

THE MEANING OF THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE ACCORDING TO THOMAS MERTON

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This title for this paper might seem rather pretentious. It is certainly not possible to determine the meaning of the contemplative life in one talk. Yet perhaps we can look at this from some of the aspects that Fr. Louis, as we knew Thomas Merton, treated in his many writings. For basically one can say that everything that Merton wrote was a development of his basic theme of "What is Contemplation?" Whether he was explicitly writing on prayer, monastic life, liturgy, the psalms or on civil rights, peace and war, nuclear disarmament or ancient cultures, he was expressing the fullness of the nature of contemplation. For contemplation for Merton was not simply one aspect of life, still less some esoteric phenomenon attainable by only a few in life. For him, contemplation was the fundamental reality in life. It was what made life real and alive. It was what makes us to be truly human.

Perhaps we can begin by looking at a few descriptive definitions of contemplation given by Merton in one of his last works: **The New Man**

"Contemplation is the perfection of love and knowledge."
(p.13)

"Contemplation goes beyond concepts and apprehends God not as a separate object but as the Reality within our reality, the Being within our being, the life of our life. 11 (P.19)

"Contemplation is a mystery in which God reveals Himself as the very center of our own inmost self." (ibid.)

"Contemplation is the highest and most paradoxical form of self realization, attained by apparent self-annihilation."
(ibid.) (1)

These quotes show us the mature Merton in his approach to contemplation. Yet they remain in continuity with the body of his writings. In a much earlier work entitled: **What is Contemplation?**, Merton had written:

Why do we think of the gift of contemplation. infused contemplation, mystical prayer, as something essentially strange and esoteric reserved for a small class of almost unnatural beings and prohibited to everyone else? It is perhaps because we have forgotten that contemplation is the

work of the Holy Spirit acting on our souls through His gifts of Wisdom and Understanding with special intensity to increase and perfect our love for Him. These gifts are part of the normal equipment of Christian sanctity. They are given to us at Baptism, and if they are given it is presumably because God wants them to be developed.... But it is also true that God often measures His gifts by our desire to receive them, and by our cooperation with His grace, and the Holy Spirit will not waste any of His gifts on people who have little or no interest in them. (2)

God, then, has created us to share in His own life. He has given Himself to us as the very source of our being. Not only that, but He has chosen to dwell in this very being of ourselves and to give us a share in His own knowing and loving of all creation and all beings. Merton says:

The seeds of this sublime life are planted in every Christian at Baptism. But seeds must grow and develop before you reap the harvest. There are thousands of Christians walking about the face of the earth bearing in their bodies the infinite God of whom they know practically nothing. They are themselves children of God, and are not aware of their identity. Instead of seeking to know themselves and their true dignity, they struggle miserably to impersonate the alienated characters whose "greatness" rests on violence, craftiness, lust and greed. ... God does not manifest Himself to these souls because they do not seek Him with any real desire. ... But desire is the most important thing in the contemplative life. Without desire we will never receive the great gifts of God. (3)

The basis for such statements is Merton's understanding of the nature of the human person and also the nature of the Incarnation of God in Christ. Following the Greek Fathers of the Church, in many respects the true meaning of the Incarnation is perhaps one of the least understood of the Mysteries of our Faith. Christ did not become Man simply in order to perform a work of redemption, freeing us from sin and from hell. The Fathers frequently say: "God became man in order that man might become God". Christ became man in order to reveal to us our own true nature and to empower us to live as children of God. Contemplation is simply living out this mystery, not only in prayer, but in our whole life. Merton says:

If the Son of Man came to seek and save that which was lost", this was not merely in order to reestablish us in a favorable juridical position with regard to God: it, was to elevate, change and transform us humans into God, in order that God might be revealed in Man, and that all people might become One Son of God in Christ. The New Testament texts in which this mystery is stated are unequivocal, and yet they have been to a very great extent ignored not only by the

faithful but also by the theologians. The Greek and Latin Fathers never made this mistake! For them, the mystery of the hypostatic union, or the union of the divine and human nature in the One Person of the Word, the God-Man, Jesus Christ, was not only a truth of the greatest, most revolutionary and most existential actuality, but it was the central truth of all being and all history. It was the key which alone could unlock the meaning of everything else, and even the inner and spiritual significance of the human person, of his actions as an individual and in society, of the world, and of the whole cosmos. (4)

As Merton says: "the very first step to a correct understanding of contemplation is to grasp clearly the unity of God and Man in Christ, which of course presupposes the equally crucial unity of man in himself." (ibid.) This, however, remains as the fundamental problem. For we are not in unity within ourselves. As a result of the fall of Adam and its effects on all humanity through all time, we find ourselves divided. We are much more aware of that "false self" which is identified with all our efforts at situating ourselves in a hierarchy of power, prestige and greatness ("like unto God" (Gen. 3:5). This "false self" is preoccupied with whatever will make us "look better" in the eyes of others and of ourselves.

