

The Guía espiritual of Miguel de Molinos
and Passivity in Mystical Prayer

by

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CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	
Preface	
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: <u>The Guía espiritual and the meaning of passivity</u>	
Introduction	14
1) Mysticism defined and its element of passivity analysed	23
2) Christian freedom, passibility, and the concept of NADA	48
Chapter 2: <u>Passivity and mystical prayer: some social implications</u>	
Introduction	66
1) The Christian doctrine of prayer	68
2) Some problems that mysticism has posed for the Church	73
3) The Beghards as forerunners of the <u>alumbrados</u> : some social implications of their false passivity	79
Chapter 3: <u>Sixteenth-century Spain and passivity in mystical prayer: alumbrados and dejados</u>	
Introduction: some sociological considerations	91
1) The origins of <u>recogimiento</u> in Spain	97
2) <u>Alumbrados</u> and <u>dejados</u>	108
3) Conclusion	126
Chapter 4: <u>The Guía espiritual and seventeenth-century spirituality in Italy and Spain</u>	
1) Illuminism in the later sixteenth-century	133
2) Jerónimo Gracián as defender of true mysticism	135
3) Illuminism in the early seventeenth-century	140
4) Religious exaltation in Valencia: the case of Francisco Jerónimo Simó	143
5) Molinos' early career in Valencia	149
6) Molinos in Rome	156
7) Illuminism in Italy	159
8) Publication of the Guía, the controversy surrounding it, and Molinos' condemnation	162

	Page
Chapter 5: <u>Analysis of the Guía espiritual</u>	
Introduction	173
1) St. John of the Cross: an outline of his teaching	181
2) The <u>Guía</u> and the active phase of contemplation	200
3) The <u>Guía</u> and spiritual direction	214
4) The <u>Guía</u> and the passive phase of contemplation	224
5) Conclusion	244
Chapter 6: <u>Passivity in late seventeenth-century Spanish religious life and the social significance of the Guía</u>	
1) The fate of the <u>Guía</u> in Spain	264
2) Spanish religious life in the late seventeenth-century: aspects of passivity	268
3) The Inquisition as a passivating influence	276
4) The dynamism of mystical solitude versus passivating ritual	279
5) Spanish passivity and Molinos' radical social function	281
Bibliography	
1) Works by Miguel de Molinos	293
2) Works dealing directly with Molinos	293
3) Works of Spanish mysticism	296
4) Works dealing with Spanish mysticism	296
5) Works related to the study of mysticism	297
6) The sociology of religion	300
7) Histories of Spain	301
8) General	301
9) Carl Jung and his commentators	302
Appendix	
1) Letter from Cardinal Caraccioli to Pope Innocent XI	304
2) Abstract of the trial and sentence of Miguel de Molinos	308
3) Condemned propositions	318

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This thesis asserts that the Guía espiritual of Miguel de Molinos is in the vigorous Spanish mystical tradition culminating in the works of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, and is notable for conveying the insights of St. John of the Cross in particular to a wider readership. The Guía's critics, however, assert that it represents an effete pseudo-mysticism, dubbed Quietism, that developed in the Roman Catholic church in the seventeenth century. Central to definitions of Quietism is the concept of passivity which itself requires the most careful definition, a requirement not met by those who have traduced Molinos and his Guía. It is argued, pace its detractors, that the Guía expresses an orthodox mystical passivity, and not an exaggerated or perverted version of it.

Chapter 1 therefore assesses the full implications of the term passivity, with particular reference to the Guía. It concludes that in fact it proposes the dynamic passivity of mysticism as a prerequisite of ethical conduct - the hallmark of authentic mysticism. Chapter 2 outlines the Christian doctrine of prayer, indicating the social problems to which wholesale cultivation of passive prayer can give rise. The false passivity of the Beghards, forerunners of the alumbrados of Spain with whom Molinos came to be associated, is cited in this respect. Chapter 3 explores the origins of interior prayer in Spain, dealing with the alumbrados of the sixteenth century. It concludes that cultivation of interior prayer by laypeople was viewed by the Inquisition as subversive. Chapter 4 discusses the concern over passive prayer in Spain and Italy in the seventeenth century, and gives details of Molinos' early career in Valencia, together with his subsequent career in Rome, including the publication and condemnation of the Guía. Chapter 5 gives a detailed analysis of the Guía, assessing its debt to St. John of the Cross, and affirming its orthodoxy in relation to the general principles of mystical passivity.

The final chapter discusses passivity in the religious life of seventeenth-century Spain, indicating that the Inquisition itself was the major passivating influence on the spirituality of the period. In this way the Guía's rejection was ironic, for its expression of dynamic passivity brings into sharp focus, and is in direct contrast to, the enervating ritual encouraged by the Inquisition. The thesis concludes that the Guía had a radical social function: to raise to collective consciousness the power of Christian freedom; its rejection was thus symptomatic of Spain's inability to rise above the inertia that typified its religious life at that time.

PREFACE

Recent years have seen an upsurge of interest in Spain in the Guía espiritual of Miguel de Molinos, marked by four separate editions in the past thirteen years, two of them using the princeps romana edition of 1675. 1974 saw the publication of two editions, one by Claudio Lendínez, using the Madrid edition of 1676, incorporating many of its textual errors; and another by José Ángel Valente, using the Rome edition correctly. It is this latter edition, which also includes excerpts from Molinos' Defensa de la contemplación for the first time, that serves us for this thesis.¹ In 1976 José Ignacio Tellechea Idígoras published his excellent critical edition of the Guía with an introduction and notes; and in 1977 Santiago González Noriega produced a further edition with an introduction which follows in the tradition of those commentators who accuse Molinos of Quietism,² without, however, attempting to analyse the text to arrive at a proper understanding of Molinos' conception of passivity in mystical prayer.

As it is Molinos' alleged advocacy of false passivity in mystical prayer that earned for him the title of 'The Father of Quietism', it seems appropriate at this time to attempt a complete vindication of the Guía to absolve it of all charges of false passivity that have so often, and for so long, been held against it. In this way we hope to confute all those critics who have been stating wrongly for centuries what Noriega has presumed to be true: that

Molinos was a quietist, and not a true mystic. It should emerge in this study, too, that the Guía espiritual belongs to the Spanish mystical tradition which culminated in the works of the Carmelite saints, St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, and indeed was an attempt to convey the insights of St. John of the Cross in particular to a wider public, a view shared by such recent scholars as Melquíades Andrés Martín, Fr. Eulogio de la V. del Carmen, and J.M. Cohen.

It was Gerald Brenan who said that 'A curious thing about Spanish literature is that it travels badly. Whatever the reason may be, few Spanish books have gained general currency beyond their language frontiers.'³ The same cannot be said of the Guía espiritual, however, whose success in disseminating a contemplative Christianity to all those ready for it may be gauged by its immense popularity in Protestant countries, and among movements such as the Pietists in Germany, and the Quakers in England and America. As Allison Peers points out in an unpublished study on Molinos and his Guía,⁴ there are none of the meditations on uncomfortable subjects like death, judgment and hell so characteristic of much of Hispanic devotional literature of the period. Instead, in the Guía, as in Quaker and Pietist spirituality, unnecessary mortification gave way to a saner simplicity in which neither the intellect nor the senses were made the avenue of approach to God, but the spirit.

Molinos' massively documented Defensa de la contemplación did nothing to stem the tide of hostility

which was to swamp all attempts in the Roman Catholic world to further an interior spirituality, which admittedly flourished briefly in France with its roots in the spirituality of Madame de Guyon and Bishop Fénelon, but was soon suppressed. 'The Church', as J.M. Cohen puts it, 'entered the age of the Enlightenment shorn of its inner light, the light of the mystics'.⁵ Molinos' radicalism, therefore, may be said to stem in part from the advice given in his Guía that when a person found conventional prayer (i.e. meditation) arid then he was ready for interior prayer (i.e. contemplation), which left the decision in part at least to the individual, although Molinos himself did not encourage interior prayer without a director.

This study is written with the knowledge that the spirituality of Miguel de Molinos, considered egregious in its day, has enjoyed a perdurability over the centuries, quite transcending the time and place of its origin. It is written with the conviction, too, that the Guía espiritual still offers us today an unpretentious lesson in spiritual egalitarianism that is the hallmark of all authentic mysticism.

I would like to thank the following: Mr J.M. Cohen, whose book The Common Experience⁶ first stimulated my interest in Miguel de Molinos and his Guía espiritual, and who has encouraged me in this project through his kind correspondence; Mr John Quigley for providing me with literature relevant to the study, and for interesting discussion on the wider aspects of spirituality; and

Dr. Colin Thompson of the University of Sussex for his generous help with Chapter 5; and finally, my supervisor, Mr. Mike Thacker, for his sensitive supervision of my thesis, and for the unfailing aptness of his comments.

NOTES

1. Guía espiritual and Defensa de la contemplación, edited by José Angel Valente, (Barcelona, 1974). All references to the Guía and Defensa in this thesis are from this edition.
2. See in particular DUDON, P., Le quietiste espagnol Michel Molinos (Paris, 1921) and KNOX, R.A., Enthusiasm. A Chapter in the History of Religion (Oxford, 1950), pp. 231-318.
3. BRENAN, G., The Literature of the Spanish People (Harmondsworth, 1963), p. 169.
4. These remarks are contained in a draft of a chapter on Miguel de Molinos and the Guía espiritual, probably intended for Vol. IV of Studies of the Spanish Mystics (Vols. 1-3 published 1927-60). This draft, together with notes, cuttings, pamphlets, offprints, correspondence, etc., related to Peers' publications on the Spanish mystics, is lodged in the Special Collections Department, Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool.
5. COHEN, J.M., 'Some Reflections on the Life and Work of Miguel de Molinos', Studies in Mystical Literature, Vol. I, No. 3 (Spring, 1981), pp. 327-50 (p. 249).
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INTRODUCTION

At one point in his history of Imperial Spain, J.H. Elliott remarks: 'the concept of a perennial struggle between two Spains is perhaps too frequently invoked as an explanation of the tensions in Spanish history, but this does not necessarily mean that it lacks all value in relation to specific periods. If it is unwise to search too closely for a continuity extending over several centuries, it is still possible to see a recurrence of divisions of a kind common to all societies, but which have been particularly sharp at certain moments in the history of Spain'.¹

In broad terms, the divisions in the quietist controversy which we believe led to the arraignment of Miguel de Molinos for heresy and the proscribing of his Guía espiritual may be interpreted as 'a recurrence of divisions of a kind common to all societies'. And Molinos' condemnation at the Minerva in Rome, 1687, may be said to mark the failure of late seventeenth-century Roman Catholicism to reconcile a number of such divisions, divisions which in our view are inherent in the very nature of man himself, and which therefore inevitably informed to some extent the political and social processes surrounding the quietist controversy at that time.

It is these divisions in the life of man that we shall subsume in this study under the fundamental dualism of activity and passivity, properly defined. This

fundamental dualism, in its various aspects and under various terminology, has of course, engaged the minds of thinkers from time immemorial.

The activity/passivity dualism may, for instance, usefully be expressed as the interplay of freedom (active) and necessity (passive), an inference we make from the following comments by Leo Tolstoy:

We must remind ourselves as often as possible that our true life is not this external, material life that passes before our eyes here on earth, but that it is the inner life of our spirit, for which the visible life serves as a scaffolding - a necessary aid to our spiritual growth ... a boundary limiting the free development of our spirit. Matter is the limit of spirit. But true life is the destruction of this limitation. In this understanding of life lies the very essence of the understanding of truth ... materialists mistake that which limits life for life itself.²

Expressed in other terms, which will also have a bearing on our thesis, we may conceive of the activity/passivity dualism as an interplay of what Friedrich Schiller, in his Letters, called the 'speculative' understanding (active), and the 'intuitive' understanding (passive). These two aspects of the psyche are conceived by Schiller as existing in a state of tension and conflict. In his Thirteenth Letter, for instance, he states:

At first sight nothing could seem more diametrically opposed than the tendencies of these two drives, the one pressing for change, the other for changelessness. And yet it is these two drives which,

between them, exhaust our concept of humanity and make a third fundamental drive, which might reconcile the two, a completely unthinkable concept. How, then, are we to restore the unity of human nature which seems to be utterly destroyed by this primary and radical opposition?³

We shall be suggesting that the Guía espiritual of Miguel de Molinos - bearing in mind the time and place from which it derives - would be a most appropriate method of evoking the intuitive, passive, receptive aspects of our nature to take their proper place alongside the rational and discursive functions. It is implied that the resultant symmetry produces the mystical consciousness, and a strong impulsion to active work.

We may also conceive of the activity/passivity dualism as the tension between the apparently contradictory urges of idealism (active) and materialism (passive). This tension is dramatically conveyed in the following allegory contained in Plato's Phaedrus:

As I said at the beginning of this tale, I divided each soul into three - two horses and a charioteer; and one of the horses was good and the other bad; the division may remain, but I have not yet explained in what the goodness or badness of either consists, and to that I will now proceed. The right-hand horse is upright and clearly made; he has a lofty neck and an aquiline nose; his colour is white and his eyes dark; he is a lover of honour and modesty and temperance, and the associate of right opinion; he needs no touch of the whip, but is guided by word and admonition only. The other is a crooked lumbering animal, put together anyhow; he has a short thick neck; he is flat-faced and of a dark colour,

with grey and blood-shot eyes; the mate of insolence and pride, shag-eared and deaf, hardly yielding to whip and spur. Now when the charioteer beholds the vision of love, and has his whole soul warmed through sense, and is full of the prickings and ticklings of desire, the obedient steed, then as always under the government of shame, refrains from leaping on the beloved; but the other, heedless of the pricks and the blows of the whip, plunges and runs away, giving all manner of trouble to his companion and the charioteer, whom he forces to approach the beloved and to remember the joys of love.⁴

If we were to translate this allegory into Freudian terminology then the primitive forces of the id, 'the crooked lumbering animal', are constantly trying to gain control of the ego, 'the associate of right opinion'. The superego, 'the charioteer', is the voice of conscience, whose task it is to keep in check the vital impulses of the id.

It was Freud's great contemporary, Carl Jung, who postulated a synthesis between the ego and the id, the conscious and the unconscious, the achievement of which would lead to interior peace and detachment:

If the unconscious can be recognized as a co-determining factor along with consciousness, and if we live in such a way that conscious and unconscious demands are taken into account as far as possible, then the centre of gravity of the total personality shifts its position. It is then no longer in the ego, which is merely the centre of consciousness, but in the hypothetical point between conscious and unconscious. This new centre might be called the self.⁵

It will be Jung's psychology, therefore, with its insistence on the need for a balance between the active and passive, or conscious and unconscious, aspects of the psyche, that will assist in our interpretation of Spanish Quietism.

The orthodox Christian resolution of the apparently irreconcilable polarities of idealism and materialism was definitively stated in the Middle Ages by St. Thomas Aquinas, the theologian appealed to most often by Miguel de Molinos in his Guía espiritual:

There is a desire in man ... namely the desire for the enjoyment of pleasure: and this men pursue especially by leading a voluptuous life, and through lack of moderation become intemperate and incontinent. Now in that vision (the divine vision) there is the most perfect pleasure, all the more perfect than sensuous pleasure as the intellect is above the senses; as the good in which we shall delight surpasses all sensible good ... and more continuously delightful...

In this life there is nothing so like this ultimate and perfect happiness as the life of those who contemplate the truth, as far as possible here below. Hence the philosophers who were unable to obtain full knowledge of that final beatitude, placed man's ultimate happiness in that contemplation which is possible during this life. For this reason, too, Holy Writ commends the contemplative rather than other forms of life, when our Lord said (Luke X.42): Mary hath chosen the better part, namely the contemplation of truth, which shall not be taken from her. For contemplation of truth begins in this life, but will be consummated in the life to come: while the active and civic life does not transcend the limits of this life.⁶

By way of comparison with this orthodox position it will be useful here to set out what are generally considered to be the constant factors in the history of Quietism:

Denominadores comunes de las distintas manifestaciones adoptadas durante los siglos pasados son estos pocos principios: existencia en el hombre de dos tendencias espiritual-mente antagónicas; material y sensual la una, espiritual y santificadora la otra; la perfección o santidad implica la aniquilación (en sentido moral) de la primera en beneficio y supremacía de la segunda; el medio o camino más expedito para lograrla no hay que buscarlo en la cruenta lucha ascética, sino en la total pasividad del mecanismo sensitivo e intelectual; únicamente esta quieta pasividad lleva al contacto directo con Dios; perdurando esa situación espiritual, la porción sensual y sus movimientos no caen en la zona de la responsabilidad moral, son actos mecánicos.⁷

The polarities mentioned here in relation to the history of Quietism indicate the essentially moral aspect to any discussion of Quietism per se. A discussion of these polarities therefore inevitably raises questions as to the very nature of human action and responsibility, the sort of questions which are posed so dramatically, and so impotently, by Shakespeare's Hamlet:

To be, or not to be, - that is the question:-
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
 And by opposing end them?

'For who', (asks Hamlet all too humanly),
 'would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make
 With a bare bodkin?'⁸

These questions as such, of course, offer no reconciling prescription, no propaedeutic to universal action. On the contrary, as Hamlet himself concludes in his soliloquy:

'Conscience does make cowards of us all;
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
 And enterprises of great pith and moment,
 With this regard, their currents turn awry,
 And lose the name of action'.⁹

In the light of the various dualisms outlined above, the history of seventeenth-century Quietism would thus appear to us as a telling paradigm of man's perennial psychosocial dilemma: that is, to bring into balance those dual aspects of his nature we mention and which appear among others to be his particular task to reconcile in community with his fellows. It is in the light of these dualisms, too, that we interpret the adverse fate of Miguel de Molinos and his Guía espiritual as a ritual relegation of the passive, receptive, intuitive and 'feminine' aspects of the religious life to a subservient rôle vis-à-vis the rational, dogmatic and 'masculine' elements of external religion. The way in which this came about will be the subject of this study.

In the seventeenth-century the quietist debate transcended national boundaries; the Guía espiritual was not published first in Spain, but in Rome, where Molinos spent the greater part of his career as a distinguished spiritual director. Nor must we forget that quietist spirituality has important ramifications in France, and prompted the polemic between Bossuet and Fénelon. That the quietist debate is not the prerogative of the Church is pointed out by Aldous Huxley in his work on mysticism, The Perennial Philosophy. Mahayana Buddhism, says Huxley, has at one stage in its evolution rejected Quietism, 'spiritual knowledge exclusively in the heights of the soul'.¹⁰ He emphasises, however, that those involved in the debate agreed to differ, in marked contrast to the stance adopted by the Church to Molinos and the alumbrados with whom he came to be associated.

It is interesting to note, too, that Huxley, in his book The Doors of Perception, Heaven and Hell, which is based on his experience with the drug mescaline, draws an analogy between quietistic inertia and the effects of mescaline ingestion; after taking the drug he was prompted to make the following remarks:

How was this cleansed perception to be reconciled with a proper concern with human relations, with the necessary chores and duties, to say nothing of charity and practical compassion? The age-old debate between the actives and the contemplatives was being renewed... For ... I had known contemplation only in its humbler, its more ordinary forms - as discursive thinking ... But now I knew contemplation at its height. At its height, but not yet in its fullness.

For in its fullness the way of Mary includes the way of Martha and raises it, so to speak, to its own higher power. Mescalín opens up the way of Mary, but shuts the door on that of Martha. It gives access to contemplation - but to a contemplation that is incompatible with action and even with the will to action, the very thought of action. In the intervals between his revelations the mescalín taker is apt to feel that, though in one way everything is supremely as it should be, in another there is something wrong. His problem is essentially the same as that which confronts the quietist ... The full and final solution can be found only by those who are prepared to implement the right kind of Weltanschauung by means of the right kind of behaviour... Over against the quietist stands the active-contemplative, the saint, the man who, in Eckhart's phrase, is ready to come down from the seventh heaven in order to bring a cup of water to his sick brother.¹¹

It is our belief, however, that in seventeenth-century Spain we find man's tendency to psychic polarization, adumbrated above, writ large; and that the religious history of Golden-Age Spain in general manifested the Spaniard's difficulty in relating the active and passive functions of the mind to a quite extraordinary degree. And that the history of Spanish Quietism illustrates this difficulty in a vivid and arresting manner.

Our view that the life and times of Miguel de Molinos epitomized this Spanish tension of polarities finds an echo in sentiments such as these expressed by Américo Castro:

If I had to locate, as it were, that which is most characteristic of Hispanic life, I would put it between the acceptance of inertia and the willful outburst through which the person reveals what there is - be it insignificant or something of value - in the depths of his soul ... On the plane of the highest human values we find a manifestation of this sharp contrast in the poetic inwardness of St. John of the Cross or of the quietist Miguel de Molinos.¹²

and these by Miguel de Unamuno:

Muy español Molinos, sí, y no menos española esta paradójica expresión de quietismo o más bien de nihilismo - ya que él mismo habla de aniquilación ... pero, no menos, sino acaso más españoles los jesuitas que le combatieron volviendo por los fueros del todo contra la nada.¹³

And more generally:

Castilian society, as the arbitristas never tired of pointing out, was a society based on paradox and contrast. The contrasts were everywhere: Moorish and Christian; devoutness and hypocrisy; fervent professions of faith and exceptional laxity of manners; vast wealth and abject poverty. There was no moderation here, no sense of proportion.¹⁴

Although the complex interplay of dualities appears to have been present in all aspects of Hispanic life in the seventeenth century, it is perhaps in the religious history of the period that these dualities come into sharpest relief. This is no more evident, for instance, than in the violent polemic that arose in seventeenth-century Spain regarding the dual patronage of Santiago and Teresa. In Castro's words 'The country rose up as

if it were a question that affected the existence of the whole kingdom. Pulpits trembled and tracts issued forth in torrents'.¹⁵

In fact, Philip IV was instrumental in securing the Pope's confirmation of the co-patronage, mostly against the will of the people, for even in seventeenth-century Spain Castro tells us 'there was greater sympathy for the attitude of the soldier than for the attitude of mystic contemplation'.¹⁶

'The attitude of the soldier' in Spain was of course the result of centuries-long reconquest, during which time Santiago was the patron Saint of Spain, and society was in all essential respects 'masculine'. By the seventeenth-century, however, Spanish society had become a 'social environment' in which, Castro maintains, the place of women assumed greater importance. As evidence of this he cites the presence of women as an active theme in the art of the period. And in terms of the religious ethos 'a pragmatic and activist conception of the divine clashed with the experience of God in pure contemplation that was not interested in bellicose activism'.¹⁷

Somewhat facile though this interpretation of the ethos of seventeenth-century religiosity may sound, it is a fact that the devotional literature of the second half of the century became increasingly concerned with systematizing passive modes of prayer.

It will be the task of the first two chapters of the thesis, then, to analyse the essential nature of

passivity, with particular reference to mystical prayer. We hope to show that, paradoxically, the dynamic passivity of mystical experience is the Christian's most intense experience of freedom and activity, which finds expression in the Guía espiritual of Miguel de Molinos.

The remaining chapters of the thesis, however, will largely be concerned with indicating how determinants of a social and political nature, together with determinants of a pathological nature evoked by passive prayer itself, vitiated attempts in Spain to arrive at the sort of socially productive spirituality that Molinos had in mind when he wrote his Guía espiritual. We hope to show, too, that the rejection of his Guía in Spain in 1685 was symptomatic of Spain's inability at this time to transcend the various forms of inertia and negative passivity that characterized much of its religious life in the late seventeenth-century.

NOTES

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2. TOLSTOY, Leo, in Yin and Yang: The Taoist Harmony of Opposites, by J.C. Cooper, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, 1982, p. 77.
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13. UNAMUNO, Miguel de, El sentimiento trágico de la vida, Obras Completas, Vol. XVI, Madrid, 1964, p. 345.
14. ELLIOTT, J.H., op.cit., p. 310.
15. CASTRO, op.cit., p. 189.
16. Ibid., p. 196.
17. p. 201.

CHAPTER 1

The Guía espiritual and the Meaning of Passivity

INTRODUCTION

We are concerned in this first chapter to place a proper interpretation on the notion of passivity in mystical experience as this is fundamental to grasping the significance of Molinos' Guía espiritual in relation to the controversy which bedevilled this aspect of interior prayer in Spain of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As the controversy above all concerns the nature of passivity in interior prayer - recogimiento - it is the concept of passivity which must chiefly engage our attention, bearing in mind that in fact it cannot be conceived apart from its complementary notion of activity.

We accept, and would hope to define, a true and a false mysticism. We accept also that there is a true and a false passivity. This latter concept, summed up in the pejorative and hostile term Quietism, will emerge in this study as one of the important preoccupations of the Spanish Inquisition in its considerations of interior prayer in Golden-Age Spain.

We would hope to show in this first chapter, however, that the experience of passivity as described by Miguel de Molinos in his Guía espiritual, is an integral and legitimate part of the mystical experience and that he in no way expresses an exaggerated or perverted version of it.

The term 'mysticism' is susceptible of many and varied interpretations; we must start by defining it as we would wish it to be understood in this thesis, and essentially that means according it a definition compatible with the Christian mystical tradition to which Miguel de Molinos belonged.

When we talk of a Christian mysticism, however, we acknowledge that Christianity is not specifically a mystical religion at all, and that mystical enlightenment, the goal of Oriental religions such as Taoism, is not the first objective of the Christian life which can be lived vigorously without a conscious cultivation of the mystical experience in prayer.

The true Christian enlightenment is believed by most Christians to come only after death, and even the most exalted spiritual experience in this life is thought only to prefigure the bliss to come. This traditional view is expressed in this way by William Johnston, S.J.:

Mysticism is valid only as a means to something more important - namely, the charity which is the center of the gospel message. When this charity expresses itself in mystical experience then it is inestimably precious. But if a mystical mode of thought is divorced from charity, induced by means other than charity, then however great its cultural and philosophical value, it cannot be called a central feature of the Christian life. In other words, mysticism as such has not been extolled by Christianity: it is always a way to, or an expression of, charity. ¹

It will be useful at this point to put forward a recent definition of Quietism:

Quietism: General name for any view of the spiritual life that minimizes human activity and moral responsibility. But more properly it refers to the theories of Miguel de Molinos (c. 1640-97) and François Fénelon (1651-1715), Archbishop of Cambrai. Its basic position is that, to become perfect, one must be totally passive, annihilate one's will and so totally abandon oneself to God that one cares for neither heaven nor hell. In prayer, the perfect soul makes no acts of love or petition, nor even of adoration. Such total passivity makes mortification or the sacraments useless. Sin becomes impossible to perfect souls. Quietism was condemned in the person of Molinos by Pope Innocent XI in 1687 and Fénelon by Innocent XII in 1691 (Etym. Latin quietus, quiet, at rest, peaceful.)²

Now the notion that 'to become perfect, one must be totally passive', and 'annihilate one's will', is untenable. This becomes evident at once if we place it in relation to Leo Tolstoy's philosophy of history, as expounded in the Epilogue of his novel War and Peace.

'To imagine a man perfectly free', says Tolstoy, 'and not subject to the law of necessity we must imagine him alone, outside space, outside time and outside dependence on cause'.³

Elsewhere he states:

In order to understand, to observe, to draw conclusions, man must first of all be conscious of himself as living. A man is only conscious of himself as a living being by the fact that he wills: he is conscious of his volition. And his own will - which is the very essence of his life - he is and cannot but be conscious of as being free.

If on submitting himself to observation man perceives that his will is directed by a constant law (say he observes the imperative need of taking food, or the way the brain works, or whatsoever it may be) he cannot regard this consistent direction of his will otherwise than as a limitation of it. But a thing can only be limited if it is free to begin with. Man sees his will to be limited just because he is conscious of it in no other way than as being free.⁴

Thus the assertion that 'to become perfect, one must be totally passive and annihilate one's will' is in flat contradiction to the fundamental dualism in the life of man, which is an interplay of both freedom and necessity:

Whatever presentation of the activity either of many men or of one man we may consider we always regard it as the product partly of freewill and partly of the law of necessity ... Very often indeed our conception of the degree of freedom varies from the point of view from which we examine the phenomenon; but every human action always appears to us alike as a certain combination of freedom and necessity. And always, the more freedom we see in any action the less necessity do we perceive, and the more necessity the less freedom.⁵

This fundamental dualism that inheres in the manifest world for man is given superb expression in theological terms by F.Schleiermacher in his work Christian Faith:

There can ... be for us no such thing as a feeling of absolute freedom. He who asserts that he has such a feeling is either deceiving himself or separating things which essentially belong together. For if the feeling of freedom expresses a forth-going activity, this activity

must have an object which has some how been given to us, and this could not have taken place without an influence of the object upon our receptivity. Therefore in every such case there is involved a feeling of dependence which goes along with the feeling of freedom, and thus limits it...

Therefore, in any temporal existence a feeling of absolute freedom can have no place. As regards the feeling of absolute dependence which, on the other hand, our proposition does postulate: for just the same reason, this feeling cannot in any wise arise from the influence of an object which has in some way to be given to us; for upon such an object there would always be a counter-influence, and even a voluntary renunciation of this would always involve a feeling of freedom. Hence a feeling of absolute dependence, strictly speaking, cannot exist in a single moment as such, because such a moment is always determined, as regards its total content, by what is given, and thus by objects towards which we have a feeling of freedom. But the self-consciousness which accompanies all our activity, and therefore, since that is never zero, accompanies our whole existence, and negatives absolute freedom, is itself precisely a consciousness of absolute dependence; for it is the consciousness that the whole of our spontaneous activity comes from a source outside of us in just the same sense in which anything toward which we should have a feeling of absolute freedom must have proceeded entirely from ourselves. But without any feeling of freedom a feeling of absolute dependence would not be possible.

As regards the identification of absolute dependence with 'relation to God' in our proposition: this is to be understood in the sense that the whence of our receptive and active existence, as implied in this self-consciousness, is to be designated by the word 'God', and that this is for us the really original signification of that word.⁶

This is part of an abstruse and closely reasoned account of what Schleiermacher believes is man's primordial awareness: his utter dependence on God. The 'feeling of absolute dependence' which he posits as the principal distinguishing feature of the religious faculty is, as we see from this extract, itself related to other aspects of our total consciousness. As Schleiermachersays elsewhere:

Let us now think of the feeling of dependence and the feeling of freedom as one, in the sense that not only the subject but the corresponding Other is the same for both. Then the total self-consciousness made up of both together is one of Reciprocity between the subject and the corresponding Other.⁷

Now the art of the mystic, properly conceived, is simply this: to develop the will to the point where his freedom will always exceed the various kinds of necessity. Such a process may thus be seen as an attempt to arrive at what St. Thomas Aquinas - the theologian appealed to by Molinos more than any other in the Guía - as 'simplex intuitas veritatis'.⁸ This 'simple intuition of the truth' is beyond all contradictions of opposites and is called 'connatural' by Aquinas, and arises from an awareness of one's union with God, in love.

The practice of contemplation is therefore the ascesis used by the mystic to attain the 'simple intuition of the truth', and the via mystica is one of identification, or integration, which Aquinas - despite the archaic formulation - expresses so well in his Summa Contra Gentiles:

Of all things the inanimate obtain the lowest place, and from them no emanation is possible except by the action of one on another: thus, fire is engendered from fire when an extraneous body is transformed by fire, and receives the quality and form of fire.

The next place to inanimate bodies belongs to plants, whence emanation proceeds from within, for as much as the plant's intrinsic humour is converted into seed, which being committed to the soil grows into a plant. Accordingly, here we find the first traces of life: since living things are those which move themselves to act, whereas those which can only move extraneous things are wholly lifeless. It is a sign of life in plants that something within them is the cause of a form. Yet the plant's life is imperfect because, although in it emanation proceeds from within, that which comes forth by little and little, and in the end becomes altogether extraneous: thus the humour of a tree gradually comes forth from the tree and eventually becomes a blossom, and then takes the form of fruit, distinct from the branch, though united thereto; and when the fruit is perfect it is altogether severed from the tree, and falling to the ground, produces by its seminal force another plant. Indeed if we consider the matter carefully we shall see that the first principle of this emanation is something extraneous: since the intrinsic humour of the tree is drawn through the roots from the soil whence the plant derives its nourishment.

There is yet above that of the plants a higher form of life, which is that of the sensitive soul, the proper emanation whereof, though beginning from without, terminates within. Also, the further the emanation proceeds, the more does it penetrate within: for the sensible object impresses a form on the external senses, whence it proceeds to the imagination and, further still, to the storehouse of the memory. Yet in every process of this kind of emanation, the beginning and the end are in different subjects: for no sensitive power reflects on itself. Wherefore this degree of life transcends that of plants in so much as it

is more intimate; and yet it is not a perfect life, since the emanation is always from one thing to another. Wherefore the highest degree of life is that which is according to the intellect: for the intellect reflects on itself, and can understand itself. There are, however, various degrees in the intellectual life: because the human mind, though able to know itself, takes its first step to knowledge from without: for it cannot understand apart from phantasm. Accordingly, intellectual life is more perfect in the angels whose intellect does not proceed from something extrinsic to acquire self-knowledge, but knows itself by itself. Yet their life does not reach the highest degree of perfection ... because in them to understand and to be are not the same thing ... Therefore, the highest perfection of life belongs to God, whose understanding is not distinct from His being...⁹

Aquinas is describing here a progression of integration in the universe which encompasses four stages, proceeding from the lowest passive level - inanimate matter - through to plant life which is mainly, though not totally passive, as it acts under the stimulus of physical influence; thence to animal life with its much greater degree of autonomy and inner freedom; and finally onwards to man himself who possesses self-awareness, and most importantly, will - that is, the power to act even though no physical stimulus or external motivating factor is present. Aquinas then extrapolates beyond human will to that of the angels, and ultimately to the perfect will that transcends all causative forces, which is God.

The inference we draw from these progressions of integration is that only man has the capacity to develop his inner freedom to exceed the various forms of necessity which enslave him. Man is thus human according to the measure in which he succeeds in developing his inner freedom at the expense of the necessities that circumscribe his actions.

Thus the progression from necessity to freedom is similar and closely related to the progression from passivity to activity.

Aquinas is saying, then, that a progression of integration is everywhere in evidence in the universe; this progression, moreover, tends to an ever increasing interiority, of escape from necessity in the direction of freedom. Man, 'the sensitive soul', represents the evolutionary high point in the sensible world. E.F. Schumacher, commenting on this extract, says:

The degree of integration, of inner coherence and strength, is closely related to the kind of 'world' that exists for beings at different levels. Inanimate matter has no 'world'. Its total passivity is equivalent to the total emptiness of its world ... The world of man, again, is incomparably greater and richer'.¹⁰

We are forcibly reminded of the superior moral strength of Molinos' 'interior' man:

Hay otros espirituales verdaderos que han pasado por los principios del interior camino, que es el que conduce a la perfección y unión con Dios, al que los llamó el Señor por su infinita misericordia de aquel exterior camino en que se ejercitaron primero.

Estos, recogidos en lo interior de sus almas, con verdadera entrega en las divinas manos, con olvido y total desnudez ... van siempre con levantado espíritu en la presencia del Señor ... pero con gran seguridad fundada en la interior tranquilidad y sosiego, en cuyo infuso recogimiento tira el espíritu con tanta fuerza, que hace recoger allá dentro el alma, el corazón, el cuerpo y todas las corporales fuerzas.¹¹ (p. 186)

SECTION 1

Mysticism defined and its element of passivity analysed

Keeping in mind the complex nature of the dualism of activity and passivity, freedom and necessity, we may adopt the following definition of Christian mysticism as put forward by Antonio Moreno, O.P.:

Mysticism is the full development of the grace received in Baptism, and its essential trait is the actuation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost in a suprahuman manner which ordinarily produce a passive experience of God in the soul (own emphasis). The activity of the gifts reaches and touches the inner recesses of our personality and affects profoundly the psychology of mystics, especially in contemplation which consists in a high and special infused knowledge of God.

The data of contemplation are vague and obscure because the experimental knowledge proper to it is neither the scientific abstract knowledge of metaphysics when it considers God as the First cause of Being, nor the knowledge of theology which speculates on the divine based on the data of revelation. The knowledge corresponding to contemplation is intuitive, rooted in love and reduced to created categories only with difficulties.¹²

This is a substantial and complex definition. As it is the most appropriate for the study, we shall attempt to analyse its relevant aspects and in this way we may be able to arrive at an understanding of what is meant by 'a passive experience of God in the soul'.

The word 'mysticism' itself has connections with the mystery religions of the Greco-Roman era; the mystic ('mustes') would be the acolyte sworn to religious secrecy. Along with other terminology associated with the mystics it passed into Neoplatonism; the Neoplatonists used the word 'muo' to describe one with eyes closed in meditation, or contemplation - as we shall see, these last two words came to acquire distinctive meanings in the Christian tradition. In general terms 'contemplation' refers to an experiential knowledge of God, 'the high and special infused knowledge' of Moreno's definition, while 'meditation' refers to discursive prayer.

We now address ourselves to the dualism which subsumes all others: that of passivity and activity. As the Quietist controversy above all concerns the nature of passivity in interior prayer - recogimiento - it is the concept of passivity which must chiefly engage our attention in this first chapter..

Unfortunately the term 'passivity' is not the happiest to denote the mystic's most profound experience. Our analyses will show that it is altogether vague and imprecise and that we are dealing with a slippery notion, itself shot through with paradox.

Many commentators on Christian mysticism would suggest that the term 'passivity' is inadequate largely because of its quietistic connotations and what von Hügel calls its 'demonstrably dangerous suggestions and frequently scandalous history'.¹³ The nub of the problem would appear to be that we have no word in the English Language to encompass the concept of a dynamic passivity.

We turn for help in the first instance to Taoism and its notion of wu-wei, one of the central concepts of Taoist doctrine. This is how J.C. Cooper explains it:

Wu-wei is another term which defies exact translation so is usually left as it is. It is the doctrine of inaction or non-action, but only a superficial outlook interprets it as laissez-faire, in the sense of indifference, for the Taoist is not indifferent... If any translation should be attempted, possibly 'non-interference', or 'letting-go' is the best ... At a higher level it is the desirelessness, the dispassionateness which leads ... to release from tensions ... Action is normally the outcome of the incessant, and usually feverish, working of the mind ... wu-wei is the 'actionless activity' ... wu-wei is not the end of all action but the cessation of motivated action ... Actionless is an inward quality; it may be passive, but it is a creative passivity.¹⁴

It is possible, of course, to describe passivity in purely psychological terms, as D.T. Suzuki does when discussing the psychology of Buddhism and the concept of 'pure experience':

In fact there is nothing we can call pure passivity. This does not make sense and does not lead us anywhere. As long as passivity is also an experience, there must be one who experiences passivity.

This one, this experiencer, is an actor. Not only is he an actor, but he is a knower, for he is conscious of experiencing. Pure experience is not an abstraction or a state of passivity. It is very much active, and creative.¹⁵

The Jesuit theologian, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, arrives at much the same conclusion in his mystical treatise Le Milieu divin:

The passivities of our lives... form half of human experience. The term means, quite simply, that that which is not done by us, is, by definition, undergone.

But this does not in any way prejudge the proportions in which action and passion possess our inner realm. In fact, these two parts of our lives - the active and the passive - are extraordinarily unequal. Seen from our point of view, the active occupies first place because we prefer it and because it is more easily perceived. But in the reality of things the passive is immeasurably the wider and the deeper part.

In the first place the passivities ceaselessly accompany our conscious deeds, in the form of reactions which direct, sustain or oppose our efforts. On this ground alone they inevitably and precisely coincide with the scope of our activities. But their sphere of influence extends far beyond these narrow limits. If we consider the matter carefully we in fact perceive... that it is only the fine-point of ourselves that comes up into the light of self-consciousness and freedom. We know ourselves and set our own course but within an incredibly small radius of light. Immediately beyond lies impenetrable darkness, ... the night of everything that is within us and around us, without us and in spite of us. In this darkness... we are not inert; we react because we undergo.¹⁶

By way of analogy we continue our various presentations of analyses of passivity in the sphere of biology. Oswald Schwarz makes the following interesting comment in his book The Psychology of Sex:

No doubt in the sexual act the female is the receptive part: the penis penetrates the vagina, and the spermatozoon bores into the ovum. The woman's is also the suffering part, every step in the sexual path is linked with pain, physical and mental alike. On the other hand, the male part is the more mobile. But the cardinal mistake is to identify receiving and suffering with passivity and mobility with activity. Every woman knows what an amount of activity is needed to relax, to let oneself go, and still more to surrender and abandon oneself; only one who has never suffered can believe that suffering is merely to be passive, a victim of superior power. Receiving is one part of female activity ... The essential activity in sex life common to both sexes is the readiness for the coming of the miracle. It is not a passive, indifferent waiting or an overacting eagerness, but an inner opened-upness, confident of being ready when the time is ripe. The adequate emotional matrix of this readiness is, perhaps, a state of tenderness from which actual sexuality springs.¹⁷

Philosophy has also been brought to bear on the passivity/activity dualism. The philosopher who has left us the most rigorous analysis of the active and passive emotions is the rationalist contemporary of Molinos, Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677). In the third part of his Ethics entitled On the Origin and Nature of the Emotions, Spinoza makes his distinction between the active and passive emotions:

I say that we act when anything takes place, either within us or externally to us, whereof we are the adequate cause; that is ... when through our nature something takes place within us or externally to us, which can through our nature alone be clearly and distinctly understood. On the other hand, I say that we are passive as regards something when that something takes place within us, or follows from our nature externally, we being only the partial cause.¹⁸

An 'adequate cause', to Spinoza, is a 'cause through which its effect can be clearly and distinctly perceived'. An 'inadequate' or 'partial cause' is 'a cause through which, by itself, its effect cannot be understood'.¹⁹

These definitions are followed by his Proposition: 'Our mind is in certain cases active, and in certain cases passive. In so far as it has adequate ideas it is necessarily active, and in so far as it has inadequate ideas, it is necessarily passive'. It is clear from Spinoza's theory of the emotions that man draws near to perfection according to the measure in which he gains intellectual control over his emotions: 'In proportion as each thing possesses more of perfection, so it is more active, and less passive; and vice versa, in proportion as it is more active, so it is more perfect'.²⁰

We infer from the Ethics that the being which approximates to perfection will act out of its own centre, without modification or interference from without; the perfected being will no longer be inertly passive in relation to its universe - an object, that is - but one which acts autonomously - an active subject.

Spinoza concludes his Ethics with the following

'note':

How potent is the wise man, and how much he surpasses the ignorant man, who is driven only by his lusts. For the ignorant man is not only distracted in various ways by external causes without ever gaining the true acquiescence of his spirit, but moreover lives, as it were unwitting of himself, and of God, and of things, and as soon as he ceases to suffer, ceases also to be.

Whereas the wise man ... is scarcely at all disturbed in spirit, but, being conscious of himself, and of God, and of things, by a certain external necessity, never ceases to be, but always possesses true acquiescence of his spirit.²¹

'Acquiescence of spirit', then, is gained through a philosophical understanding of one's own nature, through a process that clearly has affinities with the objectives of analytical psychology, to which we now turn.

The study of the relationship of the religious faculty to what we now call the conscious and unconscious mind owes its greatest debt this century to C.G. Jung. Moreover, his depth psychology, with its states, or layers of the psyche, provides us with an altogether more intelligible model when we come to describe the integration of the personality. In Molinos' day the psychological processes involved in the 'via mystica' made use of the language and concepts of the Scholastics, who in turn had adopted the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle.

The soul is described by the Scholastics as having 'faculties', which are the exterior senses, interior senses, memory, understanding, and will.

To effect union with God the faculties, which in man are naturally distorted, need to be purified. According to traditional Catholic theology this process is in three stages: the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive. We shall have occasion to see in this study that this framework ministered to one of man's deepest needs: that of relating the inner and outer man in equal measure.

This relating of the inner and outer man was what Jung called the process of individuation:

Conscious and unconscious do not make a whole when one of them is suppressed and injured by the other. If they must contend, let it at least be a fair fight with equal rights on both sides. Both are aspects of life. Consciousness should defend its reason and protect itself, and the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given the chance of having its way too - as much of it as we can stand. This means open conflict and open collaboration at once. That, evidently, is the way human life should be. It is the old game of hammer and anvil: between them the patient iron is forged into an indestructible whole, an 'individual'. This, roughly, is what I mean by the individuation process. 22

Jung insists that the status of individual 'cannot be reached without suffering ... nor is analysis the only way of reaching the goal, but it is one which fits the modern dilemma particularly'.²³

It is interesting to note that Jung suggests that the process of individuation is one which pertains to the middle years of life; in the same way Molinos' Guía was expressly written for aprovechados - those proficient in the spiritual life. It is emphasised, too, in the Guía, that the way to spiritual maturity is not an easy way - rather, a most rigorous way. The rigours involved are made quite explicit, and involve what Molinos and others call the 'passive purgations'. Like Jung, Molinos stresses that the spiritual path is not one we should travel unaided - the dangers of releasing passive elements in the unconscious which could give rise to neurosis and psychosis would be well known to spiritual directors such as Molinos. Hence his insistence, in Book (2) of the Guía, that: Para vencer las astucias del enemigo, el mayor remedio es sujetarse a un padre espiritual. (Chapter 1 Libro Segundo).

The journey, says Jung, is worth undertaking, for: 'If we succeed in making the self a new center of gravity of the individual then a personality arises from there that, so to speak, suffers only in the lower levels but in the upper is peculiarly detached from every sorrowful and joyful event alike'.²⁴

In a different age and language Molinos was saying much the same:

Ya esta alma que ha entrado
 en el cielo de la paz se reconoce
 llena de Dios y de sus sobrenaturales
 dones, porque vive fundada en un puro
 amor, agradándole igualmente la luz
 como las tinieblas, la noche como el
 día y la aflicción como el consuelo.

Por esta santa y celestial
 indiferencia, no pierde la paz
 en las adversidades ni la
 tranquilidad en las tribulaciones,
 antes se mira llena de inefables
 gozos. (p. 249)

A major part of Jung's work was involved with the relationship between the religious faculty and the conscious and unconscious mind. The question we now ask is, 'what is the psychic function of religion, according to Jung?' Hans Schaer, an important commentator on Jung, answers the question in this way:

If we are to answer this question in the Jungian sense as broadly as possible, we must first go back to what we have said already, namely, that religion is inner experience; that it contains a great many experiences of our unconscious psyche; and that in them we are often dealing with supra-personal psychic contents and forces. We have already stated that all psychic experience is really 'pathos' - suffering, letting things happen. The supra-personal forces of the soul - the unconscious with all its enigmas and ambiguities - come over us like fate. They come over us without our being able to say anything about it, without the possibility of our inducing it or avoiding it. We must now modify this view. Psychic processes can be experienced in two ways - actively or passively. When a man experiences certain contents of his psyche passively only, they pass over him and influence him, but he is merely pushed about by them. A man who experiences them actively, however, is able to give them a certain direction; he is not just pushed about in the psychic process, he actively intervenes in it and can, for instance, give it a meaning. 25

Giving meaning to the psychic process is what Jung has in mind with his notions of moral autonomy, the

self, and individuation. We now deal with each of these concepts in turn.

It is the function of the religious faculty, according to Jung, to establish psychic wholeness. The climacteric is viewed as the time when, generally speaking, the demands of the unconscious forces of the psyche for integration with the conscious mind become most insistent. The following passage from Psychology and Religion makes it clear that he does not underestimate the struggle towards moral autonomy.

