphius defines the soul's *esse essenziale* as a "most simple spiritual substance" which it will retain throughout eternity. He relates this *esse essenziale*, moreover, to the soul's intrinsic relation to its first cause. Alluding to a famous phrase of St. Augustine, Harphius says that God, the subsistence of all creatures, is by his essence more intimate to the soul than the soul is to itself. Without the divine presence in the soul, it would cease to exist and would return to nothing. This presence of God in the soul, according to its *esse essenziale*, however, neither makes the soul holy nor blessed.⁵²

The soul is blessed or damned according to its *esse actuale*, which Harphius defines as a certain adornment or perfection of the essence of the soul.⁵³ In other words, the soul's *esse actuale* stands in relation to its *esse essenziale* as act to potency. By nature, by its creation in species and genus, the soul is a similitude of the Trinity; this likeness, however, is inert unless it is possessed knowingly and lovingly through grace and glory.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the soul's *esse actuale* is not something really distinct from its *esse essenziale*. To the contrary, the

⁵²*Ibid.*, 24.764.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 24.761.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 24.762.

soul's actualization in grace or glory depends upon the prior elevation of its *esse essenziale*. As the soul, according to its *esse essenziale*, possesses a certain "essential vivacity" by nature, so according to the same *esse essenziale* it possesses a certain potency for grace and beatitude. No river is able to ascend higher than its source; so likewise the soul, according to its *esse actuale*, is not able to make acts which do not con-
grue, in nature, grace, or glory, to its "nude", or specific, nature.⁵⁵ These remarks enable one to define the soul's *esse essenziale* more precisely. It is the measure for the soul's being, specified in the eternal art. The *esse essenziale* of the soul, then, reflects the divine exemplar according to the mode of its participation in being. The *esse actuale*, in turn, is the soul's actual realization of the potencies inherent in its nature and consequent capacity for grace.

Harpius distinction between *esse essenziale* and *esse actuale* is most useful, even if, in the eyes of modern scholars at least, somewhat alien in spirit to Ruysbroeck. It makes clear that the soul's deification does not entail the destruction of its created substance. The distinction's usefulness in this regard is apparent in Harpius' rather audacious explanation of deification. His previous distinction between God's formal and efficient causality, both in nature and grace, is also helpful. In this life, Harpius says, the soul may be united immediately to God through the loving power of its *esse actuale*. In this union of love the soul possesses God and is fully formed by him, according to the nature and capacity for grace of its loving power. In this way, the spirit becomes one spirit with God.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 24.762.

This union is like the union of man's soul and body. The one spirit, according to its form, is God; according to its matter, so to speak, it is the soul. Now, the form of some being is always nobler than its matter; in fact, the matter receives its perfection from its form. Furthermore, all the operations of such a composite being are performed according to the exigency of its form. In the same way, God confers his perfection on the soul with which he is united and determines its operations.⁵⁶ Furthermore, one might add that a composite being is named for its form, not its matter. Therefore, in this union between God and the soul, the soul may be called God.

One should note, in regard to this passage, firstly, that God becomes the form of the soul's *esse actuale*, not its *esse essenziale*, or proper nature. Secondly, Harpius speaks here only of the soul's loving power, which is united to God through the efficient causality of the Holy Spirit. In this life the soul's intellectual power is not formed immediately by its formal cause, the divine Word. This Harpius reserves for glory, when God shall be all in all.⁵⁷

In effect, this chapter on deification is a response to various charges made by Gerson against Ruysbroeck. It attempts to make precise the soul's intrinsic relation to its divine exemplar. It makes clear that the divinity does not absorb the creature. It even broaches the topic of final beatitude, into which Gerson had drawn the discussion. Harpius is careful to

⁵⁶*Ibid.* See J. Orcibal, 'Une formule de l'amour extatique de Platon à saint Jean de la Croix et au cardinal de Bérulle', *Mélanges offerts à Étienne Gilson* (Paris-Toronto, 1959), 447-463.

⁵⁷Harpius, *Eden* 24.765.

indicate that in glory, both the soul's knowing and loving powers will be operative. Furthermore, his analogy with the composition of form and matter, when applied to the intellect, suggests the manner in which God will be its form in glory.⁵⁸

Harphius' distinction between the soul's *esse essentiale* and its *esse actuale* is instrumental in making these precisions. Interestingly, if as a modern scholar argues,⁵⁹ Harphius derived this distinction from a vernacular work of Willem Jordaens, we are led back to the origins of the famous controversy.