This "false self" can even look at contemplation as a means to aggrandize ourselves. Merton cautions with some humor:

If such an "I" one day hears about "contemplation" he will perhaps set himself to "become a contemplative". That is, he will wish to admire in himself something called contemplation. And in order to see it, he will reflect on his alienated self. He will make contemplative faces at himself like a child in front of a mirror. He will cultivate the contemplative look that seems appropriate to him, and that he likes to see in himself. And the fact that his busy narcissism is turned within and feeds upon itself in stillness and secret love will make him believe that this is contemplation. (5)

Such an endeavor is condemned to failure from the start because it is simply our knowing of ourselves, whereas contemplation is God's own knowing of Himself in and through us. The inner self, he says "is not a part of our being, like a motor in a car. It is our entire substantial reality itself, on its highest and most personal and most existential level." (ibid.)

Merton belonged to an Order that is called contemplative. But he was not addressing his writings only to monks. He wrote for all people everywhere. He fully realized, as one of his books is entitled, that "No Man is an Island". The fact that God became man means that **every** person is called to this life of contemplation which is the realization of our true nature. In the life of the Church, however, certain Orders are called "contemplative" because of the

particular way they gear their life and the means they use in order to live as fully as possible at the level of an awareness of this inner nature. Traditionally the Fathers of the Church have seen this expressed in the Gospel passage about Martha and Mary. Martha was busy with many things in preparing the meal for the Lord. But Mary remained at his feet, intent on His words. And the Lord Himself declared that "Mary has chosen the better part". The Fathers frequently interpreted this as a proof of the higher vocation of the contemplative who dedicates one's Life to search for God in prayer and reflection. In actual fact, however, not all of the Fathers took this same interpretation. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, one of our first and the greatest of our Cistercian Fathers, interpreted this in relation to the monastic community itself, but he extended it to include the brother, Lazarus, in the scene where Jesus eats with the three after having raised Lazarus from the tomb. Bernard says that every monastic community has its Marthas who are intent on the activities of the monastery, its Marys who are seeking primarily the leisure of prayer and reading, and its Lazarus who live their lives in a spirit of repentance from sin and past follies. But ultimately he finds all three within each monk. Contemplation binds these three into one family who can live in harmony and love.

The problem with defining contemplative life on a juridical level is that one can center on the externals of the life, and even more specifically on the negative elements of the life. Merton recognizes this problem in the history of monasticism:

In the past, the contemplative life was proposed in a rather rigid formal sort of way. You entered the contemplative life by making a list of things which you were going to drop, so to speak. You took the world and all its possibilities and you just crossed everything off the list. You crossed off the joys of human love, you crossed off the joys of art, music, secular literature, enjoyment of the beauties of nature. ...The one thing necessary is not that which is left when everything is crossed off, but it is perhaps that which includes and embraces everything else. that which is arrived at when you've added up everything and gone far beyond. (6)

And yet Merton chose a contemplative monastery and remained in that vocation until his death. His reason for this was simply that he discerned that this way of life provided him with those conditions which best suited him and his temperament in striving to live on the level of his "true self" - that self that each one is in God and which each one is called to live out in their life vocation. The monk chooses a monastic way of contemplative life not because he hates or fears the world or people or pleasure, but because he finds it helps him to discover and live out his life on a level of truth - truth to himself and truth to God and to others. He said:

It is not enough to keep monks strictly enclosed and remote from all external activity - this does not itself constitute a sign of the eschatological kingdom. On the contrary, very often this limitation constitutes a serious impoverishment of the personality of the monks and at the same time prevents that impoverishment from becoming public! It is of course true that solitude and silence contribute very much to the ends for which monastic communities exist. But the fact remains that people are called to the monastic life so that they may grow and be transformed, "reborn" to a new and more complete identity, and to a more profoundly fruitful existence in peace, in wisdom, in creativity, in love. When rigidity and limitation becomes ends in themselves they no longer favor growth, they stifle it. (7)

The purpose of monastic practice must be to bring one to what he called "Final Integration". He drew this term from the writing of a Persian psychologist named Reza Arasteh. Merton developed the ideas of this man by showing that he was not speaking of some psychological reality alone. He is speaking of that which brings every person into touch with their true universal nature, their true bond with all peoples and all cultures and the experiences of all.