Not only is 'freedom of the will' an incalculable problem philosophically, it is also a misnomer in the practical sense, for we seldom find anybody who is not influenced and indeed dominated by desires, habits, impulses, prejudices, resentments... Always, therefore, there is something in the psyche that takes possession and limits or suppresses our moral freedom ... we are continually threatened by psychic factors which, in the guise of 'natural phenomena', may take possession of us at any moment. 26

The natural phenomena Jung mentions here are elsewhere, and more usually, referred to as autonomous complexes. These are unconscious, with a dynamism and coherence of their own: that is to say, they function independently of the conscious mind - all instances of possession would be explained by Jung in this way. Man's primary task in life, according to Jung, is that of separation from all autonomous complexes. He is at pains to stress the emotional nature of such complexes, as he explains in the following passage from Aion:

Closer examination of the dark characteristics reveals that they have an emotional nature, a kind of autonomy, and accordingly an obsessive or better, possessive quality. Emotion, incidentally, is not an activity of the individual but something that happens to him. Affects occur usually where adaptation is weakest, and at the same time they reveal the reason for its weakness, namely a certain degree of inferiority and the existence of a lower level of personality. On this lower level with its uncontrolled or scarcely controlled emotions one behaves more or less like a primitive, who is not only the passive victim of his affects but also singularly incapable of moral judgment. 27

By far the most potent autonomous complex is that of the 'God archetype',²⁸ the primordial religious experience which can overwhelm the weak consciousness. Jung sees man's dealings with the God archetype, which originates in the unconscious, as the preeminent moral problem. The solving of this problem is the task of individuation, which if successful, leads to the emergence of the 'self', the fully matured human being:

'I have chosen the term "self"', says Jung, 'to designate the totality of man, the sum total of his conscious and unconscious contents'. 29

The self is thus for Jung the God within, and so the individual who realizes his own highest potential is also fulfilling God's will.

As we have indicated earlier, individuation is an arduous process, which we equate with the via mystica. We would suggest that the fully individuated person is the one who enjoys the unitive life of Catholic mystical

theology; in simple terms, we equate both individuation and the unitive life with the process of human maturation carried to its conclusion. The fully developed mystical consciousness is therefore the successful outcome of the maturation function of religion. And we would agree with Henri Bergson when he says that the great mystic is 'an individual being, capable of transcending the limitations imposed on the species by its own material nature, thus continuing and extending the divine action'. Of significance to the later chapters of our study is the important proviso he attaches to this definition: 'We are free to posit this definition', continues Bergson, 'provided we ask ourselves whether it ever finds its application'.³⁰ (own emphasis). In our later chapters, therefore, we shall be considering to what extent 'necessity' in the form of both social controls and psychological determinants denied the maturation function of religion in Golden-Age Spain.

Many scholars who have attempted to define mysticism this century have included in their definitions the following components of the mystical experience as suggested by William James in his seminal work Varieties of Religious Experience. Firstly, the mystical state is virtually ineffable: as we saw in Antonio Moreno's definition the 'knowledge corresponding to contemplation' is 'reduced to created categories only with difficulties'. Secondly, the state of contemplation undoubtedly has a noetic quality, valid for those who experience it.

Thirdly, the mystical state is transient, and fourthly, we have the element of passivity in which 'the mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance, and indeed sometimes as if he were grasped and held by a superior power'.³¹

In his chapter on Saintliness, James comments: 'lives based on having are less free than lives based either on doing or on being', and a little later: 'But beyond this more worthily athletic attitude involved in doing and being, there is, in the desire of not having, something profounder still, something related to that fundamental mystery of religious experience, the satisfaction found in absolute surrender to the larger power'. It is, according to James, this 'absolute surrender to the larger power' which, strangely enough, provides the dynamic for the new life of self-giving:

Accordingly, throughout the annals of the saintly life, we find this ever-recurring note: Fling yourself upon God's providence without making any reserve whatever - take no thought for the morrow - sell all you have and give it to the poor - only when the sacrifice is ruthless and reckless will the higher safety really arrive. 32

Interestingly, he goes on to quote, by way of illustration, from the biography of Antoinette Bourignon (1616-1680),³³ the Franco-Flemish mystic and contemporary of Molinos, and described by E. Underhill as 'the earliest in date and most exaggerated in type of these true Quietists'.³⁴

James' description of 'surrender to the larger power' is clearly linked with the phenomenon of conversion.³⁵ In order to attain complete surrender James comments:

A critical point must usually be passed, a corner turned within one. Something must give way, a native hardness must break down and liquefy; and this event ... is frequently sudden and automatic, and leaves on the subject an impression that he has been wrought on by an external power.

Whatever its ultimate significance may prove to be, this is certainly one fundamental form of human experience ... It is but giving your little private convulsive self a rest, and finding that a greater self is there. The results, slow or sudden, or great or small, of the combined optimism and expectancy, the regenerative phenomena which ensue on the abandonment of effort, remain firm facts of human nature, no matter whether we adopt a theistic, a pantheistic-idealistic, or a medical-materialistic view of their ultimate causal explanation.³⁶

William James has some significant comment on temperament and the passive state. There are, says James, two types of passive states which correspond to two different personality types, 'according as the person is of a constitutionally sombre or of a constitutionally cheerful cast of mind. In the sombre it partakes more of resignation and submission; in the cheerful it is a joyous consent'.³⁷

Significantly, he quotes a passage from Thomas C. Upham's Life and Religious Opinions and Experience of Madame de la Mothe Guyon, to indicate the joyous tenor of Madame Guyon's 'resignation'. It will be

remembered that Madame Guyon, another contemporary of Molinos, also suffered the condemnation of the Church for her so called 'quietist' views. We accept as valid, however, the importance of temperament as a determining factor in the nature of religious experience; we would propose also that the Guía espiritual of Miguel de Molinos is permeated with the passivity of 'joyous consent', quite unlike many of the more sombre devotional texts we shall refer to in this study. The following extract from Chapter XXI of the Guía provides an eloquent testimony to this assertion; it is headed De la suma felicidad de la interior paz, y de sus maravillosos efectos.

Aniquilada ya el alma y con perfecta desnudez renovada, experimenta en la parte superior una profunda paz y una sabrosa quietud, que la conduce a tan perfecta unión de amor que en todo jubila. Ya esta alma ha llegado a tal felicidad que no quiere ni desea otra cosa que lo que su amado quiere; con esta voluntad se conforma en todos los sucesos, así de consuelo como de pena, y juntamente se goza de hacer en todo el divino beneplácito. (p. 248).

Whatever the colouring lent by temperament, however, for James one fact is of paramount importance in the spiritual life:

The transition from tenseness, self-responsibility, and worry, to equanimity, receptivity and peace, is the most wonderful of all those shiftings of inner equilibrium, those changes of the personal center of energy, which I have analysed so often; and the chief wonder of it is that it so often comes about, not by doing, but by simply relaxing and throwing the

burden down. This abandonment of self responsibility seems to be the fundamental act in specifically religious, as distinguished from moral practice. 38

The result of this 'abandonment of self-responsibility' is expressed by Miguel de Molinos in this way:

Ya no hay cosa que no la consuela ni le falta nada que pueda afligirla; el morir le es gozo y el vivir su alegría. Tan contenta está en el paraíso como en la tierra, tan gozosa en la privación como en la posesión, en la enfermedad como en la salud, porque sabe que esa es la voluntad de su Señor; esta es su vida, esta su gloria, su paraíso, su paz, su sosiego, su quietud, su consuelo y su suma felicidad. (p. 248)

The psychology of the mystic receives perhaps its best interpretation this century in Underhill's Mysticism. Although Underhill believes that mystical states find their best map in Christianity, this does not stop her from presenting the phenomenological aspects of mysticism with great insight.

She characterises the normal self as a ferment of two forces: the desire to know more and the desire to love more, and 'Where the first of these cravings predominates, we call the result a philosophical or a scientific temperament; where it is overpowered by the ardour of unsatisfied love, the self's reaction upon things becomes poetic, artistic, and characteristically - though not always explicitly - religious'.³⁹ (We note in passing the quasi-cliché regarding the Spanish temper, as stated by Angel Ganivet in his Idearium español:

'Nuestro espíritu es religioso y es artístico, y la religión muchas veces se confunde con el arte. A su vez, el fondo del arte es la religión en su sentido más elevado, el misticismo, juntamente con nuestras demás características, el valor, la pasión, la caballeridad'.⁴⁰)

Evelyn Underhill has this to say on the relationship between love and knowledge:

There is a sense in which it may be said, that the desire of knowledge is a part of the desire of perfect love: since one aspect of that all-inclusive passion is clearly a longing to know ... the thing adored. Love's characteristic activity - for Love, all wings, is inherently active, and 'cannot be lazy', as the mystics say - is a quest, an outgoing towards an object desired, which only when possessed will be fully known, and only when fully known can be perfectly adored ... But there is no sense in which it can be said that the desire of love is merely a part of the desire of perfect knowledge: for that strictly intellectual ambition includes no adoration, no self-spending, no reciprocity of feeling between Knower and Known. Mere knowledge, taken alone, is a matter of receiving, not of acting: of eyes, not wings; a dead-alive business at the best. There is a sharp distinction to be drawn between these two great expressions of life: the energetic love, the passive knowledge. One is related to the eager, outgoing activity, the dynamic impulse to do somewhat, physical, mental, or spiritual, which is inherent in all living things and which psychologists call conation; the other to the indwelling consciousness, the passive knowing somewhat, which they call cognition. 41

It is clear that Underhill, in common with Christian mystics in general, and Spanish mystics in particular, emphasises the primacy of the will:

Life as we know it, has the character of purposive striving, more directly dependent on will and feeling than on thought. Of this drive...thought indeed is but the servant; a skilled and often arrogant servant, with a constant tendency to usurpation. Some form of feeling - interest, desire, fear, appetite - must supply the motive power. Without this, the will would be dormant, and the intellect lapse into a calculating machine. 42

We emphasise at this point the importance accorded to the will by the mystics of sixteenth-century Spain as there is general agreement as to the robust character of Spanish mysticism, which is very often praised as superior to the mysticism of Molinos and some of his contemporaries of the late seventeenth-century. Allison Peers, for instance, makes this comment:

The mysticism of Spain's Golden Age is active, ardent, militant, as befitted an ardent and militant race. It aims at affirming, not at denying, the power of the human will. 43

In her chapter on Mysticism and Vitalism, Underhill makes an important distinction between intellectual attempts to resolve the paradoxes of religion, and the mystical endeavour - a distinction which, as she points out, is largely overlooked by writers on mysticism:

Though philosophy has striven since thought began - and striven in vain - to resolve the paradox of Being and Becoming, of Eternity and Time, she has failed strangely enough to perceive that a certain type of personality has substituted experience for her guesses at truth; and achieved its solution, not by dubious processes of thought, but by direct perception. To the great

mystic the 'problem of the Absolute' presents itself in terms of life, not in terms of dialectic. 44

The 'dialectic' referred to here by Underhill is clearly the 'scientific abstract knowledge of metaphysics when it considers God as the First cause of Being' to which Antonio Moreno refers in his definition.

The 'scientific abstract knowledge of metaphysics' has, however, produced some outstanding intellectual constructs of the paradox which inheres in the passivity/activity dualism.

The paradox is posed in this way by F.C.S. Schiller:

The paradox is that it has been implied there can be activity, life and consciousness without change, imperfection or decay. This seems an utter paradox because in our actual experience consciousness is a succession of mental states or processes, because life is sustained by a continual metabolism, and activities are recognized only by the changes which they exhibit. We are therefore accustomed to regard a changeless activity as equivalent to rest i.e. as cessation of activity, as death. 45

Aristotle's conception of energeia akinesias (activity without change) is perhaps the most striking expression of an Absolute which transcends change and motion. The conception is summarized in this way by F.C.S. Schiller:

At present our existence seems immersed in a sea of possibilities which are the objects of our unceasing hopes and fears: nothing is ever quite all that it is capable of being; nothing can ever wholly realize itself in any single moment. Hence the potential everywhere extends beyond the actual, and the shadow of an uncalculable and inexplicable Thing-in-itself is cast over the whole of experience and obstructs the portal

that should lead from knowledge to reality. At present, then, we must admit that nothing is ever all it might be. If, however, we imagined any being overcoming this defect and attaining to a complete and harmonious self-expression in its activities, how could it any longer even suggest a shadowy region of possibilities bound up with its actual self and inhering behind the scenes in a substratum which is the substance both of the actual and of the potential? In the coincidence of the actual and the potential which the realization of the latter would involve, there would vanish our antitheses of 'essence' and 'accident', of 'ideal' and 'real', of 'appearance' and 'reality'. For the 'appearance' would have become the 'reality', and the real would have fully appeared ... Such is the ideal of 'Being' Aristotle has attributed to the divine perfection, such the full import of his energeia akinesias (activity without change). 46

The intellectual construct of Energeia would be termed by Underhill - somewhat dismissively - a 'diagram of the heavens'. The mystic, on the other hand, gives us a 'ladder to the stars'.⁴⁷ 'It is', says Underhill, 'the great contribution of the mystics that they find in the Absolute, in defiance of the metaphysicians, a personal object of love'.⁴⁸

That Molinos saw his Guía as a 'ladder to the stars' is evident from the following two statements:

No está la santidad en formar altos y sutiles conceptos de la ciencia y atributos de Dios, sino en el amor de Dios y la negación de la propia voluntad. Por eso se habla más de ordinario la santidad en los sencillos y humildes que en los doctos. ¡Cuántas viejecitas se hallan pobres de la ciencia humana y

riquísimas de amor divino!
 ¡Cuántos vanos teólogos se ven
 sumergidos en su vana sabiduría
 y pobrísimos de la verdadera luz
 y caridad! (p. 236)

Dos son los caminos que guían
 al conocimiento de Dios; el uno es
 remoto y el otro próximo. El
 primero se llama especulación y
 el segundo contemplación. Los
 doctos que siguen la científica
 especulación con la dulzura de los
 sensibles discursos suben por este
 medio como pueden a Dios, para que
 con este socorro puedan amarle.
 Pero ninguno de los que siguen este
 camino, que llaman escolástica, llega
 por él solo a la vía mística ni a la
 excelencia de la unión, transformación,
 sencillez, luz, paz, tranquilidad y
 amor, como llega a experimentar el
 que es conducido, con la divina gracia,
 por la vía mística de la contemplación.
 (p. 238)

The mystical consciousness for Molinos is thus
 ideally a marriage of heart and intellect:

Por ordinario, en el sujeto
 donde hay mucha ciencia escolástica
 y especulativa no predomina la
 divina sabiduría, pero hacen un
 admirable compuesto cuando entrambas
 van unidas. Son dignos de veneración
 y alabanza en la religión los varones
 doctos que, por la misericordia del
 Señor, llegaron a ser místicos.

Las acciones exteriores de los
 místicos y sabios que obran más passive
 que active, aunque les son cruelísima
muerte, las ordenan con prudencia,
 número, peso y medida. (p. 235)

It should be clear now that we equate true passivity
 with creativity: true passivity is dynamic in its
 effects. This is well expressed by the psychologist,
 Eric Fromm:

The modern sense of activity makes no distinction between activity and mere busyness. But there is a fundamental difference between the two that corresponds to the terms 'alienated' and 'non-alienated' in respect to activities. In alienated activities I do not experience myself as the acting subject of my activity; rather, I experience the outcome of my activity - and that as something 'over there', separated from me... In alienated activity I do not really act; I am acted upon by external or internal forces...

'Activity' and 'passivity' can each have two entirely different meanings. Alienated activity, in the sense of mere busyness, is actually 'passivity', in the sense of productivity; while passivity, in terms of non-busyness, may be non-alienated activity. This is so difficult to understand today because most activity is alienated 'passivity', while productive passivity is rarely experienced. 49

Before we set down the Christian standpoint on passivity, we make some observations on what appears to us as the quintessence of theological discussion on the nature of Quietism..

Any study of mysticism reveals two apparently antagonistic conceptions of the Godhead: the monist and the theistic. In broad terms, the monist position - often associated with the religions of the East - tends to de-emphasize the distance between man and the Absolute. The theistic conception of the universe is that there is a gulf between Creator and created, and that although union with the Divine Ground is a possibility, extreme caution is required in the interpretation of this union. Christianity - a theistic religion - insists that man retains his identity in union: in this way he can never

escape the exigencies of the moral life. We have mentioned in an earlier section the importance accorded to the will by Christian mysticism in general, and Spanish mysticism in particular. The following extract will show how St John of the Cross makes it clear that the unitive state does not mean negative absorption into an impersonal Absolute:

De donde el alma que está en este estado de transformación de amor, podemos decir que es su ordinario hábito, y es como el madero que siempre está embestido en fuego; y los actos de esta alma son la llama que nace del fuego del amor, que tan vehementemente sale cuanto es más intenso el fuego de la unión, en la cual llama se unen y suben los actos de la voluntad arrebatada y absorta en la llama de Espíritu Santo ... y así, en este estado no puede el alma hacer actos, que el Espíritu Santo los hace todos y la mueve a ellos; y por eso, todos los actos de ella son divinos, pues es hecha y movida por Dios. De donde el alma le parece que cada vez que llamea esta llama, haciéndola amar con sabor y temple divino, pues la levanta a operación de Dios en Dios. (own emphasis). 50

A clear statement of the monist position is to be found in condemned proposition (5) of the Bull Coelestis Pastor, and 'effaced as heretical, suspicious, erroneous, scandalous, blasphemous, offensive to pious ears':

Proposition 5: The soul annihilates itself by inaction, and returns to its beginning, which is the divine essence in which it remains transformed and deified. Then, also, God remains in Himself; for then there are no more two things united, but one single thing. It is thus that God lives and reigns in us and the soul annihilates itself, even in its operative power. 51

The Christian would say that the logical outcome of such a proposition is a negation of the hallmark of Christianity: its moral zeal.

The following is a concise statement by Teilhard de Chardin, which seems to us to epitomize the Christian stance on passivity, in which the rôle of the will, and ethical conduct, are given characteristic emphasis:

We have come a long way, Christianly speaking, from the justly criticised notion of 'submission to the will of God' which is in danger of weakening and softening the fine steel of the human will, brandished against all the powers of darkness and diminishment. We must understand this well, and cause it to be understood: to find and to do the will of God (even as we diminish and as we die) does not imply either a direct encounter or a passive attitude. I have no right to regard the evil that comes upon me through my own negligence or fault as being the touch of God. I can only unite myself to the will of God (as endured passively) when all my strength is spent, at the point where my activity, fully extended and straining towards betterment (understood in ordinary human terms), finds itself counter-weighted by forces tending to halt me or overwhelm me. Unless I do everything I can to advance or resist, I shall not find myself at the required point - I shall not submit to God as much as I might have done or as much as He wishes. If, on the contrary, I persevere courageously, I shall rejoin God across evil, deeper down than evil; I shall draw close to Him; and that moment the optimum of my 'communion in resignation' necessarily coincides with the maximum of fidelity to the human task. 52

This 'communion in resignation' which for the Christian 'coincides with the maximum of fidelity to the human task' is expressed in this way by Miguel de Molinos:

Sabrás que cuando el alma está ya habituada al interior recogimiento y contemplación adquirida que hemos dicho, cuando ya está mortificada y en todo desea negarse a sus apetitos, cuando ya muy de veras abraza la interior y exterior mortificación y quiere muy de corazón morir a sus pasiones y propias operaciones, entonces suele Dios tirarla, elevándola, sin que lo advierta, a un perfecto reposo, en donde suave e íntimamente le infunde su luz, su amor y fortaleza, encendiéndola e inflamándola con verdadera disposición para todo género de virtud.

Allí el divino Esposo, suspendiéndole las potencias, la adornece con un suavísimo y dulcísimo sueño. Allí dormida y quieta recibe y goza, sin entender lo que goza, con una suavísima y dulcísima calma. Allí el alma elevada y sublimada en este pasivo estado se halla unida al sumo bien, sin que le cueste fatiga esta unión. Allí, en aquella suprema región y sagrado templo del alma, se agrada el sumo bien, se manifiesta y deja de gustar de la criatura con un modo superior a los sentidos y a todo humano entender...

Vuelta en sí el alma de estos dulces y divinos brazos, sale rica de luz, de amor y de una estima de la divina grandeza y conocimiento de su miseria, hallándose toda divinamente mudada y dispuesta a abrazar, a padecer y a practicar la más perfecta virtud. (pp. 224-225)

SECTION 2

Christian freedom, passibility, and the concept of NADA

To attain the Christian freedom conferred by the maximum fidelity to the human task, however, presupposes that the Christian has completed a number of prior tasks, explained in this way by E.F. Schumacher:

His first task is to learn from society and 'tradition' and to find his temporary happiness in receiving directions from outside.

His second task is to interiorise the knowledge he has gained, sift it, sort it out, keep the good and jettison the bad; this process may be called... becoming self directed.

His third task is one that he cannot tackle until he has accomplished the first two, and for which he needs the very best help he can possibly find: it is dying to oneself, to one's likes and dislikes... To the extent that he succeeds in this, he ceases to be directed from outside, and he also ceases to be self directed. He has gained freedom, or, one might say, he is then God-directed. If he is a Christian, that is precisely what he would hope to be able to say. 53

The freedom gained by completing these tasks is known by four signs, according to Molinos:

Cuatro son las señales para conocer el hombre interior. La primera, si ya el entendimiento no produce otros pensamientos que aquellos que excitan a la luz de la fe, y la voluntad está ya tan habituada que no engendra otros actos de amor sino de Dios y en orden a Dios. La segunda, si cuando cesa de obra exterior en que estaba ocupado, luego y con facilidad se convierten a Dios el entendimiento y voluntad. La tercera, si en entrando en la oración se olvida de todas las cosas como si no las hubiera visto ni tratado. La cuarta, si se porta en orden a las cosas exteriores como si de nuevo en el mundo temiendo contrastar con los negocios, aborreciéndolos naturalmente, si no es cuando obliga la caridad.

Esta alma ya está libre de lo exterior y con facilidad se entra en la interior soledad, donde sólo ve a Dios, y a sí en Dios, amándole con quietud, con paz y verdadero amor. Allá, en aquel íntimo centro, está el Señor hablándole amorosamente, enseñándola un nuevo reino, la verdadera paz y alegría. (p. 231)

We infer from this eulogy by Molinos that for the Christian the real sign of freedom is God experienced as person, a sentiment which is, of course, at the heart of the Christian faith:

When God created man according to his image, he also gave over to him this mark of nobility - i.e. freedom. This alone constitutes the presupposition of free love to God; only in this freedom can he answer to God's love through his free love in return. Love in its fulfilled form, according to the Christian understanding, is possible only between persons; conversely, the person can be realized only in the complete love to another person. Man could use this freedom to offer God, his Creator, free love. 54

These somewhat aridly expressed sentiments receive a more aesthetically appealing statement in the Guía espiritual:

Si con esta libertad dieres a Dios el alma desapegada, libre y sola, serás la más feliz de las criaturas de la tierra; porque en esta santa soledad tiene el Altísimo su habitación secreta. En este desierto y paraíso se deja Dios tratar, y solamente en este interior retiro se oye aquella maravillosa, eficaz, interior y divina voz. (p. 222)

The success of the Guía is due no doubt in part to what Peers has called 'the surprising beauty and appeal of its style'; to its qualities of 'concision and vigour', says Peers, 'we may add a simplicity of construction, an absence of long quotations, and a felicitous phraseology, all of which would make the book popular with religiously-minded people - not only with those who would read heavy tomes like the works of

St John of the Cross, but also with those who preferred 'little books on prayer' like that of St Peter of Alcántara, or who, in the phrase of Malón de Chaide, would go about with the Diana in their pocket'.⁵⁵

We propose, however, that the main reason for its acclaim as a devotional work must be sought at the psychological level, for it is Molinos' success in conveying his experience of God as both utter transcendence, yet warm immanence, that is the Guía's most distinctive trait. And Molinos' experience of the Deity as both immanence and transcendence, warmth and austerity, is nowhere more in evidence than in his use of the word 'NADA', for it is in his development of this paradoxical concept, in passages of great conviction and charm, that we begin to grasp his conception of God as both unfathomable immensity and as divine indwelling:

El camino para llegar a aquel alto estado del ánimo reformado, por donde inmediatamente se llega al sumo bien, a nuestro primer origen y suma paz, es la nada. Procura estar siempre sepultada en esa miseria. Esa nada y esa conocida miseria es el medio para que el Señor obre en tu alma maravillas. Vístete de esa nada y de esa miseria y procura que esa miseria y esa nada sea tu continuo sustento y morada, hasta profundarte en ella; yo te aseguro que, siendo tú de esta manera la nada, sea el Señor el todo en tu alma. (p. 245)

Now the notion, and indeed the experience, that God is both transcendence and a divine indwelling - and for this very reason in some measure involved with and dependent upon his creatures - finds expression in the

mystical doctrine of the 'relativity of God'. The greatest exponent of the doctrine of the relativity of God was the German mystic, Meister Eckhart, who proposed a distinction between God and Godhead, which explains Godhead as the Absolute, beyond the soul in every sense and not to be grasped by man as such. God, on the other hand is discernible by us and graspable as real. Meister Eckhart's notions of God and Godhead have a modern champion in Carl Jung, who proposes that God for man is a psychological fact, and for this reason there is an interaction between Him and us. Hans Schaer gives us the following summary of Jung's ideas on the relativity of God:

Jung speaks of a God-image, by which he is not to be taken as saying that the individual has any power over this image. Although belonging to spiritual experience, the image and all such contents are 'pathos'... The individual becomes conscious of psychic contents which are of a supra-personal order.

From this it is but a short step to the view that psychic reality is constantly realizing itself, or becoming conscious, in man, and that in man God is accomplishing his own transformation. The changes to which man is subject ... are in the last resort nothing less than a reflection of the Becoming of God ... Such a view signifies that certain human occurrences have meaning for God and that God in turn works on human life. Our human experience and suffering are thus related to what is going on in God.⁵⁶

It would appear to be the so-called free branches of Protestantism - Quakers and Methodists, for example, who have most consistently allowed a continuing revelation. It is interesting to note that Jung quotes the following verses of the mystic and contemporary of Molinos, Angelus Silesius, to illustrate the concept of God's relativity:

I know that without me
 God can no moment live
 Were I to die, then He
 No longer could survive.

I am as great as God,
 And He is small like me;
 He cannot be above
 Nor I below Him be.

In me God is a fire
 And I in Him its glow;
 In common is our life,
 Apart we cannot grow.

He is God and man to me,
 To Him I am both indeed;
 His thirst I satisfy,
 He helps me in my need.

God is such as He is,
 I am what I must be;
 If you know one, in truth
 You know both Him and me.

I am the vine, which He
 Doth plant and cherish most;
 The fruit which grows from me
 Is God, the Holy Ghost. 57

Now it is clear that sentiments such as these expressed by Angelus Silesius do not accord well with the long held Christian doctrine of impassibility, which states that God is totally above his created world and in no way dependent upon, exposed to, or affected by that world; that His nature is always to be the active initiating subject and never the receptive object. The clearest statement of God's impassibility is to be found in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas:

Everything acts according as it is actual. Wherefore that which is not wholly actual acts, not by its whole self, but by part of itself. Now that which does not act by its whole self is not the first agent, since it acts by participation of something and not by its essence.

Therefore the first agent, which is God, has no admixture of potentiality, but is pure act.

Moreover, just as it is natural that a thing should act in so far as it is actual, so it is natural for it to be passive in so far as it is in potentiality, for movement is the act of that which is in potentiality. Now God is altogether impassible and immovable ... Therefore in Him there is no potentiality, namely that which is passive. 58

A recent Anglican theologian, however, - W.H. Vanstone - in his book, The Stature of Waiting, has considered the opposite possibility: that God is 'passible', that He is in some way dependent upon, and affected by, his creation:

The description of God as passible would imply a relationship of mutuality or fundamental interdependence between God and the world: it would imply that just as God is necessary to what the world is, so the world is necessary to what God is. If God is in His nature passible, then without the world He is, in one aspect of His being, incomplete: He must need the world in order that the passible, affective, receptive aspect of His nature may be fulfilled. 59

Furthermore, while conceding the impassibility of God in the absolute sense - the sense in which Eckhart conceives the Godhead - Vanstone considers the notion that God, in Christ, is both passible and impassible, a view which clearly has affinities with the notion of God's relativity:

The world is by the activity of God ... There is no 'mutuality' between God and the world ... God is not passible to the world, not exposed to an other and alien source

of activity ... But in reflecting on the disclosure of God which appears in Jesus, we discerned the paradoxical possibility that He who is non passibilis is passus: that the activity of God culminates in that form of activity which creates its own passion, that form of working which destines itself to waiting ... So He who made, and everlastingly makes, the world also, of His own freedom, waits upon the world, exposed to and receptive of its power of meaning. In all the history of the world Deus, qui non passibilis, passus est. 60

We conclude from Molinos, too, that Christian freedom is as much to do with waiting upon the world, 'exposed to and receptive of its power of meaning', as acting within the world. And this profound paradox of the passibility and impassibility of the perfected Christian is beautifully illustrated by Molinos with the following graceful metaphor:

Estáse el valle oscureciendo con densas tinieblas, fieras tempestades de piedra, de truenos, rayos y relámpagos, que parece un retrato del infierno, y en este tiempo está el alto monte resplandeciente, recibiendo los hermosos rayos del sol con paz y serenidad, quedando todo él como un cielo claro, pacífico e iluminado.

Lo mismo sucede en esta dichosa alma. Está el valle de la parte inferior sufriendo tribulaciones, combates, tinieblas, desolaciones, tormentos, martirios y sugestiones; y en el mismo tiempo, en el alto monte de la parte superior del alma, ilustra, inflama e ilumina el verdadero sol, con que queda clara, pacífica, resplandeciente, tranquila, serena y hecha un mar de alegría.

Es, pues, tanta la quietud de esta pura alma que llegó al monte de la tranquilidad, es tanta la paz en su espíritu, tanta la serenidad y sosiego en lo interior, que redundaba hasta en lo exterior un resabio y vislumbres de Dios. (p. 249)

And so beyond the conception of God as both utter transcendence and warm immanence, we find a third component in Molinos' spirituality; we arrive finally at an awareness that for Molinos God and man are co-participants in the world, and that God, in his Son, Jesus Christ, has expressed for all time the joy and suffering of his own passibility:

Si a esta alma, que ha subido ya por los escalones de la aniquilación a la región de la paz, le fuese necesario el escoger, elegiría primero la desolación que el consuelo, el desprecio que la honra, porque el amoroso Jesús hizo sumo aprecio del oprobio y de la pena. Si padeció antes hambre de los bienes del cielo, si tuvo sed de Dios, temor de perderle, llanto en el corazón y guerra del demonio, ya se han convertido la hambre en hartura, la sed en saciedad, el temor en seguridad, la tristeza en alegría, el llanto en gozo y la fiera guerra en suma paz. ¡Oh dichosa alma que goza ya en la tierra tan gran felicidad! (p. 248).

'¡Y hay tantos modos de dominar!' says Miguel de Unamuno, 'A las veces, hasta pasivamente, al parecer al menos, se cumple con esta ley de vida... Ser vencido, o, por lo menos, aparecer vencido, es muchas veces vencer ... Y entre las armas de vencer hay también la de la paciencia y la resignación apasionadas, llenas de actividad y de anhelos interiores'. 61

'El verdadero humilde', says Miguel de Molinos 'se está en la quietud de su corazón reposado; allí sufre la prueba de Dios, de los hombres y del demonio sobre toda razón y discreción, poseyéndose a sí mismo en paz y quietud, esperando con toda humildad el agrado puro de Dios, así en la vida como en la muerte. No le inquietan las cosas de afuera más que si no fuesen. A éste la cruz y muerte son delicias, aunque exteriormente no lo manifieste'. (p. 216)

It is sentiments of this nature which would surely have encouraged that Puritan and Quaker sympathizer, John Milton, as we see from his famous poem, On his Blindness:

When I consider how my light is spent,
 E're half my days, in this dark world and wide,
 And that one Talent which is death to hide,
 Lodg'd with me useless, though my Soul more bent
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, least he returning chide,
 Doth God exact day-labour, light deny'd,
 I fondly ask; But patience to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need
 Either man's work or his own gifts, who best
 Bear his milde yoake, they serve him best, his state
 Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
 And post o're Land and Ocean without rest:
 They also serve who only stand and waite. 62

'The image of God in which man is made is the image of this God', says Vanstone, - 'Who, in loving exposes Himself to be the object no less than the subject of that which happens in the world; and so the presence of the image of God in man is, in principle, to be discerned no less in his passion than in his activity and achievement'.⁶³

'El alma que está dentro de su nada', says Molinos, 'guarda silencio interno, vive transformada en el sumo bien, no apetece nada de todo lo criado, vive en Dios sumergida y se está resignada en cualquier tormento... Estándose el alma quieta en su nada, la perfecciona, enriquece y pinta el Señor sin embarazo su imagen y semejanza. (p. 246)

It was Teilhard de Chardin who said 'Expectation - anxious, collective and operative expectation of an end of the world, that is to say of an issue for the world - that is the supreme Christian function and the most distinctive characteristic of our religion':⁶⁴ 'Espera, sufre, calla y ten paciencia', says Molinos, 'nada te turbe, nada te espante, que todo se acaba; sólo Dios no se muda, y la paciencia todo lo alcanza; quien a Dios

no tiene, todo le falta'. (p. 212) And it is Vanstone who concludes that the image of God in man

Must include not only activity but also exposure. Man must see his dignity not only in being a point of activity in the world but also in being a point of receptivity: not only in his manifold capacity for action but also in the many facets of his passibility ... That man is made ... to know and feel his dependence on the world is no less a mark of God's image in him than that he is made ... to know and feel his capacity for acting and achieving. 65

'Hay otra humildad verdadera', says Molinos, 'y es de aquellos que alcanzaron perfecto hábito de humildad. Estos jamás piensan en ella, sino que juzgan humildemente de sí, obran con fortaleza y tolerancia, viven y mueren en Dios ... en todo se están constantes y quietos; sufren con gozo las molestias, deseando siempre mayores para imitar a su amado y despreciado Jesús ... se contentan con lo que Dios les da y se encogen con sosegada confusión en los defectos ... no hay honra que apetezcan ni injuria que les turbe; no hay trabajo que les inquiete ni prosperidad que les ensorbezca; porque se están siempre inmobiles en su nada. (p. 215)

'Christian mysticism', asserts Teilhard elsewhere, 'extracts all that is sweetest and strongest circulating in all the human mysticisms, though without absorbing their evil or suspect elements. It shows an astonishing equilibrium between the active and passive, between possession of the world and its renunciation, between a taste for things and an indifference to them'. 66

It is this equilibrium between all that is active and passive, world embracing and world denying, austere and generous, that imparts to the Guía espiritual of Miguel de Molinos its transcendent quality and distinctively Christian vision, a vision which radiates from the 'oficina de la nada':

Por el camino de la nada has de llegarte a perder en Dios, que es el último grado de la perfección, y si así te sabes perder, serás dichosa, te ganarás y te acertarás a hallar. En esta oficina de la nada se fabrica la sencillez, se halla el interior e infuso recogimiento, se alcanza la quietud y se limpia el corazón de todo género de imperfección. (p. 246)

For 'when all is said and done', says William James, 'we are in the end absolutely dependent on the universe; and into sacrifices and surrenders of some sort, deliberately looked at and accepted, we are drawn and pressed as into our only permanent positions of repose ... in those states of mind which fall short of religion, the surrender is submitted to as an imposition of necessity, and the sacrifice is undergone at the very best without complaint. In the religious life, on the contrary, surrender and sacrifice are positively espoused ... Religion thus makes easy and felicitous what is in any case necessary'. 67

'¡Oh, qué tesoro descubrirás', says Miguel de Molinos, 'si haces en la nada tu morada! Y si entras en el centro de la nada, en nada te mezclarás por afuera ... sino solamente en aquello que por oficio te toca. Si te estás encerrada en la nada, adonde no llegan los golpes de las adversidades, nada te dará pena, nada te inquietará. Por aquí has de llegar al señorío de ti misma, porque sólo en la nada reina el perfecto y verdadero dominio'. (p. 246)

It is sentiments such as these - that lend to the Guía its tenor of joyous consent - which allow us to concur with William James when he says:

It makes a tremendous practical difference to one whether one accepts the universe in the drab discoloured way of ... resignation to necessity, or with the passionate happiness of Christian saints. The difference is as great as that between passivity and activity. 68

NOTES

1. JOHNSTON, William, The Still Point: Reflections on Zen and Christian Mysticism, New York, 1970, p. 31.
2. The Modern Catholic Dictionary, compiled by John A. HARDON, S.J., New York, 1980, p. 454.
N.B. The birthdate of Molinos, as given in this definition, is incorrect. He was born in 1628.
3. TOLSTOY, Leo, War and Peace, 2 vols., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1957, Vol. II, p. 1438.
4. p. 1427.
5. p. 1431.
6. SCHLEIRMACHER, Friedrich, 'Christian Faith', in Historical Selections in the Philosophy of Religion, ed. by Ninian Smart, London, 1962, pp. 307-320 (p. 311).
7. Ibid., p. 309.
8. Compare Jean Gerson's (1363-1429) definition of mysticism, a mystic also appealed to by Molinos in his Guía:
'Theologia mystica est experimentalis cognitio habita de Deo per amoris unitivi complexum'.
(New Catholic Encyclopaedia, 1967)
9. AQUINAS, Thomas, Saint, 'Summa Contra Gentiles', in A Guide for the Perplexed by E.F. Schumacher, London, 1980, pp. 41-42.
10. SCHUMACHER, E.F., A Guide for the Perplexed, London, 1980, pp. 44-45.
11. It is interesting to note that Spain has long been predisposed to stoic philosophy, one of whose basic tenets is that man will gain freedom and peace only if he remains impervious to the claims of external necessity he cannot control. Francisco de Quevedo defines this concept of stoicism in his treatise on the subject, Nombre, origen, intento, recomendación de la doctrina estoica (1635)

La doctrina toda de los estoicos se cierra en este principio; que las cosas se dividen en propias y ajenas; que las propias están en nuestra mano, y las ajenas en la mano ajena; que aquéllos nos tocan, que estotras no nos pertenecen, y que por esto no han de perturbar ni afligir; que no hemos de procurar que en las cosas se haga nuestro deseo con los sucesos de las cosas, que así tendremos libertad, paz y quietud.

It is beyond the scope of this study to indicate the parallels between stoic philosophy and the piety of Miguel de Molinos, except that we note both place emphasis on the development of inner strength and freedom as the means to interior peace, as these words of Molinos indicate:

La razón iluminada en el sabio es una alta y sencilla elevación del espíritu, por donde se ve con sencilla y aguda vista todo lo que es a él inferior y cuanto toca a su vida y estado. Esta es la que hace al alma sencilla, ilustrada, uniforme, espiritual y totalmente introvertida y de todo lo criado abstraída. Esta es la que mueve y atrae con suave violencia los corazones de los humildes y dóciles, llenándoles con abundancia de suavidad, paz y dulzura. (p. 234)

12. MORENO, Antonio, O.P., Jung, Gods and Modern Man, London, 1974, pp. 139-140.
13. VON HÜGEL, Friedrich, The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in St. Catherine of Genoa and her Friends, London, 1927, p. 132.
14. COOPER, J.C., Taoism: The Way of the Mystic, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, 1981, pp. 73-74.
15. SUZUKI, D.T., 'The Basis of Buddhist Philosophy', in Understanding Mysticism, edited by Richard Woods, O.P., New York, 1980, pp. 126-145, (p. 142).
16. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, Pierre, Le Milieu divin, London, 1960, p. 52.
17. SCHWARZ, Oswald, The Psychology of Sex, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1967, p. 127.
18. SPINOZA, Benedict, The Ethics, in Chief Works, edited by R.H.M. Elwes, New York, 1951, Vol. II, pp. 45-271 (p. 129).
19. p. 130.
20. p. 268.
21. p. 270.
22. JUNG, Carl Gustav, in An Introduction to Jung's Psychology, by Frieda Fordham, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1981, p. 77.
23. FORDHAM, Frieda, ibid., pp. 76-77.

24. In MORENO, Jung, Gods and Modern Man, p. 65.
25. SCHAER, Hans, Religion and the Cure of Souls in Jung's Psychology, London, 1951, pp. 98-99.
26. JUNG, 'Psychology and Religion', in Jung: Selected Writings, edited by Anthony Storr, London, 1983, pp. 240-249 (p. 246).
27. JUNG, 'Aion', in Jung, Selected Writings, ed. Storr, p. 91.
28. Hans Schaer elucidates Jung's notion of the God archetype (or God symbol) in the following way:

From the psychological point of view God manifests himself as an autonomous complex of considerable strength and intensity. The God-symbol is ultimately the expression of life's intensity at its highest, and is thus always stronger than consciousness. It can do more than the conscious will can do, for it partakes of the 'objective psyche': the material of the unconscious. That is why God is always experienced as power first and never as idea. But that is why God is always a moral problem for us, the solution of which is attended by grave difficulties. Hans Schaer, op.cit., p. 146.

29. JUNG, 'Psychology and Religion', in Jung: Selected Writings, ed. Storr, p. 249.
30. BERGSON, Henri, 'Mysticism, Action and Philosophy' in Understanding Mysticism, ed. Woods, pp. 357-378 (p. 360).
31. JAMES, William, The Varieties of Religious Experience, Glasgow, 1977, p. 368.
32. Ibid., pp. 314-316.
33. Following is part of the account of Antoinette Bourignon's conversion, as quoted by William James (ibid., pp. 317-318)

She asked always earnestly, 'When shall I be perfectly thine, O my God?' And she thought he still answered her, 'When thou shalt no longer possess anything and shalt die to thyself'. 'And where shall I do that, Lord?' He answered her, 'In the Desert'. This made so strong an impression on her soul that she aspired after this; but being a maid of eighteen years only,

she was afraid of unlucky chances, and was never used to travel, and knew no way. She laid aside all these doubts and said, 'Lord, thou wilt guide me how and where it shall please thee. It is for thee that I do it. I will lay aside my habit of a maid, and will take that of a hermit that I may pass unknown'. Having then secretly made ready this habit, while her parents thought to have married her, her father having promised her to a rich French merchant, she prevented the time, and on Easter evening, having cut her hair, put on the habit, and slept a little, she went out of her chamber about four in the morning, taking nothing but one penny to buy bread for the day. And it being said to her in going out, Where is thy faith? in a penny? she threw it away, begging pardon of God for her fault, and saying, 'No, Lord, my faith is not in a penny, but in thee alone'. Thus she went away wholly delivered from the heavy burden of the cares and good things of this world, and she found her soul so satisfied that she no longer wished for anything upon earth, resting entirely upon God.

34. UNDERHILL, Evelyn, Mysticism: a Study of the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness, London, 1960, p. 471.

35. Following is an account of Christian conversion:

Religious conversion is being grasped by ultimate concern. It is other-worldly falling in love. It is total and permanent self surrender without conditions, qualifications, reservations. But it is such a surrender, not as an act, but as a dynamic state that is prior to and principle of subsequent acts. It is revealed in retrospect as an under-tow of existential consciousness, as a fated acceptance of a vocation to holiness, as perhaps an increasing simplicity and passivity in prayer. It is interpreted differently in the context of different religious traditions. For Christians it is God's love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us. It is the gift of grace...

Lonergan, Bernard, Method in Theology, London 1972, p. 241.

36. JAMES, op.cit., pp. 121-122.
37. Ibid., p. 281.
38. p. 285.
39. UNDERHILL, op.cit., p. 44.
40. GANIVET, Ángel, Ideárium español, Madrid, 1957, p. 65.
41. UNDERHILL, op.cit., p. 46.
42. Ibid., p. 48.
43. PEERS, Allison, Spanish Mysticism, London, 1924, p. 44.
44. Op.cit., p. 37.
45. SCHILLER, F.C.S., Humanism, London, 1912, p. 213.
46. Ibid., p. 226.
47. Op.cit., p. 13.
48. Ibid., p. 40.
49. FROMM, Erich, To Have or to Be, London, 1980, pp. 94-95.
50. SAN JUAN DE LA CRUZ, Obras, edited by Gabriel de la Mora, Mexico, 1973, p. 376.
51. BIGELOW, John, Molinos the Quietist, New York, 1882, p. 115.
52. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, op.cit., pp. 72-73.
53. SCHUMACHER, op.cit., pp. 155-156.
54. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Article on 'Christianity', Vol. IV, p. 487.
55. From Peers' unpublished study on Molinos (see preface, note 4).
56. SCHAER, op.cit., p. 214.
57. JUNG, Psychological Types, London, 1923, p. 317.
58. AQUINAS, Thomas, Saint, in Thomas Aquinas: Selected Writings, edited by Rev. M.C. D'Arcy, London, 1939,
59. VANSTONE, W.H., The Stature of Waiting, London, 1983, pp. 91-92.
60. Ibid., p. 111.

61. UNAMUNO, Miguel de, Del Sentimiento Trágico de la vida en los hombres y en los pueblos, Obras Completas, Vol. XVI, Madrid, 1964, p. 407.
62. The Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250-1918, edited by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, Oxford, 1957, p. 352.
63. Op.cit., p. 100.
64. Op.cit., p. 148.
65. Op.cit., p. 111.
66. Op.cit., p. 108.
67. Op.cit., pp. 67-68.
68. p. 59.

CHAPTER 2

Passivity and Mystical Prayer: Some Social Implications

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this thesis is essentially a presentation of the psychological, philosophical and theological aspects of the activity-passivity dualism necessary to refute any claim that Miguel de Molinos was encouraging a false passivity in his Guía. During the course of this study we established that diverse metaphysical systems have produced outstanding constructs of the unity inhering in the duality of the manifest universe.¹ Aristotle's concept of Energeia was cited in this respect: nevertheless, we concluded - with Molinos - that it is the mystic, rather than the philosopher who asserts this unity as the reality underpinning his own psyche.²

We established, too, that Molinos, in keeping with the Christian mystical tradition, insists that this unity - once attained - is experienced as a loving relationship with God, as expressed in His Son, Jesus Christ. Most importantly, we found that Molinos enjoins those who experience this love in contemplation to express it through the practice of virtue. Molinos' conception of interior peace - the passive experience of God in the soul - thus in no way precludes moral strenuousness. On the contrary, his Guía gives a legitimate expression of passivity: that 'busy rest' of all great mystics. Molinos' mystical vision is therefore consonant with that of all orthodox Christian mystics - a 'prescience of

the good, a fore-knowing in its totality of that which moral effort has to establish in detail'.³

Generally, of course, man does not apply himself to the task of psychic integration with the singularity of purpose that characterizes the mystic. And unfortunately for man the mystic is not always - or usually - adept at relating his experiences in a coherent fashion. The mystic - unless he be a poet of the genius of St. John of the Cross - will find almost insuperable difficulties in formulating his revelation. We recall the final part of A. Moreno's definition of Christian Mysticism: 'The knowledge corresponding to contemplation is intuitive, rooted in love and reduced to created categories only with difficulties'. For this reason, it will come as a pleasant surprise to those versed in the usually prolix devotional literature of Golden Age Spain to peruse the comparatively slim volume of the Guía by Molinos. A cursory reading will reveal an unusually compact and lucid style - a marked retreat from that of Baltazar Gracián and his contemporaries, a fact which no doubt helps to explain its enormous international popularity. Ironically, as we shall see, it was this very popularity which led to its position on the Index, and possibly to Molinos' arraignment for heresy.