In his *Directorium*, Harphius uses a traditional analogy to express the creature's essential relation to God. His particular use of this analogy is suggestive, whether one look backwards or forwards. The light of the material sun, Harphius says, is essential in its circle, from which it disperses rays in every direction. These rays have only a part of the sun's essential clarity. Nevertheless, they eternally inhere in the sun, through which they are conserved in being. If for a moment that inherence should dissipate, the rays would cease to exist. In the same way, the soul, when it has been created, retains a certain eternal nearness to its origin in "the flowing forth from the infinite abyss of the divinity". Likewise, if this manner of God's nearness to the soul were ever to be cut off, the soul would immediately return to nothing. This natural, intrinsic relation between creature and creator points out the path of our supernatural return. As the rays of the sun ineluctably lead back to

⁵⁸J. Gerson, *Epistola 1 ad Bartholomaeum* in Combes, *Essai* I, pp. 618-623, and Combes' commentary *Essai* II, pp. 150-233. Ampe, *Ruusbroec*, pp. 55-85.

⁵⁹L. Moereels, 'Herp en Jordaens over de hoogste schouwing op aarde', *Ons Geestelijk Erf*, XLVIII (1974), 225-252.

their source, so the soul, rising through its exterior and interior faculties to the unity of its essence, may thence be led to its first origin.⁶⁰

Significantly perhaps, Henry of Ghent, quoted by Denis the Carthusian, uses this analogy in precisely the same way to illustrate the intrinsic natural relation between the creature, as an *effectus Dei*, and its first cause. Viewed in terms of essence, we shall remember, the creature is rooted in its formal cause, the divine idea; viewed in terms of its act of being, it is rooted in its efficient cause, to which it bears a natural resemblance. Having characterized the analogy of the sun's light filling an obscure medium of air as fanciful, Henry produces another version of the same analogy which more suitably expresses the natural relation between creature and creator. The ray has its very subsistence in relation to the sun; so likewise the essence of the creature has its very subsistence in relation to God.⁶¹

More clearly, Harphius' analogy points forward to an important Counter-Reformation mystical work. The Capuchin Benet of Canfield (1562-1610) in his *Règle de perfection* (1610) uses the same analogy, again to suggest the ontological relation between creature and creator. Benet says:

If one asks me what a creature is, I reply that it is nothing but a pure dependency on God... this is such a thing that one is not able to explain it by words, but by some similitude... Thus, the creature is to God as the rays to the Sun, or the heat to the fire, since as these things depend so entirely on their origin, that without its sustaining and continual communication, they would not be able to sub-

⁶⁰Harphius, *Directorium* 57.577.

⁶¹Dionysius Cartusianus, *Elementatio philosophica* 38.51; Henry of Ghent, *Quod.* I q.9, fol. VII v.

sist, so the creature depends so totally on the Creator, that without God's continual conservation, the creature would not be able to be. And as these things ought to be referred entirely to their origin, as the rays to the Sun and the heat to the fire (according to the maxim: All being which is such by participation, is referred to the being which is such by essence) so the creature ought to refer itself entirely to the Creator... Therefore, if one says to me, the creature, if it is a dependency on God, is some thing, I respond that it is and it is not... if one contemplates the creature without contemplating the Creator, it is: but if one contemplates the Creator, there is nothing more of the creature.⁶²

Benet lived in a late sixteenth-century Paris where Ruysbroeck exerted a lively influence. He was led to Ruysbroeck through Harphius, whom his order promoted, and directly through

⁶²Benet of Canfield, *Reigle de perfection* (Paris 1610, repr. Lyons 1653), 3.8.272-274:

Si icy on me demande, qu'est ce doncques la creature? Je responds qu'elle n'est qu'une pure dependance de Dieu... cet une telle chose qui ne se peut expliquer par parole, mais par quelque similitude... Donc la creature est telle envers Dieu, que sont les rayons envers le Soleil, ou la chaleur envers le feu, car comme ces choses-la dependent si entierement de leur origine, que sans le soustien & continuelle communication d'iceluy, elles ne pourroient subsister, ainsi la creature depend si totalement du Createur, que sans sa continuelle manutention elle ne pourroit estre: & comme ces choses se doivent referer entierement à leur origine, comme les rayons au Soleil, & la chaleur au feu (selon la maxime: *Omne ens per participationem tale, refertur ad ens per essentiam tale* ...) ainsi la creature se doit referer entierement au Createur... Si on me dit que la creature, si elle est une dependance de Dieu, donc elle est quelque chose: ie responds qu'elle est, & qu'elle n'est pas... si on contemple la creature sans contempler le Createur, elle est: mais on contemple le Createur, il n'y a plus de creature.

his novice master, who nourished a love for both writers.⁶³

Benet was also a member of Madame Acarie's spiritual *salon*, which numbered among its members the Carthusian Dom Richard Beaucousin. Beaucousin translated Ruysbroeck's *Spiritual Espousals* into French (1606), as well as another work strongly influenced by Ruysbroeck, *The Evangelical Pearl* (1602).⁶⁴