The one who has attained final integration is no longer limited by the culture in which he has grown up. "He has embraced **all of life**." He passes beyond all these limiting forms, while retaining all that is best and most universal in them, finally giving birth to a fully comprehensive self. He accepts not only his own community, his own society, his own friends, his own culture, but all humanity. He does not remain bound to one limited set of values in such a way that he opposes them aggressively or defensively to others. He is fully "Catholic" in the best sense of the word. He has a unified vision and experience of the one truth shining out in all its various manifestations, some clearer than others, some more definite and more certain than others. He does not set these partial views up in opposition to each other, but unifies them in a dialectic or an insight of complementarity. With this view of life he is able to bring perspective, liberty and spontaneity into the lives of others. The finally integrated person is a peacemaker, and that is why there is such a desperate need for our leaders to become such persons of insight. (ibid.p.212)

As Merton shows, this kind of final integration applies not only to monks but to all:

As Dr. Arasteh points out, whereas final integration was, in the past the privilege of a few, it is now becoming a need and aspiration of humanity as a whole. The whole world is in an existential crisis to which there are various reactions, some of them negative, tragic, destructive, demonic, others proffering a human hope that is yet not

fully clear. (ibid.)

It is this new hope that is leading many today to seek for contemplation. We implicitly realize that the task ahead of all of us is too large for our own wisdom and insights and abilities. We speak of a "new world order" and yet we see the world turning into the turmoil of Bosnia and Somalia and other places. Yet this very awareness of our own inability to face this new future is itself our greatest hope. For it allows one to face our own limitations and to accept what Merton calls our own nothingness. However this nothingness is not just a negative thing. It is something positive. Merton speaks of this in relation to the contrast between what he calls the "sacred" and the "secular". This distinction was spoken of a great deal in recent years by theologians who tried to delineate between what is the realm of God and what is the realm of the "world". Merton, however, carries this further and shows how both categories are found within ourselves.

"Secular" society is by its nature committed to what Pascal calls "diversion", that is, to movement which has, before all else, the anaesthetic function of quieting our anguish. All society, without exception, tends to be in some respect "secular". But a genuinely secular society is one which cannot be content with innocent escapes from itself. More and more it tends to need and to demand, with insatiable dependence, satisfaction in pursuits that are unjust, evil, or even criminal. Hence the growth of economically useless businesses that exist for profit and not for real production, that create artificial needs which they fill with cheap and quickly exhausted products. Hence the wars that arise when producers compete for markets and sources of raw material. Hence the nihilism, despair and destructive anarchy that follows war and then the blind rush into totalitarianism as an escape from despair.

In the sacred society, on the other hand, the person admits no dependence on anything lower than himself, or even outside himself in a spatial sense. His only Master is God. Only when God is our Master can we be free, for God is within ourselves as well as above ourselves. He rules us by liberating us from our dependence on created things outside us. We use and dominate them, so that they exist for our sakes, and not we for theirs. There is no purely sacred society except in heaven. (8)

The problem is that it is painful to face this letting go of our illusions. To face this area means facing our own inner doubts, our own fears. our own anguish. And yet- -such is necessary in order to enter into contemplation or even into true life. Merton says:

The truly sacred attitude toward life is in no sense an escape from the sense of nothingness that assails us when we are left alone with ourselves.

On the contrary, it penetrates into that darkness and that nothingness, realizing that the mercy of God has transformed our nothingness into His temple and believing that in our darkness His light has hidden itself. Hence the sacred attitude is one which does not recoil from our own inner emptiness, but rather penetrates it with awe and reverence, and with the awareness of mystery. This is a most important discovery in, the interior life. (ibid.)