The danger area of contemplation, as we found in Chapter 1, is that of 'passivity' - or rather 'false passivity' (labelled el falso ocio in the antiquetist

literature of seventeenth-century Spain). It is this false passivity which we know by the pejorative term 'Quietism'.

SECTION 1

The Christian Doctrine of Prayer

The analyses of the passivity-activity dualism we have put forward in Chapter 1 will serve to remind us of the complex nature of the concept. We now proceed with and complete our analysis of Antonio Moreno's definition of Christian mysticism. We recall the opening statement of his definition: 'Mysticism is the full development of the grace received in Baptism, and its essential trait is the actuation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost'.

It will be remembered that in our first encounter with the adult Jesus in the New Testament he appeared in response to the preaching of John the Baptist:

Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, (own emphasis) the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him. (Luke, 3.21, 22)

It is significant that Christ's moment of illumination occurred while he was praying. We shall now consider in brief what we know from the Gospels concerning Christ's doctrine on prayer. We hope eventually to show that the method of prayer propounded by Miguel de Molinos in his Guía parallels the Christian doctrine of prayer and would have provided the devout of

his day with a secure means of apprehending Christ's strictures on prayer, particularly those set out in his Sermon on the Mount. Most importantly, however, we contend that Molinos is advocating a method of prayer which would dispose the penitent to the practice of virtue, in accordance with the operation of the Holy Ghost.

It is to the Sermon on the Mount we now turn, for it is here that we find the most specific injunctions concerning prayer:

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. (Matthew, 6.5-13).

The instructions which precede the Lord's Prayer would appear to refer to interior prayer; no mention is made of any external observance - no particular time, place, or posture. On the contrary, there is a quite

specific admonition that prayer is a deeply private matter between man and God: 'When thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret'.

The Lord's Prayer itself, called by Heiler 'the prototype of mystical resignation'⁴ is the cornerstone upon which subsequent commentators on the life of prayer have built, Molinos included. We limit our comment to those aspects of the Prayer which have a particular bearing on passivity in the Guía and 'the gifts of the Holy Ghost'.

Christ's dictum 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done' embodies the sine qua non of the spiritual life: poverty of spirit. 'A passive experience of God in the soul' is possible only when complete detachment, or poverty of spirit, has been achieved. As we saw in Chapter 1 Molinos uses the word NADA in his Guía to indicate poverty of spirit:

Hay otra humildad verdadera y es de aquellos que alcanzaron perfecto hábito de humildad. Estos jamás piensan en ella, sino que juzgan humildemente de sí, obran con fortaleza y tolerancia, viven y mueren en Dios. Ni atienden a sí ni a las criaturas; en todo se están constantes y quietos; sufren con gozo las molestias, deseando siempre mayores para imitar a su amado y despreciado Jesús; desean ser tenidos en el vulgo por fábula y escarnio; se contentan con lo que Dios les da y se encogen con sosegada confusión en los defectos; no se humillan por el consejo de la razón, sino por el afecto de la voluntad; no hay honra que apetezcan ni injuria que les turbe; no hay trabajo que les inquiete ni prosperidad que les ensoberbezca; porque se están siempre inmóviles en su nada (own emphasis) y en sí mismos con perfecta paz. (pp. 215-216)

It was Molinos' avowed intention, when writing his Guía, to show how proficients - 'los que tienen los sentidos bien mortificados' - might attain to poverty of spirit, using interior prayer as the appropriate ascesis. Poverty of spirit is quite clearly equated with conformity to the Divine Will, as Molinos indicates in the Advertencia IV which immediately precedes Book 1 of his Guía:

Advertencia IV: Asunto de este libro, que es desarraigar la rebeldía de nuestra propia voluntad para alcanzar la interior paz.

Esta conformidad es el yugo suave que nos introduce en la región de la paz y serenidad interior. Por donde conoceremos que la rebeldía de nuestra voluntad es la causa principal de nuestra inquietud y que por no sujetarnos al yugo suave de la divina, padecemos tantas turbaciones y desasosiegos. ¡Oh almas!, si rindiéramos nuestra voluntad a la divina y a todas sus disposiciones, ¡qué tranquilidad experimentaríamos, qué suave paz, qué serenidad interior, qué suma felicidad y remedo de la bienaventuranza! Este pues ha de ser el asunto de este libro. (p. 78)

We propose, then, that the Lord's Prayer is not only a request for spiritual blessing, but implies a necessary preparation for the reception of the Holy Spirit. This means, in fact, that we accept the interpretation of those commentators who refer to 'our daily bread' as our supersubstantial bread⁵: that is 'bread beyond substance': - the Holy Spirit.

The notion of a necessary preparation for the reception of the Holy Spirit is implied in this stricture of Christ's Apostle Paul:

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:2).

In Paul's terminology man should strive to receive the Holy Spirit (Pneuma Hagion). Reception of the divine 'pneuma' (Old Testament ruah) would lead to the birth of the new man, described by Paul as pneumatikos i.e. 'spiritual', as opposed to psuchikos i.e. 'natural'.

In summary, Christian prayer, through Paul, came to signify the science of receiving the 'Divine Pneuma', or Holy Spirit. It would appear that the Christian tradition has on the whole emphasised the rigorous nature of the ascetic or purgative aspects of the spiritual path. Certainly much of the devotional literature of Spain's Golden-Age is of a markedly ascetical cast. Molinos himself concludes his Guía with a powerful lament on the unwillingness of his fellow Christians to take up the Cross:

¡Qué pocas almas hay puras, de corazón sencillo y desapegado, y que vacías de su entender, saber desear y querer, anhelan a su negación y muerte espiritual!
¡Qué pocas almas hay ... etc.
(p. 253)

We conclude these comments on the Christian doctrine of prayer with some brief remarks on the Beatitudes⁶ with which Jesus prefaces his Sermon on the Mount. We agree with D. Martyn Lloyd Jones that 'none of these descriptions (the Beatitudes) refers to what we may call a natural tendency. Each one of them is wholly a

disposition which is produced by grace alone and the operation of the Holy Spirit upon us'.⁷ We contend that it is precisely to encourage this 'disposition' that Miguel de Molinos composed his Guía and that this intention is implicit in the subtitle of the Guía espiritual - 'Que desembaraza al alma y la conduce por el interior camino para alcanzar la perfecta contemplación y el rico tesoro de la interior paz'.

Having followed Molinos' Guía with the help of a sensitive and sympathetic director, the penitent could hope to attain the state of grace in which the Beatitudes become a liveable reality. This state of grace we equate with Moreno's 'passive experience of God in the soul'. Christian transformation, then, is effected by three means: faith, love, and prayer - all of which an analysis of the Guía will reveal. Faith relates to the reality of the kingdom within ('the passive experience of God') as expressed in Jesus Christ. Love is due to Him, and through Him to all mankind, and must express itself in works; and both love and faith are to be attained through prayer, and in consequence the works also are dependent on prayer.

SECTION 2

Some problems that Mysticism has posed for the Church

We now give a broad outline of the direction in which Christian prayer developed from the time of the Church Fathers to when interior prayer took on a characteristic form in Spain of the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries. Systematic adherence to the life of prayer originated in the monasteries in the deserts of Egypt in the first centuries after Christ's death. It is a fact that the cultivation of mystical experience has since that time largely been the prerogative of the monastery and later the great religious orders. To a greater or lesser extent the Church has always been wary of lay attempts at similar systematic cultivation of interior prayer. Some writers assert a fundamental opposition between the Church and the way of contemplation;⁸ others indicate a need for balance between the different elements, including the mystical, that constitute the Christian religion. The question that is implicit in the wide spectrum of views on Christianity and its relationship to mystical prayer is 'should mysticism be available to all?' Or alternatively, 'is everybody disposed by temperament to mystical experience?'

According to the New Catholic Encyclopaedia (1967) there are still wide divergences of opinion - Dom Cuthbert Butler, however, has argued that the traditional Christian view is that all men are called to 'a specifically mystical way of loving God'. Contemplation, though different to ordinary prayer, is not denied to humble souls who aspire to it. Neither is it a miraculous activity but 'given by God to those who remove obstacles to it and avail themselves of the requisite means'.⁹

Another notable theologian - R. Garrigou-Lagrange - has protested against the notion that there are two ways of perfection: an ordinary way for all, and an extraordinary way of the mystical life. There is only 'one unitive way ... to which by docility to the Holy Spirit, generous souls are led to perfection. Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that because of a lack of proper guidance or because of other unfavourable circumstances, or because particular individuals are strongly inclined to exterior activities, some generous souls may not arrive at the mystic life during the span of an ordinary lifetime'.¹⁰

Two points arise for consideration from this statement. Firstly, the requirement of 'proper guidance'. Miguel de Molinos was in no doubt as to the importance to be attached to adequate supervision of 'interior prayer'. Book 2 of the Guía is essentially an exposition of the qualities required of both penitent and director to ensure successful transition from the exterior way to the interior way that Molinos advocates for more advanced souls. Secondly, the notion that 'particular individuals are strongly inclined to exterior activities' and therefore 'may not arrive at the mystic life during the span of an ordinary lifetime'.

A good many 'extrovert' people might indeed find it difficult to cultivate the interior life. Yet Molinos leaves us in no doubt regarding his position on the 'exterior' and 'interior' man. He commences his third

book of the Guía with the following scathing comment on the exclusive cultivation of the exterior way:

Hay dos maneras de espirituales personas, unas interiores y exteriores otras. Estas buscan a Dios por afuera, por el discurso, imaginación y consideración. Procuran con gran conato para alcanzar las virtudes muchas abstinencias, maceración de cuerpo y mortificación de los sentidos. Se entregan a la rigurosa penitencia, se visten de cilicios, castigan la carne con disciplinas, procuran el silencio y llevan la presencia de Dios, formándole presente en su idea o imaginación, ya como pastor, ya como médico, ya como amoroso padre y señor. Se deleitan de hablar continuamente de Dios, haciendo muy de ordinario fervorosos actos de amor. Todo lo cual es arte y meditación.

Por este camino desean ser grandes, y a fuer de voluntarias y exteriores mortificaciones van en busca de los sensibles afectos y fervorosos sentimientos, pareciéndoles que sólo cuando los tienen reside Dios en ellos.

Este es el camino exterior y de principiantes, y aunque es bueno no se llegará por él a la perfección, ni aun se dará un paso, como lo manifiesta la experiencia en muchos que después de cincuenta años de este exterior ejercicio se hallan vacíos de Dios y llenos de sí mismos, y sólo tienen de espirituales el nombre. (pp. 185-186)

Now the Church has always been sensitive to the fact that there exists a 'diabolical' or false mysticism, and has elaborated norms for use by spiritual directors to assist in the delicate task of discriminating between true and false spirituality.¹¹

As we mentioned earlier Molinos stresses the importance of a competent spiritual director to assist the penitent on the inward journey:

Si para lo exterior y aparente es menester maestro, ¿qué será para lo interior y secreto? Si para la teología moral, escolástica y expositiva, que claramente se enseñan, ¿qué será para la mística, secreta, reservada y oscura? Si para el trato y obras políticas y exteriores, ¿qué será para el interior trato con Dios? (p. 135)

For it would be the fear of any experienced director such as Molinos, that the ecstatic experience, if too sudden, or not properly integrated into the penitent's ordinary life, could overwhelm the weak consciousness. The result of too abrupt a transition from normal to 'cosmic consciousness', (or to use Molinos' terms from 'acquired' to 'infused' contemplation) could produce personality disintegration nowadays associated with the so called passivity experiences, for which the deranged person might provide delusional explanations. These passivity experiences are well known to modern psychiatry as characteristic of schizophrenic illness:

They are usually reported by patients who are suffering from other psychiatric symptoms, and the more bizarre manifestations of delusions of passivity are described by patients whose personalities have become seriously disorganized. But the bizarrerie relates to the content of the experience. The basic feature of the form of passivity is that thoughts, actions, feelings or impulses are experienced as lacking personal quality ...

Passivity experiences are not related to particular situations... They become part ... of the patient's mode of thinking. They last as long as his illness; indeed some psychiatrists might say that the disturbance which they represent is his illness.¹²

It is no doubt to avoid delusional experiences of this nature that Molinos makes the following firm stipulation as a prerequisite for spiritual growth:

La sujeción a un padre espiritual experimentado es el medio más seguro, porque con la luz interior descubre con claridad cuál sea tentación y cuál inspiración, y distingue los movimientos que nacen de la naturaleza, del demonio y de la misma alma, la cual debe sujetarse en todo a quien tiene experiencia y le puede descubrir los apegos, idolillos y malos tratos que la embarazan el vuelo, porque de este modo no sólo se libraré de las diabólicas astucias, pero caminaré más en un año que caminaría en mil con otra guía sin experiencia. (p. 137)

It is in this way that the mystical consciousness is seen as an organic evolution in which each stage subsumes the one it follows. (In broad terms these stages are the purgative, illuminative and unitive - although mystical theology insists that these stages are not necessarily chronological i.e. it is possible to undergo all stages at the same time).

We have tried to indicate, then, that the Church has always been at pains to ensure that as maturation in the spiritual life proceeds, so does the life of selfless devotion to one's fellows:

But the fruit of the Spirit
is love, joy, peace, longsuffering,
gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness,
temperance: against such there is
no law. (Galatians 5. 22-24)

The authenticity of mystical experience is always to be judged by the fruits about which St. Paul speaks.

Most writers on the Christian life today would in fact assert the need for a balance between the various elements of the religious life. Dom Cuthbert Butler is typical in this respect:

There are four elements in religion: the institutional or external element of Church, sacraments, and public worship; the intellectual element of doctrine and dogma and theology; the mystical element of will and emotion and personal religious experience; and the element of service of others. 13

SECTION 3

The Beghards as forerunners of the alumbrados: some social implications of their false passivity

Despite the tension that has always existed between the Church and its mystics, Christianity has, of course, produced mystics of the highest calibre from earliest days. We mention in this connection Irenaeus (A.D. 130-202), Bishop of Lyons; Clement of Alexandria, born circa A.D. 150; Origen (A.D. 185-254).

The writer of the early Christian period who has had the most far reaching influence on later Christian mysticism was Dionysius the Areopagite, the father of apophatic mysticism, a method of denying God 'epistemologically but affirming him ontologically'.

His influence first began to be felt following John Scotus Erigena's translation into Latin of his work around A.D. 870.

The Middle Ages in Europe saw a great development of mysticism. We limit our comment on the mystics of the medieval period to one of those from the Rhineland: Ruysbroeck.

Not only is he generally regarded as one of the finest exponents of theistic mysticism, but he lived contemporaneously with the Brethren of the Free Spirit, identified with the Beghards and the Beguines.

The doctrine of the Brethren of the Free Spirit was propagated up to the end of the Middle Ages by the Beghards who were loosely affiliated to the Dominican and Franciscan Mendicant Orders. The female counterparts of the Beghards were known as Beguines. Both the Beghards and the Beguines were largely a lay movement. Thus there are obvious parallels between the Free Spirit and the later alumbrados of Spain - also largely a lay movement.

The encounter of the orthodox German mystic, Ruysbroeck, with the Free Spirit produced a polemic on the nature of true and false passivity which will serve us as a framework when we begin our study of the alumbrados of Spain, and what was alleged against them in numerous condemned 'propositions'. Unfortunately the alumbrados have left us no literature, and only two fragments attributable to the Brethren survive.

In Germany the Brethren of the Free Spirit suffered a similar fate to that of the alumbrados of Spain. By the 14th century they had become such a source of concern to the ecclesiastical authorities that Clementine effectively crushed them with the decree 'Ad nostrum qui desideranter' in Vienne, 1311. It may be supposed that one is as free to speculate on the full range of the spirituality of the Beghards and Beguines as are many modern scholars on that of the alumbrados. It cannot in truth be considered acceptable that definitive judgements may be given regarding sectarian spirituality, when all we have before us are condemned propositions as set down by hostile witnesses. It is, of course, interesting that in the case of Molinos we have the full text of his Guía espiritual, as well as the 68 condemned propositions of the Bull Coelestis Pastor.

In his book The Pursuit of the Millennium, Norman Cohn makes out a case that the Free Spirit were purveyors of a doctrine of 'mystical anarchism', and calls them 'an élite of amoral supermen',¹⁴ displaying traits usually associated with schizophrenics:

One can recognize a condition which is familiar to every psychiatrist ... as characteristic of schizophrenics and paranoiacs And in this again the quasi-mysticism of the 'Free Spirit' differs utterly from orthodox mysticism. From the standpoint of depth-psychology it could be said that orthodox mystic and heretical adept both started their psychic adventure by a profound introversion, in the course of which

they lived through as adults a reactivation of the distorting phantasies of infancy. But whereas the orthodox mystic emerged from this experience - like a patient from a successful psychoanalysis - as a more integrated personality with a widened range of sympathy, the adept of the Free Spirit introjected the gigantic parental images in their most domineering, aggressive and wanton aspects and emerged as a nihilistic megalomaniac.¹⁵

The German mystic who inveighed most against the Free Spirit was Jan van Ruysbroeck, whose main attack on their aberrant mysticism is to be found in his Spiritual Espousals which contains what is generally thought of as the definitive statement on false passivity and the Christian life.

In Chapter XXI of his Defensa de la contemplación, Molinos cites Ruysbroeck in his own defence. As J.A. Valente remarks, this chapter is in effect a gloss, and at times, a literal translation of Ruysbroeck's stance on false passivity in The Spiritual Espousals. According to Valente 'Parecería que Molinos tratase de deshispanizar la acusación de alumbramiento que con tan voraz persistencia se hizo recaer sobre todos los grandes contemplativos españoles, desde Ignacio de Loyola a Teresa de Avila'. (p. 306)

The following is a collation of extracts from The Spiritual Espousals by the Blessed Jan van Ruysbroeck which give a clear indication of this mystic's aversion to the cultivation of false passivity in mystical prayer by the Brethren of the Free Spirit:

Through the natural rest which they feel and have in themselves in emptiness, they maintain that they are free, and united with God without mean, and they are advanced beyond all the exercises of Holy Church, and beyond the commandments of God, and beyond the law, and beyond all the virtuous works which one can in any way practise. 16

For this emptiness seems to them to be so great that no-one ought to hinder them with the performance of any work, however good it be, for their emptiness is of greater excellence than are all virtues. And therefore they remain in mere passivity without the performance of any work directed up towards God or down towards man, just like the instrument which is itself passive and awaits the time when its owner wishes to work. 17

When a man possesses this rest in emptiness, and when the impulse of love seems to him to be a hindrance, so in resting he remains within himself, and lives contrary to the first manner which unites man with God; and this is a beginning of all spiritual error. 18

For according to their way of thinking, they possess everything that they might pray or yearn for. And thus they are poor in spirit, for they are without desire, and they have forsaken everything, and live without any choice of their own, for it seems to them that they have passed beyond everything into an emptiness where they possess that for the sake of which all the exercises of Holy Church are ordained and set. And thus, according to them, no one is able to give to them or to take from them, not even God himself; for it appears to them that they have advanced beyond all exercises and all virtues. And they have attained, they think, to a perfect passivity in which they are finished with all virtues. And they say that greater labour is needed to be finished with virtue in passivity than to attain to virtue. 19

It is clear from these extracts that the Brethren of the Free Spirit invited their own suppression by the ecclesiastical authorities, cultivating false passivity in mystical prayer as they did. We may say that monasticism can be regarded as a good example of a protest movement within the Church which did not end in schism: rather it was successfully institutionalized within the Church with monasteries becoming centres of liturgical life. The Brethren of the Free Spirit, on the other hand, were a movement that did eventuate in schism and no doubt one of the main reasons for its failure as a protest movement was the emphasis it placed on quietistic passivity, quite obviously a subversive influence on the society of the day.

'The essence of man', says Lefebvre, 'is social, and the essence of society is praxis - acts, courses of action, interaction. Separated from praxis, theory vainly comes to grips with... insoluble problems, bogs down in mysticism and mystification'.²⁰ The essence of Beghard spirituality, it seems, had little to do with 'praxis'. On the contrary, their spirituality appeared not to be interested in 'courses of action' at all, and appears to be all too typical of similar groups in the history of religion who have attempted to develop a mystical religion in society. Summing up the sociological significance of those groups that have attempted to profess their type of spiritual idealism, the German sociologist, Ernst Troeltsch, has this to say:

Spiritual idealism and mysticism ...
has no impulse towards organization
at all ... The question is only how
far this spirit will work of itself ...
Resignation, a sense of superiority,
pessimism, Quietism, and optimistic
expectations all have their place
within this movement. The result is,
naturally, that there is a complete
indifference ... towards all social
problems. 21

We shall bear these remarks in mind as we begin our
assessment of the spirituality of the alumbrados of
Spain, a group of spiritual idealists with whom the
name of Miguel de Molinos is inextricably linked.

NOTES

1. The dualism of activity and passivity has found expression in many metaphysical systems. Following are some examples:

Titus Burckhardt, in his work, Moorish Culture in Spain gives the following concise account of the philosophy of the metaphysician Mohammed Ibn Massarra, a Spanish Islamic philosopher who lived from 883 to 931.

In all creation, the creative act encounters something yielding and receptive, and this quality can be likened metaphorically to a substance, out of which the world is 'made'. In other words, and in order to avoid the false notion that God created the world of something outside Himself - what happens is that pure act and pure passivity, which are indivisible in the Divine Being, encounter one another as separate entities in finite existence. What, in fact, characterizes the finite or the created, is that action and reception, or activity and passivity, are distinct, opposite poles between which all creatures develop. Moreover, the pure act is always on the side of oneness, like a light that emanates from the one source; whereas the receiving pole, like a mirror that reflects the light, or like a medium that breaks it, is the root of all plurality ... The hierarchy of the levels of existence results from the distinction between the active and receptive poles, insofar as the two poles define each other. The union of the purely active pole with the purely receptive pole produces the first level in the hierarchy, namely a relatively active reality, followed by a second level, a relatively receptive reality. These levels could be described as 'materialized form' and 'formed matter'. This union of the opposite poles repeats itself and graduates downwards as far as the physical matter, which is scarcely receptive at all ... Yet the two initial poles, pure act and primordial matter, always remain the same, primordial matter being, in mythological terms, the eternal virgin mother of the universe.

BURCKHARDT, Titus, Moorish Culture in Spain, London, 1972, pp. 134-135.

Eastern religions, too, have evolved a metaphysics in which the activity/passivity dualism is central. Hindu Tantra, for instance, expresses the dualism through Shiva (God) and his Consort (Shakti). We may translate this dualism back into western scholastic terms as Essence and Substance, or Act and Potency. It is in scholastic terms that Miguel de Molinos would have understood these notions; he would have understood, too, the following pleasing description of the ideal state of the Perfect Man, in Izutsu's chapter on The Magical Power of the Perfect Man:

The most ideal state of the Perfect Man is a spiritual tranquillity and quietude of an unfathomable depth. He is a quiet man content with a passivity in which he confides himself and everything else to God's disposal. The Perfect Man is a man who, having in himself a tremendous spiritual power and being adorned with the highest knowledge of Being, gives the impression of a deep calm ocean. He is such because he is the most perfect image, in a concrete individual form, of the cosmic Perfect Man who comprehends and actualizes all the Names and Attributes of the Absolute.

IZUTSU, Toshihiko, A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism - Ibn' Arabi and Lao-Tzu, Chuang-Tzu, 2 Vols., Tokyo, 1966-67, Vol. I, p. 272.

2. The American philosopher quoted below expresses the relationship between mysticism and philosophy very succinctly:

A philosophy does not supply the thinker ipso facto either with the incentive to worship or with the power to worship. Thought may perhaps persuade us of God's immediate presence in experience, and yet it leaves us empty of the idea of 'approach'; it may even exclude such idea (for how can one who is universal be either approached or fled from?). Philosophy finds its Real in the third person, not in the second: it ends in the announcement, 'Lo, he is there', not in the address, 'Lo, Thou art here'. Before that presence, we, as philosophers, stand dumb and awkward - we have nothing to say. The mystic is he who, finishing his philosophy, or more frequently, anticipating its conclusion, breaks through the film of objectivity involved in the theoretical relation and adopts toward his God the vocative case. In that new relation lies all that is distinctive of mysticism.

HOCKING, William Ernest, 'The Meaning of Mysticism as seen through Its Psychology', in Understanding Mysticism, ed. Woods, pp. 223-239 (p. 225).

3. BENNETT, C.A., A Philosophical Study of Mysticism, Yale, 1923, p. 151.
4. HEILER, Friedrich, Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion, New York, 1932, p. 267.
5. It is intriguing to note that Father Paolo Segneri, the Italian Jesuit preacher enlisted by Molinos' adversaries to combat his 'heresy', puts the following interpretation on 'our daily bread':

Give us this day our supersubstantial bread. It has seemed to me that by this bread may fitly be understood that heavenly consolation which is received from God in prayer. It is called bread because it is universal food loved by every soul, without which the spirit becomes weak, and, as it were, lean, and with which it gains incredible vigour to walk as Elija did, through deserts, to the summit of Horeb, that is perfection. It is called ours because it is prepared for us, and is for our comfort more than for the divine glory; since it is to be partaken of secretly, unknown to others, and is to be received in our private chamber. It is called supersubstantial because as ordinary food bread is the food of the inferior substance, that is the body, so this is the food of the superior substance, the soul: also because it not only affords comfort, but gives great strength to overcome difficulties and conquer temptations...

SEGNERI, Paolo, 'Thoughts during Prayer', in Systems of Meditation in Religion by W.L. Hare, London, 1937, p. 114.
6. The Beatitudes.
 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 Matthew, 5.3-10.
7. LLOYD-JONES, D. Martyn, Studies in the Sermon on the Mount, 2 Vols., London, 1974, Vol. I, p. 35.

8. Compare Kolakowski's view:

Si nous dégageons la controverse qui a surgi autour du quiétisme de toutes les restrictions sur des points de détail, des faux-fugants, des distinguos vides, des allusions touchant aux moeurs et des motivations politiques, elle nous apparaît immédiatement, dans sa forme brute et non édulcorée, comme l'opposition de deux attitudes religieuses radicalement impossibles à synthétiser, et entre lesquelles toute conciliation est pure hypocrisie. Une spiritualité qui consiste entièrement en un acte de contemplation unique, indivisible et indifférencié - que l'on accepte ou que l'on rejette la transformation - ne peut pas, si l'on veut conserver la cohérence la plus élémentaire, renoncer au caractère exclusif et, ce qui est fondamental, universellement accessible de sa méthode; or, ces deux points principaux sont très évidemment irrecevables pour l'Eglise, étant donné l'idée qu'elle se fait de la religion.

KOLAKOWSKI, L., Chrétiens sans Eglise: La Conscience Religieuse et le lien confessionnel au XVII Siècle, Paris, 1969, p. 497.

9. New Catholic Encyclopaedia, article on 'Contemplation' by J. Aumann, p. 262.
10. Ibid., article on 'Mysticism' by T. Corbishley, p. 176.
11. James H. Leuba lists the following norms under his heading 'The distinguishing traits of supernatural mysticism', otherwise known as 'Rules for the Discernment of Spirits'.
 1. Divine communications, whether verbal or otherwise, possess greater distinctness and clearness than either human or diabolical communications.
 2. They are expressed in us, but not by us: we listen, we are passive. They are often heard when we are not thinking of the subject to which they refer, and even when we are occupied with other thoughts.
 3. Their meaning possesses a transcendental, character, beyond human intelligence; and is therefore usually incommunicable.
 4. The meaning they convey seems, in a mysterious way, independent of the words used; the same words may convey several meanings.

5. They come with power and authority, and produce a deeper and more lasting impression than natural words.
 6. They produce peace in the soul. Worry, doubt, discouragement, etc., vanish and are replaced by joy and happiness or by a pain free from any distressing implication.
 7. They stimulate progress in the Christian virtues; in particular, they incline to obedience, humility, and the praise of God; and they increase faith in the teachings of the Church.
 8. They have no bad physiological effects.
- LEUBA, James H., The Psychology of Religious Mysticism, London, 1972, p. 180.
12. REED, Graham, The Psychology of Anomalous Experience, London, 1972, p. 121.
 13. BUTLER, Dom Cuthbert, Western Mysticism, London, 1922, p. 292.
 14. COHN, Norman, The Pursuit of the Millennium, London, 1957, p. 149.
 15. Ibid., p. 185.
 16. VAN RUYSROECK, Jan, The Spiritual Espousals, London, 1952, pp. 166-167.
 17. Ibid., pp. 170-171.
 18. p. 173.
 19. p. 171.
 20. LEFEBVRE, 'The Sociology of Marx', in Max Weber, ed. by J.E.T. Eldridge, London, 1972, p. 26.
 21. TROELTSCH, Ernst, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, 2 Vols., London, 1956, Vol. II, p. 801.

CHAPTER 3

Sixteenth-century Spain and Passivity in Mystical Prayer:
alumbrados and dejados

INTRODUCTION

Some sociological considerations

We return at this point in our thesis to Tolstoy's theory of history, for it is now that we attempt to record the outcome of the interplay of freewill and necessity as it applies to the history of Spanish Quietism. Tolstoy states his theory in the following way:

So far as history is concerned, the question relates not to the essential nature of man's freewill but to our presentation of how this freewill actually manifested in the past and under certain conditions ... And so for history the insoluble mystery presented by the union of freewill and necessity does not exist as it does for theology, ethics and philosophy. History deals with a presentation of the life of man in which the union of these two antinomies has already taken place. 1

Chapter 1 of this thesis attempts to indicate the essential nature of freewill as it would appear to the Christian. It is strongly argued that the dynamic passivity of mystical experience, as expressed by Molinos in his Guía, is the Christian's highest expression of freewill.

If we are to allow for our thesis that history consists in the presentation of the union of freewill and necessity - of activity and passivity in our terms -

we must also place a proper interpretation on Tolstoy's term 'necessity' for our purposes.

Tolstoy's theory of history prompts the following sociological question: to what extent did necessity in the form of religious controls in Golden-Age Spain deny the maturation function of religion as defined in the first chapter? In concrete terms, to what extent did the Inquisitorial controls of a religiously legitimated society negate the growth of authentic spirituality in those groups that most systematically applied themselves to developing the mystical consciousness in prayer - the alumbrados, and others?

Sociology tells us that worlds are socially constructed and socially maintained; each world requires a 'base' for its continuing existence as a world that is real to actual human beings. This 'base' may be called its 'plausibility structure',² which in Spain was religiously legitimated. Although the Spaniard was located in society at the intersection of various social forces, and moved within carefully defined systems of power and prestige, it was essentially the Catholic faith that served to maintain the reality of the socially constructed world in which he had his being. All the important social processes within this plausibility structure served to confirm and reconfirm the reality of this world. This was particularly so when Spain felt herself threatened by the alien faith of Islam, and which involved her in the protection of the territorial limits of her plausibility structure, and the upkeep

of effective controls over dangerous, or potentially dangerous, deviants within her own territory.

In early sixteenth-century Spain religion had the specific function of legitimating political authority which stemmed from the monarchy. As C.H. Lea puts it: 'The theory was still the medieval one - that the ecclesiastical power is the sun and the royal power the moon, which derives its light from the sun'.³ The chief means of religious and social control, as we know, was the Inquisition, whose own authority was ultimately based on the crudest control of all: physical violence.

In this chapter we shall demonstrate that the Inquisition prevailed in its insistence on the observance of the outward and conservative aspects of spirituality as a means of ensuring social cohesion.⁴

One of the ways in which it did this was to insist that interior prayer - notably meditation - should continue to buttress medieval notions of the servile fear of hell among the populace, thereby strengthening its own authority and control. On the other hand it discouraged contemplation - with its natural tendency to mollify authoritarian conceptions of the Deity, thus weakening for the Inquisition the possibility of exploiting such conceptions to legitimate its own status and power.

Although it is possible to demonstrate that 'necessity' in the form of Inquisitorial controls of this nature succeeded in vitiating attempts to develop

mysticism socially in early sixteenth-century Spain, we shall also indicate in this chapter that there was another sense in which necessity militated against an authentic spirituality. 'Necessity' in this sense relates to determinants of a profoundly psychological nature, determinants which although normally passive in the unconscious were evoked by imprudent contemplative practices, giving rise to behaviour ranging from the merely bizarre to the frankly pathological.

In short, unstructured forms of mental prayer would appear at times to have encouraged the same kinds of negative passivity associated with the Beghards against whom Ruysbroeck inveighed in his day. And so the same element of passivity which formed the matrix for the sublime introvertive mysticism of St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, and Molinos himself, also provided the basis for the most absurd examples of religious hysteria and moral paralysis. The unbridled release of passive elements in the unconscious will therefore be shown to have denied the maturation function of religion just as effectively as the Inquisitorial controls we have mentioned; indeed, it was the pathological manifestations of passive forms of prayer that first drew the attention of the Inquisition.

The Inquisition, then, apart from legitimating and prolonging the essentially medieval piety of early sixteenth-century Spain took upon itself the function of integrating into the religious ethos those groups that

put the reality of social and religious norms into question. For the alumbrados, with their attempts to alter consciousness through passive prayer, were for this reason believed to be subversive, putting forward as they did often macabre counterdefinitions of the world. It is clear that the Inquisition felt that the frequently eccentric religiosity of these groups created a sub-world shielded from the ideological controls of the wider society. In this they were correct, not least because the pathological effects of passive prayer were socially destructive in themselves.

Although the dangers of negatively passive and pathological forms of mysticism were a serious source of concern for the Inquisition of the day, we do not lose sight of the fact that these dangers were only one problem - albeit an important one - as the following remarks of J.H. Elliott attest:

The very violence of Spain's response to religious upheaval of the sixteenth century demands a sympathetic understanding it does not always receive, for Spain was confronted with a problem more complex than that facing any other state in Christendom. It alone was a multi-racial society, in which the inter-penetration of Christian, Jewish and Moorish beliefs created a constant problem of national and religious identity. To this problem there was no obvious solution. The closing of the frontiers and the insistence on the most rigorous orthodoxy represented a desperate attempt to deal with a problem of unparalleled

complexity; and it is hardly surprising if religious uniformity appeared the sole guarantee of national survival for a society characterized by the most extreme racial, political and geographical diversity. The price paid for the adoption of this policy proved in the end to be very high, but it is understandable enough that to contemporaries the cost of not adopting it should have seemed even higher. 5

To what point, then, may we profitably trace the origins of the Quietist polemic in Spain, prior to the late seventeenth century?

We take as our starting point those aspects of recogimiento left unexplored in Chapter 1 and which appear to be the pivot on which discussion hinges: that is, the practical difference between meditation and contemplation, and the balance to be struck between them. Differences of opinion in Spain as to the relative merits of these two aspects of prayer would appear to date from very early in the sixteenth century, and perhaps before.

It will be remembered that the Christian tradition in general has distinguished between meditation - equated with active modes of prayer and the ascetic life in general - and contemplation, equated with passive modes of prayer. Chapter 1 of this thesis attempts to demonstrate the immense complexity attendant on any discussion of passivity in the spiritual life, especially with regard to its moral implications.

It is now necessary to demonstrate how Spain first began to interpret the traditional teaching on meditation and contemplation. For reasons which we have adumbrated, Spain found itself beset by extraordinary difficulties in

its interpretation of what are generally understood to be complementary aspects of prayer. As we have implied, there were potent social, political and psychological factors to militate against an effective solution.

SECTION 1

The Origins of recogimiento in Spain

We proceed now with a brief account of how interior prayer first came to be practised in Spain.⁶

Meditation and contemplation evolved out of the wider context of Exercitia Spiritualia. This was a term widely used by the early sixteenth-century to include the following range of devotional practices: preparation and thanksgiving for reception of the sacraments, the Stations of the Cross and the Rosary, spiritual reading, examination of one's conscience, meditation and contemplation. The feature common to these practices was that they were all sequential: that is, they were systematic.

From the days of the early Church exercitium was used particularly of meditation. The Latin meditari was roughly equivalent to the verbs cogitare and considerare, meaning 'to think or reflect'. Meditari, however, differed from cogitare and considerare in two important respects: it involved reflection with a view to act, and the idea of memorisation. It was also used in early Latin Bible translations to render the Hebrew hàgà, a term used to indicate the practice of reciting the Torah with a view to memorisation.

The early Christian monks adopted both classical and Jewish traditions in the exercise of meditation, which consisted in slow reading and repetition of a text. It was not until the twelfth century that meditation was securely established as the means to the preparation of methodical mental prayer, encompassing the following stages: lectio, meditatio, oratio and contemplatio.

Meditation developed between 1200 and 1500 under two impulses: the first from the religious orders, notably the Carthusians and Franciscans; and secondly from the members of the Devotio Moderna.

Significant treatises from the Orders were the Vita Christi of Ludolph the Carthusian (d. 1378) and the Art de Contemplació by the Catalan Franciscan, Ramon Lull (d. 1315).

There were many works on methodical prayer by members of the devotio moderna, the community for laymen and priests also known as the Brethren of the Common Life, founded in the Low Countries by Gerard Groote (1330-84).

The 'Tractatus devotus ... de spiritualibus exercitiis' by Groote's successor, Florens Radewijns (1350-1400) was the first major work on prayer by the movement. Although it describes union with God in terms of the purgative, illuminative and unitive ways popularised a century earlier by Hugh of Balma and St. Bonaventure, it is the via purgativa and meditation that receive by far the most attention.

Schematic prayer was further elaborated by Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen (1368-98) in his two famous treatises: the 'De reformatione virium animae', or 'Homo Quidam', and the 'De spiritualibus ascensionibus', or 'Beatus vir'. The last work of excellence by devotio moderna circles was the 'Rosetum exercitiorum spiritualium' of John Mombaer (d. 1501).

By the late fifteenth-century there was a flourishing literature of spiritual exercises, not only in the Low Countries, but also in Italy and France. It was from these latter two countries that it spread to Spain.

The first Spaniard to write a manual of spiritual exercises in Castilian was García Jiménez de Cisneros (1455/6-1510). It was printed in both Latin and Spanish in 1500 and was entitled Exercitatorio de la vida spiritual. It was, in fact, influenced in part by the above-mentioned works of Zutphen and Mombaer.

In the early sixteenth-century Spanish religion was essentially late medieval: that is to say, it was informed by the fears and expectations which characterized the religion of that period. These fears related to eternal damnation as divine retribution for a sinful life; and the expectations related to the joys of Heaven as reward for a virtuous existence on earth.

The Exercitatorio are significant in that the rôle of fear in the Christian life is discussed for the first time in Spanish. Chapter 10 of the work, for instance, discusses the various types of fear a Christian may

experience, depending upon his relationship with God. Fear is generally praised as the beginning of faith, charity and wisdom. But Cisneros is more subtle: he discusses three basic kinds of fear. In the first place there is temor humano, which may be considered fear in its negative aspect - negative in the sense that physical fear is the only impulse to avoid sin. Temor servil, however, encourages virtue and resistance to temptation; but at the same time it lacks the element of charity. For this reason it cannot be considered sufficient stimulus to save one's soul. However, the acquiring of temor servil does indicate the means by which the seeds of charity are first implanted in the soul.

Temor servil should eventually lead to temor filial; the distinguishing feature of 'temor filial' is that one now resists temptation for the love of God, and fear of separation from Him.

Thus the guiding principle of the Exercitatorio is that of progress from servile fear to filial fear. The latter is encouraged in the illuminative way, in the hope that it will be the monk's prime concern by the time he is preparing for the unitive life. Cisneros equates the unitive way with verdadera sabiduría, which is contemplation; it is made clear in the Exercitatorio that 'wisdom' involves less activity on the monk's part as it is God's gratuitous gift.

Whatever other interpretation we may wish to put on the Exercitatorio of Cisneros, clearly they mark a progression from a pessimistic construction of reality based on servile fear to a more optimistic one based on filial fear. In our own terms this represents a movement from a negative passivity to an increasingly dynamic passivity in which the monk in the illuminative and unitive life may experience the gift of grace as a stimulus to charity.

The period from 1500, when the Exercitatorio were first printed, to 1534, which marks the founding of the Jesuit movement by Ignatius of Loyola, saw a growth in popular enthusiasm for interior prayer. There is no doubt that this period was marked by intense religious fervour at all levels of Spanish society. 'The Catholic faith', says Marcelin Defourneaux, speaking of this period, 'permeated the Spanish soul so profoundly that there was no single aspect of individual or collective life which was not bound up in it. This omnipresence of religious feeling explained the rôle of the clergy ... the importance which clothed all the manifestations that exalted God's glory, and ... the part played by the Inquisition'.⁷

The Exercitatorio of Cisneros may be said to indicate a transition, then, from an essentially medieval conception of man's relationship to God, based on servile fear, to a more optimistic relationship, based on filial fear. In this way Cisneros prefigured those aversions to the profound medieval concern for personal salvation

which were to characterize movements of religious renewal in early sixteenth-century Spain.

Although the Exercitatorio were indeed innovatory in that they emphasised the need to progress from servile to filial fear in the spiritual life, their overall tenor is ascetical, and certainly prolonged the most important aspect of medieval interior prayer: meditation on the Passion of Christ. The meditations in which Christ is portrayed as the passive victim of man's sin, for instance, occupy more than half of the section given over to the events of the Gospel.

It must be stressed that Devotion to the Passion had long been part of the general tradition of meditation in the Church, and arose out of an intense interest in the fifteenth-century in the events of Christ's life and Passion. This general tradition of meditation included the recitation of the Rosary together with meditation on the principal events of the Gospel, and the practice of the Stations of the Cross commemorating Christ's Passion in fourteen stages.

Thus Devotion to the Passion was an integral part of meditative practice, and indeed continued as such throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the early part of the sixteenth-century, however, attitudes to meditation on the Passion changed, particularly amongst the alumbrados, who appear to have considered unwholesome the fear of damnation which undue Devotion to the Passion aroused. We may note in this respect

Gerald Brenan's assertion that the alumbrados were of an 'optimistic spirit':

No tears were to be shed over the Passion, for the Resurrection followed it. Beatitude was a sign of faith. One had only to practise 'recogimiento' to feel grace rising like a sap within one. These Alumbrados were therefore happy and enthusiastic people, confident of their salvation, and it was this that led Melchor Cano to condemn them. 8

Ignatius of Loyola, a key figure in the movement of spiritual renewal in early sixteenth-century Spain, was himself influenced by both illuminist and Erasmian objections to excessive meditation on the humanity of Christ. In his Exercises Loyola calls the retreatants' attention to Christ's divinity during the four weeks, as well as his humanity. Like Cisneros before him, Loyola was concerned to diminish servile fear, which is appealed to only when God's love is well established in the spiritual life of the retreatant. Thus although Loyola did prolong the tradition of meditation on the Passion - for he made it a focal point of his Exercises - his main intention was to encourage filial fear with an eventual view to contemplation.

It is a vexed question whether Loyola's Exercises were truly designed to train those living active lives in the world to pray contemplatively. The view that they were contemplative in intent was upheld by some Spanish Jesuits later in the sixteenth-century, notably by Baltasar Álvarez and Antonio Cordeses. But their views did not prevail, and under the generalships of Everard

Mercurian and Claud Aquaviva the Exercises were given a conservative, or ascetical, interpretation. The debate continues to this day. Marcel Bataillon, for example, nowhere revises his opinion that Loyola's Exercises were conservative in conception.⁹

Miguel de Molinos, however, was quite clear on the matter: the Exercises were meditative, not contemplative. It is important to state this now, as it was the Jesuit Order which ultimately condemned Molinos, accusing him of despising meditation.

Molinos states his position unequivocally in his Defensa de la contemplación:

Los Ejercicios Espirituales del Santo Patriarca Ignacio son santísimos utilísimos y dignos de infinita alabanza por las maravillosas e innumerables conversiones que han hecho y cada día hacen en todo estado de personas, por cuya causa merecieron la aprobación de la Sede Apostólica. Y yo, no sólo no hablo con poca estima y veneración de tan provechosos Ejercicios, como algunos me han impuesto, sino que los alabo continuamente y los aconsejo a infinitas personas y los aconsejaré mientras Dios me diere vida. Porque conozco muy bien que son medio eficaz para convertir el alma a Dios, para desengañarla y hacerla aborrecer las falsas esperanzas y falaces apariencias del mundo, pero no para hacerlas subir como medio inmediato a la unión y perfección. El decir que por estar aprobados por la Sede Apostólica son el único medio para subir a la cima de la perfección parece que es sin fundamento, porque la Iglesia no pretendió otra cosa en su aprobación sino asegurar la doctrina, que no se oponía a la santa fe ni a las buenas costumbres, contra aquellos que la impugnaban, por las estupendas conversiones que por este medio hacían cada día el Santo, sus hijos y compañeros. Por esta causa solicitaron la aprobación apostólica, como se ve en

todas las crónicas de la Compañía, y esto solo decidió y resolvió la Iglesia, sin decir en su aprobación que la meditación es medio inmediato para llegar a la perfección, al absoluto desapego, a la purgación de las pasiones, a la contemplación perfecta ni al perfecto ejercicio de las virtudes. Porque para pasar a estos perfectísimos grados es necesario (como enseña San Agustín en muchas partes) pasar por la oración y contemplación, que vienen después de la meditación. (pp. 276-277)

The interaction between Erasmians, the spirituality of Loyola, and the alumbrados is a complex one, and is adequately discussed in an unpublished thesis by T. O'Reilly. It is sufficient to note that Loyola was not an irrevocable opponent of Illuminists and Erasmians, and that the same distaste for excessive servile fear, which informs the Enquiridion of Erasmus and the Diálogo de doctrina cristiana of Juan de Valdés, informs the Exercises of Loyola. The central theme of both the Exercises and the Enquiridion is the attainment of Christian freedom as understood by St. Paul: that Christ came to change men from slaves of sin into adopted sons of God.

We may say that underlying all objections to meditation on the Passion held by Illuminists and Erasmians was the belief that people who practised it paid more attention to the externals of religion rather than to inner spiritual meaning. And that excessive attachment to externals was associated with servile fear of hell, which was at root based on self-interest. For this reason both Illuminists and Erasmians disapproved

of imaginative, discursive prayer, tending to favour a more inspirational type of interior prayer, and abandonment to the action of grace. The common ground between Loyola and these other movements of reform, however, was the shared conviction of the power of grace, and a confidence in direct divine guidance.

In brief, the overwhelming tendency in the spirituality of the period under discussion was optimistic in nature; and the inordinate attention given to the humanity of Christ in meditation was felt by many to be fatiguing and sad. More importantly, such meditations were not felt to inspire compunction, nor result in resolutions to avoid sin and practise virtue.

