

An Excerpt from *The Golden Fountain*

by

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To love God might commence to be expressed as being a great quiet, an intense activity, a prodigious joy, and the poignant knowledge of *the immensity of an amazing new life shared*.

The contemplation of God might be expressed as the folding up or complete forgetfulness of all earthly and bodily things, desires and attractions, and the raising of the heart and mind and the centering of them in great and joyful intensity upon God, by means of love. Of this contemplation of God I find two principal forms: the passive and the active. In the first we are in a state of steady, quiet, and loving perception and reception, and at some farness; in this we are able to remain for hours, entering this state when waking at dawn and remaining in it till rising.

In active contemplation we are in rapturous and passionate adoration with great nearness, and are not able to remain in it long because of bodily weakness. The soul feels to be never tired by the longest flight, but must return because of the exhaustion of the forlorn and wretched creature, which creature is complete in itself, having its body, of which, being able to touch it, we say, "It is my body," and its heart and mind with intelligence, of which we are wont to think, "This is myself"; yet it is but a part, for the intelligence of our creature is by no means the intelligence of the divine soul, but a far lesser light; for with the intelligence of the divine soul we reach out to God and attain Him, but with the intelligence of the creature we reach towards Him but do not attain, for with it we are unable to penetrate the veil. Therefore, who would know the joys of contemplation must come to them by love, for love is the only means by which the creature can attain. The soul attains God as her birthright, but the creature by adoption and redemption, and this through love. By love the creature dies and is reborn into the spirit.

The word "poverty," as used to express a necessary condition of our coming to God, is a most misleading term. For how can any condition be rightly named poverty which brings us into the riches of God? Rather let us use the words "singleness of heart," or "simplicity": which is to say, we *put out* all other interests save those pleasing to God (to commence with), and afterwards we reach the condition in which we *have no* interests but in God Himself—the heart and mind and will of the creature becoming wholly God's, and God filling them. How can we say, then, is it rightly expressed as being a heart fixed in singleness upon God, through drastic simplification of interests: the which is no poverty, but the wealth of all the Universe.

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Some of use seem open to suggestion, others to the steadier effects of personal influence. I never came under the personal influence of another except once, when I came under the influence of the being I loved most—my brother. At ten he saved my life from drowning, and at eighteen his influence and total lack of faith in God, coupled with the searchings and probings of my own intelligence, took me away from God, in whom I have previously had a comfortable faith. At seventeen I began to lap up the hardest scientific books as a cat laps milk. I said to myself, “I must find truth, I must find out what everything really is”; but I could not reconcile science with Church teaching. I was not able to adjust the truths of science—which were demonstrable to both senses and intelligence—with the unprovable dogmas set forth by the Church as necessary to salvation. I slowly and surely lost what faith I had, and hung a withered heart upon the pitiless and nameless bosom of the Cosmos. Inward life became for me a horrible emptiness without hope. Surrounded with gaieties and the innumerable social successes of youth, I found that neither science nor society could satisfy my soul, or that something living within me which knew a terrible necessity for God. For two long and dreadful years I fought secretly and desperately to regain this lost belief, and when at last I succeeded there remained a monstrous and impenetrable wall between myself and God. But by comparison with the horrors of past loneliness it was heaven to me to feel Him there, even behind that wall. (Now that I have found Him by love, I am able to return to science as to a most exquisite unrolling of the majesty of His truths and powers and laws, and am brought nearer and nearer to Him the more I learn of science.) Outside the wall I remained for more than twenty years, seeking and searching for an opening in that might barrier.

And after more than twenty years I found the Door—and it was Jesus Christ.