Merton applies this to the coming to final integration. Following Dr. Arasteh he speaks of this Breakthrough in the language of Sufism and calls it "Fana", annihilation or disintegration, a loss of self, a real spiritual death. This leads us into the traditional way of seeing contemplation as a sharing in the Paschal Mystery of Christ: His death and resurrection. The Scriptures constantly remind us of this theme. "Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit." (Jo 12:24). "to live is Christ; to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). This dying and rising is part and parcel of our very Christian life. But it is particularly an essential part of entering into the life of contemplation. Merton says:

This change of perspective is impossible as long as we are afraid of our own nothingness, as long as we are afraid of fear, afraid of poverty, afraid of boredom - as long as we run away from ourselves. What we need is the gift of God which make us able to find in ourselves not just ourselves but Him: and then our nothingness becomes His all. This is not possible without the liberation effected by compunction and humility. It requires not talent, not mere insight, but **sorrow**, pouring itself out in **love** and **trust**. (ibid.)

St. Paul had spoken of this in other terms when he discussed the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world. In I Corinthians he said:

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption; therefore, AS IT IS WRITTEN, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." (I Cor. 1:18-30 passim)

It is in the wisdom of God that we can let go of our own false self, that we can die to ourselves in order that the power of God can live in us. The wisdom of the world fears abasement, rejection inner poverty and having to face our own

shadows. But Christ embraced these things. He "emptied Himself" and because of this he was exalted. So we also are exalted in Him. For then the contemplative becomes a living expression of Christ in the world. As St. Augustine says, the Christian becomes the arms and hands and feet and voice of Christ in the world. Only then can one can ourselves and one another in this light of Christ. Only then can one "look upon the crowd with compassion" (Mt. 14:14)

All of this is brought about by the power of the Holy Spirit - the Spirit of Christ in us. This binds us in a oneness which exceeds anything that we might imagine. We do not have to reflect on it, we need only live it. Merton says:

We cannot get too deep into the mystery of our oneness in Christ. It is so deep as to be unthinkable and yet a little **thought** about it doesn't hurt. But it doesn't help too much either. The thing is, that we are not united in a thought of Christ or a desire of Christ, but in His Spirit. (9)

Merton saw this as his own vocation in a special way. Already in 1951 he said:

Do you suppose I have a spiritual life? I have none, I am indigence, I am silence, I am poverty, I am solitude, for I have renounced spirituality to find God, and He it is who preaches loud in the depths of my indigence, saying: "I will pour out my spirit upon my children and they will spring up among the herbs as willows besides the running waters". (Is. 44:3-4). I die of love for you, Compassion: I take you for my Lady, as Francis married poverty I marry you, the Queen of hermits and the Mother of the poor. (10)

This compassion was the fruit of contemplation and the living sign of its presence within one. As Jesus said, "By this shall all know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (Jo. 13:35). True contemplation does not isolate one, even in solitude. true contemplation binds all together in -that love which Christ came to demonstrate. But the reverse holds true as well. True love and compassion brings us to a fuller awareness of the importance of contemplation in our lives. Its importance is not for ourselves alone, but for all peoples. In the **Inner Experience** Merton said that in our age -perhaps in a special way the contemplative is called to be, like Christ, a Suffering Servant.

The contemplative is one who is, 'like the Servant of Yahweh, "acquainted with infirmity", not only with his own sin but with the sin of the whole world, which he takes upon himself because he is a human among humans, and cannot dissociate himself from the sins of others. The contemplative life in our time is therefore modified by the sins of our age. They bring down upon us a cloud of darkness far more terrible than the innocent night of unknowing. It is the night of the soul which has descended

on the whole world. Contemplation, in the age of Auschwitz and Dachau and other places is something darker and more fearsome than contemplation in the age of the Fathers. For that very reason, the urge to seek a path of spiritual light can be a subtle temptation to sin. (11)

This is not said in order to become melodramatic, but to be realistic in our approach to what contemplation is. It is not something which we will be able to see or even experience in any dramatic way. It is a life of faith, hope and love and as Paul says "hope that is seen is not hope. But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words." (Rom 8:24-26). Contemplation is the action of the Spirit within the heart of every person, it is the yearning of the Spirit for that-new creation which we become in contemplation. It is the fulfillment of that prayer of Jesus who prayed that we might all be one in Him as He is one in the Father and the Holy Spirit. (Jo.17:20-23).