We have, of course, noted the optimistic tenor of Molinos' Guía elsewhere in this thesis. This is nowhere more in evidence than in the chapter commencing with the following words:

Debes, pues, siempre que cayeres en algún defecto, sin perder tiempo ni hacer discursos sobre la caída, arrojar el vano temor y cobardía, sin inquietarte ni alterarte, sino conociendo tu defecto con humildad, mirando tu miseria, vuélvete con amorosa confianza al Señor, poniéndote en su presencia y pidiéndole perdón con el corazón y sin ruido de palabras, quédate con sosiego en haciendo esto, sin discurrir si te ha o no perdonado, volviendo a tus ejercicios y recogimiento como si no hubieras caído. (p. 182)

It was this same chapter, incidentally, that prompted William James to make the following remark:

One of the heresies for which the Jesuits got that spiritual genius, Molinos, the founder of Quietism, so abominably condemned was his healthy-minded opinion of repentance. 10

Molinos sets out his position regarding Devotion to the Passion in Chapter XVI of his Guía, entitled 'Modo con que se puede entrar en el recogimiento interior por la santísima humanidad de Cristo Nuestro Señor'.

When he wrote the Guía Molinos was well aware of the traditional split in opinion regarding the relative values of meditation and contemplation, for he commences his chapter with the following words:

Hay dos maneras de espirituales totalmente opuestos. Unos dicen que siempre se han de meditar y considerar los misterios de la pasión de Cristo. Otros, dando en un extremo opuesto, enseñan que la meditación de los misterios de la vida, pasión y muerte del Salvador no es oración, ni aun su memoria, que sólo se ha de llamar oración la alta elevación en Dios, cuya divinidad contempla el alma en quietud y silencio. (p. 128)

For Molinos, however, meditation on the Passion of Christ is to be persisted in only for as long as spiritual nourishment is derived from it.

Es santo y bueno el meditar, y pluguiese a Dios que todos los del mundo lo ejercitasen. Y deben también al alma que con facilidad medita, discurre y considera dejarla en ese estado y no sacarla a otro más alto, mientras en el de la meditación halla cebo y provecho. (p. 129)

But Molinos advises those proficient in meditation to avoid undue dwelling upon the Passion, as this hinders further advance in prayer. There comes a point, in effect, where progress in interior prayer depends on the transition from a discursive consideration of the Passion to the stage where the humanity of Christ is held in the memory as a simple act of faith:

El modo más noble, el más espiritual y el más propio de estas almas aprovechadas en el recogimiento interior para entrar por la humanidad de Cristo Señor nuestro y conservar su memoria y su pasión por un acto sencillo de fe ... Este es el modo que hace aprovechar a las almas interiores, sin que esta santa, piadosa, veloz e instantánea memoria de la humanidad les pueda servir de embarazo para el curso del interior recogimiento. (p. 130)

In this way the proficient arrives at the stage of acquired contemplation, a quiet waiting upon God:

Póngase, pues, el alma, cuando entra al recogimiento, a las puertas de la divina misericordia, que es la amorosa y suave memoria de la cruz y pasión de aquel Verbo humanado y muerto de amor. Estése allí con humildad resignada en la divina voluntad para cuanto quisiere hacer de ella su Majestad. Y si de esta santa y dulce memoria es luego llevada al olvido, no hay necesidad de hacer nueva repetición, sino de estarse en silencio y quietud en la presencia del Señor. (p. 131)

We reserve for chapter 5 more detailed discussion of 'acquired contemplation', a term which gained currency in Spain and elsewhere in the seventeenth century.

SECTION 2

Alumbrados and Dejadados

Our concern in this section is to indicate the ways in which the alumbrados - recogidos and dejadados - reacted to what they considered to be obsessive concern for personal salvation resulting from excessive meditation

on Christ's Passion. It is particularly important to do this now for as we stated elsewhere, alumbradismo and molinosismo eventually became synonymous.

We note at the outset that the term alumbrado did not bear a pejorative connotation in early sixteenth-century Spain. In fact, the term was freely and frequently attached to anyone in Spain who pursued the life of prayer seriously; or to anyone who showed signs of extraordinary religiosity. As Selke¹¹ and Böhmer¹² tell us, the early alumbrados were held to be devout and saintly people evincing an authentic piety.

We shall now trace out the steps by which both recogidos and dejados came to be stigmatized and condemned in forty-eight propositions of the Edict of Toledo, 1525. It was these propositions that formed the criteria by which later outbreaks of Illuminism at Llerena (1577) and Seville (1624) were largely to be judged. They also bear a striking resemblance to propositions that condemned Molinos' Quietism a century and a half later.

The orthodox mystic from whose writings the main tenets of recogimiento are derived is the Franciscan, Francisco Osuna. Osuna's principal work is the Tercer abecedario (1527), and its teaching is significant in the emphasis it places on the power of grace in the soul. With the term recogimiento he designates the process by which the soul prepares itself to receive contemplation, and the incipient union with God that contemplation implies.

It is important to note that Osuna believed that contemplation was the prerogative of all men, clerics and laity alike. The characteristic gift of contemplation is what Osuna calls consolación, and is held by him to be the chief means by which virtue is strengthened. But confidence in the power of grace has an important corollary for Osuna: a firm conviction of human weakness. Osuna's encouragement of hope and faith in God's mercy, however, is in deliberate contrast to the lugubrious Devotion to the Passion we have discussed.

Lo que he conocido en esta
vía del recogimiento es que
aprovechan poco en ella los hombres
que son naturalmente tristes; y
los que de sí mismos son alegres
y ordenan su alegría a Dios aprovechan
mucho, y en el ejercicio de la sacra
Pasión es al revés. 13

We should not conclude from this statement that Osuna was against meditation on the Passion, for in the prologue to the Tercer abecedario he is insistent on recalling Christ's humanity as the first means to the appreciation of Christ's divinity by man. However, he is equally insistent on turning the attention to Christ's divinity while praying, thereby obviating the obsessive concern with personal guilt and salvation which characterized the years in which Cisneros wrote.

Although the Inquisitorial decree of 1525 was directed principally against the dejados, it was the spectacular manifestations of religious fervour among recogidos that initially alarmed the Inquisition. Our evidence¹⁴ suggests that between 1512 and 1519 groups

of reformed Franciscans originating in the Archdiocese of Toledo, from the monasteries of La Salceda, Pastrana and Escalona, began to attract the attention of the Inquisition. To this group belonged alumbrados such as Fr. Gil Lopez, Fr. Cristobal de Tendilla, Francisco Ortiz, Fr. Juan de Olmillos and Fr. Francisco de Ocaña. The latter two of this group appeared to have indulged in raptures, visions and prophecies, for which they were celebrated in and around Escalona. Olmillos, particularly, was given to tremblings and ecstatic behaviour during Mass, and in due course information regarding his spectacular performances gained the attention of the ecclesiastical authorities. The Chapter of the cathedral of Toledo intervened and Bishop Campo, the auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese, was commissioned to investigate the reports. In addition, the Franciscan Superiors took measures of their own, and the Provincial, Fr. Andrés de Ecija, himself witnessed Olmillos' raptures following communion.

It is perhaps significant that at this early stage in the development of Illuminism that Olmillos was merely required to confine his communion to the cloistered chapel. Eventually he was transferred to Madrid where he continued his extraordinary religiosity, especially during celebration of the Mass, where he was witnessed by great numbers of the curious who came to see him. Wadding, a Franciscan historian of the time, informs us that he became Provincial Superior of the Franciscans in Castile, and that he died in 1529.

In his Tercer abecedario Francisco Osuna gives us graphic descriptions of the consequences of over-zealous indulgence in interior prayer. We are told of various recogidos being paralysed as a result of prolonged abstraction in prayer; of involuntary gesticulations, piercing screaming and groaning. One recogido is described as having to walk with his head permanently bent backwards to such an extent that he concocted excuses to account for his extraordinary behaviour. Loss of sleep, or inability to sleep at all, appear to have been one of the commonest indications of recogimiento in its pathological forms. Sometimes complete insensibility was the result of protracted prayer; one recogido is said to have recovered only when being attired in a shroud. More usually the adept believed that his soul had left his body, as a result of which he was privileged to divine revelations. This particular feature of recogimiento attracted great popular veneration. It is interesting to record Graham Reed's remarks concerning revelations of this nature:

In the case of revelation the subject experiences a vivid and sudden insight which he attributes to divine intervention ... in many cases the percipient believes that his revelation was put into his mind by the Almighty ... It may be taken to be part of a divine plan which is not amenable to mortal understanding. But he may feel he has justified his selection by the strength of his faith ... Again, strictly speaking, if he sincerely believes all this he is suffering from highly systematized delusions of passivity. 15

An interesting feature of the spirituality of the recogidos was the credence given to the visions and utterances of beatas revelanderas. These women were usually engaged in religious practices without necessarily belonging to a religious order - in this respect they were somewhat akin to the Beguines of the medieval period, some of whom flourished in Valencia. The most notorious of the period under discussion, when the Inquisition began their investigations of the alumbrados, was Francisca Hernández.

Our information regarding this beata derives mainly from the trial of Antonio de Medrano, her alleged lover. It emerges from the statements of various witnesses for the Inquisition that the notions she entertained regarding her advanced spirituality were based on ideas of impeccability. Before we set down the allegations which were brought against her and Medrano we must state that extreme caution is required in our interpretation of them. For many of the admissions of guilt imputed to these recogidos were extracted under torture at the hands of the Inquisition. Alcaraz, the dejado with whom we shall deal shortly, and who strongly disapproved of the spectacular religiosity of the recogidos, gave the following testimony against Hernández:

Ella dezia que todas las cosas criadas especialmente dios las auvia criado para los siervos de dios y que gozasen dellas y de los mejores manjares y asy estos que la seguian lo hazian; especialmente queria ella que fuese asy servido de ellos el dicho medrano de buenos manjares y otras cosas de la carne, dandole licencia con la libertad que publicavan del espiritu. 16

Apart from allegations of sexual immorality collected by the prosecutor in this case, Diego Ortiz de Angulo, there were other charges relating to pseudo mystical experiences and revelations:

Esta provado por dos testigos varones ... el uno que dixo que tenia rebelaciones de Dios para conoçer quando alguno comulgava o dezia misa en graçia o en pecado o predicava por buen fin o malo o en pecado, y el otro que conoçia quien se avia llegado no tan bien al sacramento y syn devoçion.

Que oyo dezir este testigo al mismo Medrano, que desde que avia tres anos la dicha Francisca Hernández le avia revelado nro. Señor el misterio de la Trinidad. 17

Antonio de Medrano himself was tortured to yield a series of propositions, the substance of which is as follows:

Que avia dicho que tenia ynpecabilidad que podia estar en una cama con qualquier muger syn detrimento de su virtud, porque ya Dios le avia quitado todo el mal de sus miembros ... Que si abraçaba a las donzellas que les daba castidad, y que esta gracia tenia de Dios ... Que tenia revelaciones de Dios para conoçer quando alguno comulgava o dezia missa, si lo hazia en graçia ó en pecado ... Que en su espiritu vya él por quien avia él de rogar en la misa ... E que pensar en la pasion de Christo, e ayunar e deceplinars, o otras cosas de penitencia heran cosas baxas ... Que no podia callar las cosas de la dicha muger, porque no avia leido de santo ninguno lo que avia visto en ella ... Que la dicha muger savia los pensamientos de las personas ... Que savia las personas que yban al Cielo, e otras que salian del purgatorio ... Que el vencia a Dios porque tenía vencida a dicha muger18

Testimonies of this kind, whether they be true in part, or in totum, reveal a pathological dimension to recogimiento which was clearly sufficient to arouse the hostility of the Inquisition. Medrano's case appears to have been far from unusual in the period under discussion; and the bizarre manifestations of religious hysteria cited above do seem to have been the hallmark of the more extreme adherents of recogimiento. There can be little doubt that the ecclesiastical authorities must have felt that such zealous attention given to the voice of the unconscious imperilled the observance of dogma. The extreme instances of eccentric religiosity we have mentioned do suggest the dangers in allowing such complete autonomy to the unconscious, and bring to mind Carl Jung's descriptions of the autonomous complex:

The autonomy of the unconscious... begins where emotions are generated. Emotions are instinctive, involuntary reactions which upset the rational order of consciousness by their elemental outbursts. Affects are not 'made' or wilfully produced; they simply happen. In a state of affect a trait of character sometimes appears which is strange ... or hidden contents may irrupt involuntarily. The more violent an affect the closer it comes to the pathological. 19

If we are to view recogimiento in its purest form as an attempt to activate the ethical function, the evidence is that this form of prayer used indiscriminately can involve a descent into totally unproductive forms of behaviour, as the Inquisition was quick to point out.

Although it was the spectacular and seemingly pathological exhibitions of religiosity by adepts of

recogimiento that first drew the attention of the Inquisition, the Inquisitors commissioned by Manrique discovered what they considered more dangerous groups of dejados practising their form of mental prayer together with the recogidos. The distinguishing feature of dejamiento, as far as modern research has been able to ascertain its nature, was an even more profound distaste for servile fear than that expressed by the recogidos.

Although both dejados and recogidos appear to have shared the same belief in the goodness and mercy of God rather than His severity towards evil, the dejados were more emphatic in their belief in prayer as the means to man's complete abandonment to God. In short, the dejados placed greater emphasis on the efficacy of mental prayer as the means to eliminate the will to sin.

The desire to eliminate the will to sin, however, was not the interpretation that the Inquisition put on their objectives in the life of prayer. Quite the contrary: the condemned propositions of the Edict of Toledo leave us in no doubt that they considered dejamiento not as the means to eliminate the will to sin, but rather induced a total passivity that conferred the freedom to sin.

Our knowledge of dejamiento is largely derived from the group surrounding Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz; or at least from the propositions condemning the form of prayer that was imputed to them. The first accusation of false mysticism brought against Alcaraz by the Inquisition was in 1519. It was then that his sumaria, or secret trial,

began. This particular investigation proved fruitless. The Inquisition then commenced to gather further evidence against him, and it was not until February 20, 1524 that Diego Ortiz de Angulo, prosecutor of the Inquisitorial Tribunal of Toledo, obtained from Inquisitor Alonso de Mariana the warrant for his arrest.

As was customary in such cases his property was confiscated and his family left destitute. The three amonestaciones were delivered to him and it is recorded that he expressed bewilderment at the charges levelled against him. On October 31, 1524 the official trial began. Alcaraz presented his defence in the form of a letter to the Inquisitors on the same day, a letter which explained his teachings in the light of orthodox doctrine:

devia el onbre syenpre andar
contra sy venciendo nuestras passiones,
porque la naturaleza viciosamente nos
inclina. 20

and elsewhere:

Que aunque Adan no pecara, no
entrara (el hombre) en el cielo
si el hijo de Dios no muriera. 21

Another statement ascribed to Alcaraz indicates that although he was indeed concerned with the notion of sin, he rejected the self-centredness implied by obsessive concern for purity of conscience:

...que no curase el hombre de su
anima solo de amar y servir a Dios, e
aun que el hombre se pusiese en algun
peligro de conçiencia por este fin, que
era mexor que estarmuy abstenido o muy
en su paz. 22

Alcaraz's trial continued, however, until he was finally committed to torture on July 19, 1527. The customary instruments were used: the escalera, and jarros de agua. He made a partial confession and was then imprisoned for two more years; he was further tortured. He finally implored mercy and pleaded guilty to most charges. The severest judges demanded the death penalty, but the more lenient of them prevailed and he was imprisoned for a further ten years. Before he began his sentence, however, he was required to appear before an auto de fe on July 22, 1529, wearing the sanbenito. He abjured de vehementi, and was then publically whipped in the cities where he had preached: Toledo, Guadalajara and Pastrana. He was released after ten years but confined to the city of Toledo, where he was obliged every Friday to recite the seven penitential psalms in the monastery of St. Augustine, to say the Rosary every Saturday, to fast once a week, and to do other penances.

The doctrine of dejamiento, as ascribed to Alcaraz, is clearly expressed in the following condemned propositions:

Que el amor de dios en el hombre es dios, y que se dexasen a este amor de dios que ordena las personas de tal manera que no se puede pecar mortal ni venialmente, y que no ay culpas veniales, y que si alguna cosa libiana pareçiere, seran culpas sin culpas y que llegado a ese estado no ay mas que merecer. 23

and:

Que el subdito devaxo del prelado no tiene que dar cuenta a dios ni a nadie de su anima que ni mas ni

menos el que estava en este dexamiento no tiene de dar cuenta a dios de su anima ni de nada y que no hagan nada sino que lo dexen a dios porque si algo quisiese obrar se hacen yncapaces de las obras deste amor a quien se an sugetado y el que esta en el dicho dexamiento no a menester oracion ni recogimiento ni lugar determinado ni otra cosa ninguna. 24

Serrano y Sanz presents us with the following concise summary of the condemned doctrine of dejamiento:

It consisted in a complete renunciation of the human will to the will of God. This, however, must not be understood in the Catholic sense in which we are bound to model our actions after natural and revealed law, but in the sense that all our actions, even in our indifferent actions, our will would lose all its freedom and spontaneity, receiving its total determination from God. Thus it would become totally passive. Among the logical consequences of this doctrine would be private inspiration, direct communication of the soul with the Creator, and the lack of moral responsibility. The dejado could no longer sin mortally or even venially, since his actions would be deprived of freedom. They would be fully elicited by God. 25

The years following the Edict of Toledo saw further reaction against attempts at the development of contemplative spirituality, particularly among lay people. We shall now consider the attempts by three Dominican members of the Inquisition to proscribe the types of prayer under discussion. These three Dominicans were Domingo Soto, Juan de la Cruz, and Melchor Cano. The objections they held against the movements of religious renewal at this time in Spain are summarized by T. O'Reilly in this way:

Firstly, the reaction against servile fear in the spiritual life, and the encouragement of selfless love of God; secondly, the presentation of religious perfection to laypeople as an ideal they could and ought to attain; thirdly, the encouragement in vernacular works of mental prayer and contemplation among all men; fourthly, a confident and ready acceptance of spiritual joy, or 'consolation', in prayer; and lastly, openness to guidance and inspiration by the Holy Spirit. 26

We shall now present a summary of their reservations as set down in O'Reilly's thesis. It should emerge from our précis that the cultivation of passivity in mystical prayer was held by these Inquisitors to be a subversive influence and was felt to encourage a lack of social cohesion, which many would say has characterized Spain from its earliest days.²⁷

The three members of the Inquisitorial hierarchy, whose views on contemplative prayer we shall now present, may be said to have seen a clear connection between movements that encouraged laypeople to practise contemplation and the tendency to social divisiveness. At a time when Spain was attempting to deal with other social problems of unrivalled complexity, it is perhaps reasonable to suppose that the Inquisition viewed the cultivation of passive forms of prayer as militating against the authority of the Christian religion which at that time was perhaps the major structuring influence on Spanish society. Criticism of mental prayer, then, appears to have been motivated as much by social and political concerns as theological ones.

The appearance in Spain of the alumbrados was coincidental with the rise of Lutheranism in Germany. It is evident from the celebrated trial of Bartolomé Carranza de Miranda, Archbishop of Toledo,²⁸ that the fear of Lutheranism was uppermost in the mind of Melchor Cano, who attacked Carranza's work Comentarios sobre el catechismo, published in 1558. Cano, the foremost theologian of his time, condemned the book as supporting the heresies of the Beghards and Beguines, of Alcaraz and the alumbrados, and of Lutheranism. In his own book, written as a riposte to Carranza's, Cano states that Carranza's evident desire to diminish servile fear 'quita el temor e pone seguridad sicut luterani e alumbrados'.²⁹ The riots of the Anabaptists in Germany in 1534-5 no doubt heightened the fears of civil disorder in the mind of Cano and his fellow Inquisitors.

In his critique of Carranza's writings Cano equates the eradication of servile fear with Protestant notions of justification by faith. Cano insisted that forgiveness of sins is dependent on good works and the contribution to society the duty of all men. One of the principal objections that Cano raised to Carranza's work was his notion of the perpetual Sabbath; that is to say, the distinction between holy days and working days was without significance to the perfected Christian. Cano found the following passage particularly offensive:

Assi nosotros despues que
 uvieramos trabajado en las obras
 exteriores y en la mortificación
 de nuestra carne, dando obediencia à
 Dios, dexaremos de obrar nuestras
 obras y haremos holgança y sabado
 en Dios, dexando que su espiritu
 obre en nosotros y estando quietos
 y atentos à lo que Dios dixere en
 nosotros, y obedientes para recibir
 lo que su espiritu quisiere obrar, y
 obrando nosotros con el, no siguiendo
 nosotros afectos humanos sino sus
 sanctas inspiraciones. 30

Despite the fact that Carranza describes the
 perpetual Sabbath as a constant mortification of the flesh
 and human passions Cano inferred that the above statement
 implied impeccability. Another somewhat reckless statement
 by Carranza was seized upon by Cano:

Si la razon se estuviesse en
 su grado y no se abatiesse à las
 baxesas de la carne quedaria el
 hombre en su honra y sin pecado
 aunque ardiesse la sensualidad
 en sus passiones en vivas llamas. 31

There can be no doubt that Melchor Cano was profoundly
 distrustful of any attempts by laypeople to view the
 Deity in anything other than the most authoritarian
 terms:

haze gran perjuicio a la gente
 popular, que la más o toda ha
 menester enfrenada del temor ...
 a la mayor parte de los hombres
 por buenos que sean convenga
 enfrenar e enclavarles las carnes
 con el temor de la pena. 32

This same authoritarian conception of the Deity is to
 be found in expressions of reservations regarding amor
puro, the love of God for His own sake, which is a
 corollary of the eradication of servile fear. The three
 Dominicans we are considering felt that such ideals could

result in the neglect of good works. Domingo Soto, for instance, in his Tratado del amor de Dios is extremely insistent in relating amor puro to the practice of virtue:

éste ha de ser el fin y el hito que ha de tener el amor de Dios en nosotros en esta vida ... amarle por El mismo y por quien El es, y no por nuestro interés, sino servirle y cumplir sus leyes por cumplir su voluntad. 33

De la Cruz believed that the popularisation of the ideal of amor puro was a threat to the traditions of the Church. And although Cano nowhere refers to amor puro he takes Carranza to task for implying that exclusive love of God is an invitation to disregard human laws and commandments, a failing he associates with the alumbrados and Lutherans.

As regards the ideal of perfection in this life Cano was emphatic in asserting that it was unattainable. Christian freedom, emancipation from fear, and perpetual rest, are reserved for the life to come. He shared the belief with de la Cruz that any promise to the contrary is to fall into the error of the dejados and Lutherans. Indeed, the view that perfection was unattainable in this life was held by most contemporaries of the Dominicans as militating against the traditional pre-eminence of the religious state.

Melchor Cano in particular held that the very notion of perfectibility was unthinkable to those who did not profess the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. De la Cruz, too, felt that any criticism of the religious

state was tantamount to a threat to the authority of the Church: the enemies of the Church, he declares at one point in his book, are intent on the overthrow of the orders and disobedience to those in authority 'para anatematizar toda la jurisdicción y estatutos eclesiásticos'.³⁴

Although Erasmians and alumbrados alike agreed on the value of mental prayer as a stimulus to piety, Melchor Cano held that the contemplative and active lives were fundamentally irreconcilable. He believed that the laity could ill afford the time necessary for contemplation and claimed that the alumbrados had neglected their work and families by practising it. In similar vein he objected to the early Jesuits, for after following their Exercises they 'behaved like hens instead of lions', and 'they were a threat to the order and vigour of the kindgom.'³⁵

De la Cruz contended that no one who had not first thoroughly engaged in good works was entitled to practise contemplation, and that the external, corporal man must be fully nurtured initially:

Ningún hombre debe dedicar su
vida y ejercicio a contemplación, sin
que primero labre su alma y sus
afecciones con los trabajos. 36

Melchor Cano also condemned the Libro de Oración of Luis de Granada, partly on the grounds that it advocated contemplation as the right of all men, fearing that laypeople would be led to neglect the duties proper to the active life. De la Cruz, too, was against the advocacy of contemplation to 'los rudos'; most people, he declared, were inconstant in virtue and better suited to meditation,

which was within the capacity of all. In his turn Domingo Soto contended that the only people suited to the contemplative life were nobles and leisured laypeople.

Expectations regarding consolation in prayer also received heavy criticism, as it was thought to militate against charitable works. De la Cruz states his position unequivocally:

Porque huelgan de esperar y
seguir la perfección, aunque nunca
la alcancen, por camino deleitable,
huyen de la vereda estrecha y
trabajosa de la abstinencia y
trabajos corporales ... y de las
limosnas y obras de misericordia.³⁷

Cano, too, inveighs against the expectation of consolation, declaring that it was prejudicial to the active life and that the lazy ('holgazanes') would turn to it out of sloth.

The Dominicans appear to have considered the encouragement of guidance by the Holy Spirit as the biggest threat to the authority of the Church. Cano believed that the alumbrados had misapplied the scriptural text spiritualis judicat omnia, and that the gifts of the Holy Spirit thus freed them from the magisterium of the Church. Juan de la Cruz feared that some vernacular works of prayer gave descriptions of union with God in which the soul was more passive than active: he declared that the 'rudos y presuntuosos' often felt that they had reached a state of spiritual attainment in which God alone acts within the soul:

De donde no aprenden ... sino a
hablar por extraños vocablos de las
cosas divinas, de las cuales los

proprios no entienden, para parecer espirituales, a quien sea lícito juzgar todas las cosas y ellos de nadie sean juzgados. Y de aquí ... no obedecen a sus confesores ni hacen lo que les avisan, confiando más en lo que su espíritu les persuade. 38

The result, says Juan de la Cruz, is anarchy, and a failure to observe the outward liturgical forms of the Church and the commandments.

CONCLUSION

Many students of Illuminism would say that the utopian spirituality of the alumbrados strikes at the historical basis of Christianity in which man's redemption is to be worked out in Christ in the process of time. Compare Antonio Márquez's conclusion on this matter:

Si los alumbrados negaban - y ésta es nuestra hipótesis - que entre Dios y el hombre hubiese medio alguno, difícilmente podían tener una teoría de la Historia, como no podían tener una teoría de la gracia o de las virtudes. Justamente lo que media entre Dios y el hombre es la Historia, el tiempo concreto, el mundo y su redención en Cristo: un fenómeno religioso dogmáticamente histórico desde el principio al fin. 39

Thus if we deny the dynamic between freedom and necessity - activity and passivity - then we destroy the historical basis of Christianity without which it loses its validity, and Tolstoy's theory of history, for instance, becomes impossible.

We have indicated in our previous chapter that the Church has always experienced a tension between spiritual idealism and the need for its proper expression through ecclesiastical channels. As regards the groups we have particularly considered - recogidos and dejados - there appear always to have been suspicions held against them that their impulse towards social organization was weak. There are those commentators on the Christian religion who assert that all groups who profess an enthusiastic type of spirituality are prone to schism. The sociologist, Ernst Troeltsch, for instance, has this to say:

The sense of need for public worship and an historical basis, in which churches and sects find the rallying point of their organization, is not evident; it either disappears out of sight altogether, or it is changed into a strong emphasis upon a personal direct relation with God and Christ, or into spiritual exaltation ... People of this type, however, do not carry this fundamental theory systematically and actively into society. 40

Similar conclusions suggesting the socially cohesive force of religious externals are voiced by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim in his book The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life:

So, everything leads us back to this same idea: before all, rites are means by which the social group reaffirms itself.⁴¹

In his summing up of the Inquisition's reaction to the intensified spirituality of early sixteenth-century Spain, O'Reilly has this to say:

If one were to seek one issue which more than any other sums up the reservations expressed it would certainly be: doubts over the encouragement and development of a contemplative spirituality among people leading active lives outside the cloister. 42

Certainly the evidence we have deduced from O'Reilly's thesis and other sources would bear out this assertion. Although the opinions of the Dominicans that we have summarised above would indicate the threat which contemplation posed to Spanish catholic piety, it is evident also that these Inquisitors felt that contemplative spirituality was also a subversive influence on the society of the day. Clearly, remarks concerning mental prayer such as 'contemplation among the laity is dangerous to souls and also to the Republic', 'the Jesuit exercises pose a threat to the order and vigour of the kingdom', and the result of passive prayer is 'anarchy' indicate concerns which transcend the purely theological.

It would appear, in fact, that the three Dominicans viewed contemplation as the prerogative of an élite, and that that élite was to be found within the structure of the Church itself. 'Rudos y presuntuosos' were enjoined to adhere firmly to practices proper to the active life. Despite the fact that many commentators have drawn attention to the outstanding spirituality of the early alumbrados, who evinced a piety far superior to that of many religious within the Orders, there seems little doubt that contemplation was generally seen as a

divisive influence on Spanish life and society. We bear in mind that the Spanish people have perennially been considered as averse to association, 'for it is obvious', says Salvador de Madariaga, 'that a race instinctively hostile to association, rebellious to discipline and to technique, and used to inverting the scale of social service in favour of such groups as are most clearly related to the individual, must find great obstacles in the setting up of some system of collective order; while at the same time, the very fact these tendencies operate in the race weakens collective institutions and fosters an equalitarian instinct which acts as a powerful check against all hierarchy'.⁴³

It is difficult to escape the conclusion, therefore, that the Inquisition viewed passive forms of prayer as subversive in nature, if not in intent. And that the people in Golden-Age Spain were indeed all too often victims of the negative forms of passivity we have reviewed in this chapter.

We suggest, then, that progress in spiritual renewal, so carefully charted in the spiritual exercises of Cisneros, Loyola and others, was believed by the Inquisition to be vitiated in large measure by indiscriminate and irresponsible practice of passivity in prayer among the laity. It was for these reasons that the devotional literature in the second half of the sixteenth-century was markedly ascetical in character, and was usually required to conclude with

admonitions to practise virtue. The Edict of Toledo of 1525, and the conservative reaction against contemplative prayer that followed it, thus set the standard by which future attempts at mystical prayer by laypeople came to be judged. It was much the same reactionary response which eventually led to Spain's rejection of mystical prayer altogether. We believe it was in this way that Miguel de Molinos and his Guía espiritual became an eponym in Spain for false passivity in mystical prayer.

We conclude at this point by noting Molinos' own emphatic rejection of the false passivity of the alumbrados, as set down in his Defensa de la contemplación:

Aquí se verá que el intento de los alumbrados era no tener acto ninguno interior, ni de amor ni de confianza ni de deseo de orar, sino el estar en calma y total ocio de acto interior y exterior, gozándose en ese ocio y gusto de la naturaleza y torpeza diabólica, y no en Dios ni en el cumplimiento y conformidad con su santísima voluntad. Pero los contemplativos totalmente atiendan a lo contrario, pues ponen toda la mira y cuidado en no buscarse a sí mismos ni cosa de gusto, sino sólo el de Dios y el cumplimiento entero de su divina voluntad, con el ejercicio de todas las virtudes, negación, resignación y perfección. Con esto queda declarada la diferencia que hay de los alumbrados a los contemplativos. (pp. 309-310)

NOTES

1. TOLSTOY, Leo, War and Peace, 2 Vols., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1957, Vol. II, p. 1430.
2. See BERGER, Peter, The Social Reality of Religion, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1973, pp. 53-54.
3. LEA, Henry Charles, A History of the Inquisition of Spain, 4 Vols., London, 1922, Vol. IV, p. 498.
4. The following views of Herbert Spencer are typical of many that view ecclesiastical authority as essentially seeking cohesion and continuity:

We may say that ecclesiasticism stands for the principle of social continuity. Above all other agencies it is that which conduces to cohesion; not only between the coexisting parts of a nation, but also between its present generation and its past generations. In both ways it helps to maintain the individuality of the society. Or ... we may say that ecclesiasticism ... has for its function to preserve in force the organized product of earlier experiences, versus the modifying effects of more recent experiences.

SPENCER, Herbert, 'An Ecclesiastical System as Social Bond' in Sociology and Religion: A Book of Readings, edited by Norman Birnbaum and Gertrud Lenzer, New Jersey, 1969, pp. 126-128 (p. 128).

It is interesting to note in the light of the above that Salvador de Madariaga said that only the force of a superior passion could group Spaniards together; and that the Church in Spain owes its power to the brute fact that it possesses a collective life of its own based on the passion which appeals above all to the Spaniard: his religion. Thus while the nation in general tends always to disunity, the Church holds together to give Spain an external superimposed unity.

MADARIAGA, Salvador de, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Oxford, 1928, p. 136.

5. ELLIOTT, J.H., Imperial Spain, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1972, p. 381.
6. I am indebted to Terence O'Reilly, whose doctoral thesis, The Literature of Spiritual Exercises in Spain, 1500-1559, University of Nottingham (1972-73) provided me with much useful information for this chapter.

7. DEFOURNEAUX, Marcelin, Daily Life in Spain in the Golden Age, London, 1970, p. 106.
8. BRENAN, Gerald, St. John of the Cross: His Life and Poetry, Cambridge, 1973, p. 97.
9. See BATAILLON, Marcel, Erasmus y España: Estudios sobre la historia espiritual del siglo XVI, Mexico, 1950.
10. JAMES, William, The Varieties of Religious Experience, Glasgow, 1977, p. 139.
11. See SELKE DESÁNCHEZ, Angela, Algunos aspectos de la vida religiosa en la España del siglo XVI: los alumbrados de Toledo (A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy), University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1953.
12. See BÖHMER, Edward, Francisca Hernández und Frai Francisco Ortiz, Leipzig, 1865.
13. OSUNA, Francisco de, 'Tercer abecedario', in O'Reilly, p. 182.
14. TAPIA, Ralph, The Alumbrados of Toledo: A Study in Sixteenth Century Spanish Spirituality, Park Falls, Wisconsin (U.S.A.), 1974.
15. REED, Graham, The Psychology of Anomalous Experience, London, 1972, p. 122.
16. TAPIA, op.cit., p. 100.
17. p. 101.
18. p. 97.
19. JUNG, C., 'Conscious, Unconscious, and Individuation', in Jung: Selected Writings, ed. Storr, p. 215.
20. O'REILLY, p. 184.
21. p. 184.
22. p. 185.
23. TAPIA, op.cit., p. 95.
24. p. 96.
25. Quoted in TAPIA, pp. 78-79.
26. O'REILLY, p. 330.

27. Cf. CASTRO, Américo: 'The characteristically European activity of doing and reasoning, in which the agent or thinker is unmindful of his empiric presence in his work, has as its counterpart in Iberia a personalized activity which is not evaluated according to its useful results... The degenerate aspect of all this is seen in three types: the pícaro, the vagabond, and the idler, who had all fallen into a state of inert passivity', The Structure of Spanish History, Princeton, New Jersey, 1954, p. 4.
28. See LEA, Henry Charles, Chapters from the Religious History of Spain, New York, 1967, pp. 270-279.
29. Quoted by O'REILLY, p. 273.
30. CARRANZA, Bartolomé de, 'Comentarios', in LEA, Chapters from the Religious History of Spain, p. 274.
31. Ibid., p. 276.
32. CANO, Melchor, 'Censura', in O'REILLY, p. 278.
33. SOTO, Domingo, 'Tratados del amor de Dios', in O'REILLY, p. 282.
34. DE LA CRUZ, Juan, 'Diálogo sobre la necesidad de la oración Vocal', in O'REILLY, p. 295.
35. O'REILLY, p. 298.
36. DE LA CRUZ, Juan, op.cit., in O'REILLY, p. 303.
37. DE LA CRUZ, Juan, ibid., in O'REILLY, p. 315.
38. DE LA CRUZ, Juan, ibid., in O'REILLY, p. 320.
39. MÁRQUEZ, Antonio, Los alumbrados: orígenes y filosofía, 1525-1559, Madrid, 1972, p. 212.
40. TROELTSCH, Ernst, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, London, 1956, Vol. II, pp. 800-801.
41. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Article on 'Religion, Social Aspects of', p. 605.
42. O'REILLY, p. 330.
43. MADARIAGA, Salvador de, op.cit., p. 50.

CHAPTER 4

The Guía espiritual and Seventeenth-century
Spirituality in Italy and SpainSECTION 1Illuminism in the later sixteenth-century

Following the Edict of Toledo in 1525 the Inquisition continued to look unfavourably on mysticism in Spain, both within the cloister and in society at large. As a measure of the deep distrust mystical ardour aroused we may cite in the first instance the vicissitudes of Spain's two greatest mystics of the century: St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross.¹

In 1575 Teresa founded her convent of discoloured Carmelites in Seville; it was not long before her nuns were denounced as alumbradas and the inquisitors visited the convent to pursue their investigations, but found nothing to warrant prosecution. In the previous year Teresa's autobiography had been denounced to the Inquisition and its printing was delayed until 1588 when it was undertaken by Fray Luis de León at the special request of the Duchess of Alba who possessed a copy in manuscript. During this period Teresa enjoyed immense popular veneration, as did numerous other beatas of lesser calibre. It was not until she and her convent received the support of Philip II that her persecution came to an end.

Teresa's most celebrated disciple, however, St. John of the Cross, did not fare so well. He was repeatedly denounced to the Inquisition and harassed on suspicion of being an alumbrado, both by the unreformed ^{by his fellow Carmelites}

Carmelites and their discalced brethren. In 1577, with the agreement of the Papal Nuncio, Sega, he was arrested at Ávila where he was then spiritual director to Teresa's convent. He was taken to Toledo and confined in the Carmelite convent, where he was beaten and kept in a small, dark and airless cell, before finally managing to escape. St. John of the Cross ended his days in 1591 in a convent in the Sierra Morena.

In 1579 a large number of alumbrados were prosecuted at Llerena in Extremadura, the seat of an inquisitorial tribunal. Fray Alonso de la Fuente, who had been conducting a campaign of persecution against the Jesuits in the area, also suspected of Illuminism, instigated the attacks on the large group of alumbrados he found there. Bishop Soto of Salamanca was eventually required to pursue investigations which resulted in the auto de fe of 1579.²

Our information regarding the resulting prosecution is largely derived from the account of this auto de fe,³ which tells us that nine ecclesiastics, two laymen and two women were punished. It is evident from this account that sexual immorality was the main cause of concern to the Inquisition: promiscuous sexual intercourse was held to be without sin by alumbrados and was moreover a palliative to the effects of excessive contemplation with its accompanying pains, tremblings and visions. The leader of Llerena alumbrados was identified as padre Hernando Álvarez, and he was alleged to have

seduced a number of women under his spiritual direction. Likewise, his assistant, Padre Cristobal Chamizo, was alleged to have seduced thirty-four 'spiritual daughters'.

Hernando Álvarez was sent to the galleys while others were whipped and sentenced to life imprisonment. The harsh treatment meted out to the alumbrados of Llerena was sufficient to deter other attempts at the setting up of alumbrado conventicles. The Edict of Denunciations arising from the trial continued to be published annually, inviting delation, and it was not until half a century later, in Seville, that further prosecutions of alumbrados took place.

SECTION 2

Jerónimo Gracián as defender of true mysticism

As a further instance of the problem that proper discernment between true and false mysticism posed for the Inquisition in Spain we shall now consider the case of Fr. Gerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios, who was spiritual director to Teresa from 1572 to 1582. Gracián is today regarded as a defender of true mysticism, and was in fact quoted with approval by Molinos in his Defensa de la Contemplación. Yet his life was one of unmitigated persecution and hardship.

In 1575, when Teresa was being investigated on suspicion of Illuminism, Gracián was prosecuted as an alumbrado, although on this occasion proof was held to be insufficient. Eventually, however, at the prompting

of the unreformed Carmelites, he was confined in Alcalá and subjected to harsh penances and scourging. He was then expelled from his own Order, the Discalced Carmelites. His subsequent career was one of immense suffering and hardship, and is well told in Peers' Studies of the Spanish Mystics.⁴

After much travelling and many vicissitudes, he settled in Flanders in 1604 to print his works, where he lived quietly until his death in 1614. Gracián is a notable figure in the history of Spanish mysticism as it was he who initiated the attack on quietistic modes of thought early in the seventeenth century. It is to his work Diez Lamentaciones del Miserable Estado de los Ateístas de Nuestros Tiempos,⁵ published in 1611, that we now turn, for it is here that we find the clearest statements regarding true and false mysticism. It is perhaps a measure of the extreme sensitivity of the Inquisition of this period to matters mystical that the Diez Lamentaciones never left the Spanish Index.

Before we present Gracián's formulations on the nature of authentic piety, we shall quote in full - in view of its historical importance - a section from the fifth 'Lamentation', bearing the heading De los Alumbrados y Dexados. This section gives a graphic account of the revulsion felt by Gracián for the macabre and morbid features of mystical passivity. By implication his account will also inform us of the distaste felt by members of the Inquisition whose task it was to extirpate such aberrant forms of mysticism:

Avra algunos años passados, que en España se leuvaron vnos hereges que se llamauan Alumbrados y dexados, porque dezian que les alumbrava Dios desde el Cielo, y dava luz en sus particulares espíritus, de lo que auian de hazer: y que no auian de hazer obras, dexandose del todo en las manos de Dios, y por eso los llamauan, Dexados, y tambien porque se dexauan caer, diziendo, que tenian extasis y raptos. Estos... ponian todo su negocio en la oracion mental: diziendo mal de la vocal, y de hazer buenas obras. Dezian, que veyan en esta vida la divina Essencia. Que estauan en estado de perficion, y semejantes heregias.

Cõtome, aura mas de 30. años, vn buen viejo de noventa, llamado el Tio Antonio Ximenez (que yo confessaua en Pastrana) que conocio a vn su Tio, llamado Iuan Ximenez de Pedro Corona: el qual le contò, que vinieron de Guadalaxara a Pastrana vn Clerigo, y ciertas mugeres, sembrando la secta de los Alumbrados por muchos lugares de la Mancha. Y acaecio, que estando vn dia de fiesta en Missa Mayor estos, y muchos otros discipulos que ya tenian, al tiempo de leuantar el Santissimo Sacramẽto, ponian la boca en el suelo, y aullauan y temblauan. Este Iuan Ximenez (no lo pudiendo sufrir) echò mano de hisopo del agua bendita (que en aquella tierra es vn razonable garrote) y començò a darles en las cabeças, con ñ descalabrò algunos, diziendo, levantad en hora mala los ojos, mirad y adorad al Santissimo Sacramẽto, y no esteys aullando como bestias.

Desta raça huuo muchos, que en Erena (pueblo de Estremadura en España) engañaron personas contemplativas, y de espiritu peligroso, amigos de novedades, y de extraordinarios affectos de oracion: a los quales en Santo Officio de España castigò, aurà quarenta años.

Y aurà veynticinco años, que el Obispo de Jaen Don Francisco Sarmiento, me embiò a llamar a mi, para examinar algunas Beatas, que se parecian a estos, y tenian por perficiõ, padecer acceso carnal con el demonio, siendo sucubas, porque dezian que les hazia

fuerça, sin que ellas consintiessen, y salian de juyzio, y arrepticias, hasta que por fuerça las abrian la boca, y les metian en el Santissimo Sacramento, siendo principal author desta novedad de Alumbrados vn Cura de vna Parochia de Iaen, llamado Gaspar Lucas. Examiné muy de espacio muchas dellas, y escrivi contra este abuso vn libro, que intitulò, Higuera Loca. Di parte dello a la Inquisicion de Cordova, determinarõ ser error, llamar perficion a tan abominable torpeza, como es el sucubito: y ser irreverencia al Santissimo Sacramento de Eucharistia darle desta manera a estas locas. Castigaron al Gaspar Lucas, y a otros semejantes. 6

Gracián concludes his fifth 'lamentation' with an analysis of the notions of Christian perfection, juxtaposing the then current - and to Gracián - aberrant accretions. The section is headed Perficion es Union, Essencial, Immediata, Passiva, Momentanea, Caliginosa, y Oculta, con total Aniquilacion, Suspension, Revelaciones y Gustos espirituales del alma, en el Amor frutivo.⁷

The analysis he makes of Christian perfection is based upon the above composite definition, or collation, derived from many sources, of what he believes is the substance of ambiguous and misleading concepts of Christian perfection. These ambiguous concepts are then discussed, clause by clause. The following is a summary of Allison Peers' presentation of this discussion. Thus to describe Union as essencial, according to Gracián, could imply such a union alone is sufficient, and that the Christian so perfected should ask nothing else of God. To call union immediata could suggest that it is an imperfection to perceive God through the creatures. And if union is simply passiva then the active life and practice of virtue could be considered

useless. And if it is momentanea then vocal prayer, the daily offices, and even mass, are an obstacle to inward contemplation, which is thus construed as the only valid worship. To say that union is caliginosa might imply that the perfect soul has abandoned exterior reality, including the virtues, to enter 'la niebla interior de su conciencia, y condenan por imperfecta doctrina la que aconseja obrar virtudes y cosas exteriores'.

Total Aniquilación, says Gracián is wholly indefensible, and smacks of Lutheranism; suspensión, too, is indefensible, for it could no doubt imply that 'la perfición consiste en la suspension del alma sin ningun acto interior de entendimiento, y voluntad'. Revelaciones can admit the worst of heresies and are clearly related by Gracián to the pseudo-mysticism of the alumbrados. And gustos espirituales are criticised for much the same reason as 'consolation' in prayer was criticised by the three Dominicans whose views we reviewed in our previous chapter. Thus those who deliberately encourage such 'gustos' 'ponen los Regalos y gustos del amor fruitivo por lo sumo de la perfición, y querrian estar siempre en aquellos gozos, aunque faltassen de rogar a Dios por su salvacion'.⁸

Many years later, Miguel de Molinos was to restate the orthodox stance vis-à-vis the pseudo-mysticism of the alumbrados, in much the same terms as Gerónimo Gracián, in his fifth 'Lamentation'. The following excerpts are taken from Chapter XXI of the Defensa de la contemplación:

Con que se verá claramente cuán diferente era aquel ocio de los alumbrados a la oración de quietud y contemplación que enseñan los santos

y místicos. Porque todo el fin de los alumbrados es procurar el deleite del carnal y natural apetito, y para conservar este descanso se estaban vacíos y ociosos, sin hacer ninguna obra exterior ni interior, ni con el cuerpo ni con el alma; así no querían atender con el entendimiento a Dios ni con la memoria acordarse de él ni amarle con la voluntad ni desear cosa de Dios ni adorarle ni tener oración ni decir misa ni frecuentar sacramentos ni hacer acción alguna interior, sino estarse en una suspensión, ocio y quietud vana, sensual y diabólica. (p. 308)

Véanse con cuidado y sin pasión los libros místicos, y se verá que están llenos de luz y santos documentos, instruyendo y animando continuamente al alma a la interior, rígida y perfecta mortificación, a la vida de angélica pureza, a huir del vano y falso ocio, a la perfecta imitación de Jesucristo, al amor de su cruz, a la negación, íntima y total del propio juicio y voluntad, a la más estrecha obediencia, a la muerte espiritual de los sentidos, pasiones, afectos y apegos, a la humildad verdadera y desprecio propio, al desapego de los sensibles gustos y dones gratis datos de visiones, éxtasis y revelaciones, a la perfecta y total desnudez del espíritu, a la espiritual y absoluta aniquilación, a la frecuencia de los Sacramentos, y finalmente al continuo ejercicio de todas las virtudes. Todo lo cual aborrecen y condenan los demonios, los alumbrados y los herejes. (p. 310)

SECTION 3

Illuminism in the early seventeenth-century

It becomes evident that Spain had need of a champion of authentic spirituality such as Gerónimo Gracián if we consider the outbreak of Illuminism in Seville.⁹ This particular outbreak was first investigated in 1622, the year of Teresa's canonization. Such was the extent of Illuminist spirituality in Seville at this time that Bishop Andreas Pacheco was appointed Inquisitor General to take quick measures to eliminate the mystical

extravagances that appear to have been endemic. We hear of a priest named Fernando Méndez who would fall into a trance at mass and let out tremendous roars; he was also spiritual adviser to a group of beatas who after mass in the oratory would shed their clothes and dance indecently 'drunk with the love of God'.