Indeed, Benet's *Règle de perfection* everywhere shows the inspiration of Ruysbroeck and Harphius. However, Benet rather brilliantly modifies the trinitarian exemplarism of these authors in "reducing the whole spiritual life" to a single point: conformity to the will of God. He achieves this reduction in two ways. Firstly he founds his doctrine on the speculative principle that God's attributes and operations are one with the divine essence. Therefore, the will of God is God himself.⁶⁵ Secondly, drawing a principle from both speculative and mystical traditions in the Franciscan order, he teaches that only the soul's affective power, the will, proceeds to union with God without interruption.⁶⁶ In making this reduction, however, Benet does not destroy the trinitarian thought of his masters. In the highest degree of conformity to God, the desires of the will flow immediately into God, the intellect reflects the light of the divine exemplar, and the memory recollects the soul's divine origin through a "nude

⁶³Godefroy de Paris, *Les Frères mineurs capucins en France* II (2 vols., Paris, 1937-1950), p. 444.

⁶⁴Ruysbroeck, *L'Ornement des nopces spirituelles* (trad. Beaucousin, Toulouse, 1606), *La Perle evangelique* (trad. Beaucousin, Paris 1602). See J. P. Van Schoote, 'La Perle evangelique. I. Dom Richard Beaucousin', 'II. La Doctrine', *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique*, XXXVII (1961), 79-92, 291-313.

⁶⁵Benet of Canfield, *Reigle de perfection* 3.1.218-225.

⁶⁶*Ibid.* 1.1-2.1-25 et *passim*.

faith".⁶⁷ Moreover, by establishing that the soul's exemplar is Christ crucified *ab aeterno*, Benet harmonizes the teaching of Ruysbroeck and Harphius with the meditative traditions of his order.⁶⁸ It is perhaps this point of Benet's doctrine which most influenced Cardinal de Bérulle and other important figures of the Counter-Reformation.⁶⁹

Finally, the purpose of Benet's reduction of the spiritual life is to integrate the active and contemplative lives, an aim consistent with the charter of his order. Undoubtedly Ruysbroeck's treatment of the dynamic relation between the two lives inspired Benet. Herein, I believe, lies the key to the Counter-Reformation's esteem for Ruysbroeck and his disciples. Indeed, Ruysbroeck's admirers struggled speculatively to understand him, but they did so in order to live what he taught. This is best expressed, and most consequentially, in the Carthusian Bruno Loher's dedicatory letter to Ignatius Loyola, which prefaces the 1556 edition of Harphius' works. Loher clearly places Harphius' doctrine in the context of the Counter-Reformation. The Carthusian praises the apostolic efforts of the Jesuits, which are more than needed in a time when the Church is declining and God is chastising it for the sins of its members. However, Loher offers Ignatius a kind of *caveat*. Before one can perform the duties of the active life fruitfully, he must mortify the vices and perfect

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 3.5-7.240-267. For Benet's doctrine of contemplation see Emery 'Benet of Canfield', Mommaers, XLVII-XLIX *Revue d'histoire*, Optat de Veghel, *Benoit de Canfield (1562-1610): sa vie, sa doctrine et son influence* (Rome, 1949), pp. 200-357.

⁶⁸ Benet of Canfield, *Reigle de perfection* 3.16-20.337-397.

⁶⁹ A. Huxley, *Grey Eminence: A Study in Religion and Politics* (N.Y., 1941), pp. 91-104 *et passim*.

the virtues. This is impossible, unless one uproots the source of all vice, the self-will. One does not destroy self-will, in turn, through human effort, but through the "touch" of heaven. This divine touch enables one to know the goodness of God, not through abstraction, but by a "taste in the interior mind". In other words, the active life is not something independent; rather it flows out of the contemplative life and its highest gift, the gift of wisdom.⁷⁰ Loher's letter to Ignatius indicates that the dissemination of Ruysbroeck's and Harphius' writings was the Carthusian contribution to the active reform of the Church. If the doctrines of Ruysbroeck and Harphius informed the apostolic labors of the Capuchins, if, in Spain, they influenced the contemplation of St. John of the Cross,⁷¹ the Jesuits on the other hand never really accepted the Carthusians' invitation, and even became hostile to the writers they recommended.⁷² Perhaps if the Carthusians' counsel had been heeded generally, the sharp practical distinctions between active and contemplative lives, active and passive participations in grace, which tore apart the Church in the late seventeenth century, could have been avoided.

⁷⁰ B. Loher, dedicatory epistle to Ignatius Loyola (1556) printed with Harphius, *Theologia mystica* (1538, repr. 1966).

⁷¹ J. Orcibal, *Saint Jean de la Croix et les mystiques rheno-flamands* (Paris, 1966), pp. 57-79.

⁷² Cognet, *La Spiritualité moderne*, pp. 187-230.