Every person is called to this contemplation. Irrespective of whether one ever has any kind of extraordinary experience or not, irrespective of whether one finds God in light or in darkness, in joy or in sorrow, each person is called to live out this mystery of Christ in his or her own life.- It is not limited to monks or religious, not even to Christians or believers. it is intended for all, and only in that can we find our true fulfillment.

Merton certainly realized that seeking such a life and such a way of seeing and experiencing life is not easy for many people who live in the world, whose lives are filled with daily pressures of family, work and myriad of responsibilities. However he did point out several ways that even such people can strive to come to contemplation. In the **Inner Experience** he spelled out something of a program for such people. He suggested that people who are seeking a contemplative life should form groups to support one another in this endeavor to foster and protect something of an elementary contemplative spirituality. He says that the already existing movements interested in liturgy and the study of Scripture could help in this direction. He encourages contemplative monasteries themselves to help in this, striving not only to provide places for retreat and withdrawal, but to form groups of people who can help and support one another in something like a contemplative Third Order. Such groups could provide their members with books, conferences, direction and perhaps a quiet place in the country where they could go for a few days of meditation and prayer. But he cautions:

if you are waiting for someone to come along and feed you the contemplative life with a spoon, you are going to wait for a long time, especially in America. You had better renounce your inertia, pray for a little imagination, ask the Lord to awaken your creative freedom and consider some

of the following possibilities. (12)

He then goes on to indicate five possibilities which might be considered:

1) He says that it might be possible by the sacrifice of seemingly good economic opportunities, you could move into the country or to a small town where you can have more time to think. This might involve the acceptance of a relative poverty; if so, all the better for your interior life. The sacrifice could be a real liberation from the pitiless struggle which is the source of most of your worries.

2) Wherever you may be, it is always possible to give yourself the benefit of those parts of the day which are quiet because the world does not value them. One of these is the earlier morning hours. Even if a person cannot put a few hundred miles between himself and the city, if he can get up earlier in the morning he will have the whole place to yourself, and taste something of the peace of solitude. One thinks of the movements for Centering prayer with the encouragement to spend twenty minutes in the early morning and again, if possible in the evening in centering oneself before the Lord in a prayer which is wordless and which enables one to hold on to the Lord by a simple "word" to bring our wandering minds back before the Lord. He encourages one to go to early Mass, even though the later ones may be more splendid and solemn. At the earlier Mass, things are quieter, more sober, more somber, more austere. The poor go to early Mass, because they have to get to work sooner. And Christ is more truly with the poor; His spiritual presence among them makes their Mass the more contemplative one.

3) He says that it should be obvious that Sunday, is set apart by nature and by tradition of the Church as a day of contemplation. Puritan custom tended to make Sunday seem a negative sort of "Sabbath" characterized more by the things one "must not" do. The inevitable reactions against this has stressed the legitimate, but more or less insignificant, recreations that make Sunday a day of rest for the body as well as for the spirit. Sunday is the "Lord's Day" not in the sense that on one day of the week one must stop and think of Him, but because it breaks into the ceaseless "secular" round of time with a burst of light out of a sacred eternity. We stop working and rushing about on Sunday not only in order to rest up and start over again on Monday, but in order to collect our wits and realize the relative meaninglessness of the secular business which fills the other six days of the week, and taste the satisfaction of a peace which surpasses understanding and which is given us by Christ. Sunday is a contemplative day not just because Church law demands that every Catholic assist at Mass, but because everyone who celebrates this day spiritually, and accepts it at-its face value, opens their heart to the light of Christ the light of the Resurrection. In so doing they grow in love, in faith and are able to see a little more of the mystery

of Christ. Simple fidelity to this obvious duty, realization of this gift of God to us, will certainly help the harassed lay person to take their first steps on the path to a kind of contemplation.

4) No matter where one seeks the light of contemplation one commits one's self by that very fact to a certain spiritual discipline. This is just as true outside the cloister as in it. But it would be a mistake for a man or woman with all the obligations and hardships of secular life, to try to live in the world like a monk. To try to do this would be an illusion. Active virtue and good works play a large part in the contemplative life that is lived in the world, and for this reason the discipline of the contemplative in the world is first of all the discipline of fidelity to their duty of state - to their obligations as a head of a family, as ,very great sacrifices. Perhaps indeed some of the difficulties of people in the world exact from them greater sacrifice than they would find in a cloister. In any case, their contemplative life will be deepened and elevated by the depth of their understanding of their duties. Mere conformism and lip service is not enough. It is not sufficient to "be a good Catholic". One must penetrate the inner meaning of the life in Christ and see the full significance of its demands. One must carry -out the obligations not simply as a matter of form, but with a real, personal decision to offer the good one does to God, in and through Christ. The virtue of a Christian is something creative and spiritual, not simply a fulfillment of a law. It must be penetrated and filled with the newness, the Christlikeness, which comes from the action of the Spirit of God in their hearts, which elevates their smallest good act to an entirely spiritual level. But, he cautions, this must entail more than simply verbalizing one's "purity of intention".