Spectacularly, in one of his visions Méndez announced that he would die on July 20, 1616; he prepared for his glorious death by contemplation and fasting and on the day of his imagined death stationed himself at the altar at four in the morning, very emaciated. He did not die, yet continued to enjoy the reputation of a saint.

Pacheco's tribunal found no difficulty in gathering information regarding similar extravagances. The result of information gained by investigation was an Edict of Grace in 1623 which gave all offenders thirty days in which to come forward. Appended to this Edict was a catalogue of sixty-six errors imputed to the alumbrados, including many errors that appeared in the Edict of Llerena, in 1568: that trembling and fainting were signs of grace and the working of the Holy Spirit; that at a certain level of spiritual attainment they could perceive the Divine Essence and the mysteries of the Trinity; that they were guided directly by the Holy Spirit; that in contemplation discursive thought was unnecessary; that the will remains passive in the state of union; and that contemplation makes the practice of virtue useless.

Other errors included the assertion that contemplative prayer had the dignity of a sacrament; that promiscuous

intercourse was moral; and the uniquely quietist error contained in proposition 43: 'Que en el estado de perfectos y vida unitiva por amor de Dios, si le dijere Dios al alma formalmente ser buena, sustanzialmente sería buena, y que en este caso no tiene el alma que obrar ni querer, ni no querer, ni que hacer'.

The Edict was read out in all the churches of Seville on June 4, and again on June 11. The effect on the populace appears to have been exceedingly dramatic: most of Seville's pious circles considered themselves technically arraigned for heresy and rushed to obtain absolution within the thirty days grace. Surprisingly few examples were made of the population, as only eleven alumbrados were required to appear at the auto de fé of November 30th, 1624. Eight of these alumbrados admitted to imposture and of the other three only one was imprisoned, while the remaining two were required to abjure de levi. One of the latter two alumbrados, a priest named Francisco de Castillo, was apparently subject to violent and ecstatic fits, often while eating; he was condemned as a teacher of Illuminism and for indecent behaviour with his penitents. From that time he was debarred from hearing confession; he was confined for four years in a convent, and then banished from Seville with the severe warning that if he were to indulge in further raptures and visions he would be severely punished.

Two years later on February 28, 1627, a further auto de fe was held in the church of San Pedro. At this auto two celebrated mystics, the priest Maestro Juan de Villalpando, and a Carmelite beata, Madre Catalina de Jesús, were arraigned for heresy. The beata was sentenced to six years confinement in a convent, and Villalpando was condemned as a leader of alumbrados. Two hundred and seventy-five condemned propositions were held against him, including most of those of Pacheco's Edict. He, too, was sentenced to confinement in a convent, where he was obliged to recite aloud parts of the rosary, and he was fined two hundred ducats.

The Seville outbreak of Illuminism was finally crushed in 1630 at an auto de fe in which eight alumbrados were burnt alive - clear evidence of the Inquisition's determination by this time to extirpate for good the heresies of Illuminism in Seville.

SECTION 4

Religious exaltation in Valencia: the case of Francisco Jerónimo Simó

Seville was not the only city in Spain during this period in the grip of religious exaltation. In this section we shall consider events in Valencia prior to the arrival there of Miguel de Molinos in 1639, events which have a bearing on the history of Spanish Quietism in general, and on Molinos' life in particular.

Contemporaneous with the cases of Illuminism in Seville were the remarkable manifestations of religious fervour surrounding the death in 1612 of Francisco

Jerónimo Simó, whose beatification Molinos eventually went to Rome in an attempt to secure.¹⁰ Simó was born in Valencia on 16 December, 1578, and was orphaned when he was seven years of age. He was adopted by a local priest and educated by him; he seems to have felt his calling at an early age, for when he was ten he took a vow of chastity. He subsequently studied at the University of Valencia where he received a glowing report from the auxiliary Bishop of Troya, Isidoro Aparici Gilart:

Supo perfectamente la lengua latina, muy bien la griega y suficientemente la hebrea; fue gran lógico, excelente filósofo y gran teólogo escolástico, despreciando inútiles y tal vez perniciosas sutilezas y siguiendo los dogmas y sólidas sentencias de los santos padres; fundado en ellas, escribió un libro, De Trinitate, muy docto y erudito, que dice haber visto y tenido en su poder Antonio Noguera, que fue catedrático de filosofía en dicha universidad y maestro del siervo de Dios. 11

Simó was appointed priest to the parish of San Andrés Apóstol, dedicated to la Concepción de Nuestra Señora, on 6th June, 1603. At this time the parish supported thirty-seven benefices enjoying a rent of between fifteen and twenty escudos each. Two years after receiving his benefice Simó became its presbiterado.

At first Simó lived at the Portal Nuevo at the other end of the city from his parish, before moving to a humble dwelling close to his parish. He lived in extreme poverty and habitually gave away the money he derived from his benefice; he was often reduced to

begging food from the convent of discalced Franciscans of San Juan de la Ribera. During his time at the parish Simó lived in the company of a beata called Francisca López, and described by Sobrino, Simó's confessor, as devout and as saintly as Simó himself. It is not without interest that Francisca López is quoted with warm approval by Molinos in his Guía. (p. 114)

The extent of Simó's rigorous asceticism is beyond doubt: each night he would perform penances before matins; he fasted on bread and water for the whole of Lent; he would drink vinegar and honey every Friday to put himself in mind of Christ's Passion. His gifts of charity were also remarkable, extending to the sick in hospital and prisoners in gaol. In addition, miraculous transfigurations were imputed to him; witnesses asserted that 'una noche, una doncella de su casa, entrando en el aposento del sacerdote, que estaba sin luz, para llamarle a cenar, le vio tan resplandeciente como el sol a mediodía'.¹²

When Jerónimo Simó died in 1612 he was immediately acclaimed a saint by the populace of Valencia. It is clear from what was to follow that he enjoyed intense popular veneration; people from all walks of life came to pay him tribute: they kissed his hands and feet as he lay in his coffin; they cut off parts of his clothing as relics; they took away the few poor chattels in his house. Such was his popularity that many hastened to take measurements of the length of his body in accordance with an ancient Valencian custom of devotion to the

Longitud de Cristo, a superstition frowned upon by the ecclesiastic authorities, and based on the supposed curative powers inherent in the body length of revered and holy people.

The city authorities decreed that Simó's body should be on view to the townspeople for three days. Following this period his funeral was held and was attended by the Cabildo of Valencia. Adoration for Simó intensified and we have reports of numerous miracles in the aftermath of his funeral on April 28th. The prevailing religious fervour prompted the Marqués de San Germán, visiting the city at the time, to offer to have sent from Milan a specially wrought sepulchre. The city's painters, too, were very busy painting and selling portraits of Simó.

In due course the cathedral dedicated a service of remembrance to him on the 5th May, at which the Viceroy and the jurados attended. Other churches followed suit and held their own services of remembrance. The following is a brief extract from an anonymous description of the tumult surrounding the death of Jerónimo Simó:

Las alegres fiestas y demostraciones que se hacen en Valencia, celebrando la santidad del padre mosén Simó, es imposible acertar a referirlas como ellas son, porque estando mirando parecen cosa de sueño.

Toda la gente anda alborotada y inquieta, festejando esta gran reliquia que se ha descubierto, y con ser tantos y tan señalados los milagros que se han visto en tan breve espacio, parece que es el mayor el haberse movido tantos millares de gente, de todas las calidades, a solemnizar las exequias y fiestas y

a salir de juicio en servicio del santo, pues a porfía, procuran todos a cada uno señalarse en sacrificios, en limosnas y ofrendas. Anda la gente con tan gran ansia y fervor que más parecen obras de ángeles que de hombres...

Hiciéronle en San Andrés un túmulo muy alto, con la mayor autoridad que se puede pensar, donde estuvo el cuerpo tres días. Y no es mucho que entonces estuviese la iglesia, la calle y las plazas junto a ella ocupadas de cincuenta mil almas, porque cada día están en la misma manera y en siete días que estoy en Valencia, no me ha sido posible entrar allá. Y todos dicen a voces: Santo, santo, santo. 13

There were even those witnesses who swore that Simó had appeared to them in the flesh, giving precise details of time and place:

Dimecres a 4 de juliol, a la vespradeta, se aparegué lo reverent Francés Geroni Simó en la obra nova de Sant Andreu, que entrá per la porta nova y s arrimá a un cantó de l'obra y l veu mestre Alonso l'obrer de vila de l'obra y altres persones. 14

In the midst of this tumult, however, on the 30th May, a new Dominican archbishop - Aliaga - was appointed to the see of Valencia. His first act as archbishop was to instruct the vicar general to prohibit all acts of veneration in honour of Simó; moreover, the remains of Valencia's hero were to be returned to the ordinary urn at San Andrés, and all portraits of him were to be destroyed.

These acts of hostility towards the memory of Simó on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities set the scene for many years of bickering regarding the sanctity

of Valencia's prospective saint. Not unnaturally, the city of Valencia was deeply aggrieved by this high-handed rejection of their attempts to promote Simó as a suitable candidate for beatification. The regidores reacted immediately and inaugurated even more extravagant fiestas, while the University was quick to join the ranks of the regidores with its support. Positions quickly polarised as a prelude to claim and counter-claim regarding Simó's suitability for beatification, and in the following years the cult of Simó assumed political proportions which need not concern us here. What must be borne in mind, however, was that the cause for Simó's beatification was not the only one being pursued in Spain at this period. Many other groups were promoting their own particular claimants, even within the kingdom of Valencia.

Such was the zeal with which the Spaniards asserted their various claims for beatification that the Roman Inquisition felt obliged, in 1625, to publish a decree regulating the beatification process. This decree forbade all popular veneration of popular figures such as Simó without the express permission of the Pope. The only exceptions to the decree were those saintly persons who had long enjoyed veneration, or whose public veneration already rested on pontifical decree, or who had been properly adjudged saintly at the Congregation of Rites, or in the writings of the Fathers or Holy Men. Apart from these exceptions it was decreed that fifty years must elapse before any cause for beatification could

be brought before the Congregation of Rites in Rome.

This decree naturally put an end to any official approach from Valencia to secure Simó's beatification at Rome. It was not until the spring of 1662 - fifty years after Simó's death - that his votaries could again prepare their case for Rome. It was this preparation that resulted in Molinos' mission to the Holy City in the second fortnight of November, 1663.

SECTION 5

Molinos' early career in Valencia

The following are those details of Molinos' life that modern research has made available, prior to his residence and death in Rome: Miguel de Molinos was born in Muniesa a town half way between Zaragoza and Teruel. He was baptised on the 29th June, 1628 by Mosén Juan Fuyó, and was the son of Pedro Molinos and María Ana Zujía. He took the name of his paternal grandfather, not that of his father, nor that of St. Peter, during whose festival he was baptized. His family is believed to have been of modest means for that time.

We have no further information regarding Molinos' early life until 1639 when he enrolled at the Jesuit College of San Pablo in Valencia; it is surmised that he took his doctorate there, for the College conferred degrees, albeit with strong opposition from the University of Valencia. By 1646 he held the benefice of San Andrés, which of course was that of Simó fifty years earlier.

By 1649 he was subdeacon, deacon by 1651, and presbiterado in 1652. On two occasions he applied for the position of penitenciario of the famous College of Corpus Christi, founded by San Juan de Ribera of Valencia. He failed to gain the appointment, possibly because he was thought to be too young.

As a result of the researches of Francisco Sánchez-Castañer,¹⁵ we now know the extent of Molinos' activities in the prestigious Esucela de Cristo of Valencia, to which he was admitted in 1662. The Escuela de Cristo was one of the first to be established in Spain in honour of San Felipe Neri, following that of the 'mother' school in Spain at Madrid. From its inception the Escuela de Cristo enjoyed a reputation for high piety, and moreover a piety which placed emphasis on the interior life, as we see from Chapter XV of its constitutional rules:

Que no se hagan fiestas ni se añaden ejercicios... En ningún tiempo se podrán hacer fiestas ningunas exteriores, de cualquier calidad que sean, y no se innovará en esto por ningún accidente causa o razón que se ofrezca; porque esta Escuela es más interior y retirada, y su principal Instituto los ejercicios de mortificación y penitencia, y en tantas como se hacen fuera de ella, se podrán aprovechar los devotos. 16

Although the schools placed emphasis on an interior spirituality, there was no hint that the type of interior prayer practised by the brotherhood was in any way unorthodox; indeed, it was stipulated that their spiritual exercises 'se conformarán con los evangelios

del año, siguiendo en todo el espíritu de la Iglesia; pero en la Cuaresma serán de los misterios de la Pasión'. The work prescribed to develop meditation was the Compendio de las meditaciones del Venerable Padre Luis de la Puente, S.J., a Jesuit whose works were quoted later with approval by Molinos in his Defensa de la contemplación.

Apart from the development of interior spirituality, the Escuela de Cristo had a missionary function in the city.¹⁷

We also have an important letter dated 2nd July, 1662, the year in which the Escuela de Cristo was founded in Valencia, from don Guillermo Ramón de Moncada, Marqués de Aitona, who belonged to the Madrid School. This letter was sent by Moncada from Madrid as a gesture of support to the brothers of the Valencian Escuela de Cristo. In the middle of his letter Moncada identifies the objectives of the brotherhood in the following way:

No espante a Vuestras Caridades, lo que el demonio y el mundo intentarán persuadirles, de que aunque los ejercicios de la Escuela sean buenos, no son para seglares, ni para gente ocupada, sino para religiosos y personas muy retiradas ...

Mas porque no piensen de la Escuela lo que no es, diré a Vuestras Caridades lo que es. La escuela es una junta y congregación de pecadores, que se unen en caridad y verdad para no tratar sino de llorar sus culpas y las de todo el mundo, deseando enmendarlas y remediarlas con lágrimas, suspiros y penitencia. Esta es la escuela ... A esto se va a la escuela; que si el Señor quisiera, por su liberalidad, adelantar a alguno en alta oración, suyo es todo y puede obrar como dueño, que a nosotros no nos toca sino

estarnos en nuestro lugar,
 que es la nada, con indiferencia
 total para todo lo que el Señor
 dispusiese de nosotros. Y aunque
 se juntan pecadores, deve advertirse
 que son pecadores que desean dexar
 de serlo que dan pasos azia la
 enmienda y no los que perseveran
 en su obstinación. 18

The Escuela de Cristo of Valencia, then, enjoyed the approbation of clerics and laypeople alike, and was established with proper authorization from the ecclesiastical authorities, through the Prelate of Valencia:

Nos Don Martín López de Hontiveros, por la gracia de Dios y de la Santa Sede Apostólica, Arzobispo de Valencia, del Consejo de su Magestad, etc. Por Cuanto de orden y licencia se ha fundado en el Collegio del Corpus Christi, la Escuela de Christo Señor. Nuestro, que en España ha tenido principio en la de Madrid... 19

It follows that the Escuela de Cristo, with its reputation for high piety, was open only to those adjudged to be of high piety themselves. Miguel de Molinos was, in fact, the second member to be admitted to the brotherhood in Valencia, on 4th June, 1662. At this time he was thirty-four years of age, and obviously enjoyed considerable prestige.

His career in the Escuela de Cristo was brief, but impressive. On 28th August he was nominated second Nuncio of the altar with the duties of caring for both altar and oratory. In addition, and in conjunction with others, he was responsible for the good name of the brotherhood. Thus

Molinos and his colleagues were 'celadores de los hermanos y deben dar cuenta al Obediencia²⁰ si supiere alguna falta grave pública de algún hermano, o que de ella pueda resultar inconveniente, aunque no sea grave'.²¹ (These duties, incidentally, were the first to be set out following the founding of the School - an indication of the jealous regard the brotherhood had for its reputation).

Before Christmas, 1662, Molinos was nominated segundo Diputado eclesiástico, a position which involved him in greater responsibility:

Ha de haber cuatro diputados, dos sacerdotes y dos seglares. Los sacerdotes de tal espíritu, fervor y letras, que en falta de Obediencia puedan hacer su oficio. Y unos y otros, de mucha virtud y prudencia... Asisten y votan en todas las juntas y son como consultores del Obediencia. Han de cuidar del aprovechamiento o faltas de los hermanos, y que entre todos haya verdadera y santa hermandad y acudir a sus necesidades espirituales y corporales, dando cuenta al Obediencia y, en los casos graves, a la Junta de los Ancianos... Han de examinar los diputados eclesiásticos a los que pretenden ser recibidos,²² habiéndolo ordenado el Obediencia.

The spring of 1662 marked the fifty years since the death of Jerónimo Simó, and his votaries began to prepare their case for his beatification. The archbishop of the day, Martín López de Hontiveros, was not antagonistic to the cause, and the preparations went well. In July, 1663, the Diputación del Reino de

Valencia lent its support to the cause. In cases of beatification it would have been normal for the archbishop himself to travel to Rome but instead he nominated Miguel de Molinos as 'síndico, agente, postulador y procurador' to effect the visit ad limina.²³ In the second fortnight of November, 1663, Molinos set out for Rome, carrying with him the sum of five hundred pounds and letters of recommendation for Cardinals Aragón and Albizzi. He was never to return to Valencia.

The evidence that would suggest that Molinos left behind him a nucleus of quietists in Valencia is slender indeed. Rather, we believe that Molinos, as a recent study has shown,²⁴ was representative of a widespread movement in Spain at this time that favoured the growth and availability of acquired contemplation for all those who were ready for it. We shall return to this aspect of Molinos' spirituality in our next chapter. At this juncture we must concur with José Ignacio Tellechea Idígoras when he declares:

En realidad, Valencia representa un caso típico de una corriente generalizada más amplia que, con diversos matices y no sin polémicas, invade a toda España... El tópico, propio de manuales, que pretende convertir a Molinos en el original inventor del sistema, en su cenit y expresión definitiva, en una especie de aerolito, desarraigado de España, que irrumpe en el cielo romano ... es una simpleza y una falsedad histórica. Con todo y en medio de este ambiente, Molinos no llega a asumir en Valencia protagonismo alguno que resulte premonitorio o significativo. 25

The 'corriente generalizada' referred to here by Idígoras was the growing trend of oración quieta (technically, acquired contemplation) during the period under discussion. Molinos' Guía was published first in Rome, in 1675, and then in Spain in 1676. What is clear is that the type of spirituality advocated in the Guía - oración quieta - was indeed contested in Spain, long before its condemnation in Rome in 1687. And perhaps significantly, we have a record of a polemic in Valencia during the 1670's, when Molinos was enjoying immense popularity in Rome. The following passage is from the biography of El Venerable Agustín Pasqual, published in 1690 and written by Agustín Belda, a fellow brother of the Regular Observance. This passage gives a clear indication that Pasqual felt that oración quieta was objectionable for much the same sort of reasons advanced against contemplative spirituality by the Dominicans of the sixteenth century: that is, indiscriminate interior prayer was felt to be subversive in nature, if not in intent. In the passage that follows Belda is describing Pasqual's attempts to combat the spread of oración quieta in and around Valencia during the 1670's:

En este mismo tiempo, siendo señalado por confessor extraordinario por el Ilustrísimo Señor Arçobispo de Valencia, D. Luis Alfonso de los Cameros, de uno de los conventos de monjas a su inmediata jurisdicción sugetas, encontró seguían todas la oración quieta, sin dar lugar a que en la que tenían en comunidad, se leyese antes punto alguno para

meditarle. Procuró el zeloso Padre su desengaño con santas y fundadas razones, diziéndoles que el estado de contemplativas (que era el nombre que le davan) no estava en su mano alcançarle: porque Dios era quien lo dava a quien quería, y procurarlo de aquel modo era como una espiritual soberbia. Instava se leyese alguna meditación devota; porque era doctrina que practicavan los santos, lo más seguro y sin riesgo.

Mucha fue la resistencia que encontró al principio aun en religiosas solícitas de sus espirituales medras; pero tomando el consejo de San Pablo: insta oportune, importune, perseveró en su empresa, sin perder punto ni diligencia...

Todas estas diligencias aplicó el Venerable Padre para que dexasen aquella doctrina extraordinaria y sin provecho, en que las almas gastavan el tiempo en una ociosidad impertinente, sin dar passo en la mayor perfección...

Predicava la Quaresma en una parroquia de Valencia y encomendáronle el sermón de la feria quarta después de la Dominica segunda, para que lo predicase al Santo Tribunal de la Inquisición y en él introduxo toda la doctrina y razones que impugnava la oración quieta...

Acabado el sermón, dixo ser aquella su doctrina la que enseñava y practicava. Y aquellos muy Ilustres Señores le dieron las gracias, exhortándole prosiguiese en dirigir almas con tan solítica y recebida doctrina...26

SECTION 6

Molinos in Rome

It was on the 20th July, 1663, that Miguel de Molinos was nominated to effect the visit to Rome in an attempt to procure the beatification of Gerónimo Simó. Apart from the details of the controversy that

súrrounded the publication of the Guía espiritual in 1675, and of Molinos' subsequent fate, the details of his movements in the intervening period are somewhat sketchy.

It is a matter of record, however, that Molinos acquired great distinction as a confessor and spiritual director during this period, and that Pope Innocent XI came to think so highly of him that he was provided with apartments in the papal palace. We do know for certain, too, as a result of the researches of Francisco Sánchez-Castañer, that Molinos established relations with the Roman brotherhood of the Escuela de Cristo, founded in 1655 along the lines of that of Madrid, founded in 1653.

The first reliable date of Molinos' membership of the Escuela is 1671, as evidenced by the receipt of a routine letter from him to the Escuela de Cristo of Valencia. More important than this letter was that received by Valencia in May, 1675. In view of its historical importance we quote the substance of this letter as it was recorded by the Junta de Ancianos of the Valencian Escuela de Cristo which met on the 12th May, 1675:

Acordose por quanto la carta que remitió de Roma de 6 de abril, 1675, el doctor Molinos, Obediencia, participando a esta Escuela cómo el Reverendísimo Padre Oliva, General de la Compañía de Jesús, después de haver coadiuvado a la Escuela de Roma en las tribulaciones que se hallo por los inconvenientes que representaron los pocos afectos, dándole sitio a dicha Escuela por espacio de ocho anyos en la casa profesa y después de pasada a su Oratorio, la premió con una limosna de dies missas por cada Hermano que muriese en dicha Escuela

y a todos los que tuviesen
Hermandad en ella por el discurso
de su vida.

Por lo qual en remuneración del
afecto y limosna con que dicho
Reverendísimo Padre General se ha
mostrado, le admite esta Escuela
en Hermano para que assi en vida
como en muerte partisipe y se haga
todo lo que hacostumbra hazer con
Hermano de esta Escuela. Y que se
escribiese dando las gracias. Se
hizo. 27

Two points of significance arise from the account of this letter: firstly, by 1675 Molinos was the Obediencia of the Roman Escuela de Cristo, and secondly, the headquarters of the Escuela was for the eight years prior to 1675 in the same location as the Jesuits' power-base under the protection of General Oliva, with whom Molinos was eventually to come into sharp conflict. But the fact that Oliva extended his patronage to the Escuela de Cristo during this time must certainly quash any accusation that it was a quietist centre, as is generally believed (Cf in this respect P. Montalbán in his Historia de la Iglesia Católica who states that Molinos made of the Escuela 'el centro de su propaganda espiritual'.)²⁸

The case for Simó's beatification foundered after lengthy attempts by Molinos to promote it, and he was relieved of his onerous task by the Valencian authorities. Sánchez Castañer tells us that Molinos wrote to Valencia on 12th January, 1675, indicating that despite the numerous difficulties the cause had occasioned him, he found Rome to his liking, declaring 'Porque yo no trato de partir para España, remito a V.S. muy Ilustre el

descargo del dinero que tomé del crédito para las
expensas de la causa'.²⁹

SECTION 7

Illuminism in Italy

Before we present the details of Molinos' life following publication of the Guía, and the controversy it aroused, we set down some information relating to Italy's attitude towards mysticism, which in the seventeenth century was not regarded with quite the same hostility as was mysticism in Spain, a token perhaps of its less extreme aspect.

Nevertheless, Italy was not without its mystical problems,³⁰ as we see from the case in Florence in 1640 when Canon Pandolfo Ricasoli, his accomplice Faustina Mainardi, her brother Girolano, and seven others were arrested as illuminati and accused of false mysticism, based largely on notions of impeccability. Ricasoli eventually came forward to denounce himself and express contrition; a public atto da fede was held on November 28, 1641, at which he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

More alarming to the Inquisition was the sect known as the Pelagini which about 1650 developed in Valcamonica and spread through Lombardy. Giacomo Filippo di Santa Pelagia was a layman of Milan with a reputation for extreme piety; he obtained permission from Marco Morosoni, Bishop of Brescia (1645-54) to found conventicles to practise mental prayer. Eventually,

however, Morosini forbade mental prayer in these conventicles when he learnt that the devotees were indulging in raptures and visions and claiming impeccability.

In 1654 Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni (later Pope Alexander VIII) was appointed to the see of Brescia and took further severe measures to suppress all Pelagini. The Inquisition eventually took charge of matters and prosecuted the leaders, although Pelagia himself seems to have escaped conviction. The Inquisition's activities on this occasion did nothing to curtail the spread of the sect which continued its existence in secret for twenty years, establishing oratories in Brescia, Verona, Vicenza, Treviso, Padua, Pesaro and Lucca. Many of the devotees appear to have been devout and pious people, although some were given to mystical extravagances of the kind so common in Spain.

Apart from the undesirable social implications of passive types of prayer practised by the Pelagini, the main objections of the Church to the continuance and spread of the Pelagini was the threat that they were believed to pose to the hierarchy, emphasising the value of an interior piety as they did.

In 1682 Cardinal Albizzi delivered a documented account to the Holy Office in which he outlines the ramifications of quietism by this time prevalent throughout Italy. His statement enjoins certain measures: the prohibition of books in French, Italian and Spanish dealing with 'oración pasiva'; the advising

of bishops to forbid confessors and directors to encourage contemplation, which is the prerogative of 'almas perfectas y totalmente segregadas de los negocios del siglo, y a aquellas que, por esencial gracia de Dios, se deduzca que nuestro Señor les ha concedido aquella gracia infusa que difícilmente puede adquirirse'.³¹

Albizzi's account also makes clear that Innocent XI, having become aware of the Molinos controversy, then in progress, set up a private Congregation

para conocer si era oportuno permitir o tolerar semejante modo de orar o de contemplar, o verdaderamente poner remedio a los abusos introducidos no sólo en Roma, sino en otras ciudades de Italia por no saberse el modo y manera de ejercitar esta mística contemplación, abusos que podían degenerar en varios errores antiguamente practicados por los beguardos y beguinas en Alemania, por los alumbrados de España, los pelaginos en Italia y por los profesores de esta oración de quietud en Roma. 32

No action was taken on this occasion, yet we are in no doubt from Albizzi that one of the main causes of concern over passive prayer was its pathological social effects:

si bien no ha condenado la mística contemplación, sin embargo, ha desaprobado siempre el modo introducido por los desórdenes que provienen de ella, como se verá de la infrascrita carta del Cardenal Caraccioli. 33

The letter referred to from Caraccioli is that written to Pope Innocent XI (Odescalchi) on June 30, 1682, in which he gives a vivid description of the abuses of the misapplication of mystical passivity

which had appeared in his diocese. He describes penitents incapable of using the rosary, or making the sign of the cross; of those in passive prayer refusing to go to confession, and even tearing down the crucifix as an impediment to union with God. It is interesting to note that the term 'Quietist' appears in the written form for the first time in Caraccioli's letter. (See Appendix I).

SECTION 8

Publication of the *Guía*, the controversy surrounding it, and Molinos' condemnation

Against this background of growing concern over mystical prayer Molinos published his *Guía espiritual* at the instance of the Franciscan P.F. Juan de Santa María, Provincial Minister of San Pedro de Alcántara, of the Kingdom of Naples. It is well known that it received the emphatic approval of five distinguished theologians, four of whom were Censors of the Inquisition, and all of them of high reputation in their various Orders of Franciscans, Trinitarians, Jesuits, Carmelites and Capuchins.³⁴

Molinos had preceded the publication of the *Guía espiritual* with a tract, in the same year, on the virtues of daily communion,³⁵ of which he was an ardent advocate. In his tract Molinos states that penitents may partake of the sacrament without previous confession, 'a doctrine', says H.C. Lea, 'which, however theologically defensible, threatened, if extensively practised, largely

to diminish the authority of the priesthood, while encouraging the sinner to settle his account directly with God,³⁶ - an opinion we shall bear in mind, for it is believed by many that the Jesuits who were to attack Molinos, exercised much of their power through the confessional.

Certainly the Jesuits were a powerful body at this time and it is conjectured that they prevailed upon Père La Chaise to persuade Louis XIV to instruct his ambassador, Cardinal d'Estrées, to effect the removal of Molinos. In any case, it is a matter of record that d'Estrées was to become Molinos' unremitting opponent.

The first attack on Molinos' Guía came from the Jesuit Gottardo Bell'Uomo in 1678 when he published a work at Modena, on the relative value of ordinary and mystical prayer,³⁷ a work which was promptly denounced to the Inquisition.³⁸ On February 16, 1680, however, Molinos felt compelled to write a long letter to the Jesuit General, Oliva, outlining his position. In brief, this letter explains that he had never wished to attack the society, as he held it in the highest esteem; and far from supporting the Beghards, alumbrados and illuminati, he had always condemned them.

Oliva's reply of the 28th February gave no reassurance to Molinos. Oliva declares in this letter that although he himself had not read the Guía espiritual, he could not condone contemplation as

suitable for all. Moreover, he was shocked that Bell'Uomo should have been brought before the Congregation of the Index.

Molinos replied promptly the next day, February 20th, asserting the high esteem in which he held the exercise of meditation, an assertion he was to reiterate in his Defensa de la contemplación. He also laments the fact that he should be the subject of so much unwarranted persecution, and as for Bell'Uomo, if his doctrine was as enlightened as Oliva says it was, then God would give his ministers the wisdom to recognize it.

Oliva's final reply came on March 2nd, containing the complaint that many of the convents under the control of the Jesuits had passed out of their hands in their zeal to practise Molinos' method of interior prayer.

In 1680 the Jesuits pressed their case further by persuading Italy's most popular Jesuit preacher and favourite of Innocent XI, Padre Paolo Segneri, to issue a small book entitled Concordia tra la Fatica e la Quiete nell' Oratione. In essence this work states that the highest Christian perfection was a combination of both activity and contemplation, a contention with which Molinos would surely have concurred.

The answer to the Concordia came from Pietro Matteo Petrucci,³⁹ Bishop of Jesi, an ardent supporter of Molinos and his Guía espiritual. Segneri's riposte to Petrucci came in the form of a Lettera di Riposta al Sig. Ignacio Bartalini. From this point the controversy intensified. In 1682 the Minorite Padre Alessandro Reggio

wrote an aggressive tract entitled Clavis Aurea qua aperiuntur Errores Michaelis de Molinos, in which he concluded that Molinos condoned the errors of the Beghards, and that his conception of Quiet destroyed the notion of the Trinity; that prayer without works was contrary to the observances of the Church; and that to endure temptation without resistance was subversive of the doctrines of the Church.

Petrucci responded vigorously to this tract, while Molinos remained silent. By this time Bell'Uomo's book, Segneri's Lettera and the Clavis Aurea had all received unqualified condemnation from the Inquisition. Segneri's Concordia was also proscribed and he was required to revise it. But despite these setbacks for the Jesuits, the case against Molinos gathered momentum.

In November, 1684, the Congregation of the Index formally assumed consideration of the matter. At its head was Cardinal Ottoboni who had been active in the campaign against the Pelagini when Bishop of Brescia. He addressed a memorandum to the Congregation in which he denounced the dangers of Quietism, quoting the dangers Spain was facing as a result of Palafox's proselytizing efforts on Molinos' behalf. He also drew attention to the Quietist school in Jesi, and the fact that the monasteries of Faenza and Ravenna had a Quietist confessor.

In the following eight months testimony sufficient to warrant an arrest was gathered, and on July 18, 1685, ten years after publication of the Guía, at a meeting

of the Congregation, Cardinal d'Estrées issued the order for Molinos' arrest. The sbirri were then dispatched for that purpose.

It is interesting to note that on this day of Molinos' arrest by the police of the Holy Office that Jean Mabillon, the famous medievalist and diplomatist was in Rome, and that his companion is recorded as saying:

nada más dividido que Roma en lo que al asunto de Molinos y de los demás quietistas se refiere. Observo que la mayoría de las personas ecuanímes convienen en que dicho doctor era irreprochable en su vida y en sus costumbres. 40

Molinos' imprisonment prior to his official condemnation lasted two years. He had many admirers, among them Queen Christina of Sweden, who attempted to intervene on his behalf. Nothing remains of the details of his trial, and the mass of evidence used to condemn him appears to have been drawn up from his voluminous correspondence and depositions from witnesses. Accusations of immorality levelled at Molinos would appear to have collapsed at the trial. F. Nicolini, for instance, comments as follows:

Se pecaría de injusticia si no se recordase una vez más que en dos años de minuciosas pesquisas, durante los que se hurgó fatigosamente en toda su vida presente y pasada, es decir romana e ibérica, no se consiguió probarle más pecado carnal que algún 'enfantillage' más o menos inocente, cuya falta de significación se suplió inflándolo hasta lo inverosímil, es decir, en medida no menos calumniosa que inverecunda'. 41

The sentence of condemnation was never in doubt and was drawn up on August 20, 1687. The following day the inquisitorial decree was signed, embodying the sixty-eight condemned propositions, and was posted in the usual places on September 3rd.

On September 13th Molinos was escorted to the church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva where the atto da fede was to be held, and in whose chancel was buried the Archbishop of Toledo, Bartolomé Carranza, 'otro de los grandes protagonistas del insoluble conflicto entre el espíritu y el poder', as Valente expresses it.⁴² The huge church of Santa Maria was filled to capacity as was the grand piazza fronting the building. Present were the officers of the Inquisition, the Apostolic College, ambassadors and nobility, bishops, clerics and laypeople.

During the reading of the sentence Molinos knelt with a lighted candle in his tied hands, and all commentators - hostile and dispassionate alike - have remarked on his remarkable imperturbability during this time:

When he was brought to this place, as he made his Reverence very devoutly to the Cardinals,... there was no show of Fear or Shame, in his whole Deportment...⁴³

and from another source:

se estuvo en el tablado tan severo como si dijese alguna alabanza suya, sin mostrar arrepentimiento ni señal de él. 44

The sentence concluded by declaring Molinos a heretic and he was ordered to be detained for life, during

which time he would wear the sanbenito and recite vocal prayers each day. it is recorded that:

When he came back to prison, he entered into his little cell, with great Tranquility, ... and took leave of the Priest in these words, 'Adieu Father, we shall meet again at the Day of Judgement, and then it will appear on which Side of the Truth is, whether on my side, or on yours'. So they shut him up for Life. 45

Miguel de Molinos died after nine years imprisonment on 28th December, 1696, aged sixty-eight. (See Appendix 2 for the abstract of Molinos' trial and Appendix 3 for the 68 condemned propositions.

NOTES

1. See LEA, Henry Charles, A History of the Inquisition of Spain, 4 Vols., London, 1922, Vol. IV, pp. 16-17.
2. Ibid., p. 24.
3. LEA, Henry Charles, Chapters from the Religious History of Spain, New York, 1957, pp. 298-299.
4. PEERS, Allison, Studies of the Spanish Mystics, 3 Vols., London, 1960, Vol. II, pp. 151-159.
5. GRACIÁN, Jerónimo, Diez lamentaciones del estado miserable de los ateístas de nuestros tiempos, Brussels, 1611.
6. Ibid., pp. 111-116.
7. p. 140.
8. PEERS, op.cit., pp. 185-186.
9. See LEA, Chapters from the Religious History of Spain, pp. 300-308.
10. For the information in this section I am indebted to an article by R. Robres Lluch, 'En torno a Miguel de Molinos y los orígenes de su doctrina. Aspectos de la piedad barroca en Valencia 1578-1691', Anthologica Annua, 18 (1971), pp. 353-465.
11. Ibid., p. 358.
12. p. 360.
13. p. 365.
14. p. 366.
15. SÁNCHEZ-CASTAÑER, Francisco, Miguel de Molinos en Valencia y Roma. Nuevos datos biográficos, Valencia, 1965.
16. Ibid., pp. 53-54.
17. This is testified by a document to be found in Sánchez-Castañer, pp. 59-60.
18. p. 27.
19. p. 26.
20. Obediencia: equivalent to 'grado supremo de superior'.

21. pp. 33-34.
22. pp. 34-35.
23. LLUCH, op.cit., p. 420.
24. See MARTÍN, Melquíades Andrés, Los recogidos: nueva visión de la mística española, 1500-1700, Madrid, 1976.
25. TELLECHEA IDÍGORAS, José Ignacio, 'Molinos y el quietismo español', in Historia de la iglesia en España, edited by Ricardo García-Villoslada, 5 Vols., Madrid, 1979, IV, pp. 478-519 (p. 483).
26. LLUCH, op.cit., pp. 434-435.
27. Quoted by SÁNCHEZ-CASTAÑER, op.cit., p. 61.
28. MONTALBÁN, P., quoted by LLUCH, p. 68.
29. LLUCH, op.cit., p. 423.
30. See LEA, 'Molinos and the Italian Mystics', American Historical Review, Vol. 11 (January, 1906), pp. 243-262.
31. TELLECHEA IDÍGORAS, op.cit., p. 512.
32. TELLECHEA IDÍGORAS, Introduction to Guía espiritual, Madrid, 1976, p. 46.
33. Ibid., p. 49.
34. The Guía was an immediate success when first published and was translated into many languages: into Latin (Leipzig, 1687), French (Amsterdam, 1688), Dutch (Rotterdam, 1688); into English (London, 1688 and 1699) and German (Frankfurt, 1699). In the eighteenth century it was translated into Russian (Moscow, 1784). In the nineteenth century we have notable translations by Wesley (1819), and another by the writer, Shorthouse (1883). There was a further English edition in the nineteenth century (Glasgow, 1885) and an American one (Philadelphia, 1885).
 This century the Guía has been republished in Paris (1905), in London (1907, 1909, 1928); in Italy (1909) and 1931, 1942 and 1957. In Spain there was the edition of R. Urbano (1911), Ovejero and Entrambasaguas (1935). In 1974 J.A. Valente used the princeps romana edition for the first time, the edition which serves us for this thesis. Lendínez used the Madrid edition of 1676 for his publication incorporating many errors. In 1976 Tellechea Idigoras' critical edition appeared,

and in 1977 González Noriega reproduced correctly the 1676 edition (Madrid).

Of particular interest is the Leipzig translation of 1687, made by Hermann Francke, the pietist. It was this translation that is thought to have been instrumental in Francke's conversion to pietism for he completed the translation a few weeks before declaring himself partisan to the pietist cause. Another leading pietist, Gottfried Arnold (1666-1715) translated the Guía from Latin to German, accompanying it with a laudatory preface.

The influence of the Guía espiritual on the Quaker movement - which was considerable - has been studied by Domingo Ricart in his book Juan de Valdés y el pensamiento religioso europeo en los siglos XVI y XVII (México, 1958).

35. MOLINOS, Miguel de, Breve Tratado de la Comunión Cuotidiana, Rome, 1675.
36. LEA, A History of the Inquisition of Spain, p. 51.
37. BELL'UOMO, . Gottardo, Il pregio e l'ordine dell' Oratione ordinarie e mistiche, Modena, 1678.
38. For an account of this phase of the controversy see LEA, A History of the Inquisition of Spain, pp. 49-54.
39. PETRUCCI, Pietro Matteo, Della Contemplatione mistica acquistata, 1681.

The following is an excerpt from Christian Perfection by Petrucci. It gives an indication of how closely it follows the piety of Miguel de Molinos.

But I can never say enough of the necessity of faith in mental prayer ... I advise you to endeavour to put yourself immediately upon the apprehension of the real Presence of God ... rest contented to know by Faith that you are most immediately present to God, that you are willing to love Him dearly, depend upon Him, please Him and glorify Him, and that you study not your own satisfaction; in such a condition be constant, patient and cheerful in spirit and calm in the midst of dryness, temptations, vain imaginations, that befall you in the time of prayer. If you cannot meditate on the point or points which you had fixed upon be at least content to stand entirely immersed in the divinity of your God, believe therefore from your heart that He is in you, and that you live and move in Him, and so adore Him in the depth of spirit, love Him, and be inwardly quiet in this state of faith, adoration, and love...

- PETRUCCI, Pietro Matteo, 'Christian Perfection' in Systems of Meditation in Religion, by W.L. Hare, London, 1937, p. 195.
40. Valente, Introduction to Guía espiritual, p. 42.
41. NICOLINI, Fausto, 'Su Miguel de Molinos e taluni quietisti italiani', in Valente, p. 47.
42. pp. 40-41
43. BURNET, G. Dr., 'A Letter Writ from Rome to One in Holland concerning the Quietists', in Three Letters Concerning the Present State of Italy, written in the year 1687, p. 94
44. ELLACURIA BEASCOECHEA, Jesús, Reacción española contra las ideas de Miguel de Molinos, Bilbao, 1956, in Valente, p. 41.
45. BURNET, op.cit., p. 94.

CHAPTER 5

Analysis of the Guía espiritualIntroduction

Miguel de Molinos, like St. John of the Cross before him, was clearly of the view that the Christian revelation should be a continuous, or dynamic process. In this sense the subjective empiricism encouraged in the Guía espiritual may be interpreted as an attempt to regenerate and vivify this revelation in each individual soul.

Unfortunately for Molinos, the dominant spirituality of the time was that championed by the Jesuits. As we have seen, it was a spirituality that was essentially meditative and imagistic, rather than contemplative. It is likely that Molinos considered such exclusive preoccupation with externals as condemning to death a certain margin of consciousness; for he insists, like his mentor St. John of the Cross, that when the time has come to effect the transition from meditation to contemplation, reasoning and reflection should be gently set aside in favour of a superior, supraconceptual silence in order to attain the dynamic passivity of contemplation. Seen in this way the Guía is a restatement of the dynamic and voluntaristic character of Christianity, which at its best will always transcend the limited interest of any group based crudely on a static pattern of dogma and outward observance.

We might claim with some justification, then, that what Molinos was teaching in his Guía was the right of all men to establish relations with God at the personal level, a right which was evidently more in keeping with certain Protestant conceptions than Catholic ones at that time. Had Molinos been allowed to continue his mission, therefore, it is possible that the Jesuits, who exercised their power through the confessional, might have seen that power seriously eroded. As we have seen, imparting his lesson in spiritual democracy cost Molinos dearly. ¹

We are reminded forcibly of Heine's pronouncement on the historical malleability of orthodoxy which as Valente succinctly puts it, 'no es tanto una cualidad del Espíritu como una necesidad del Poder'. (p. 28)

Plato and Aristotle! These are not merely two systems; they are also two distinct human natures, which from immemorial time, under every sort of cloak, stand more or less inimically opposed. But pre-eminently the whole medieval period was riven by this conflict, persisting even to the present day; moreover, this battle is the most essential content of the history of the Christian church. Though under different names, always and essentially it is of Plato and Aristotle that we speak. Enthusiastic, mystical, Platonic natures reveal Christian ideas and their corresponding symbols from the bottomless depths of their souls. Practical, ordering, Aristotelian natures build up from these ideas and symbols a solid system, a dogma and a cult. The Church eventually embraces both natures - one of them sheltering among the clergy, while the other finds refuge in monasticism; yet both incessantly at feud. ²

Molinos, of course, although an 'enthusiastic, mystical, Platonic nature', did not 'shelter among the clergy': quite the contrary - his refusal to do just that earned him disgrace and life-imprisonment at the hands of those intent on building up 'a solid system, a dogma and a cult'. It is in the context of ecclesiastical power-politics that Molinos' condemnation, in part at least, must be viewed. ³

Doctrinally speaking, it is perhaps not altogether surprising that Molinos was accused of traducing the general principles of mystical passivity, for few mystical concepts have caused more misunderstanding than this. As we noted in chapter (1) of our study von Hügel has indicated the inadequacy of nomenclature to deal with the notion of passivity; at the same time he draws the conclusion that Christian mystics have tended to fall into two categories, one of them opting for a specious and quietistic interpretation of passivity in the spiritual life:

The one tends so to emphasize the sense and reality of the soul's simple receptivity, and of what the soul receives at such, apparently, purely receptive times, as to ignore, or even practically deny, the undeniable fact that this very receptivity is, inevitably, an act of its own. Its decisive terms are Passivity, Fixedness, Oneness.

This is, of course, the heterodox position. The other orthodox category of mystics, according to von Hügel, perceives the soul's passivity holistically, as part of a wider dynamic of spiritual growth, and thus

in terms of responsiveness and complementarity, rather than stasis and inertia. It is to this category that Miguel de Molinos belongs:

The other current realizes that Grace does not destroy, violate or supplant nature, ... but that it awakens, purifies and completes it, so that every divine influx is also ever a stimulation of all the good and true energy already, even though latently, present in the soul. And its characteristic₅ terms are 'Action'...Growth, Harmony.

We take the above comments by von Hügel to be a fair general description of Molinos' own spirituality, the detail of which will emerge from our analysis of the Guía. We confine ourselves at present to stating Molinos' orthodoxy in relation to the general principles of mystical passivity, according to which God does not replace the soul's activity with His own, but rather stimulates and informs it by a process of purification, which if successful eventuates in the supreme transforming union. In this union the soul, though now dead to its former natural operations, is fully alive to God, as Molinos makes perfectly clear:

Sabrás que esta aniquilación, para que sea perfecta en el alma, ha de ser en el propio juicio, en la voluntad, en los afectos, inclinaciones, deseos, pensamientos y en sí misma, de tal manera que se ha de hallar el alma muerta al querer, al desear, procurar, entender y pensar... ¡Oh, qué dichosa alma la que así se halla muerta y aniquilada! Ya ésta no vive en sí, porque vive Dios en ella. (p. 244)

It is important to recall, then, that the passivity of union, as envisaged by Molinos, is of a dynamic nature, experienced both as rest and as a

galvanizing energy. There is thus no real contradiction between the vitality which seizes the mystic in union and the peace and rest which he experiences at the same time. 'The peace that passes all understanding and the pulsating energy of creation', says Warner Allen, 'are one in the center in the midst of conditions where all opposites are reconciled'.⁶ Similarly, Sri Aurobindo declares, 'Those who have thus possessed the calm within can perceive always welling out from its silence the perennial supply of the energies which work in the universe'.⁷ Thus the goal, once experienced, proves to be a paradoxical state of relaxation, together with a boundless and morally purposeful energy: 'Las acciones exteriores de los místicos y sabios que obran más passive que active', says Molinos, 'las ordenan con prudencia, número, peso y medida'. (p. 235) Furthermore, the negative mental disciplines of apophatic mysticism which result in dynamic passivity are not the goal of spirituality: they are simply the means to the end.

The Guía espiritual itself is linked to the mainstream of orthodox apophatic mysticism most directly through St. John of the Cross, who himself is indebted to the Christian tradition lavish in its use of words like 'nothingness', 'emptiness' and 'darkness'. As we have mentioned in Chapter (2), apophatic mysticism - 'the negative theology of

positive transcendence', in a phrase used of the teaching of Plotinus - stems from the writings of the Pseudo Dionysius, probably a Syrian monk of the fifth or sixth century A.D. The extract that follows from his Mystical Theology gives a clear indication of the way in which Dionysius heaps up terms of negation and darkness to describe the deity:

We pray that we may come unto this Darkness which is beyond light, and, without seeing and without knowing, to see and to know that which is above vision and knowledge through the realization that by not-seeing and by unknowing we attain to true vision and knowledge; and thus praise, super-essentially, Him Who is superessential, by the abstraction of the essence of all things; even as those who, carving a statue out of marble, abstract or remove all the surrounding material that hinders the vision which the marble conceals and, by that abstraction, bring to light the hidden beauty.

It is necessary to distinguish this negative method of abstraction from the positive method of affirmation, in which we deal with the Divine Attributes. For with these latter we begin with the universal and primary, and pass through the intermediate and secondary to the particular and ultimate attributes; but now we ascend from the particular to the universal conceptions, abstracting all attributes in order that without veil, we may know that Unknowing, which is enshrouded under all that is known and all that can be known, and that we may begin to contemplate the superessential Darkness which is hidden by all the light that is in existing things.

In all this negation, however, there is a tremendous affirmation, for in the Nothingness, everything is contained. It is the divine ground, writes Ruysbroeck, where man meets God without intermediary:

Here [writes Ruysbroeck] he meets God without intermediary. And from out the Divine Unity there shines into him a simple light; and this light shows him Darkness and Nakedness and Nothingness. In this Darkness he is enwrapped and falls into somewhat which is in no wise, even as one who has lost his way. In the Nakedness, he loses the perception and discernment of all things, and is transfigured and penetrated by a simple light. In the Nothingness, all his activity fails him; for he is vanquished by the working of God's abysmal love, and in a fruitive inclination of his spirit he vanquishes God, and becomes one spirit with Him.

The language of St. John of the Cross, too, contains many such negative assertions, but there is no suggestion in his teaching of complete negation or an absolute void of both God and creatures. It is simply that to the extent that the soul has the one, it is empty of the other. As Colin Thompson puts it: 'San Juan gives little attention to the problem of how if at all we may know God through his attributes, and when we speak of negation in San Juan's system, it means the negation of all created things as man rises towards the uncreated God'. 10

The warrant for this Christian emptiness, or nothingness, is held by the Christian tradition to be the kenosis, or self-emptying, of Jesus, 'who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man.' (Philippians 2.6,7) And the ultimate kenosis of Jesus was his dereliction on the cross 'being found in human

form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross'. (Philippians 2.8) The kenosis of the cross is, however, the prelude to the vast affirmation of the resurrection:

Therefore God has exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
(Philippians 2.9-11)

Accordingly, the advice that St. John of the Cross gives to penitents in his Subida del Monte Carmelo, the prose commentary on En una noche oscura, is notably Christocentric from the beginning:

Lo primero, traiga un ordinario apetito de imitar a Cristo en todas sus cosas, conformándose con su vida, la cual debe considerar para saberla imitar y haberse en todas las cosas como se hubiera él.

Lo segundo, para poder bien hacer esto, cualquiera gusto que se le ofreciere a los sentidos, como no sea puramente para honra y gloria de Dios, renúncielo y quédese vacío de él por amor de Jesucristo. (p. 29, Subida 1, 13)"

Molinos' teaching gives similar admonitions regarding the imitation of Christ, although he admits that there are few capable of attaining complete nakedness of spirit:

Son raros los espirituales que van por este camino, porque son pocos en el mundo los que totalmente se nieguen a sí mismos para seguir a Cristo crucificado, con sencillez y desnudez de espíritu.
(p. 207-8)

SECTION (1)

St. John of the Cross: an outline of his teaching

As we consider the Guía espiritual of Miguel de Molinos to be a recapitulation and distillation of the teaching of St. John of the Cross on the life of prayer, it will be as well at this point to give a brief outline of the general theme and character of those works of the saint from which Molinos has drawn most heavily.

Those works from which the teaching of the Guía is largely derived are the Subida del Monte Carmelo (particularly Books 2 and 3), the Noche oscura, and the third canción of the commentary on Llama de amor viva.

The prose treatises of the Subida and Noche oscura are in fact commentaries on St. John of the Cross' poem Noche oscura, while the Llama commentary derives from another of his poems. The Subida and Noche oscura particularly treat of how the soul reaches perfection, while the poem itself, as St. John of the Cross tells us, refers to the path of perfection as a dark night, and this for three reasons: the soul on the ascent must mortify the appetites, journey in faith and finally receive God's communication. These reasons involve the penitent in privation in the same way that night involves a privation of light.

Book One of the Subida describes the active night of the senses in which the soul must mortify all voluntary, inordinate appetites which impede the perfect love of God. Books Two and Three of the Subida

describe the journey in faith, especially as it pertains to the active purification of the spirit. At this time the soul must journey in the darkness of faith to attain union with God. In the language of St. John of the Cross the soul must strive, in this active night (or purification) of the spirit, to purge its spiritual faculties - memory, intellect and will - through the theological virtues. It is meticulously explained how each of these virtues purifies its respective faculty of anything in opposition to God's glory, and unites it to Him.

As the soul begins to liberate itself from dependence on the senses, therefore, it enters the way of faith - also a dark night. At this stage St. John of the Cross has particularly in mind those who have just entered the state of contemplation in which the soul sets aside discursive thinking and remembrances. Thus those seeking to purify their spiritual faculties in prayer must put aside particular knowledge to the point where the reflective powers are almost completely in abeyance and the soul rests in a loving awareness of God in faith. This loving awareness of God in faith is the meaning of contemplation at this stage.

Broadly speaking, we equate this active phase of the journey in faith, described in the Subida, with the first book of the Guía, entitled 'De las tinieblas, sequedades y tentaciones con que Dios purga a las

almas, y del recogimiento interior o contemplación adquirida'.

The Noche oscura, on the other hand, explicates in full the manner in which God in his communication to the soul purifies it passively to bring its faith and love to perfection. As this stage of contemplation is dark and painful to the soul it too is called a night. Book One of the Noche describes the passive purification of the senses, dealing particularly with the shortcomings of beginners, the signs of incipient contemplation, and the benefits attendant on the passive night of the senses. But as St. John indicates, 'la purgación del sentido sólo es puerta y principio de contemplación para la del espíritu, que...más sirve de acomodar el sentido al espíritu que de unir el espíritu con Dios'. (p. 210, Noche, 2,2)

It is in Book Two of the Noche that St. John describes the intense rigours of the passive night of the spirit during which the intellect is darkened and emptied by faith, the memory emptied and separated by hope, the will emptied of its affections and appetites by charity. The three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity thus divorce the soul from all that is not God and unite it to Him. The life of union with God that follows is one of perfect faith, hope and charity.

Our analysis of the Guía will reveal that the rigours involved in the passive phases of contemplation, and described in the Noche oscura, are

reproduced in the third book of Molinos' work, entitled 'De los espirituales martirios con que Dios purga a las almas, de la contemplación infusa y pasiva, de la resignación perfecta, humildad interna, divina sabiduría, verdadera aniquilación e interior paz'.

The question of spiritual direction, a dominant theme in the second book of the Guía, is dealt with in Canción 3 of Llama de amor viva, as it is in Subida, Book Two, Chapter 18.

To sum up St. John's conception of the mystical ascent we may say that the soul has two parts: the 'superior' (the spirit) and the 'inferior' (the sensitive). The superior is spiritual, containing the memory, intellect and will, conceived as 'potencies' of the rational or spiritual part of the soul. The inferior contains the 'passions' and 'appetites'. Understood in this way the soul must pass twice through the 'dark night of the senses' to purify the sensitive part of the soul. The second night is for 'aprovechados' and leads towards union with God. Thus there is an 'active night of the senses' and a 'passive night of the senses'; there is an 'active night of the spirit' and a 'passive night of the spirit'. In St. John's scheme, then, the soul must pass beyond the active and passive nights of the senses as well as the active night of the spirit. Having completed this latter phase of the ascent the soul in a state of 'nakedness' or nothing (nada) undergoes the

passive night of the spirit. If the rigours of this most terrible of nights are successfully overcome then there is no longer conflict between the sensitive and spiritual parts, and neither is there conflict within the spiritual part itself. The faculties of the soul are now emptied and purified, and cooperation can take place between the soul and the Holy Spirit.

The works of the saint we have mentioned provide us with an elaborate and systematic presentation of the sanjuanist theory and practical norms pertaining to the development of the spiritual life. As such they provide a point of departure for anyone wishing to undertake the spiritual journey, whether they are beginners or those well advanced on the interior way. Each individual may therefore discover the instructions necessary for him at his particular stage of spiritual development. Sometimes the instructions are exclusively for those who are still meditating; at others they concern those who have begun to receive contemplation. The saint's treatises are thus the complete compendium of the spiritual life.

The treatises, however, couched as they often are in the complex terminology of scholastic theology, may prove a deterrent to the unlearned, a possibility of which St. John of the Cross was not unaware, for he admits that the reader should not be surprised if the doctrine initially seems obscure, although as he progresses it is possible that 'irá entendiendo mejor lo primero, porque con lo uno se va declarando lo otro,

si lo leyere la segunda vez entiendo le parecerá más claro, y la doctrina más sana'. (Subida, Prologue, p.3)

There are those, moreover, who find St. John's prose style difficult, as Gerald Brenan admits: 'his books are tedious to read at any length because, as his translator Professor Allison Peers has complained, of his involved and cumbrous parentheses. He is also, like most Spanish writers, inclined to prolixity and repetition and will wander off the subject for pages on end'. ¹²

Miguel de Molinos, on the other hand, will make every effort to avoid possible obfuscation, for by his own admission, 'He procurado que el estilo de este libro sea devoto, casto y provechoso, sin exornación de pulidas frases, sin ostentación de elocuencias ni sutilezas teológicas'. (p. 63)

It is beyond the scope of this study to present a literary appraisal of Molinos' style - a model of elegance and clarity. But no doubt it is a style that greatly helped to make it the hugely popular text it was. 'Miguel de Molinos', eulogizes Domingo Ricart in his study, 'que formuló definitivamente la doctrina quietista en magnífica prosa castellana, es el último gran místico español, legítimo continuador de la tradición espiritual hispana'. ¹² Although Molinos intended his Guía to have a wide readership, he insists in his preface that the doctrine he will put forward 'no instruye a todo género de personas, sino solamente

a aquellas que tienen bien mortificados los sentidos y pasiones, que están ya aprovechadas y encaminadas a la oración y llamadas de Dios al interior camino'. (p. 63)

The Guía was, however, directed to both laypeople and clerics alike, whereas St. John of the Cross, as he tells us in the Prologue to the Subida, was writing in the first instance for some persons of the Holy Order of the Primitive Observance of Mount Carmel, albeit persons who had acquired a measure of detachment: 'los cuales, como ya están bien desnudos de las cosas temporales de este siglo, entenderán mejor la doctrina de la desnudez del espíritu'. (p.4, Subida, Prologue)

It is worth noting, nonetheless, that both St. John of the Cross and Molinos assert the traditional contrast between scholastic theology which is syllogistic and academic, and mystical theology, which is the fruit of the experience of love: 'la ciencia mística', says Molinos, 'no es de ingenio, sino de experiencia; no es inventada sino probada; no leída, sino recibida'. (p.61).

Although we shall indicate that there is an overall congruence of language and doctrine between St. John of the Cross and Molinos, in fact the saint is not referred to once in the Guía, and neither is his metaphor of the night used to depict the various aspects of the spiritual path. The sanjuanist concept of nada, however, is used to good effect in Molinos' third book, as we shall see. No doubt Molinos omitted more direct reference to his mentor for reasons of prudence, for it was not until 25 of January, 1675,

that the Bull of Beatification of St. John was published, and this beatification, as we know, was by no means uncontested in Rome. The full extent of Molinos' debt to St. John of the Cross emerges from his Defensa de la contemplación, for this unpublished work includes chapters of direct quotation from the works of the saint. 14

By the time Molinos was writing in the late seventeenth century the active and passive phases of the spiritual life, treated so meticulously and eruditely by St. John of the Cross, had been simplified and systematized under the concepts of acquired and infused contemplation. Thus the active aspects of the contemplative life were broadly designated by the term 'acquired contemplation' and the passive by 'infused contemplation'. In this way Molinos and other devotional writers of the period were able to obviate much of the demanding theology deployed by St. John of the Cross, thereby giving their work a broader appeal.

It is important, then, to distinguish - as Molinos does - between the state of acquired contemplation (a term first used by St. Teresa's commentator, Tomás de Jesús) and infused contemplation, for Molinos composed the Guía to direct all those ready for it to the state of acquired contemplation, which he maintains is within the capacity of all. Infused contemplation, on the contrary, may or may not occur to the individual during the course of an ordinary lifetime.

Hay...dos maneras de contemplación, una imperfecta, activa y adquirida, otra infusa y pasiva. La activa...es aquella que se puede alcanzar con nuestra diligencia, ayudados de la divina gracia; recogiendo las potencias y sentidos, preparándonos para todo lo que Dios quisiere. (p. 74)

Infused contemplation, on the other hand, is 'la cual da el Señor graciosamente a quien quiere'. (p.77)

Molinos' principal aim, therefore, is to remove obstacles that hinder the proficient in his quest, in the first instance, for acquired contemplation. It is implied, too, that without this initial preparedness infused contemplation would be unlikely to occur.

Meditation, as we have seen, is a discursive activity and usually associated with various aspects of Christ's Passion. Above all, it is an activity of directed thinking. Molinos maintains, however, that if meditation be habitual, it will not long remain in this mode; for the mind will eventually become permeated with the object of reflection. At this stage discursive meditation becomes difficult and is usually accompanied by aridities (sequedades). At this juncture Molinos is emphatic that the help of an experienced director is imperative to effect the transition from ordinary mental prayer, or meditation, to the prayer of simplicity, or acquired contemplation.

Thus with the proper guidance the deep pondering of meditation culminates, at length, in the soul finding itself at a level of consciousness characterized by an immense increase in receptivity in

which the reflective powers are almost completely in abeyance. This state is designated by Molinos, following St. John of the Cross, the state of pura fe in which the self is content to rest in this new level of vivid awareness marked by a deep peace and living stillness. Molinos insists that this state, once acquired, provides a strong impulsion to active work.

It is clear, then, that acquired contemplation is the result of a growth, or development, in the life of prayer. As A. Goodier, S.J., expresses it:

It is the result, or rather the reward, of the soul's own perseverance, and therefore, given the right conditions, it is within the reach of every earnest soul. It is what every soul with the grace of God to help it, can hope to attain if it tries. It is not essentially different from, but is rather a development of, every other kind of ordinary prayer; as St. John of the Cross describes it, it is the gradual absorption of all other kinds of prayer into one. That is why it is called 'Acquired'.¹⁵

Infused contemplation (called 'supernatural' by St. Teresa) is a gift of God, and so to attempt to acquire it is a contradiction in terms. But although infused contemplation is not consequent upon one's own efforts it may be given as a reward, as God pleases.

Infused contemplation, then, is a truly passive prayer as far as the soul is concerned, in which it must suffer the rigours of passive purgation, until at last it emerges to partake of the Spiritual Marriage, in which the spiritual growth of the earlier phases of spiritual development is made profitable for work in

the world. The difference between infused and acquired contemplation may be summarized in the words of A. Goodier, S.J.:

In acquired contemplation the soul, even when 'held' by its prayer - it is hard to find a better word - is always to some extent active. The attention at least must be retained, or the mind may go off at a tangent; there is a certain reaching forward to the object realised, which the will must encourage. In infused contemplation such action is less positive, growing still less as God assumes yet more complete control; it is a state, rather, of surrender and submission...Continuance in acquired contemplation depends chiefly on the soul's efforts; in infused contemplation it does not.

It is possible that Molinos learnt of the mysticism of St. John of the Cross from Juan Falconi, sometimes dubbed a 'prequietist', although it is quite evident that he himself had a thorough first-hand knowledge of the works of the Carmelite.

It is interesting to note, however, that Falconi, a Mercedarian, had spent time in Valencia teaching theology at the famous College of San Juan de Ribera, where Molinos had applied for the position of penitenciario. It is interesting, too, that Falconi, quoted with approval in the Guía espiritual, was a devotee of the Oratory of Valencia during his stay there. The Oratory, the first to be inaugurated in Spain on 8th September, 1645, sought to promote mental prayer, and advocated frequent communion, as did Molinos. Molinos arrived in Valencia when the Oratory was in the process of being established, and in fact

the Escuela de Cristo of which he eventually became a member, was a derivation of this Oratory. It is possible to indicate many similarities between the Guía of Molinos and the main concepts of Falconi's mysticism, most of which were derived directly from St. John of the Cross, and are very evident in Carta a un religioso, quoted from by Molinos in the Guía.

As we have indicated, Molinos' mysticism derives in good measure from the Carmelite saints, and of the two he owes by far the greater debt to St. John of the Cross. Teresa had herself established two radically different zones in prayer: that which may be acquired by one's own efforts, and what she terms supernatural prayer (infused contemplation). In her works all prayer preceding the 'Prayer of Quiet' ¹⁷ is active, or acquired. The 'Prayer of Quiet' itself cannot be attained by one's own efforts, but the soul should make the necessary preparations. Teresa, however, did not firmly fix the relationship between the two areas of prayer - meditation and contemplation - and neither did she provide norms for effecting the transition from one to the other.

It was St. John of the Cross who gave precision to the intermediate area of prayer between meditation and acquired contemplation, although acquired contemplation is implicit in 'el coloquio afectuoso' and 'recogimiento activo' of Teresa.

The specific points of doctrine relating to the spiritual life in its active and passive phases, and

common to both Molinos and St. John of the Cross, may now be summarized as follows:

- 1) The nature of contemplation as 'una simple atención general y noticia amorosa, de pura fe'.
- 2) The value and spritual efficacy of the latter, despite appearances to the contrary.
- 3) Signs to indicate the opportune moment to leave meditation for contemplation.
- 4) Necessity of good spiritual direction when contemplation commences.
- 5) Necessity of passive purifcations to attain perfect contemplation.
- 6) Necessity for the path of 'nada aniquiladora'.
- 7) The state of the soul that has attained the supreme transforming union.

We shall deal firstly with those doctrinal issues relating to the active phase of prayer (i.e. numbers (1) to (3)) which are adumbrated in the advertencias, or explanatory prefaces to the Guía, and elaborated in the first book. Subsequently we shall discuss Molinos' requirements for spiritual direction, (i.e. number (4)) largely the subject of the second book of the Guía. And finally we shall examine the doctrinal issues relating to the passive phase of contemplation, and Molinos' conception of the supreme transforming union (i.e. numbers (5) to (7)).

Before we do so we note the obvious congruence of vocabulary between the Guía and the works of St. John of the Cross.

The first advertencia, for instance, indicates the two ways of approaching God: 'el primero, por meditación y discurso; el segundo por pura fe y contemplación'. Molinos is at pains to demonstrate that meditation, while wholly laudable for beginners, is only the initial stage in the life of prayer. In this belief, as in others, he follows his master, St. John of the Cross:

La luz que aprovecha (el alma) en lo exterior para no caer, es al revés en las cosas de Dios: de manera que es mejor no ver, y tiene el alma más seguridad. El camino de la Fe es el sano y seguro. Por este han de caminar las almas para ir adelante en la virtud: cerrando los ojos a todo lo que es del sentido e inteligencia clara y particular. 18

The soul that has set aside discursive considerations, declares Molinos, 'debe no violentarse ni buscar por fuerza noticia más clara o particular'. (p. 68). Rather it should prefer the way of 'pureza de fe, noticia indistinta, general y confusa'. (p. 67). Likewise, St. John of the Cross asserts, 'poniéndose delante de Dios se pone en acto de noticia confusa, amorosa, pacífica y sosegada', (p. 61, Subida 2,19) and elsewhere 'lo que antes el alma iba sacando en veces por su trabajo de meditar en noticias particulares, ya...se ha hecho y vuelto en ella en hábito y sustancia de una noticia amorosa y general'. (p. 61, Subida, 2,14)

The transition from meditation to contemplation, and the difference between them, is therefore couched in very similar language. Those who have attained to contemplation, says St. John of the Cross, 'aprendan a estarse con atención y advertencia amorosa en Dios en aquella quietud, y que no se den nada por la imaginación... pues aquí...descansan las potencias y no obran activamente, sino pasivamente'. (p. 58, Subida, 2,12)

Similarly, Molinos declares, 'después de haberse fatigado por medio de la meditación llega a la quietud, sosiego y reposo de la contemplación, debe entonces cercenar los discursos y reposar quieta con una atención amorosa...desechando con suavidad todas las imaginaciones'. (p. 71)

Both mystics employ similar metaphors, too, to describe the gradual absorption of one prayer into the other. St. John of the Cross, for instance, declares 'cuanto el alma se pone más en espíritu, más cesa en obra de las potencias en actos particulares, porque se pone ella más en un acto general y puro, y así, cesa de obrar las potencias que caminaban para aquello donde el alma llegó, así como cesan y paran los pies acabando su jornada'. (p. 58, Subida 2,12). Adapting St. John's metaphor of travel Molinos says 'siempre se alcanza el fin, cesan los medios, y llegando al puerto la navegación'. And those souls who have attained to contemplation, says St. John of the Cross, 'ya no gusta...de aquel manjar, tan sensible, sino de otro más delicado...que no consiste en trabajar con la

imaginación, sino en reposar el alma' which Molinos paraphrases as 'la meditación obra con trabajo y con fruto; la contemplación sin trabajo, con sosiego...la meditación rumia el manjar, la contemplación le gusta'. (pp. 72-73)

Describing the passive phase of contemplation in the third book Molinos uses both traditional vocabulary to describe interior mortification (humildad interna, probeza de espíritu etc.) and the more specifically sanjuanist terms 'nada' and 'aniquilación'. This latter term is used by St. John of the Cross when he is comparing the work of purification to a putting to death, or annihilation, of all affections contrary to God: 'El verdadero espíritu', he tells us in the Subida, 'requiere aniquilación del afecto en todas las cosas particulares'. (p. 167, Subida, 3,35) ¹⁹ When he is discussing the passive purifications Molinos uses markedly similar vocabulary to that of St. John. The purifying night, says the latter, cleanses the soul 'con esta fuerte lejía y amarga purga'. (p. 234, Noche, 2,13). Those souls that God wishes to draw along the mystical way, reiterates Molinos, 'las mete en la lejía fuerte de tribulaciones y amarguras'. (p. 195). And St. John compares the soul's anguish at this time to that of 'Jonás en el vientre de aquella marina bestia', (p. 215, Noche, 2,6) a comparison also employed by Molinos in the first book of the Guía: 'hasta que el Señor te labre y purifique a su modo con estos

interiores tormentos no arrojarás al Jonás del sentido en el mar'. (p. 102). At this stage of incipient contemplation, however, both Molinos and St. John of the Cross are insistent that there comes a time when meditation ceases to satisfy and may become counterproductive.

When the soul feels 'desgana y repugnancia' in meditation, says St. John of the Cross, it is useless to continue; to such souls his advice is as follows:

Les podemos decir, que mientras aprietan, menos les aprovecha, porque, cuanto más porfían de aquella manera, se hallan peor, porque más sacan al alma de la paz espiritual. (p. 58, Subida 2,12)

And so:

A estos tales se les ha de decir, que aprendan a estarse con atención y advertencia amorosa en aquella quietud. (p. 58, Subida, 2,12)

Having once attained the state of 'pura fe' (acquired contemplation), says Molinos, the soul consigns itself to God, 'dejándose atrás todo su entender', (p. 68) without seeking to return to 'sus modos de ver y entender'. During acquired contemplation the soul will not, however, progress unhindered. Both mystics note the rôle of 'aridities' during this stage of dark contemplation, but both assert the spiritual efficacy of this time, despite appearances to the contrary. The soul, says Molinos, must remain 'quieta, firme y constante, dejando obrar el Señor'. Allowing God to act in this way is 'la ciencia verdadera'. Or as St. John of the Cross tells us:

Los que de esta manera se vieren, conviéneles que se consuelen perseverando en paciencia, no teniendo pena; confían en Dios, que no deja a los que con sencillez y recto corazón le buscan. (p. 198, Noche, 1, 10)

In his third advertencia Molinos enumerates the signs to indicate the opportune moment to leave meditation for contemplation. They may be summarized as follows: 1) inability to meditate 2) need for solitude and desire to escape conversation 3) reading becomes tedious 4) a firm decision on the part of the penitent to persist in contemplation 5) a recognition of one's unworthiness before God.

These norms are firmly in the sanjuanist tradition, and may be found also in the works of Juan Falconi (c.f. Chapter IV of Camino derecho para el cielo). In Chapter 13 of the second book of the Subida, entitled 'en que se ponen las señales que ha de haber en sí el espiritual por las cuales se conozca en qué tiempo le conviene dejar la meditación y discurso y pasar al estado de contemplación', we find the following norms set out by St. John of the Cross:

La primera es ver en sí que ya no puede meditar ni discurrir con la imaginación.

La segunda es cuando ve no le da ninguna gana de poner la imaginación ni el sentido en otras cosas particulares.

La tercera y más cierta es si el alma gusta de estarse a solas con atención amorosa a Dios sin particular consideración, en paz interior y quietud y descanso...sino sólo con la atención y noticia general amorosa. (p. 59)

It is a simple task to relate the sanjuanist norms with those of Molinos. Thus the latter's first norm

corresponds to the first of St. John of the Cross; the aversion to reading given by Molinos to the 'otras cosas particulares' of the Subida. And Molinos' requirements of solitude and perseverance in acquired contemplation clearly correspond to the third 'señal' of St. John of the Cross. Molinos' fifth norm relating to feelings of unworthiness would appear to be an additional one of his own.

Before we discuss the contents of the Guía we must assert precisely what Molinos' intention was in writing it. This intention is implicit in the subtitle: Guía espiritual: 'Que desembaraza al alma y la conduce por el interior camino para alcanzar la perfecta contemplación y el rico tesoro de la interior paz'. The initial clause of the subtitle, 'Que desembaraza al alma', reveals Molinos' first objective which is 'no asegurar el interior camino, sino desembarazarlo'. (p. 64). We must remember that the Guía is the fruit of long experience as a highly placed spiritual director in Rome, a pastoral experience which convinced Molinos of the necessity for removing obstacles encountered by laypeople attempting to advance in the spiritual life.

The task of the first book of the Guía, then, is to deal with the kind of obstacles that hinder those called to contemplation; as we have implied, these obstacles relate to the purification of the senses and the journey in faith, the necessary ascesis for those souls who are leaving meditation for acquired

contemplation. It should be said that total mortification of the senses and the journey in faith are not completed until the soul attains perfect union with God. As this is the case Molinos' ultimate objective extends far beyond the active purification of the senses, for that objective is to direct proficients to 'la perfecta contemplación y el rico tesoro de la interior paz'. And as we have indicated, Molinos insists, like St. John of the Cross, that the radical detachment wrought through passivity in mystical prayer is the ineluctable prelude to interior peace.

Section 2

The Guía and the active phase of contemplation

The first book of the Guía is entitled 'De las tinieblas, sequedades y tentaciones con que Dios purga a las almas, y del recogimiento interior o contemplación adquirida'. Its main purpose therefore is to deal with the obstacles that confront the soul in the active phase of the contemplative life in which the soul must make the necessary preparations for the passive phase which is described in the third book.

Chapter (1) sets the scene for this phase of the spiritual life with the following admonition: 'Para que Dios descanse en el alma, se ha de pacificar siempre el corazón en cualquiera inquietud, tentación y tribulación'. The first chapter then proceeds to amplify this advice with a series of elegant metaphors denoting

God's immanence in the soul, which must first be pacified to experience Him:

Has de saber²⁸ que es tu alma el centro, la morada y reino de Dios. Pero para que el gran rey descansa en ese trono de tu alma, has de procurar tenerla limpia, quieta, vacía y pacífica. (p. 79)

The metaphors of the soul as 'morada', or dwelling place, and 'trono', or throne, of God, are then modified to that of 'castillo', or castle:

El castillo fuerte para triunfar de tus enemigos visibles e invisibles y de todas sus asechanzas y tribulaciones está dentro de tu misma alma, porque allí reside la divina ayuda...éstrate allá dentro y todo quedará quieto, seguro, pacífico y sereno.

And finally the 'castillo' itself become the 'fortaleza', or fortress:

Cuando te vieres más combatida, retírate a esa región de paz, donde hallarás la fortaleza. Cuando más pusilánime, recógete a ese refugio de la oración, única arma para vencer al enemigo y sosegar la tribulación.

The first chapter, which is essentially a rapid interchange of similitudes to denote God's immanence concludes by reverting once more to the metaphor of the soul as the throne of God:

Finalmente, no te aflijas ni desconfías por verte pusilánime. Vuélvete a quietar, siempre que te alteres; porque sólo quiere este divino Señor de ti, para reposar en tu alma y hacer un rico trono de paz en ella, que busques dentro de tu corazón. (p. 80)

Chapter (2) is entitled 'Aunque el alma se vea privada del discurso, debe perseverar en la oración y

no afligirse, porque ésa es su mayor felicidad', which indicates the basically pragmatic approach Molinos now takes to the development of spirituality in those souls leaving meditation for acquired contemplation. The soul must not become alarmed, says Molinos, when it finds itself unwilling, or unable, to meditate, for such a development is quite normal. The important thing is 'no volver atrás cuando te faltare el discurso en la oración, que ésa es tu mayor felicidad, porque es señal clara te quiere hacer caminar el Señor por fe y silencio en su divina presencia'. And so begins that journey in faith described by St. John of the Cross in the Subida:

...la fe es sustancia de las cosas que se esperan. Y, aunque el entendimiento con firmeza y certeza consienta en ellas, no son cosas que al entendimiento se le descubren, porque, si se le descubriesen, no sería fe; la cual, aunque le hace cierto al entendimiento, no le hace claro, sino oscuro. (p. 42, Subida, 2,6)

Molinos goes on to explain that in this early stage of the journey in faith the soul should behave as a humble beggar before God (p. 83) or 'como un niño sencillo', who 'se arroja en el suave y seguro seno de su amada madre'. Not only is this method of prayer simple, says Molinos, but it is the most certain 'porque está libre de las operaciones de la imaginación'.

The same disparagement of the intellect as an avenue to God is to be found in the Subida:

Y no acabaríamos a este paso de traer autoridades y razones para probar y manifestar cómo no hay escalera con que el entendimiento pueda llegar a este alto

Señor entre todas las cosas criadas y que pueden caer en entendimiento.
(p. 49, Subida, 2,8)

Furthermore, says Molinos, God will require those souls He wishes to draw to Himself to journey in darkness and faith 'porque sabe muy bien la divina Majestad que para llegarse a él...no es el medio el de la propia industria y discurso, sino el de la resignación con silencio'. (p. 83). ²¹

Molinos concludes this part of the second chapter with the pleasing metaphor of the blindfolded donkey at the mill in order to illustrate the hidden advantages that accrue to the soul that perseveres in contemplation at this time:

Mira el jumentillo vendado, dando vueltas a la rueda del molino, que si bien no ve ni sabe lo que hace, obra mucho en moler el trigo, y aunque él no lo guste, tiene su dueño el fruto y el gusto.

The soul, reiterates Molinos, must persevere in blindness and in faith:

Procura...no afligirte ni volver atrás, aunque no puedes discurrir en la oración...persevera con confianza de su infinita bondad, que ha de dar la constante fe...Camina a ciegas vendada, sin pensar ni discurrir. (p. 85) ²²

The third chapter (Prosigue lo mismo) continues the theme of the primacy of contemplation, with Molinos lamenting the fact that many souls never progress beyond mere meditation 'haciéndose violencia para discurrir, aunque Dios las prive del discurso para pasarlas a otro estado y oración más perfecta'. He dwells particularly on the erroneous assumption that

God can be found by searching outside when all the time He is within. St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas are quoted to support his claim regarding God's immanence, while St. Bonaventure is cited in support of his assertion that God is not accessible through reasoning, however subtle.

Chapter (4) is entitled 'No se ha de afligir el alma ni ha de dejar la oración por verse rodeada de sequedades'. In this chapter Molinos draws a distinction initially between the prayer of beginners, which is often a delight to the senses, and called scathingly 'vida animal', and the prayer of proficients, 'vida de hombres'. This latter prayer is characterized not by 'dulzura sensible' but by 'sequedades'. The main purpose of aridities, one of the rigours of acquired contemplation, is to cure the soul of its inveterate tendency to languish in the mollifying effects of prayer. As Molinos puts it:

Asienta por cierto en tu corazón que se ha de quietar primero toda la sensibilidad para caminar por el interior camino, y el medio de que Dios se vale son las sequedades. (p.91)

The benefits of persevering during aridities are tabulated by Molinos and are essentially as follows: 1) increased desire to please God 2) greater readiness to admit faults 3) a more sensitive conscience 4) improved ability to control the passions 5) firmer resolve to persevere during the rigours of prayer 6) ultimately, greater peace in the soul and trust in God. ²³

The fifth chapter of the Guía (Prosigue lo mismo) further emphasises the distinction between the prayer of beginners, 'accidental y sensible', characterized by 'ternura, lágrimas u otros afectos', and the prayer of proficientes, characterized by 'tentaciones, sequedades y tinieblas'. To progress in prayer, Molinos insists, the soul must incline towards these latter rigours. ²⁴

Midway through this chapter Molinos reminds his readers that to be in dryness and darkness before God is not be idle:

No creas cuando estás seca y
tenebrosa en la presencia de Dios por fe
y silencio que no haces nada, que pierdes
tiempo y que estás ociosa. (p. 95)

And elsewhere: 'Ni se ha de decir que está ociosa el alma, porque aunque no obra activa, obra en ella el Espíritu Santo'. (p. 95)

A similar reminder is given by St. John of the Cross to those who may have scruples regarding time-wasting in prayer:

Y aunque más escrúpulos le vengán de
que pierde tiempo y que sería bueno hacer
otra cosa, pues en la oración no puede
hacer ni pensar nada, súfrase y estése
sosegado, como que no va allí más que a
estarse a su placer y anchura de espíritu;
porque si de suyo quiere algo obrar
con las potencias interiores, será
estorbar y perder los bienes que Dios por
medio de aquella paz y ocio del alma está
asentando e imprimiendo en ella.
(p. 199, Noche 1,11)

Chapter (6) explains the rôle of 'darkness' (tinieblas) in prayer. Here Molinos tells his readers that darkness, far from being a cause for apprehension

and doubt as to God's presence, is in reality a sure sign that He is leading the soul towards Him:

el camino de las tinieblas es de los que aprovechan, y el más perfecto, seguro y derecho, porque en ellas hace el Señor su trono. (p. 97)

St. John of the Cross, as we have noted, is equally positive in his remarks on the efficacy of dark contemplation, despite fears the soul may have to the contrary:

De donde a esta tal alma le conviene no hacer aquí caso que se le pierdan las operaciones de las potencias; antes ha de gustar que se le pierdan presto, porque, no estorbando la operación de la contemplación infusa que va Dios dando, con más abundancia pacífica la reciba, y dé lugar a que arda y se encienda en el espíritu el amor que esta oscura y secreta contemplación trae consigo y pega al alma. (p. 198, Noche 1,10)

In Chapters (6) and (7) Molinos stresses the importance of interior mortification while indicating the limited value of mortification of the flesh. The value of interior mortification lies in the resistance the soul makes in quiet contemplation to 'los enemigos invisibles' which pursue the penitent with vile and libidinous suggestions and temptations. But the soul should not turn back when it finds itself besieged with temptations that inevitably assail it during prayer: they are God's way of teaching it humility. For this reason God 'permite que vengan varios pensamientos...horribles tentaciones...soberbia, gula, lujuria, rabia, blasfemia...' (p. 103) 25

Chapter (10) continues the theme of temptations in prayer and suggests that the insidious promptings of evil and importunate thoughts should be gently brushed aside:

El remedio que has de tener en todas estas tentaciones y abominables pensamientos es despreciarlos con una sosegada disimulación, porque no hay cosa que más lastime al demonio. (p. 107)

Chapters (11) and (12) provide us with a definition of 'recogimiento interior' (acquired contemplation):

El recogimiento interior, [says Molinos] es fe y silencio en la presencia de Dios. Por aquí te has de habituar a recogerte en su presencia con una atención amorosa, como quien se entrega y une a Dios con reverencia, humildad y sumisión...sin forma, especie, modo de figura, en vista y general noticia de fe amorosa y oscura. (p. 108)

The attitude of the soul at this time, then, is essentially one of receptive listening, a quiet waiting on God, a gentle stretching towards Him with loving attention. The soul is thus in a state of dynamic passivity in which the reflective powers are held in check; certainly no attempt should be made to reactivate the mental processes by regressing to more primitive prayer which would serve only to unsettle the soul's hard-won equanimity:

No quieras en ese tiempo usar la oración vocal, porque aunque en sí es buena y santa, usarla entonces es declarada tentación. (p. 113)

Neither should any attempt be made to dam the natural stream of thoughts which should be allowed to flow undisturbed:

El propio esfuerzo que harás para resistir los pensamientos, sabe que es impedimento y dejará a tu alma más inquieta; lo que importa es despreciarlos con suavidad. (p. 109)

St. John is equally anxious to caution against any reflective activity that might disturb the soul's acquired passivity:

Y así totalmente, si el alma quiere entonces obrar de suyo habiéndose de otra manera más que con la advertencia amorosa pasiva que habernos dicho, muy pasiva y tranquilamente sin hacer acto natural, si no es como cuando Dios la uniese en algún acto, pondría impedimento a los bienes que sobrenaturalmente le está Dios comunicando en la noticia amorosa. (p. 408, Llama, 3)

In Chapter (12) Molinos introduces the sanjuanist concept of 'nada' for the first time, which in the following extract stands for the subduing of memory and intellect and the interior peace which this confers:

No mira Dios las muchas palabras...su mayor contento y gloria en aquel tiempo es ver el alma en silencio, deseosa, humilde, quieta y resignada. Camina, persevera, ora y calla, que donde no hallarás una puerta para entrarte en tu nada, conociendo que eres nada, que puedes nada, ni aun tener un buen pensamiento. (p. 113)

We shall see later in the third book that the word 'nada' is more fully exploited to denote also the subduing of self-will.

Molinos concludes Chapter (12) with a decisive rebuttal of any charge of false passivity that may be laid against the soul at this time:

Concluiré este capítulo desengañándote del común error de los que dicen que en este interior recogimiento u

oración de quietud no obran las portencias, y que está ociosa el alma sin ninguna actividad: es engaño manifiesto de poco experimentados, porque si bien no obra la memoria ni la segunda operación del entendimiento juzga ni la tercera discurre, obra la primera y más principal operación del entendimiento, por la simple aprehensión, ilustrado por la santa fe y ayudado de los divinos dones del Santo Espíritu. (p. 115) (26)

Molinos' formula, then, remains always the same: 'fijar en Dios la voluntad con repulsa de pensamientos y tentaciones, con la mayor quietud que se puede, es alto modo de orar'. The corollary of this formula is the teaching of the 'One Act' explained by Molinos in Chapters 13-15, in which the soul, having made the initial act of faith will in effect remain 'en aquel santo ocio con quietud, silencio y sosiego, procurando continuar todo el día, todo el año y toda la vida en aquel primer acto de contemplación por fe y amor'. (p. 116).

To some, this statement has sounded ambiguous, implying as it does a sort of limitless continuity of contemplation and an invitation therefore to an endless sterile passivity. But Molinos makes his meaning clear, and our interpretation of it is as follows: it is sufficient, according to Molinos, that the proficient should commit himself to God in a single act of faith; it is therefore unnecessary to keep on repeating this act of faith, just as it is unnecessary to proffer the same gift time and again. Molinos elaborates here by referring to a metaphor of Falconi:

No has de ir a multiplicar estos actos, ni a repetir sensibles afectos, porque impiden la pureza del acto

espiritual y perfecto de la voluntad;
 pues además de ser imperfectos esos
 sentimientos...no hay necesidad de
 renovarlos, como dijo muy bien el místico
 Falconi en el siguiente símil: si diese a
 un amigo una rica joya, entregada una
 vez, no hay necesidad de repetir la
 entrega diciéndole cada día: 'Señor,
 aquella joya os doy; Señor, aquella joya
 os doy. (p. 116)

In a very real sense, then, once the act of faith
 has been made, there is no revoking it, and the soul
 having consigned itself to God 'va siempre en la oración
 y fuera de ella en virtual y adquirida contemplación'.
 (p. 121) In other words, contemplation will
 persist beyond the actual time involved in its
 practice, or to be more correct, the state of faith
 induced by contemplation will persist in all one's
 activities:

Procura, pues, desde que sales
 de la oración hasta que vuelves a ella,
 no distraerte, sino andar resignada
 totalmente en la voluntad de
 Dios, para que haga y deshaga de ti y de
 todas tus cosas según su beneplácito,
 fiándote de él como de amoroso padre.
 (p. 125)

The One Act is not, then, an invitation to
 indifference, idleness and lethargy, but a statement of
 continuity in, and single-minded commitment to, the
 spiritual life, the preparation for which is that
 rigorous detachment insisted on by St. John of the
 Cross, and Molinos himself. In Chapter (13) Molinos
 uses the word 'nada' once more to emphasise the
 necessity for such a detachment:

Qué dichosa será tu alma y qué bien
 empleada estará si se entra dentro y se
 está en su nada, allá en el centro y

parte superior, sin advertir lo que hace, si está recogida o no, si le va bien o mal, si obra o no obra, sin mirar ni cuidar ni atender a cosa de sensibilidad. (p. 118)

It is a detachment recognized by all orthodox mystics as the highest point at which God can work in the soul, as we see from the following statement by Eckhart:

Perfect detachment is without regard, without either lowliness or loftiness to creatures; it has no mind to be below nor yet to be above~ it is minded to be master of itself, loving none and hating none, having neither likeness nor unlikeness; neither this nor that, to any creature; the only thing it desires to be is to be one and the same. For to be either this or that is to want something. He who is this or that is somebody, but detachment wants altogether nothing. It leaves all things unmolested. ²⁷

In Chapter (15) Molinos summarizes the orthodoxy of his teaching on the One Act as an expression of continuity in the inner life by reference to St. Thomas Aquinas:

No solamente sirve esta verdadera doctrina para el tiempo de la oración, sino también para después de ella, de noche, de día y a todas horas y en todos los ejercicios cotidianos de tu vocación, obligación y estado. Y si me dijeres que muchas veces no te acuerdas entre día de renovar la resignación, respondo que, aunque te parece que te diviertes de ella por atender a las ocupaciones cotidianas de tu oficio, como estudiar, leer, predicar, comer, beber, negociar y otras semejantes, te engañas, que no por eso sales de ella ni dejas de hacer la voluntad de Dios ni de andar en virtual oración, como dice Santo Tomás. (p. 124)

And so, concludes Molinos, 'el alma interior que tiene hábito de ir cada día a sus horas señaladas a la oración ... va continuamente en la presencia de Dios'. (p. 127)

The subject of Chapter (16) is the rôle of meditation on Christ's Passion as it relates to acquired contemplation, and which we considered in Chapter (3) of this thesis. It is generally agreed that Molinos is setting out the teaching of St. Teresa in this matter, as he himself claims:

Este es el modo que asegura
Santa Teresa en los contemplativos, y el
que destierra las opiniones ruidosas de
algunos escolásticos. pp. 130-131)

Molinos concludes the first book of the Guía with a fine chapter entitled 'Del silencio interno y místico' in which he describes the quiet culmination of the active phase of the mystical ascent, when the soul has finally set aside discursive reasoning to rest at a new supraconceptual level of peace and receptivity: 'no hablando, no deseando ni pensando, se llega al verdadero y perfecto silencio místico, en el cual habla Dios con el alma'. (p. 132)

It is a state of patient waiting on God, a calm prelude to the rigorous passive purgations of the soul described in the third book. Molinos gently reminds his readers that 'La perfección del alma no consiste en hablar ni en pensar mucho en Dios, sino en amarle mucho. Alcánzase este amor por medio de la resignación perfecta y el silencio interior'. (pp. 132-133)

To sum up, Book One of the Guía is concerned with the transition from meditation to acquired contemplation and is directed to those who no longer find meditation satisfying and who wish to proceed to a deeper imageless contemplation. In effect it is a presentation of the implications arising from the classic norms set down by St. John of the Cross regarding the opportune time to leave meditation for contemplation, in particular his third norm which states: 'La tercera y más cierta es si el alma gusta de estarse a solas con atención amorosa a Dios sin particular consideración, en paz interior y quietud y descanso...sino sólo con la atención y noticia general amorosa'.

The preconditions for the acquisition of contemplation as 'atención amorosa a Dios...en paz interior y quietud' are carefully and systematically explored by Molinos in this first book which is effectively a distillation of St. John's teaching on the active night of the senses and spirit. Although there is no specific mention of the sanjuanist 'nights' Molinos does employ the traditional imagery of darkness, as well as St. John's vocabulary, to denote the wordless silence of the journey in faith, in which the workings of the intellect are gradually stilled.

The journey in faith, however, as Molinos points out, is not without its trials, for the soul deprived of its habitual support of senses and intellect will experience periods of dryness, periods which can, and

should, be borne with patience and fortitude. In brief, Molinos gives instruction to acquire the dynamic passivity of contemplation, distinguished at this stage by periods of aridity, often bitter and painful, but also by intervals of peace and tranquillity.

And finally, Molinos makes it clear that the knowledge pertaining to contemplation is a secret, silent, or hidden knowledge, without conceptual form or feature. Above all, it is a knowledge that is not produced by the intellect, but rather received by it, a teaching that reproduces the essential insight of St. John of the Cross on the value of quiet passivity at this stage of prayer:

La cual noticia amorosa...se recibe pasivamente en el alma al modo de Dios sobrenatural, y no al modo del alma natural, síguese que para recibirla ha de estar esta alma muy aniquilada en sus operaciones naturales, desembarazada, ociosa, quieta y pacífica y serena al modo de Dios. (p. 408, Llama, 3) ²⁸

Section 3

The Guía and Spiritual Direction

The second book of the Guía has a threefold purpose; it is entitled 'Del padre espiritual y su obediencia, del celo indiscreto y de las penitencias interiores y exteriores'. Molinos' first objective in this book is to impress on his readers the importance of good spiritual direction together with the need for implicit trust in a competent director. Chapter (1) takes up these themes straight away; it is headed 'Para

vencer las astucias del enemigo, el mayor remedio es sujetarse a un padre espiritual'.

With irrefutable logic Molinos asks, 'Si para lo exterior y aparente es menester maestro, qué será para lo interior y secreto ' (p. 135). He then proceeds to counsel utmost caution in the choice of director:

'Antes que se elija el padre espiritual se ha de pensar bien...porque es materia gravísima'. Similar caution is advised by St. John of the Cross: 'grandemente le conviene al alma que quiere ir adelante en el recogimiento y perfección, mirar en cuyas manos se pone.' (p. 406, Llama, 3).