5) It follows from this that for the married person, their married life is essentially bound up with their contemplation. It is by marriage that such ones are situated in the mystery of Christ. It is by their marriage that they bear witness to Christ's love for the world, and in their marriage that they experience both the trials and the joys of love. Their marriage is a sacramental center from which grace radiates out into every department of their lives, and consequently it is their marriage that will enable their work, their leisure , their sacrifices and even their distractions to become in some degree contemplative. For by their marriage all these things are ordered to Christ and centered in Christ. It should above all be emphasized that for the married person, even and especially their sharing of married sexual love enters into their contemplation, and this, as a matter of fact, gives it a special character. The union of husband and wife in nuptial love is a sacred and symbolic act, the very nature of which signifies the mystery of the union of God and human in Christ. Now this mystery is the very heart and substance of contemplation. Hence married love is a kind of material and It is a blind, simple groping way of expressing our need to be utterly and completely **one**. The Fathers of the Church thought that before the fall Adam and Eve were

literally two *_in one flesh_*, that is to say, they were one single being, that human nature, united with God, was whole and complete in itself. But after the fall they were divided into two and therefore sought by sexual love to recover this lost unity. But this desire is ever frustrated by original sin. The fruit of sexual love is not perfection, not completeness, but only the birth of another Adam or another Eve, frail, exiled, incomplete. But the coming of Christ has exercised the futility and despair of the children of Adam. Christ has married human nature, united man and woman and God in Himself, in one Person. In Christ, the completeness we were born for is realized. In Him' all are one in the perfection of charity.

Merton concludes this section of his writing by saying that contemplation must not be confused with abstraction. A contemplative life is not to be lived by permanent withdrawal within one's own mind.

"The true contemplative is not less interested than others in normal life, not less concerned with what goes on in the world, but **more** interested, more concerned. The fact that he or she is a contemplative makes them capable of a greater interest and a deeper concern. The contemplative has the inestimable gift of appreciating at their real worth values that are permanent, authentically deep, human. truly spiritual and even divine. Their mission is to be a complete and whole person, with an instinctive and generous need to further the same wholeness in others, and in all humanity. They arrive at this, however, not by superior gifts and talents, but by the simplicity and poverty which are essential to their state because these alone keep one traveling in the way that is spiritual, divine and beyond understanding. (13)

Thomas Merton, then, presents to us both the great loftiness of contemplation and at the same time the simple ordinariness of it. It is not something that we do of ourselves, but which Christ does in us if we are poor of heart and ready to receive it from Him. For then He brings us to that original unity in which He created us and He is able to truly exert His Love, His Providence and His care for us, one and all. In that way we become the children of God that we are.

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FOOTNOTES

1. *The New Man*, Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, New York, 1961
2. *What is Contemplation?*, Templegate Publishers, Springfield, IL. 1950. p.8.

3 *Inner Experience*, unpublished MS., Abbey of Gethsemani, p. 35. Also found in *What is Contemplation?*, p. 16 & 23.

4. **Inner Experience**, p. 28.

5. *ibid.*, p. 5.

6. *Contemplation in a World of Action*, Doubleday & Co., Inc. Garden City, N.Y., 1965, P. 341. in chapter "Is the Contemplative Life Finished?"

7. *ibid.*, p. 207-208. Chapter: "Final Integration".

8. I.E., *op. cit.*, p. 37-38.

9. *Hidden Ground of Love, Letters of Merton*. Farrar, Straus, Giroux,, New York, 1985, p. 360.

10. *The Sign of Jonas*, Harcourt, Bruce & Co., N.Y., 1953, p. 334.

ii. I. E., *op. cit.*, p. 55.

12. *ibid.*, p. 68-69.

13. *ibid.*, p. 69 ff.