Molinos insists that if the guide lacks experience he should be given up in favour of one who is experienced: 'El no ser...experimentada la guía es la principal causa para dejarla y elegir otra'. Experience in this context refers to experience of the higher reaches of prayer, i.e. beyond meditation. It is well known that St. Teresa, for instance, suffered at the hands of poor directors in this sense. St. John, too, advises caution when dealing with directors in the same sense. ²⁹

In chapter (2) Molinos interrupts his theme of direction to advise against frequent reading of books on mysticism that are not the fruit of practical experience 'porque...las llena de noticias discursivas que embarazan sumamente'. (p. 139)

Chapters (3) and (4) expatiate on the dangers of excessive zeal in the religious life. Such zeal, says Molinos, is quite likely a disguised self-regard, 'una vana complacencia, de una afectación industriosa y estimación propia, enemigos todos de la paz del alma'. The one thing needful, says Molinos, is to serve God with simplicity 'procurando templar tu desordenado fervor para que reine en tu alma la tranquilidad'. (p.142)

'No pienses', concludes Molinos in these chapters, 'que estima Dios más a quien más hace; aquél es más amado que es más humilde.' (p. 143) - a sentiment which recalls the following dictum of St. John of the Cross:

Es más precioso delante de él [Dios] y del alma un poquito de este amor puro y más provecho hace a la Iglesia...que todas esas otras obras [exteriores] juntas. (p. 340, Cántico, 28).

In Chapter (5) Molinos returns to his theme of spiritual direction. He considers three qualities the director must possess: 'luz o ciencia'; 'experiencia'; and 'divina vocación'. Without the last named quality particularly 'todo es vanidad, satisfacción y propia estima'. For this reason the aspiring director should remain resigned until God calls him 'para el beneficio de las almas'; the vocation of director is for Molinos 'un ministerio de calidad que no habernos nosotros jamás de poner en él, hasta que Dios nos ponga por medio de los superiores.' (p. 146)

Chapter (6) consists of a series of short paragraphs giving epigrammatic advice and instruction to confessors and spiritual directors. Molinos is

emphatic here in his denunciation of inexperienced guides who force those to meditate who are called to contemplation, 'mandándolas que mediten por fuerza, aunque no puedan, con lo cual las aturden y arruinan.' (p. 144). St. John of the Cross is equally scathing in his attacks on those directors who fail to see the necessity for progress beyond meditation:

en este estado en ninguna manera la han de imponer en que medite...porque sería poner obstáculo al principal agente, que...es Dios...y así, entonces el alma también se ha de andar sólo con advertencia amorosa a Dios...pasivamente sin hacer de suyo diligencias. (p. 407, Llama, 3)

Molinos enumerates in this chapter various pitfalls, some of a sexual nature, that guides should avoid: 'Del nombre de hija ha de usar lo menos que pueda...porque es peligrosísimo'; 'El confesor...no ha de visitar jamás las hijas espirituales'; 'Si el padre espiritual muestra con singularidad a alguna hija más afición, es de grandísima inquietud para las otras'; and 'los empleos que ha de admitir el confesor fuera del confesionario han de ser pocos, porque Dios no le quiere agente de negoicos'. (p. 149)

Chapter (7) continues Molinos' advice to confessors and directors of souls and underscores the failings and often indifferent calibre of many of the directors of his day in words which could have done little to endear him to the ecclesiastical authorities:

Aunque hay muchos confesores, no todos son buenos, porque unos saben poco; otros son muy ignorantes; otros se asen a los

aplausos de la gente noblel; otros buscan los favores de los penitentes. (p. 152)

In the following statement he seems to be implying that penitents habitually made demands on a complacent clergy that they were unable to fulfil:

Para confesar aún se hallan algunos buenos, pero para gobernar espíritus por el camino místico son tan pocos, que dijo el Padre Maestro Juan de Avila no había entre mil uno. (p. 153)

The reason for this paucity of good directors, declares Molinos, is that 'hay pocos que se dispongan a recibir la ciencia mística.' (p. 153). And those who arrogate to themselves the task of leading souls without the necessary experience 'proceden a ciegas'. (p. 155). In Chapter (8) (Prosigue lo mismo) Molinos is specific regarding the faults of certain guides; some of them, says Molinos, hold on to their penitents at all costs, not allowing them the freedom to approach other directors who may be more experienced:

No les permiten a las almas este desahogo por el temor que tienen de perderlas. (p. 156)

St. John of the Cross noted similar shortcomings in some of the directors of his day, and is more vitriolic than Molinos in his denunciation of them. ³⁰

Having dealt at length with the sort of director to avoid in the spiritual quest, Molinos is equally emphatic concerning the obedience due to the worthy director. Chapters 9-12 of this second book of the Guía are among those most often mutilated in Protestant translations, perhaps because of reservations regarding

the very strict emphasis Molinos places on obedience to one's director. It is important therefore that we understand what Molinos had in mind with his notion of 'obedience'. In our view, there is nothing servile, negative or humiliating in Molinos' insistence on obedience to the director of one's choice, for obedience in the context in which Molinos uses it is a necessary prelude to the dynamic passivity of mystical prayer. Put differently, obedience to the director is the surest means of negating self-will to arrive at that dynamic passivity which is the goal of the spiritual endeavour as conceived by Molinos. He is quite specific on this point:

no llegarás jamás al monte de la perfección ni al trono de la interior paz si te gobiernas por tu propia voluntad... Tu propia dirección y juicio, como a rebeldes, los has de avasallar, disponer y quemar en el fuego de la obediencia. (p. 158)

Molinos is in complete agreement here with St. John of the Cross, for both mystics regard the spiritual director as ultimately acting on God's behalf. As Molinos puts it:

Es medio, pues, más eficaz para hacer progreso en el camino del espíritu es imprimirse en el corazón que su espiritual director está en lugar de Dios, que cuanto ordena y dice es dicho y ordenado por su divina boca. (p. 159)

And now St. John of the Cross:

Advierten estos tales que guían las almas, y consideren que el principal agente y guía y movedor de las almas en este negocio no son ellos sino el Espíritu Santo... y que ellos sólo

son instrumentos para enderezarlas en la perfección por la fe y ley de Dios. (p. 140-11, Llama, 3)

In Chapter (10) Molinos provides us with his definition of obedience:

Ha de ser pues la obediencia, para ser perfecta, voluntaria, pura, pronta, alegre, interior, ciega y perseverante. Voluntaria, sin fuerza y sin temor; pura, sin interés terreno, sin respeto mundano o amor propio, puramente por Dios; pronta, sin réplica, sin excusa y sin dilación; alegre, sin aflicción interior y con diligencia; interior, no sólo ha de ser exterior y aparente, sino de ánimo y de corazón; ciega, sin juicio propio, sujetándolo con la voluntad a aquella de quien manda, sin investigar la intención, el fin o la razón de la obediencia; perseverante, con firmeza y constancia hasta morir. (pp. 161-62)

These precepts, according to Molinos, are completely orthodox, and he quotes St. Bonaventure and St. Teresa in support (p. 162). In short, obedience to one's director, conceived as a loving trust by Molinos, is central to the Guía's teaching on spirituality. Progress along the mystical path is therefore inconceivable without it, as is the relinquishing of self-love that it implies.

The director does, of course, have a purely practical function, apart from the psychological one we have indicated. The director is he who guides the soul through the perils of the 'nights', through the rigours of aridities and temptations which beset the penitent on the mystical way. In this respect the task of the guide is akin to that of a doctor:

Si creas y obedeces, aunque lo sientas vivamente, es señal de que estás

viva y mal mortificada; pero te adelantarás con aquella violenta y rigurosa medicina. (p. 165)

The most important function of the director, however, is his psychological one, which is to help eradicate the disease of self-will:

Es, pues, necesario usar el remedio del enfermo que quiere sanar, que es no creer a nuestros juicios y antojos, sino al acertado parecer del espiritual y experimentado médico, sin réplica y sin excusa, despreciando las razones aparentes del amor propio; que si de esta manera obedecemos, sanaremos de cierto y quedará vencido el propio amor, enemigo de la quietud, de la paz, de la perfección y del espíritu. (p. 167)

Chapter (13) is entitled 'La frecuente comunión es medio eficaz para alcanzar todas las virtudes, y en especial la interior paz'. It is clear from what follows that Molinos considers frequent communion, together with uncompromising obedience to the director of one's choice, as a linchpin in his doctrine on the spiritual life. The reason for his enthusiastic advocacy of frequent communion is clear: it is a sure means of encouraging that passivity which is the goal of the mystical journey; a most excellent way of ensuring a proper humility before God:

Si tú llegas con humildad, con deseo de hacer la divina voluntad...cada día le puedes recibir y cada día te mejorarás y aprovecharás. (p. 171)

And elsewhere:

En este escollo del deseo de hacer la divina voluntad se han de romper todas las dificultades y vencer todos los escrúpulos, las tentaciones, las dudas, los

contradicciones. Y...la mejor preparación es comulgarse el alma con frecuencia. (p. 170)

Molinos goes on to describe two ways of preparation for communion, one for 'almas exteriores' and another for 'almas interiores'. Exterior souls must first confess, and then withdraw from worldly affairs before communion, remaining in silence to meditate on what they are to receive. Interior souls must strive to live in ever greater humility and detachment in acquired contemplation; in this way their whole life is 'una continua y perfecta preparación'.

Chapter (15) (Prosigue lo mismo) is in effect a eulogy on the virtues of communion, an elaborate encomium by Molinos on the beauty of the Eucharist:

¡Que quiera Dios, siendo quien es,
comunicarse a mi alma! ¡Que quiera Dios
hacer un recíproco vínculo de unión con
ella, siendo la misma miseria! ¡Oh, si
nos quemásemos en esta ardiente zarza!
¡Oh, si nos hiciésemos un espíritu con
este Señor soberano! (p. 173)

Chapters (15) to (17) contain unexceptionable advice regarding bodily penances and their sometimes pernicious effects. Molinos, like St. John of the Cross, does not necessarily reject bodily mortification, but points out that it is but one aspect of spirituality, and a relatively unimportant one at that, and certainly not one to be overindulged:

Desengáñate que, aunque son buenas las mortificaciones y exteriores penitencias que tú mismo tomarás por tu mano, no alcanzarás por sólo ellas la perfección, porque aunque doman el cuerpo, no purifican el alma. (p. 179)

Finally, Molinos quotes the celebrated excessive bodily penances of Heinrich Suso as a warning against such overindulgence. ³¹

The second book of the Guía concludes with those chapters to which we alluded in Chapter (3) of this thesis, and which indicate Molinos' essentially pragmatic and positive approach to wrongdoing. They are entitled 'Como se ha de portar el alma en los defectos que cometiere para no inquietarse y para sacar fruto de ellos'.

It is clear from these two chapters that Molinos is against excessive compunction for the same reason he is against unrestrained bodily penances: both are unwarranted responses to natural human weakness. And so the second book concludes on a markedly optimistic note, with Molinos giving his readers a forceful reminder of God's mercy:

aunque debes andar con mucho cuidado en no caer en ningún defecto ni imperfección, si te vieres caído una y mil veces, debes usar el remedio que te he dado, que es la amorosa confianza en la divina misericordia. (p. 183)

To sum up, this second book of the Guía has one overriding concern: to state the paramount importance of good spiritual direction. Molinos, like St. John of the Cross, counsels utmost caution in the choice of director, who should be experienced in the higher reaches of prayer, and so able to guide the penitent through those times which present especial difficulty, such as the transition from meditation to acquired

contemplation. Molinos and St. John also stress the need for strict obedience to one's director, not out of misplaced servility, but because implicit trust in him is the surest means of encouraging a proper humility before God, on whose behalf the director is acting. Molinos also recommends frequent communion for the same reason: it encourages humility, and by extension is conducive to the passivity of contemplation that he is advocating. By the same token he speaks out against excessive zeal in the religious life, as he does against excessive compunction and bodily penances, for all of these, in Molinos' view, are an inducement to spiritual pride.

Section 4

The Guía and the Passive Phase of Contemplation

The third book of the Guía has the following comprehensive title: 'De los espirituales martirios con que Dios purga a las almas, de la contemplación infusa y pasiva, de la resignación perfecta, humildad interna, divina sabiduría, verdadera aniquilación e interior paz'. In essence it describes how God purifies the soul passively and brings its faith and love to the perfection adumbrated in the first book. Both Molinos and St. John stress that the passive purifications are different both in degree and in kind from the active purifications, which are the subject of the first book of the Guía. In brief, the soul is incapable of completing its own purification, for this would impede

the work of the spirit, which is God: the active purifications are of the 'natural' order, initiated by man, the passive of the 'supernatural', given by God:

Y esto está claro, porque si el alma entonces quiere obrar por fuerza, no ha de ser su obra más que natural...y así, si entonces el alma quiere obrar de fuerza...ha de impedir con su obra activa la pasiva que Dios le está comunicando, que es el espíritu. (p. 132, Subida, 3,13)

In practical terms the third book describes the passive purifications attendant on the sanjuanist passive nights of the senses and spirit to attain the supreme transforming union in God: in Molinos' terms, 'el rico tesoro de la interior paz'. The radical and absolute detachment required in the passive purifications is first delineated in the Subida in a series of celebrated maxims which centre on the word 'nada':

Para venir a gustarlo todo,
no quieras tener gusto en nada;
para venir a poseerlo todo,
no quieras poseer algo en nada;
para venir a serlo todo
no quieras ser algo en nada;
para venir saberlo todo,
no quieras saber algo en nada.
(p. 30, Subida, 1,13)

For Molinos, as for St. John of the Cross, 'nada' embraces notions of humility, poverty of spirit, annihilation of the senses, intellect and self-will, all as preconditions for union with God. To attain interior peace (the passive experience of God in the soul) Molinos insists that the soul must travel the path of 'nada aniquiladora', including the passive

purifications, designated by St. John as the dark night of the senses and spirit.

Chapters (1) and (2), entitled 'La diferencia que hay del hombre exterior al interior', constitute a link between the first and third books in that they contain a restatement of a theme common to both: that is, the difference between exterior and interior spirituality. These chapters reassert one of Molinos' fundamental premisses, that the life of prayer has a dual aspect, an exterior and an interior one, which are not mutually exclusive, but which are ineluctably and inextricably bound together. Molinos insists here, as he does throughout the Guía, that there are two ways of approach to God, there are two sorts of prayer, there are two types of spiritual men, there are two kinds of contemplation, and as we shall see shortly, two kinds of passive purification. And these differentiations permeate the whole of the Guía, distinguishing Molinos' spirituality from the monoideism that characterized the late seventeenth-century Roman Catholic conception of spirituality.

It is not that Molinos despised meditation, as the Jesuits said he did, but that it confined men to one aspect of reality: the exterior. He is therefore insisting in these chapters that the transforming truth lies beyond these merely exterior aspects of spirituality:

Estas almas, como han pasado ya por la interior mortificación y Dios las ha purgado...son señoras de sí mismas porque

en todo se han vencido y negado, y así
viven con gran sosiego y paz interior.(p. 186)

Molinos is saying, then, that the contrast is not between a bad system - the exterior way of meditation - and a good one - the interior way of contemplation - but between a good way and a better way. And it is the interior way of contemplation which provides the Guía with its single, positive theme: the dynamic passivity of interior peace.

Before we proceed with, and complete, our analysis of the Guía, it will be useful at this point briefly to rehearse some of the conclusions we reached in our first chapter relating to the Guía and the concept of dynamic passivity. It will be remembered that Chapter (1) presented the psychological, philosophical and theological aspects of passivity necessary to refute any argument that Miguel de Molinos was inculcating a quietistic passivity in his Guía.

We drew attention initially to the untenability in psychological terms of the concept of a pure passivity; D.T. Suzuki explains the invalidity of such a notion in this way:

We realize that...passivity is made possible only when there is something intensely active within ourselves... the suppression of the self does not mean its utter annihilation, but its perfect readiness to receive a higher power into it. In this receptivity we must not forget that there is a power which receives, which has been made passive. The absolute 'other-power' doctrine is not psychologically valid.³²

Neither is it possible, metaphysically speaking, to conceive of a passivity in the created universe without its complementary notion of activity. Indeed we found that many metaphysical systems have emphasised this inseparability and interrelatedness of the functions of passivity and activity in the created world. The dualism of activity and passivity is central, for instance, to the doctrine of Taoism, in which the yin principle represents passivity and the yang activity, as J.C. Cooper explains:

The yin principle rises from rest, the yang is generated by motion... they are the ever-alternating and inseparable modes of passivity and activity, inertia and energy of the primordial power in creation, which₃ must continue in the manifest world.

And elsewhere:

The realm in question is metaphysical first and, by analogy, the mental and physical. It is the realm of relationships and it is this essentially creative duality of the yin-yang that gives rise to...all the balance of opposites and complementary qualities of the phenomenal world.₃₄

Our analysis of passivity in relation to spirituality showed that Christianity has traditionally upheld the primacy of the contemplative life over the active life. St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, asserts the apparent paradox that contemplation is the highest form of human activity. In this belief he shares Aristotle's conception of the contemplative life as the expression of the nous, man's highest part. The active life was considered necessary and commendable by

Aquinas, provided, however, it tended always to well-being (beatitudo). And the prerequisite for well-being is the mortification of one's body and passions, a prerequisite well in evidence in the devotional literature of Golden-Age Spain, as it is in the Guía espiritual.

One of the conclusions we reached in our first chapter was that the Guía expresses an orthodox mystical passivity by equating Molinos' expression of it with Teilhard de Chardin's notion of passivity as a 'communion in resignation' which necessarily coincides with the 'maximum of fidelity to the human task'; for as Teilhard says elsewhere:

there is no attitude which the Gospel is so bitterly reproached with having fostered as that of passivity in the face of evil... It is therefore of supreme importance for the Christian to understand and live submission to the will of God in the active sense...the only orthodox sense.³⁵

True passivity, then, as described by Molinos, is synonymous with creativity; and the dynamic passivity of mystical prayer as conceived by him in the Guía is held to be the Christian's highest expression of freedom and activity.

Conversely, we concluded also from the Guía that the freedom of dynamic passivity is as much to do with waiting upon God in the world as acting within it. For waiting on the world and acting within it are for Molinos nothing other than the dual aspects of the activity of loving; and it is this dignity of waiting

on God as a necessary condition of loving, which imbues Molinos' requirements of man before God with a stoic austerity that Vanstone has captured in his use of the word 'passibility' in relation to Christ. It is a passibility we equate with Molinos' conception of dynamic passivity:

There is in the God Who is disclosed in Jesus first the glory of signs and mighty works - the glory of free...activity and achievement; but when Jesus destines himself...to wait at the end in exposure and helplessness, there is disclosed...that same glory which we dimly perceive in our own experience when, because we love, we destine ourselves to wait and to be exposed and to receive. The glory of God which finally appears in the waiting figure in the Garden is the glory of that...activity which always, in the end, destines itself to waiting - the activity of loving... The most glorious activity of God is that He hands Himself over, and, in His free activity of loving, surrenders His own impassibility.³⁸

Such a surrendering of impassibility, which eventuates in a loving awareness of the soul's utter dependence on God, is evoked by Molinos in the third book of his Guía with an insistent use of the words aniquilación, humildad perfecta and nada, which for him are equivalent concepts, and which are synonymous with the complete eradication of self-will. It is these terms that impart to this third book of the Guía a compelling gravitas, a gravitas that underscores the dignity Molinos ascribes to a sensitive waiting on the world, of being 'exposed to and receptive of its power of meaning':

Conociendo que eres nada, que puedes nada y que vales nada, abrazarás con quietud las pasivas sequedades, tolerarás las horribles desolaciones, sufrirás los espirituales martirios e interiores tormentos. Por medio de esa nada has de morir en ti misma de muchas maneras, en todos tiempos y a todas horas. Y cuanto más fueres muriendo, tanto más te irás profundando en tu miseria y bajeza y tanto más te irá el Señor elevando, y a sí mismo uniendo. (p. 247)

The gravitas and austerity of these pages are matched, however, by those that speak of the warmth of union:

Sabe que cuanto más el alma se desnuda, tanto más se va entrando en la interior soledad y tanto más queda de Dios vestida; y cuanto más el alma queda sola y vacía de sí misma, tanto más el divino espíritu la llena...

No hay vida más beata que la solitaria; porque en esta feliz vida se da Dios todo a la criatura y la criatura todo a Dios por una íntima y suave unión de amor. (p. 222)

Before this stage is reached, however, Molinos will leave his readers in no doubt as to its inescapable precondition, and which he states as the heading of Chapter (3): 'El medio para alcanzar la interior paz no es el gusto sensible ni el espiritual consuelo, sino la negación del amor propio'.

'Esta hidra de siete cabezas del amor propio', he tells us picturesquely, 'se ha de degollar para llegar a la cumbre del alto monte de la paz'. (p. 193)

We have arrived now at the final working out of what Molinos has previously declared to be the main concern of the Guía ('asunto de este libro') in his fourth advertencia, or preface, and which is to

'desarraigar la rebeldía de nuestra propia voluntad para alcanzar la interior paz'. 'Esta conformidad es el yugo suave', says Molinos, 'que nos introduce en la región de la paz y serenidad interior'³⁷, all of which precepts are to be found in the Subida, with very similar wording:

'mi yugo es suave y mi carga ligera' (Matth., XI,30), la cual es la cruz; porque si el hombre se determina a sujetarse a llevar esta cruz, que es un determinarse de veras a querer hallar y llevar trabajo en todas las cosas por Dios, en todas ellas hallará grande alivio y suavidad para andar este camino así, desnudo de todo, sin querer nada. (p. 46, Subida, 2,7)

'La rebeldía de nuestra voluntad', asserts Molinos, 'es la causa principal de nuestra inquietud y que por no sujetarnos al yugo suave de la divina, padecemos tantas turbaciones y desasosiegos'. (p. 78).

And the final putting to death of self-regard is achieved through the passive purifications which God prescribes for those whom he calls to infused contemplation. These passive purifications are the subject of chapters four to six where Molinos adheres closely to the sanjuanist doctrine, which may be summarized as follows: the light received in contemplation, says St. John, serves to emphasise the soul's wretchedness in contrast to God's purity:

esta pena en el alma a causa de su impureza es inmensa cuando de veras es embestida de esta divina luz, porque embistiéndose en el alma esta luz pura...siéntese el alma tan impura y miserable, que le parece estar Dios contra ella, y que ella está hecha contraria a Dios.(p. 214, Noche, 2,5)

Moreover, continued perseverance in contemplation finally renders the soul's faculties inoperative, thus preparing them for God's work, for now, St. John tells us, 'Dios es el que anda...haciendo pasivamente la obra en el alma; por eso ella no puede nada; de donde ni rezar ni asistir con advertencia a las cosas divinas puede, ni menos en las demás cosas y tratos temporales.' (p. 220, Noche, 2,8)

The resulting state, according to St. John, is one of intense desolation, captured by him with the following striking image of abject passivity: 'hasta que el Señor acabe de purgarla...ningún medio ni remedio le sirve ni aprovecha para su dolor...como el que tienen aprisionado en una oscura mazmorra atado de pies y manos, sin poderse mover ni ver.' (p. 218, Noche, 2,7). In addition, this feeling of abject passivity, abandonment and frustration is accompanied by an anxious hunger to reciprocate the love that God is infusing in the soul: 'siéntese aquí el espíritu apasionado en mucho amor...que, por cuanto este amor es infuso, es más pasivo que activo, y así engendra en el alma pasión fuerte de amor.' (p. 228, Noche 2,11). Feelings of desolation already present in the soul are thus compounded by an intense yearning to return God's initiative of love:

Hácese a esta alma todo angosto;
no cabe en sí, no cabe en el cielo ni en
la tierra, y llénase de dolores hasta las
tinieblas...es un penar y padecer sin
consuelo de cierta esperanza de alguna
luz y bien espiritual como aquí lo padece

el alma. De donde el ansia y pena de esta alma en esta inflamación de amor es mayor, por cuanto es multiplicado de dos partes: lo uno, de parte de las tinieblas espirituales en que se ve que con sus dudas y recelos la afligen, lo otro, de parte del amor de Dios, que la inflama y estimula.(p. 229, Noche, 2,11)

It is in chapters four to six that Molinos also describes these two ways that God uses to purify the soul passively.

The first purification, according to him, 'es con amargas aguas de affliciones, tentaciones, angustias, apreturas e interiores tormentos'; and the second 'es con fuego ardiente de inflamado amor, impaciente y hambriento'. (p. 195) The two ways for Molinos - as for St. John of the Cross - are interdependent:

Tal vez se vale [Dios] de entrambos [modos] en aquellas almas, que quiere colmar de gracias, de amor, de luz y de paz interior... Ya las mete en la lejía fuerte de tribulaciones y amarguras internas y externas, abrasándolas con el fuego de la rigurosa tentación...ya en el crisol del amor ansioso y celoso. (p.195)

Molinos, like St. John, emphasises the greater intensity and efficacy of the latter purification of 'amor ansioso y celoso':

El otro martirio, más útil y meritorio en las almas ya aprovechadas en la perfección y alta contemplación, es un fuego del amor divino que abrasa al alma y hace que pene con el mismo amor...todo es suspirar, padecer y morir de amor. (p.204)

And he, too, gives us graphic descriptions of the soul's trials at this time:

el mismo Señor te dispondrá y preparará pasivamente...con el fuego de la tribulación y tormento interior, sin más disposición de tu parte que el

consentimiento en la interior y exterior cruz. Experimentarás dentro de ti misma la pasiva sequedad, las tinieblas, las angustias, las contradicciones, la repugnancia continua, los interiores desamparos, las horribles desolaciones. (p. 197-8)

At the close of Chapter (5) he puts the sufferings of the soul in passive purgation in the following perspective:

Aunque este penoso martirio de la horrible desolación y pasiva purgación es tan tremendo que con razón le dan nombre de infierno los místicos (porque parece imposible vivir un solo instante con tan atroz tormento, de tal manera que se puede decir con mucha verdad que el que lo padece vive muriendo y muriendo vive una prolongada muerte), con todo eso sabe que es necesario sufrirlo para llegar a la dulce, suave y abundante riqueza de la alta contemplación y amorosa unión. (p.202)

The link between this extract from the Guía and the following from the Noche oscura describing the same passive purgation could not be more obvious, including as it does reference to the 'infierno' of the mystics:

cuando esta contemplación purgativa aprieta, sombra de muerte y gemidos de muerte y dolores de infierno siente el alma muy a lo vivo, que consiste en sentirse sin Dios, y castigada y arrojada e indigna de Él. (p. 216, Noche 2,6)

As we have mentioned in an earlier section the purgations of infused contemplation involve a complete emptying of self-will comprising both natural attachments and spiritual attachments - these latter perhaps the most insidious of all and called 'spiritual gluttony' by St. John of the Cross; he has the following harsh words to say to those inclined to such 'gluttony':

muchos de éstos, engolosinados con el sabor y gusto que hallan...procuran más el sabor del espíritu que la pureza y discreción de él, que es lo que Dios mira y acepta en todo el camino espiritual. (p. 191, Noche, 1,6)

Molinos, too, is aware of the danger of resting and delighting exclusively in the heights of the soul:

También está el alma impedida por el desordenado deseo de los sublimes dones, por el apetito de sentir el espiritual consuelo, por el apego a las infusas y divinas gracias, entreteniéndose en ellas y deseando muchas otras para gozarlas. (p. 197)

Chapters (7) to (11) are in the nature of a homily on humility, and give instruction on how the soul must predispose itself before infused contemplation can be considered a possibility. There are several longueurs in these pages as Molinos strives to drive home his central message: infused contemplation, if it is to be given at all, is contingent on the complete eradication of self-will. There is an abundance of phrases such as 'Resígnate y niegate en todo' (p. 206); 'la total transformación con Dios es necesario que se pierda y niegue a su vivir' (p. 209); 'debe primero morir en sí misma' (p. 210); 'si quieres ser bienaventurada, aprende a menospreciar y a ser menospreciada'. (p.217).

Molinos also illustrates in these pages that the difference between spiritual persons derives from the grade of humility to which each has attained, as we see from the following collation of extracts:

La diversidad de estados entre los espirituales sólo consiste en no morirse todos igualmente.(p. 210)

Hay algunas almas que buscan el descanso; otras, sin buscarlo, gustan de él; otras gustan de la pena; y otras la buscan. Las primeras no andan nada; las segundas caminan; las terceras corren y las cuartas vuelan. (p.211)

Hay algunas almas que, aunque tienen oración, por no mortificarse, siempre se quedan imperfectas y llenas de propio amor. Ten por verdadera máxima, que el alma de sí misma despreciada y que en su conocimiento es nada, nadie la puede hacer agravio ni injuria. Finalmente, espera, sufre, calla y ten paciencia; nada te turbe, nada te espante, que todo se acaba, sólo Dios no se muda, y la paciencia todo lo alcanza; quien a Dios tiene, todo lo tiene; quien a Dios no tiene, todo le falta. (p. 212)³⁸

Sabrás que hay dos maneras de humildad, una falsa y fingida y otra verdadera. La fingida es de aquellos que, como el agua que ha de subir, toman una caída exterior y artificiosa de rendimiento, para subir luego. (p. 215)

The strictures on humility in Chapters (7) to (10) are then neatly summarized, aphoristically, in Chapter (11), entitled 'máximas para conocer el corazón sencillo, humilde y verdadero'.

Chapter (12) is in effect a prelude to the following chapters which deal directly with infused contemplation; its theme is that of complete detachment, encapsulated in the elegant metaphor of 'la soledad interior'. It contains some lines of lyrical intensity:

Si con esta libertad dieres a Dios el alma desapegada, libre y sola, serás la más feliz de las criaturas de la tierra; porque en esta santa soledad tiene el Altísimo su habitación secreta. En este desierto y paraíso se deja Dios tratar, y solamente en este interior retiro se oye aquella maravillosa, eficaz interior y divina voz. (p.222)

They are lines which recall in their lyrical focus on solitude certain passages of the Cántico espiritual:

Mi Amado, las montañas,
los valles solitarios, nemorosos,
las ínsulas extrañas,
los ríos sonorosos. (p. 259)

Chapters (13) and (14) deal directly with the nature of infused contemplation, providing us with the following definition:

Es, pues, la sencilla, pura, infusa y pasiva contempación una experimental e íntima manifestación que da Dios de sí mismo, de su bondad, de su paz y de su dulzura, cuyo objeto es Dios puro, inefable, abstraído de todos los particulares sentimientos dentro del silencio interno. Pero es Dios gustoso, Dios que nos atrae, Dios que dulcemente nos levanta con un modo espiritual y purísimo: don admirable que le concede su Majestad a quien quiere, como quiere y cuando quiere, y por el tiempo que quiere. (p.225)

The unitive state of infused contemplation described in the third book of the Guía may thus be the prize of those who have attained complete poverty of spirit - called NADA by Molinos - a state which however transient it may be confers an ineffable interior peace. Those who have followed the Guía espiritual of Molinos, with the aid of a competent and sympathetic director, may thus attain to an involuntary passivity in which God lifts to Himself the prepared soul.

Chapter (15) is strangely perfunctory, enumerating somewhat artificially the various grades of infused contemplation, and are included one assumes, for the sake of completeness; for as Molinos states in his

preface to the Guía: 'No ha sido jamás mi intento tratar de la contemplación ni de su defensa, como muchos que docta y especulativamente han publicado enteros libros', (pp. 63-64) thereby indicating his essentially pragmatic purpose and desire to avoid the purely theoretical aspects of contemplation. Certainly these pages have a stilted tone quite out of keeping with those which are shortly to conclude the Guía. The following extract is typical of the dismissive tone of this chapter:

Otros muchos grados hay de contemplación, como son éxtasis, raptos, liquefacción, dereliquio, júbilo, ósculo, abrazo, exultación, unión, transformación desposorio y matrimonio, los cuales dejo de explicar por huir la especulación y porque hay libros enteros que tratan de estos puntos, aunque todos son para quien no los experimenta como el color al ciego y al sordo la armonía. (p. 230)

Prior to the final pages are three further didactic chapters, the first entitled 'señales para conocer el hombre interior y el ánimo purgado'. The signs are as follows:

Cuatro son las señales para conocer el hombre interior. La primera, si ya el entendimiento no produce otros pensamientos que aquellos que excitan a la luz de la fe, y la voluntad está ya tan habituada que no engendra otros actos de amor sino de Dios y en orden a Dios. La segunda, si cuando cesa de la obra exterior en que estaba ocupado, luego y con facilidad se convierten a Dios el entendimiento y la voluntad. La tercera, si en entrando en la oración se olvida de todas las cosas como si no las hubiera visto ni tratado. La cuarta, si se porta en orden a las cosas exteriores como si de nuevo entrara en el mundo temiendo contrastar con los negocios, aborreciéndolos naturalmente, si no es cuando

obliga la caridad. (p. 231)

Chapters (17) and (18) expatiate on the nature of 'divina sabiduría'. Wisdom, says Molinos, transcends purely scholastic, or speculative knowledge:

los científicos están en el conocimiento de las cosas del mundo detenidos, y los sabios viven en el mismo Dios sumergidos. (p. 235)

Both rational and intuitive knowledge are needed, according to Molinos, for a proper balance:

Por ordinario en el sujeto donde hay mucha ciencia escolástica y especulativa no predomina la divina sabiduría, pero hacen un admirable compuesto cuando entrambas van unidas. (p. 235)

These two chapters are thus a plea for symmetry and balance in the spiritual life, in which those dual aspects of spirituality - intellect and faith - receive their due. 'It is a well known fact', says Frithjof Schuon, 'that religions make little of intelligence (i.e. intellect) and insist instead on faith, virtue and works; this is not hard to understand since every man has an immortal soul to save without necessarily being intelligent. Intelligence has, on the other hand, no effective worth unless its contents are the fundamental and saving truths; on the other, intelligence must be in balance with virtue and faith, for without the conjunction of the two elements, it does not fully conform to its own nature or, for that very reason to its vocation'.³⁹

It is precisely this balance of faith and intellect that Molinos is reasserting in these chapters:

Dos son los caminos que guían al conocimiento de Dios...El primero se llama especulación y el segundo contemplación. Los doctos que siguen la científica especulación con la dulzura de los sensibles suben por este medio... Pero ninguno de los que siguen este camino...llega por él solo a la vía mística. (p. 238)

The concluding chapters of the Guía deal with the theme of aniquilación, which is defined as 'el aborrecimiento de la honra, dignidad y alabanza; porque a la vileza y al puro nada no es razón se le dé la dignidad y la honra'. (p. 243)

It is interesting to note from this definition that Molinos reverses Hispanic notions of honour predominant at that time. 'Honour to the Spaniard in the seventeenth century', says Gerald Brenan, 'was the private banner or escutcheon that a man hung up in the temple of his ego...not so much a department of the individual conscience as a sort of tyranny, not unlike that of the Inquisition, which society exercised with the aim of procuring greater uniformity and cohesion'.⁴⁰

It is evident from the Guía, however, that such ego-related conceptions of honour are the enemy of interior peace:

Sabe que tanto cuanto estará muerta tu alma en sí misma, tanto más conocerá a Dios. Pero si no atiende a la continua negación de sí misma y a la interior mortificación, no llegará jamás

a este estado ni conservará a Dios dentro de sí, con que siempre estará sujeta a los accidentes y pasiones del ánimo, como son juzgar, murmurar, resentirse, excusarse, defenderse por conservar su honra y estimación propia, enemigos de la quietud, de la perfección, de la paz y del espíritu. (p. 210)

The truly spiritual do not seek honour, but rather:

desean ser tenidos en el vulgo por fábula y escarnio; se contentan con lo que Dios les da y se encogen con sosegada confusión en los defectos; no se humillan por el consejo de la razón, sino por el afecto de la voluntad; no hay honra que apetezcan ni injuria que les turbe. (p.215)

For Molinos, then, poverty of spirit and honour are equivalent concepts:

¡Oh qué gran riqueza el ser pobre!
¡Qué grande honra el ser despreciada!
(p. 192)

And true honour comes only to those willing to suffer for God, to live in Him and for Him:

El espiritual que vive para Dios y en Dios, en medio de las adversidades del cuerpo y del alma está interiormente contento, porque la cruz y la aflicción son su vida y sus delicias. La tribulación es un gran tesoro con el cual honra Dios en esta vida a los suyos. (p.208)

In Chapter (18) Molinos continues the theme of aniquilación by making full use of 'nada' as complete poverty of spirit:

Nos buscamos a nosotros mismos siempre que salimos de la nada, y por eso no llegamos a la quieta y perfecta contemplación. Entrate en la verdad de tu nada y de nada te inquietarás, antes bien te humillarás, confundirás y perderás de vista tu propia reputación y estima. (pp. 245-246)

In the penultimate chapter, entitled 'De la suma felicidad de la interior paz, y de sus maravillosos

efectos', Molinos describes the state of the soul in union in terms strongly suggestive of the final pages of the commentary to the Cántico espiritual. Here St. John describes a state of transformation in which the 'inferior' part of the soul is completely subdued to the 'superior', when the devil does not dare to appear before the purified soul, but rather 'con grande pavor huye muy lejos'. (p. 370, Cántico espiritual, 40). Molinos, too, describes the devil's impotence before the purified soul which is now fully resistant to any assault from that quarter:

y aunque el príncipe de las tinieblas
mueve contra ella todos los asaltos del
infierno...resiste en esta guerra como
firme columna. (p. 249)

The result of such devastating eradication of self-will, is not, then, a complete desolation of spirit; it is on the contrary 'la suma felicidad de la interior paz, de la amorosa unión, de la divina transformación'. And elsewhere, 'una profunda paz y una sabrosa quietud, que la conduce a tan perfecta unión de amor, que en todo jubila.' (p.248) ⁴¹

The final chapter of the Guía is a lament of great intensity in which Molinos expresses his deep sadness at the fact that so few souls attain perfection:

¡Oh hijos de los hombres! ¿Hasta
cuando hemos de seguir la mentira y
vanidad? ¿Quién así nos engañó para
dejar al sumo bien y nuestro Dios? ¿Quién
nos habla más verdad? ¿Quién más nos
ama? ¿Quién más nos defiende? ¿Quién
es más fino para amigo, más tierno para

esposo y más bueno para padre? !Que sea
 tanta nuestra ceguedad que desamparemos
 todos a esta suma e infinita bondad!
 (p. 252) ⁴²

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we may say that just as Molinos has used St. John's formulation of the active phase of the spiritual life as his interpretative framework for the first book, so he has used his conception of the passive phase for the third. The active phase may be described as the soul's approach to God in prayer, involving the purification of the senses and the journey of faith, both required of those aspiring to leave meditation for contemplation; and Molinos, following St. John of the Cross, provides clear norms for effecting the transition from one prayer to the other. Although it is the soul that takes the initiative at this time, the intention - paradoxically - is to passivate the faculties, or more correctly, to purify them, and bring them into a state of receptivity, described by St. John of the Cross, and in similar terms by Molinos, as 'una simple atención general y noticia amorosa, de pura fe'. Both mystics stress the importance of good spiritual direction when contemplation commences.

The passive phase of the contemplative life, on the other hand, is the approach from God to the soul, for as St. John says, 'por más que el alma se ayude, no puede ella activamente purificarse de manera que esté

dispuesta en la menor parte para la divina unión de perfección de amor'. (p.188, Noche, 1,3) The soul in a state of preparedness, then, is approached by God and stimulated to respond to His loving initiative. Recognizing its unworthiness before Him, it must then travel the way of 'nada aniquiladora' to eradicate the last vestiges of self-will; the contingent God-given purifications cause the soul intense suffering, emphasising as they do the distance between God and creature. In addition, the soul experiences a further frustration and desolation, borne of the inadequacy it feels to reciprocate God's love. Both Molinos and St. John assure us, however, that these purifications, if suffered with patience and fortitude, will with God's grace give way to the ineffable joy and peace of the supreme transforming union. In this union the soul, having died to, and risen above, its former natural operations, becomes divine through participation in God's activity:

¡Oh, qué dichosa alma la que se halla muerta y aniquilada! Ya ésta no vive en sí, porque vive Dios en ella; ya con toda verdad se puede decir que es otra fénix renovada, porque está trocada, espiritualizada, transformada y deificada. (p. 244)

This short extract from the Guía demonstrates Molinos' complete accordance with orthodox mysticism, which states that ascetic preparation - or 'mystical annihilation' - is the preliminary condition for transformation in God and participation in His

activity. And in this preparation, as we have seen in the Guía, it is not simply a question of the human will being suppressed and replaced by the will of God, for as Teilhard de Chardin argues, true spirituality 'neither leaves the creature where he is on his own plane, nor suppresses him: it 'sur-animates' him'.⁴⁴ It is at this point in Molinos' spirituality that the soul 'no vive en sí, porque vive Dios en ella'.

We have attempted to show in this chapter that the preparation for union, as described by Molinos, is a long and arduous one, and its attainment the prize of those who have successfully undertaken the disciplines of acquired contemplation, and subsequently borne the purifications of the passive phase of infused contemplation. There is no harm in admitting, either, that after these long preparations the soul in union with God is passive in relation to Him, so long as we recognize the fundamentally dynamic quality of this passivity, as Teilhard explains:

Of course as God takes possession of man, the creature finally becomes passive (because it finds itself newly created in the divine union). But that passivity presupposes a subject that reacts and an active phase. The fire of heaven must come down on something: otherwise there would be⁴⁵ nothing consumed and nothing consummated.

And this consummation, described by Molinos as 'interior peace', is the subject of the final pages of the Guía espiritual which culminate in a paeon of love, extolling that state of quiet simplicity in which all vestige of self-love has been put to death, and the

soul is at last infused with the divine love and the rich treasure of interior peace.

We consider the following passage from the concluding pages of the Guía a fine evocation by Molinos of passivity in mystical prayer, and the interior peace which it confers:

en el trono de quietud se manifiestan las perfecciones de la espiritual hermosura: aquí la luz verdadera de los secretos y divinos misterios de nuestra santa fe; aquí la humildad perfecta hasta la aniquilación de sí misma; la plenísima resignación, la castidad, la pobreza de espíritu, la inocencia y sencillez de paloma, la exterior modestia, el silencio y soledad interior, la libertad y pureza del corazón; aquí el olvido de lo criado, hasta de sí misma; la alegre simplicidad, la celestial indiferencia, la oración continua, la total desnudez, el perfecto desapego, la sapientísima contemplación, la conversación del cielo y, finalmente, la perfectísima y serenísima interior paz. (p. 250)

We see from the above that Molinos does not commit the solecism of suggesting an interior peace divorced from the matrix of spiritual qualities that gives his conception its viability, recognizing no doubt, as all authentic mystics do, that statements about a metaphysical reality must be paradoxical to lay claim to any kind of validity. And we have no grounds for believing that the terms used to express union - negative on the one hand ('aniquilación', 'olvido', and so on) and positive on the other ('interior paz', 'luz', etc.) - are not literally meant. Both sets of terms belong to what W.T. Stace has called the 'vacuum-plenum' of mystical experience,⁴⁶ the

expression of which is as evident in the Guía espiritual as it is in the works of St. John of the Cross and mystics the world over. It is true, for instance, that according to the Guía the mind must seek to empty itself of all empirical contents to enter the undifferentiated 'vacuum', or void, of the divine ground; that the soul must strive for complete detachment to enter the silence and nakedness of the Godhead. It is equally true that unity once experienced may be expressed in glowingly positive terms, as a 'plenum', as light, peace, joy and love. Something of the paradoxicality of this vacuum-plenum is conveyed in the following lines from the Guía:

El camino para llegar a aquel alto estado del ánimo reformado, por donde inmediatamente se llega al sumo bien, a nuestro primer origen y suma paz, es la nada. Procura estar siempre sepultada en esa miseria. Esa nada y esa conocida miseria es el medio para que el Señor obre en tu alma maravillas. Vístete de esa nada y de esa miseria y procura que esa miseria y esa nada sea tu continuo sustento y morada, hasta profundarte en ella; yo te aseguro que, siendo tú de esta manera la nada, sea el Señor el todo en tu alma. (p. 245)

At the most fundamental level we equate the vacuum-plenum paradox with our own paradoxical concept of dynamic passivity. It is this dynamic passivity that the mystic perceives as the primal quality of the Godhead, and in which he himself participates in the unitive experience. It is not, then, merely a metaphysical formulation on our part, but the direct experience of mystics like Molinos, for whom the divine

ground is both a 'vacuum' - dark, pacific, silent and actionless - and a 'plenum' of activity, light, joy and love.

In a way that defies logical analysis, therefore, the passivity experienced in the divine ground is both vacuum and plenum, passivity and activity, a metaphysical reality attested by mystics in both East and West. Here, for instance, is D.T. Suzuki describing his own experience of dynamic passivity, termed sunyata in Buddhist philosophy:

It is not the nature of prajna (mystical intuition) to remain in a state of sunyata (the void) absolutely motionless. It demands of itself that it differentiates itself unlimitedly, and at the same time it desires to remain in itself. This is why sunyata is said to be a reservoir of infinite possibilities and not just a state of mere emptiness. Differentiating itself and yet remaining in itself undifferentiated, and thus to go on eternally in the work of creation...we can say of it that it is creation out of nothing. Sunyata is not to be conceived statically but dynamically,⁴⁷ or better, as at once static and dynamic.

Here in the West, Meister Eckhart, according to his commentator, Rudolph Otto, 'establishes a polar identity between rest and motion within the Godhead itself',⁴⁸ expressed in this way by Eckhart:

For this divine ground is a unified stillness, immovable in itself. Yet from this immobility all⁴⁹ things are moved and all receive light.

Elsewhere Eckhart uses the following image of the inward man who shares in the dynamic passivity of the Godhead:

Let us use a simile: the door has a hinge on which it moves. I liken the door to the outward and the hinge to the inward man. When the door opens and shuts it moves to and fro, but the hinge remains unmoved in its place⁵⁰ and is not affected by the movement.

The soul that attains to unity, then, reflects the dynamic passivity of the Godhead, which must forever express itself in works. And when the soul attains complete devotion, unity and stillness in the Godhead, then it too must express itself in works, according to this precept of the anonymous author of The Cloud of Unknowing: 'A man cannot be fully active except he be partly contemplative, nor fully contemplative...without being partly active'.⁵¹

Rudolph Otto gives us the following succinct description of Eckhart's spirituality, which according to him, expresses 'both a complete inward composure and a most powerful actualization and exercise of the will'.⁵²

When the soul passes from all works into complete devotion and composure, it achieves the real 'inward work': the one, whole, true, undivided and indivisible. Where this work is performed in the ground and stillness of the soul, above space and time, it breaks forth in temporal works... in the free-outpouring of a new and truly liberated will; and it is as incapable⁵² of resting as is the creating God.

This interpretation by Otto of the principles of mystical passivity in relation to Eckhart's spirituality may be applied equally to the following passage from the Spiritual Espousals by John

Ruysbroeck, where he too is describing the dynamic passivity of the inward man:

the most inward man lives his life in these two ways; namely, in work and in rest. And in each he is whole and undivided; for he is wholly in God because he rests in fruition, and he is wholly in himself because he loves in activity... And he dwells in God, and yet goes forth towards all creatures in universal love, in virtue, and in justice. And this is the supreme summit of the inward life. All those men who do not possess both rest and work in one and the same exercise, have not yet attained this justice.⁵⁴

This is precisely what is meant by the following extract from the Guía espiritual, where Molinos, like Ruysbroeck, Eckhart and others, defines passivity in mystical prayer in essentially voluntaristic terms:

Allí el divino Esposo, suspendiéndole las potencias, la adormece con un suavísimo y dulcísimo sueño. Allí dormida y quieta recibe y goza, sin entender lo que goza, con una suavísima y dulcísima calma. Allí el alma elevada y sublimada en este pasivo estado se halla unida al sumo bien...

Vuelta en sí el alma de estos dulces y divinos abrazos, sale rica de luz, de amor y de una estima de la divina grandeza y conocimiento de su miseria, hallándose toda divinamente mudada y dispuesta a abrazar, a padecer y a practicar la más perfecta virtud.
(pp. 224-225)

Molinos' conception of passivity in mystical prayer will not therefore admit of any nugatory or quietistic interpretation. On the contrary, its expression is consonant with the general principles of mystical passivity to be found in the works of all orthodox mystics, and thus the very reverse of the

simplistic and meretricious interpretations that commentators have so often preferred to put upon it, from his day to this.

We conclude at this point, and turn now to an assessment of the Guía's fate in Spain.

NOTES

1. It is ironic in the context of Molinos' condemnation that he concludes his Guía with the following remarks:

Todo lo sujeto, humildemente postrado, a la corrección de la Santa Iglesia Católica Romana. (p. 253)

A clear enough indication, we believe, that Molinos did not compose his Guía to promote individual moral autonomy at the expense of the heteronomy of the Church.

2. HEINE, H., 'Deutschland', in Psychological Types by C. Jung, London, 1923, p. 9.
3. This is a view shared by José Nieto in his book Mystic, Rebel, Saint: A Study of St. John of the Cross:

the mystical doctrine of Molinos is rooted in John's mystical experience and doctrine and this makes him the forerunner of Molinos' Quietism. Thus understood, Quietism is not a strand of heterodox thought but rather the orthodoxy of John expressed in an abridged form. However, one is reminded also that John himself was a submissive rebel and that before they were published his writings were purged to satisfy a zealous orthodoxy... this understanding of the relationship between John and Molinos shows that there is not a fixed point between orthodoxy and heterodoxy and that lines may be moved according to the...spiritual and doctrinal climate or ecclesiastical politics of the time.

NIETO, J.C., Mystic, Rebel, Saint: A Study of St. John of the Cross, Geneva, 1979, p. 132.

We prefer to emphasise, however, Molinos' positive contribution to mysticism, which confirms the reality of faith rather than replacing it. This confirmation is what Colin Thompson calls 'the positive function of mysticism'; commenting on Paul Tillich's assessment of the value of mysticism Thompson says:

He (Tillich) does not regard it as the summit of Christian discipleship, but endows it with a distinctive theological function, as that which prevents man from elevating into his ultimate concern anything other than God. Authority and

tradition in the Church can be so distorted that men focus their worship on them, not God. Mysticism conserves the essential mystery, and by pointing always to the infinite prevents men from identifying the finite with the transcendental. True, it runs the risk of making revelation irrelevant to the actual human situation and of removing its concrete character; but in spite of these recognized limitations, it does have a clear historical and theological function.

THOMPSON, C.P., The Poet and the Mystic: A Study of the Cántico espiritual of San Juan de la Cruz, Oxford, 1977, p. 150.

This 'historical and theological function' is to reaffirm the truths of the faith that have already been given in the person of Jesus Christ. The mystic, therefore, is enabled to appreciate these truths, rather than 'being inspired with new beliefs'. This is what Molinos means in the following passage from the first book of the Guía:

Es Cristo Señor nuestro, con su doctrina y ejemplo, la luz, el espejo, la guía del alma, el camino y única puerta para entrar en aquellos pastos de la vida eterna y mar inmenso de la divinidad. De donde se infiere que no se ha de borrar del todo la memoria de la pasión y muerte del Salvador. Y es también cierto que por la más alta elevación de mente a que haya llegado el alma no ha de separar del todo la santísima humanidad. (p. 128)

4. VON HUGEL, F., The Mystical Element of Religion, 2 vols., London, 1923, Vol. 2, p. 131.
5. Ibid.
6. ALLEN, W., 'The Timeless Moment', in Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology, by F.C. Happold, Harmondsworth, 1970, p. 133.
7. AUROBINDO, S., 'The Divine Life', in The Alien Christ, by R.C. De Lamotte, Lanham, 1980, p. 62.
8. In HAPPOLD, F.C., Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology, Harmondsworth, 1970, p. 194.
9. Ibid. p. 87.
10. THOMPSON, C.P., Op. cit., p. 157.

11. The edition of the works of St. John of the Cross we use for this chapter is San Juan de la Cruz: Subida del Monte Carmelo, Noche oscura, Cántico espiritual, Llama de amor viva, Poesías, edited by Gabriel de la Mora, Mexico, 1973.
12. BRENAN, G., St. John of the Cross: His Life and Poetry, Cambridge, 1973, p. 141.
13. Quoted in VALENTE, p. 28.
14. Valente reproduces all the significant references to these works (see pp. 279-92). They include lengthy quotations for Canción 3 of the Llama de amor viva, and two from the Subida (Book (2) Chapters 12 and 13) which prove beyond doubt that the main source of Molinos' mystical inspiration came from St. John of the Cross. The Defensa is therefore important for tracing Molinos' religious sources, which as we have seen were not fully disclosed in the Guía.

The most thorough study to date of the Defensa is that by Fr. Eulogio de la Virgen del Carmen, who makes reference to it in his excellent study 'El quietismo frente al magisterio sanjuanista de la contemplación', Ephaemerides Carmeliticae, 13 (1962), pp. 353-426. I am indebted to Fr. Eulogio whose study drew my attention to many similarities between the works of St. John of the Cross and the Guía. I am indebted to him, too, for forwarding me a complete copy of the Defensa (M.S. Vat. Lat. 8604)

Although Molinos owes his greatest debt to St. John of the Cross, he is also indebted like him to the accumulated mystical tradition. The Defensa amounts to a massive display of erudition from Molinos to vindicate his stance on contemplation in the Guía, which itself calls upon many authorities in the mystical tradition, as the following list testifies:

Authorities quoted in the Guía (numbers in brackets = no. of times)

Ana María de San José (1)
 Arnaya (1)
 Augustine, St. (1)
 Bernard, St. (1)
 Bonaventure, St. (4)
 Cardoña, Doña (1)
 Chantal, St. Jane Frances de (1)
 Chrysostom, St. John (1)
 Damascene, St. John (1)
 Dionysius the Areopagite (3)
 Dominic, St. (1)
 Escobar, Doña Marina (2)
 Falconi, Juan (1)

- Frances de Sales, St. (3)
 Gerson, John (2)
 Gregory, St. (5)
 Herp, Henry of (1)
 Hugo, Cardenal (1)
 John of Avila (1)
 Juana de Cristo, Sister (1)
 López, Francisca (1)
 López, Gregorio (1)
 Loyola, St. Ignatius (1)
 Medina, B. (1)
 Molina, Antonio (1)
 Paluzzi, Catalina (1)
 Pazzi, Mary Magdalene de, St. (1)
 Rojas, Antonio de (1)
 Rose of Lima, St. (1)
 Suarez, Francisco (1)
 Suso, H. (1)
 Tauler, J. (2)
 Theophilus (1)
 Teresa, St. (8)
 Thomas Aquinas, St. (6)
 Zumel, Francisco (1)
15. GOODIER, Alban, S.J., An Introduction to the Study of Ascetical and Mystical Theology, London, 1938, p. 193.
16. Ibid., p. 196.
17. The 'Prayer of Quiet' is described in St. Teresa's Quinta Morada.
18. JOHN OF THE CROSS, St., Avisos y Sentencias, Obras, Vol. III, Toledo, 1914, p. 26.
19. C.f. also,

por ser esta luz espiritual tan sencilla, pura y general, no afectada ni particularizada a ningún particular inteligible natural ni divino (pues acerca de todas estas aprehensiones tiene las potencias del alma vacías y aniquiladas), de aquí es que con grande generalidad...conoce y penetra el alma cualquiera cosa de arriba o de abajo que se ofrece... Y ésta es la propiedad de el espíritu purgado y aniquilado acerca de todas particulares aficiones e inteligencias que, en este no gustar nada ni entender nada en particular, morando en su vacío, oscuridad y tinieblas, lo abraza todo con gran disposición. (pp. 221-222 Noche, 2,8)

20. The metaphor of the soul as morada of God has clear echoes of St. Teresa's Moradas.
21. Teaching clearly in the sanjuanist tradition as we see from the following short extract from the second book of the Subida:

aquí vamos dando doctrina para pasar adelante en contemplación a unión de Dios, para lo cual todos esos medios y ejercicios sensitivos de potencias han de quedar atrás y en silencio, para que Dios de suyo obre en el alma la divina unión, conviene ir por este estilo desembarazando y vaciando y haciendo negar a las potencias su jurisdicción natural y operaciones.
(p. 118, Subida, 2,2)

22. It is noteworthy that both mystics employ the metaphor of blindness to denote the rôle of passivity in this incipient stage of contemplation:

porque a Dios, ¿quién le quitará que Él no haga lo que quisiere en el alma resignada, aniquilada y desnuda? Pero de todo se ha vaciar como sea cosa que puede caber en su capacidad, de manera que, aunque más cosas sobrenaturales vaya teniendo, siempre se ha de quedar como desnuda de ellas y a oscuras - así como el ciego -, arrimándose a la fe oscura, tomándola por guía y luz.
(p. 37, Subida, 2,4)

23. We may see from the following extract from the Noche oscura, which we fragment for the sake of brevity, that Molinos has in fact neatly summarized the Saint's original prolix underscoring of the benefits of the night of the senses:

Porque, como Dios en esta seca y oscura noche en que pone al alma tiene refrenada la concupiscencia y enfrenado el apetito, de manera que no se puede cebar de algún gusto ni sabor sensible de cosa de arriba ni de abajo, y esto lo va continuando de tal manera, que queda el alma impuesta, reformada y empresada según la concupiscencia... Sale de aquí otro segundo provecho, y que es que trae ordinaria memoria de Dios, con temor y recelo de volver atrás... Hay otro provecho muy grande en esta noche para el alma, y es que se ejercita en las virtudes de por justo, como es en la

paciencia y longanimidad que se ejercita bien en estos vacíos y sequedades, sufriendo el perseverar en los espirituales ejercicios sin consuelo y sin gusto.
(p. 204, Noche 1,13)

24. St. John of the Cross is equally insistent on this point:

el verdadero espíritu busca lo desabrido en Dios que lo sabroso, y más se inclina al padecer que al consuelo, y más a carecer de todo bien por Dios que a poseerle, y a las sequedades y aflicciones que a las dulces comunicaciones, sabiendo que esto es seguir a Cristo y negarse a sí mismo, y esotro por ventura buscarse a sí en Dios es buscar los regalos y recreaciones de Dios, mas buscar a Dios en sí es no sólo querer carecer de eso y de esotro por Dios, sino inclinarse a escoger por Cristo todo lo más desabrido, ahora de Dios, ahora del mundo; y esto es amor de Dios.
(p. 45, Subida, 2,7)

25. St. John of the Cross also notes the rôle of temptations during the night of the senses:

suele ir acompañada con graves trabajos y tentaciones sensitivas que duran mucho tiempo...porque a algunos se les da el ángel de Santanás, que es espíritu de fornicación, para que les azote los sentidos con abominables y fuertes tentaciones y les atribule el espíritu con feas advertencias y representaciones más visibles en la imaginación, que a veces les es mayor pena que el morir.

Otras veces se les añade en esta noche el espíritu de blasfemia, el cual en todos sus conceptos y pensamientos se anda atravesando con intolerables blasfemias, y a veces con tanta fuerza sugeridas en la imaginación, que casi se las hace pronunciar, que les es grave tormento.
(p. 207, Noche, 1,14)

26. A similar rebuttal of the charge of idleness at this stage of prayer is to be found in the third canción of the Llama de amor viva:

Ha de advertir el alma en esta quietud que, aunque ella entonces no se sienta caminar ni hacer nada, camina mucho más que si fuese por su pie, porque la lleva

Dios en sus brazos; y así, aunque camina al paso de Dios, ella no siente el paso, Y aunque ella misma no abra nada con las potencias de su alma, mucho más hace que si ella lo hiciese, pues es Dios el obrero. (pp. 417-18, Llama, 3)

27. Quoted in Mysticism, Christian and Buddhist by D.T. Suzuki, London, 1957, p.9.

28. St. John's view of the pre-eminence of passivity may also be inferred from the following passage, taken from the Cántico espiritual:

la contemplación es oscura...que quiere decir sabiduría de Dios secreta o escondida, en la cual, sin ruido de palabras y sin ayuda de algún sentido corporal ni espiritual, como en silencio y quietud...enseña Dios ocultísima y secretísimamente al alma...lo cual algunos espirituales llaman 'entender no entendiendo', porque esto no se hace en el entendimiento que llaman los filósofos activo...mas hácese en el entendimiento en cuanto posible y pasivo, el cual, sin recibir...formas, etc., sólo pasivamente recibe inteligencia sustancial desnuda de imagen, la cual le es dada sin ninguna obra ni oficio suyo activo.
(p. 368, Cántico espiritual, 39)

29. St. John, for instance, will have no truck with those directors who esteem revelations, visions etc., as signs of the higher reaches of prayer. C.f. the following short extract from the Subida:

parécame a mí...que, si el padre espiritual es inclinado a...revelaciones ...no podrá dejar...de imprimir en el espíritu del discípulo aquel... término.

To persist in giving credence to such visions can seriously impede the penitent's progress, says St. John, or even, 'le podrá hacer harto daño'.
(p. 75, Subida, 2,18)

Molinos, too, notes the futility of paying attention to visions, locutions, and the like; spiritual growth, he asserts, proceeds:

sin mezcla de raptos ni éxtasis exteriores ni afectos vehementes...de todos se ha de desnudar...si no quiere que le sean de impedimento para pasar a la deificación. (p. 243)

30. Y tú de tal manera tiranizas las almas y de suerte las quitas la libertad y adjudicas para ti la anchura de la doctrina evangélica, que no sólo procuras que no te dejen, mas, lo que peor es, que si acaso alguna vez sabes que alguna haya ido a tratar alguna cosa con otro, que por ventura no convendría tratarla contigo o la llevaría Dios para que la enseñase lo que tú no la enseñste, te hayas con ella (que no lo digo sin vergüenza), con las contiendas de celos que tienen entre sí los casados.
(p. 415, Llama, 3)

St John of the Cross, like Molinos, insists therefore on the gravity of the office of spiritual guide:

De esta manera es él un ciego que puede estorbar la vida del alma, que es el Espíritu Santo, lo cual acaece en los maestros espirituales de muchas más maneras que aquí queda dicho, unos sabiendo, otros no sabiendo; mas los unos y los otros no quedarán sin castigo, porque teniéndolo por oficio, están obligados a saber y mirar lo que hacen.
(p. 416, Llama, 3)

31. St. John of the Cross has the following words to say to those who make bodily penances their priority in the spiritual life:

Estos son imperfectísimos, gente sin razón, que posponen la sujeción y obediencia (que es penitencia de la razón y discreción, y por eso es para Dios más acepto y gustoso sacrificio que todos los demás) a la penitencia corporal, que, dejada estotra parte, no es más que penitencia de bestias, a quien también como bestias se mueven por el apetito y gusto que allí hallan.
(p. 191, Noche, 1,6)

32. SUZUKI, D.T., Essays in Zen Buddhism, 2nd Series, London, 1970, p. 286.
33. COOPER, J.C., Taoism: The Way of the Mystic, Wellingborough, 1972, p.33.
34. Ibid., p. 39.
35. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, Pierre, Le Milieu Divin, London, 1960, p. 71.

36. VANSTONE, W.H., The Stature of Waiting, London, 1983, p. 99.
37. Roy C. De Lamotte, in his book The Alien Christ, points out that there is only one teaching of Jesus concerning rest, and this, interestingly, in connection with the 'yoke' which is 'easy':

Come unto me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden light.
(Matthew, 11 : 28)

Interpreting this passage from Matthew, De Lamotte comments as follows:

we note the following elements in this saying: Rest is something that can be had here and now from Jesus; it is gained through a process of instruction as something we learn from him; it is apparently an inner state, for it is related to the fact that the teacher is 'meek and lowly in heart'; and lastly, it is a paradoxical experience that comes through effort by the bearing of a yoke.
De Lamotte, R.C., The Alien Christ, Lanham, 1980, p. 63.

It is interesting to note that Molinos couples the 'yugo suave', a fitting symbol of dynamic passivity, with his 'región de la paz y serenidad interior'.

38. The latter part of this quotation has been taken, almost word for word, from one of St. Teresa's poems, Paciencia en las adversidades:

Nada te turbe,
nada te espante;
todo se pasa,
Dios no se muda,
La paciencia
todo lo alcanza.
Quien a Dios tiene
nada le falta.
Sólo Dios basta.

Teresa, St., in La poesía de Santa Teresa, edited by Angel Custodio Vega, O.S.A., Madrid, 1972, p. 248.

39. SCHUON, Frithjof, Islam and the Perennial Philosophy, London, 1976, p. 72.
40. BRENNAN, Gerald, The Literature of the Spanish People, Harmondsworth, 1963, p. 257.
41. It is a song of love which is redolent of the 'canto de la filomena' in the Cántico espiritual:
 siente la esposa fin de males y principio de bienes, en cuyo refrigerio y amparo y sentimiento sabroso ella también como dulce filomena da su voz con nuevo canto de jubilación a Dios.
 (p. 367, Cántico espiritual, 39)
42. It is a lament which surely echoes this one of St. John of the Cross in the Cántico espiritual:
 ¡Oh almas criadas para estas grandezas y para ellas llamadas! ¿Qué hacéis? ¿en qué os entretenéis? Vuestras pretensiones son bajezas y vuestras posesiones miserias. ¡Oh miserable ceguera de los ojos de vuestra alma, pues para tanta luz estáis ciegos y para tan grandes voces sordos, no viendo que, en tanto que buscáis grandezas y gloria, os quedáis miserables y bajos, de tantos bienes hechos ignorantes e indignos!
 (p. 366, Cántico, 39)
43. We see the orthodoxy of Molinos' statement on the divinity of the soul through participation in God's activity if we compare it with the following from the Llama de amor Viva:
 Y, finalmente, todos los movimientos y operaciones e inclinaciones de su vida natural, ya en esta unión son trocados en movimientos divinos, muertos a su operación e inclinación, y vivos en Dios. (p. 397, Llama, 2)
44. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, op.cit., pp. 94-95.
45. Ibid., p. 82.
46. See STACE, W.T., Mysticism and Philosophy, London, 1973, p. 174.
47. Ibid., pp. 176-177.
48. OTTO, Rudolph, Mysticism East and West. A Comparative Analysis of the Nature of Mysticism, New York, 1957, p. 174.

49. Ibid., p. 174.
50. p. 176.
51. The Cloud of Unknowing, translated by Clifton Wolters, Harmondsworth, 1967, p. 63.
52. OTTO, p. 173.
53. pp. 175-176.
54. HAPPOLD, pp. 257-258.

CHAPTER 6

Passivity in Late Seventeenth-century Spanish
Religious Life and the Social Significance of the GuíaSECTION 1The fate of the Guía in Spain

Following Molinos' condemnation in Rome in 1687 alumbrados were thereafter designated molinistas in Spain. On May 18, 1692, for instance Ana Raguza was condemned as alumbrada and molinista; and on May 12, 1693 a molinista was penanced at Córdoba in an auto. And the Valencian tribunal of 1695 records further trials of molinistas: the Franciscan, Fray Vicente Selles, arrested in 1692; and Vicente Hernan, arrested on September 23, 1692.¹

The identification of Molinos with the alumbrados was, however, preceded by two years of heated debate. It was in 1685, while Molinos was under arrest in Rome, that the tribunals of Zaragoza, Sicily, Seville and Toledo, and the Supreme Council itself, took up the issue of the Guía espiritual. In the autumn of that year the Spanish Inquisition debated the matter at length, and came to the conclusion on that occasion that the Guía contained 'doctrina corriente'. Although Molinos had his detractors in Spain, he had his supporters too: Fr. Alejo de Foronda, for instance, professor at the University of Santiago, considered that the Guía contained 'proposición ninguna que tenga calidad de oficio'.²

Molinos' most ardent and distinguished supporter was Archbishop Palafox y Cardona of Seville. The Seville

edition of the Guía came out in 1685 with lavish praise from the archbishop; he also undertook to recommend it to the Cabildo of Seville and disseminated it in the convents. Palafox is recorded as preaching with the Guía in one hand and a work of St. John of the Cross in the other, declaring that they were 'gemelas'. His enthusiasm for the Guía was shared by others in Seville: Don Francisco de Lasarte, Don Antonio Pazos Bustos, Chavero, and Jerónimo Timonel.³

The Seville edition, however, provoked ponderous investigation on the part of the Inquisition with the result that Molinos' admirers were committed to trial: some of them were condemned and died in prison; others suffered exile. Palafox himself was required to write a letter of retraction to the Pope and to publish a pastoral letter countering his previous encomiums. All the Seville editions of the Guía were seized and confiscated by the Inquisition with such thoroughness that to this day there is no extant copy of it.

The Guía was actually condemned in totum in Spain on the 26th November, 1685, two years before Molinos' condemnation in Rome. The substance of the Spanish condemnation was as follows:

por contener doctrinas peligrosas, proposiciones malsonantes, piarum aurium ofensivas, sapientes haeresim y alguna errónea, y por lo general, ser un libro peligroso por estar en lengua vulgar para las personas ignorantes, aunque deseen entrar en la vida espiritual; y no corresponder el título del libro al asunto de él, pues, dando en él

documentos sobre la vida contemplativa y unitiva, y da ocasión para que el que quiere entrar en el camino del espíritu piense que con sólo la unitiva, sin emplear las demás, puede conseguir su deseo, que según lo regular es error. 4

The assertion that the Guía is 'un libro peligroso por estar en lengua vulgar para las personas ignorantes' recalls the strictures of the Dominican theologians whose views we presented in Chapter 3 and who enjoined 'rudos y presuntuosos' to adhere firmly to the practices of the 'active' life. To say that the Guía 'da ocasión para que el que quiere entrar en el camino del espíritu piense que con sólo la unitiva, sin emplear las demás, puede conseguir su deseo', is clearly erroneous, as we have demonstrated at some length by reference to the Guía in the previous chapter. In the Guía we have seen that Molinos was at great pains to emphasise that, although the prayer of acquired contemplation is a natural progression from discursive meditation, it is appropriate only for those 'que tienen bien mortificados los sentidos y pasiones': that is to say, for those who have successfully travelled the via purgativa. The infused contemplation of the unitive life, on the other hand, is emphasised by Molinos as a gift from God, 'don admirable que le concede su Majestad a quien quiere, y por el tiempo que quiere'. (p. 225)

It should be emphasised that Molinos was not alone in his desire to teach contemplative prayer to all those

ready for it in the society of his day. In Spain itself devotional literature generally in the second half of the century became increasingly concerned with systematizing passive modes of prayer in the same way that Loyola may be said to have systematized meditation the previous century.

Falconi and Viana, for instance, fall into the category of those who sought to popularize contemplative prayer, providing the penitent with what came to be called the atajo, or 'short cut', to contemplative states. Gaspar de Viana, for example, like many of his contemporaries of the last third of the seventeenth century, wrote not for beginners or progressives, but for proficients living the 'contemplative and unitive life', who have already 'walked along the ordinary way of purgation and illumination, and have practised the exercises described in spiritual books as proper to those states'.⁵

From 1685 to the end of the century and beyond there followed a welter of tracts condemning Molinos which, according to Tellechea following Ellacuria Beascoechea, 'en realidad no representan un diálogo o debate abierto con Molinos, sino una apología de la condenación de Molinos ... una fría dialéctica, con escasa atención a su contenido histórico'.⁶ Typical of these tracts, with their ponderous and sterile tone, is the work of the Capuchin, Félix de Alamín, El espejo de la verdadera y falsa contemplación, published in 1695.

In the words of Tellechea Idígoras, 'el siglo XVII se cerraba con los más negros nubarrones sobre la mística y sobre la literatura oracional'.⁷

SECTION 2

Spanish religious life in the late seventeenth-century: aspects of passivity

Concomitant with the desire of writers on the life of prayer to make its passive modes available to persons of all states, we find Spanish religious life in general taking on an increasingly morbid and passive complexion:

Inert and immovable, the top-heavy church of baroque Spain had little to offer a passive population but an unending succession of sedatives in the form of Te Deums, processions, solemn masses and heavy ceremonial which ministered to its apparently insatiable passion for display. Religious festivals in some places occupied a third of the year. The rites of the Church had degenerated into mere formalism, its dogmas into superstitions, and the dead weight of ecclesiastical bureaucracy lay heavy on Castile. 8

It was a sensitivity to this highly-charged religious ethos that prompted A. Castro to remark:

What impresses the historian when he posts himself at the beginning of this much despised period of three centuries, he hears the voices of those who foresee the ruin of the nation. In fact, it is precisely this sense of agony that makes these prophets Spanish ... In 1617 a deputy to the Cortes told the king: 'All the vassals to the crown are being lost because they are becoming monks and priests, and the estates that originally were supposed to pay taxes to Your Majesty are gradually being taken over by the Church, and if

the situation is not remedied, in a very few years Your Majesty is not going to have anyone to serve him. 9

Francisco Santos, a contemporary of Molinos, would no doubt be one of those prophets to whom Castro alludes. He paints an atmosphere of the period 'corrompido desde sus más altos estratos hasta sus fundamentos. Lo que le interesa ... es la situación de España en total decadencia, religiosa, política social Y económica', as his commentator, Julio Rodríguez-Puértolas, puts it.¹⁰

Typical of Santos' disgust for religious hypocrisy is the following anecdote he relates in El Arca de Noé which describes a hypocrite mistakenly considered genuinely devout:

Tenía de costumbre hazer día de San Juan vn grandioso altar; y como el conocimiento suyo era en casas donde avía poder, hallava quanto quería. Adornava su altar de mucha plata labrada. Vn día que havia hecho altar con más gravedad que otros años, con grande adorno de plata, ya que se llegava la media noche, víspera del santo, en que avía concurrido infinita gente, despedidos ya para recogerse y cerradas sus puertas, lió toda la plata, y con ayuda de vn criado, gran ladrón, que tenía, sin que el ama (que era vna buena señora que servía de todo) lo supiera, huyeron, y hasta oy no se ha sabido de él. Este fin tuvo el hermano Juan, tenido por santo en Madrid. 11

In such desperate times as these it is hardly surprising that messianic solutions to Spain's problems are entertained by Santos¹² and his contemporaries. One of Santos' books, La Verdad en

el Potro (1671) is a fantasy in which el Cid Campeador returns to earth as the national saviour. Santos is clearly advocating el Cid and his ally Verdad as Spain's hope for national renewal; the Cid is depicted as implacable in his fight against injustice and immorality, vowing that he will not return to the tomb before the gates of the Palacio Real of Madrid have been opened to Truth and Justice. Verdad is given to haranguing a wretched Republic:

así vosotros, República perdida,
dais muchas voces para que hable, y
si voy a empezar me amenazáis, de
manera que no manifiesto mi pureza
jamás, y sólo medra mi bastarda
hermana, la mentira vil ... 13

Underlying all this desperation regarding Spanish decadence is Santos' profound conviction that Spain is a people chosen by God and as such will eventually rise from its prostration more powerful than before. 'La tesis es clara', says Julio Rodríguez Puértolas, 'Religión y Estado se unen en un todo orgánico, y mientras esta unión perdure, España permanecerá en pie como bastión del catolicismo ecuménico, imperial'.¹⁴ Such a view of things is supported by Santos with 'historical' proofs:

San Isidoro pronosticó en su
muerte a la Nación Española que si
se apartaba de la verdadera religión
sería oprimida, pero si la observase,
sería levantada su grandeza sobre las
demás naciones. 15

It is perhaps not without significance that it is precisely such chiliastic aspirations implicit in Illuminist practice that have provoked commentators of

Illuminism to their harshest criticisms. Antonio Márquez, for instance, has these words to say regarding the propositions of condemnation held against the alumbrados, in which he discerns the same kind of millenarist aspirations:

En otras muchas denuncias aparece esta curiosa justificación del abandono, de raíz bíblica y posibles matices islámicos: Dios proveerá. Dios dirá. El automatismo místico a que aspiraban los alumbrados en el conocimiento y en la voluntad se transforma en el terreno de la acción en un descargar las responsabilidades de la Historia en Dios. Dios a su vez ha establecido una ley en la cual se cumplen simultáneamente su voluntad y la de la historia. Pero los alumbrados estaban por encima de la Ley, y así la historia se queda por cumplir ... Al contraponer providencia y cosmos urbano o civilización, los alumbrados niegan la historia y regresan teóricamente al punto de partida: al paraíso perdido ... En España, el utopismo iluminista ... tomará formas de exaltación patológica, totalmente destructivas. 16

We have seen that Golden-Age Spain, apart from any other interpretation we may wish to put upon it, was an age in which mystical exaltation degenerated all too often into religious hysteria of a socially pernicious type. It would seem possible, therefore, that the Inquisition, apart from the many other nefarious tasks it arrogated to itself, felt it was exercising a protective function in its rigorous scrutiny of devotional texts, and in its repression of groups overtly and indiscriminately practising passive forms of prayer. The unbridled release of unconscious forces, normally passive and latent, as the result of systematic

contemplation, was clearly interpreted as a threat by the Inquisition.

It is not without significance that during the second half of the seventeenth century there was a growing tendency to view mystics as deluded when there was thought to be no conscious attempt at imposture, and no doctrinal error involved. In 1694, for instance, Don Francisco de las Cuevas y Rojas of Madrid was sentenced by the Toledo tribunal as iluso pasivo. In the same year a beata named María de la Paz was also convicted as ilusa, and required to abjure de levi.

The Inquisition continued to prosecute ilusas into the eighteenth century: in 1716, Don Eugenio Aguado de Lara was sentenced as iluso by the tribunal of Toledo, while his companion - a beata - was thought to be the more culpable, suffering from false revelations. She abjured de levi and was confined in a hospital for two years.¹⁷

It was Carl Jung who suggested that the Church has traditionally been a protective institution whose function has often been to mediate to the many the direct religious experience of the few, through its ritual and dogma. In a word, one becomes a disciple, but by the same token one is debarred from one's own direct religious experience, with its attendant hazards:

Since the dawn of mankind there has been a marked tendency to delimit the unruly and arbitrary 'supernatural' influence by definite forms and laws. And this process has gone on in history by manipulation of

rites, institutions and creeds.
 In the last two thousand years
 we find . . . the church assuming
 a mediating and protective
 function between these influences
 and man. 18

It is also Jung's contention that the West has always feared its unconscious; and it is this fear which has led Western man to develop the rational, scientific functions of his mind often to the detriment of his intuitive faculties. The failure by the West to evolve a systematic yoga is explained by Jung in these terms. Interestingly, he regards the Ignatian spiritual exercises as a limited attempt at a European yoga. We would add that Molinos' Guía represents a far more ambitious attempt to disseminate a contemplative type of Christianity to all those ready for it, a type of spirituality clearly felt by the Inquisition to have its safest home in the cloister.

A recent Jungian - Stan Gooch - has elaborated the ideas of Carl Jung concerning the societal implications of man's failure to bring into balance the conscious and unconscious, or active and passive functions, of the mind. His model of the psyche, with its Jungian emphasis on the need for a balance between the dual faculties of the mind, has implications for the history of Spanish Quietism.

Gooch calls Jung's dualism of the conscious and unconscious mind System A and System B respectively. System A he subsumes under his own concept of the Ego, and System B under his concept of the Self. He contends

that to gain an idea of the Self we simply reverse every quality of the Ego: Thus we might characterise the Self as illogical (or intuitive), or as non-assertive (or 'receptive'), while the Ego will be 'rational' and 'competitive'.¹⁹ In another sense 'the mode of Self is Being, while the mode of the Ego is Doing',²⁰ and more negatively 'The Self is never far from emotion and hysteria in its various forms' and often 'too human', while the Ego is 'not human enough'.²¹

Certainly we may assert that the mode of the Spaniard in the seventeenth century became emphatically, and often exaggeratedly, 'the mode of Being', as opposed to 'the mode of Doing'. One is left with the impression that Spanish religious life did indeed assert itself with such vigour that its intellectual life all but atrophied.²²

The weight of evidence we have adduced would suggest to us that the religious life of seventeenth-century Spain was 'never far from emotion and hysteria in its various forms'; an emotionalism, moreover, which appears to have been accompanied by a massive failure of the will permeating all strata of society. Historians are unanimous in proclaiming the last decades of the Habsburg rule in Spain as a nadir in Spanish history. Spain, John Lynch tells us, 'resembled a corpse, picked at by noble parasites and foreign marauders',²³ a metaphor which finds heightened

expression in the figure of the dying Charles II, who 'presented a pathetic spectacle of degradation at Madrid. Afflicted with convulsive fits, the wretched monarch was believed to have been bewitched, and the Court pullulated with confessors and exorcists and visionary nuns employing every artifice known to the Church to free him from the devil'.²⁴

The years between 1677 and 1687 are designated by Lynch as 'Castile's Tragic Decade', when 'Castile passively endured its fate'.²⁵ It may be supposed, therefore, that the supreme irony in the history of Spanish Quietism occurred at this point, for it was precisely during these years that the Guía espiritual of Molinos - a superb manual for training the will - appeared in Spain, and was rejected.

As it was, Spain sank deeper into a quietistic inertia in which reason and will had little part to play, and the various forces of necessity reached their most savage intensity, as we see from the following vivid fragment from a report by a minister of the Council of Castile, dated 1685:

The state of the whole kingdom of Castile is utterly wretched, especially Andalucía, where the aristocracy are without funds, the middle elements poverty-stricken, artisans reduced to vagrancy or beggary, and many dying of hunger, buried by the Brothers of Charity who used to give them relief but now have nothing to give. The women are also suffering. Necessity forces them to beg from door to door ... others never leave the house ... even to go to Mass ... and others ... have prostituted themselves at all ages, simply to eat. 26

J.H. Elliott's conjecture about this period would therefore seem eminently reasonable:

It is natural to look back over this century and wonder where things had gone wrong ... could it not be interpreted by the confident rationalists of the eighteenth century as an object lesson in the disastrous consequences of ignorance, superstition and sloth? To an age which took the idea of progress as gospel the Spain which had ... allowed itself to fall into the clutches of ignorant monks and priests had condemned itself to disaster before the bar of history. 27

SECTION 3

The Inquisition as a passivating influence

It would be temerarious to suggest that the Inquisition alone must bear the full weight of censure for this 'disaster'. Yet in the evidence we have reviewed we perceive that this institution appears to have had two functions: one manifest, the other latent.²⁸ The manifest function of the Inquisition, as we have seen, was to promote social cohesion, which it did by insisting on the outward and liturgical forms of religion. In fact, however, during the period under discussion, the latent function of the Inquisition becomes increasingly apparent: this function was a passivating one. The way in which it sought to extirpate passivity in mystical prayer was, therefore, ironic, for the passive nature of religious expression it engendered in general was ultimately far more devastating, as C.H. Lea attests in the conclusion to his celebrated study:

There was one service ... it was never tired of claiming for itself ... that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it preserved Spain from the religious wars which desolated France and Germany ... yet even should we admit this service, its method, in causing intellectual torpor and segregating the nation from all influences from abroad, only postponed the inevitable ... The nineteenth century bore, in an aggravated form, the brunt which should have fallen on the sixteenth. When the spirit of the Revolution broke in, it found a population sedulously trained to passive obedience to the State and ²⁹ submissiveness to the Church.

The way in which the Inquisition encouraged this kind of passivity is excellently conveyed in Dostoyevsky's story of the Grand Inquisitor,³⁰ in which Christ reappears in Seville and is brought before the Grand Inquisitor, who proceeds to take him to task for the suffering he has brought upon man in revealing to him the essence of freedom, freedom which man is simply not equipped to live with. The Inquisitor, addressing Christ, says:

Was it not you who said so often in those days, 'I shall make you free'? But now you have seen those 'free' men ... Yes, this business has cost us a great deal ... but we've completed it at last in your name. For fifteen centuries we've been troubled by this freedom, but now it's over ... these men are more than ever convinced that they are absolutely free, and yet they themselves have brought their freedom to us and humbly laid it at our feet. 31

It is instructive to recall that Henry Kamen tells us that the mass of Spaniards in the seventeenth century

did indeed collaborate with the Inquisition and its objectives:

The power of the Inquisition rested not on a conscious tyranny but on a fundamental conviction among Spaniards that it was necessary. 32

Dostoyevsky's moral tale also tells us that the Inquisition was a monstrous apparatus to suppress authentic spirituality, to provide alibis from freedom by encouraging an elaborate system of rituals that relieved society of questioning:

'Man', says the Grand Inquisitor, 'so long as he remains free, has no more constant and agonizing anxiety than to find as quickly as possible someone to worship. But man seeks to worship only what is incontestable, so incontestable, indeed, that all men at once agree to worship it all together. For the chief concern of those miserable creatures is not only to find something that I or someone else can worship, but to find something that all believe in and worship, and the absolutely essential thing is that they should do so all together'. 33

It has been said that society, in its essence, is a 'memory';³⁴ it is a memory which in seventeenth-century Spain was largely a religious one, in need of constant 'reminders' in the form of enervating ritual. As the sociologist, Peter Berger, puts it:

Men forget. They must, therefore, be reminded over and over again ... Religious ritual has been a crucial instrument of this process of reminding. Again and again it 'makes present' to those who participate in it the fundamental reality-definitions and their appropriate legitimations. 35

SECTION 4

The dynamism of mystical solitude versus passivating ritual

In the sociological perspective, identity is held to be socially conferred and socially sustained. But what the mystic would prefer to emphasise - by implication at least - is that identity, as he would understand it, can transform socially. His starting point is therefore the deeper identity of the individual, which his own hard-won experience has shown him to be essentially moral in aspect. Thus social renewal and transformation in the deepest sense, in the sense of ethical obligation towards others, can be wrought only through regenerate individuals. A collectively redeemed society to the mystic is neither more nor less than a society of redeemed individuals. And it would appear to us that what Miguel de Molinos was attempting to reassert in his Guía espiritual is the absolute nature of human values, values which all too often depend so completely on social confirmation of them. The Guía espiritual, in fact, makes no reference to any plausibility structure, to any political or ecclesiastical authorities, to any arbitrary moral codes; its appeal throughout is to the naked existence of the individual. This nakedness, as we have seen, is conveyed in the concept of NADA, a concept that finds heightened expression in Molinos' passages on the nakedness of mystical solitude:

¡Oh, qué infinitos espacios hay dentro del alma que ha llegado a esta divina soledad! ¡Oh, qué íntimas, qué retiradas, qué secretas, qué anchas y qué inmensas distancias hay dentro de la feliz alma que ha llegado a ser verdaderamente solitaria! Allí trata y se comunica el Señor interiormente con el alma. Allí la llena de sí, porque está desnuda; la eleva porque está baja; y la une y la transforma en sí, porque está sola. (p. 221)

The American philosopher, William Ernest Hocking, is one of the few commentators on mysticism who has discerned that the nakedness of mystical solitude is precisely what gives mysticism its supreme moral value, and by extension its socially transforming power:

It is the intention, and so the defining character of the mystic solitude, that its object develops pari passu with the entrance into subjectivity. Mysticism in its true character, is just the redemption of solitude: it is a process which enters one step further into the heart of our own infinite subjectivity and reclaims it for social service in the form... of a deepened morality ... The vital function of mysticism is origination, the creation of novelty.³⁶

The 'deepened morality' contingent on the nakedness of mystical solitude is explained by Molinos in the fourteenth chapter of the third book of the Guía: 'es necesaria', says Molinos, 'una gran fidelidad y desnudez de sí misma para llegar a la perfecta y pasiva capacidad de las divinas influencias' (pp. 226-7) - even though, continues Molinos, 'son pocas las almas que llegan a esta infusa y pasiva oración, porque son pocas las capaces de estas divinas influencias con total desnudez

y muerte de su propia actividad y potencias'. (p. 227) Nevertheless, concludes Molinos, the nakedness of passivity in mystical prayer is the prerequisite for ethical conduct: 'Solo ha de ser tu anhelo a la indiferencia, a la resignación y olvido, y sin que tú lo adviertas dejará el sumo bien en tu alma una apta disposición para la práctica de las virtudes, un verdadero amor a la cruz', (p. 227) thus confirming in this respect the assertions of mystics such as Meister Eckhart - 'what a man takes in by contemplation, that he pours out in love',³⁷ and of St. Teresa - 'we should desire and engage in prayer not for our enjoyment but for the sake of acquiring this strength which fits us for service'.³⁸

CONCLUSION

Spanish passivity and Molinos' radical social function

We may assert in conclusion that the rejection of Molinos' Guía at this time is deeply symbolic of the extent to which Spain had cut itself adrift from its spiritual moorings, the 'roca viva' of authentic and operative spirituality, as Miguel de Unamuno puts it:

Con su mística (i.e. of Spanish)
llegó a lo profundo de la religión,
al reino que no es de este mundo,
al manantial vivo de que brotaba
la ley social y a la roca viva de su
conciencia.

En ninguna revelación del alma
castellana que no sea su mística se
entra más dentro en ella, hasta
tocar a lo eterno de esta alma, a
su humanidad, y en ninguna otra
tampoco se ve más al desnudo su
vicio radical en la pseudómistica,

en los delirios del alumbrismo
 archisensitivo y ultraintelectivo...

Por su mística castiza es como
 puede llegarse a la roca viva del
 espíritu de esta casta, al arranque
 de su vivificación y regeneración en la
 humanidad eterna. 39

Three centuries earlier, Miguel de Molinos had composed
 his own virile and eloquent guide to 'la roca viva del
 espíritu':

Estándote en la nada, cerrarás
 la puerta a todo lo que no es Dios;
 te retirarás aun de ti misma, y
 caminarás a aquella interior
 soledad ... Por este camino has de
 volver al dichoso estado de la
 inocencia, que perdieron nuestros
 primeros padres. Por esta puerta
 has de entrar a la tierra feliz
 de los vivientes, donde hallarás el
 sumo bien, la latitud de la caridad,
 la belleza de la justicia, la derecha
 línea de equidad y rectitud y,
 en suma, toda la perfección.
 Últimamente no mires nada, no
 desees nada, no quieras nada, ni
 solicites saber nada, y en todo
 vivirá tu alma con quietud y gozo
 descansada. Este es el camino para
 alcanzar la pureza del alma, la
 perfecta contemplación y la interior
 paz. Camina, camina por esta segura
 senda, y procura en esa nada sumergirte
 y abismarte si quieres aniquilarte,
 unirte y transformarte. (p. 247)

Of all the writers of the Generation of '98 it is
 perhaps Unamuno who gives us the most acute diagnosis of
 that sterile tension between utopian idealism and the
 squalid reality of inertia that has tended to
 characterise Spain - and particularly late seventeenth-
 century Spain - in its history. But in his prescription
 for national renewal, Unamuno will have no truck with
 any quietistic solution: more than once he insists on
 the claims of morality that must attend all authentic

interplay between the ideal and the real, between freedom and necessity:

La ley moral es, en efecto, la misma de la naturaleza, y quien lograra acabada comprensión del organismo universal viendo su propio engranaje y oficio en él, su verdadera valía y la infinita irradiación de cada uno de sus actos en la trama infinita del mundo, querría siempre lo que debiera querer. 40

Thus for Unamuno freedom is won only through a willing acceptance of necessary laws, a freedom whose conception is embodied in his doctrina del pacto: 'pacto hondamente libre, esto es, aceptado con la verdadera libertad que da el hacer de los leyes de las cosas, leyes de nuestra mente, con la que nos acerca a uno como omnipotencia humana'.⁴¹

All authentic spirituality, then, takes the willing acceptance of the interplay between freedom and necessity as its starting point. For Unamuno, Spain's great mystics 'no fueron al misticismo por hastío de razón ni desengaño de ciencia, sino más bien por el doloroso efecto entre lo desmesurado de sus aspiraciones y lo pequeño de la realidad'.⁴² And so the response that Spain must make to its problem - one of decadence at the turn of this century - is quite clearly equated with that of the mystic's individual response to his own self-imposed challenge. Those mystics who successfully met this challenge are described by Unamuno as 'el fruto más granado del espíritu castellano'.⁴³

It is in fact in Unamuno's masterpiece, El sentimiento trágico de la vida, that we find a complete rejection of that sloth which is the enemy of spirituality, and as we have seen, the distinguishing trait of Quietism in its amoral and pejorative aspects. We quote from his chapter on El problema práctico:

La pereza, se dice, es la madre de todos los vicios, y la pereza, en efecto, engendra los dos vicios: la avaricia y la envidia, que son, a sus vez, fuente de todos los demás. La pereza es el peso de la materia, de suyo inerte, en nosotros, y esa pereza, mientras nos dice que trata de conservarnos por el ahorro, en realidad no trata sino de amenguarnos, de anonadarnos.

Al hombre, o le sobra materia o le sobra espíritu, o, mejor dicho, o siente hambre de espíritu, esto es, de eternidad, o hambre de materia, resignación a anonadarse...

"Sed perfectos como vuestro Padre celestial lo es", se nos dijo, y este terrible precepto - terrible porque la perfección infinita del Padre nos es inasequible - debe ser nuestra suprema norma de conducta. El que no aspire a lo imposible, apenas hará nada hacedero que valga la pena. Debemos aspirar a lo imposible, a la perfección absoluta e infinita, y decir al Padre: "¡Padre, no puedo: ayuda a mi impotencia!" Y El lo hará en nosotros.

Y ser perfecto es serlo todo, es ser yo y ser todos los demás, es ser humanidad, es ser universo. Y no hay otro camino para ser todo lo demás, sino darse a todo, y cuando todo sea en todo, todo será en cada uno de nosotros. La apocatastasis es más que un ensueño místico: es una norma de acción, es un faro de altas hazañas. 44

The apocatastasis, described here by Unamuno, and equated with 'una norma de acción', is known by two effects, according to Miguel de Molinos:

De esta plenísima hartura nacen dos efectos. El primero un grande aliento para padecer por Dios. El segundo una cierta esperanza o seguridad que jamás le ha de perder ni de él se ha de separar. Aquí, en este interior retiro tiene el amado Jesús su paraíso, al cual podemos subir estando y conversando en la tierra. (p. 232)

And these two effects are accompanied by three signs denoting the perfected Christian, signs that indicate qualities which are the very antithesis of quietistic inertia:

Por tres señales se conoce el ánimo purgado ... La primera, la diligencia, que es una fortaleza de ánimo que arroja toda negligencia y pereza para disponerse con solicitud y confianza a obrar bien las virtudes. La segunda, la severidad, que es una fortaleza de ánimo contra la concupiscencia, acompañada con ardiente amor de la aspereza, de la vileza y santa pobreza. La tercera, la benignidad, que es una dulzura del ánimo que despidе todo rencor, envidia, aversión y odio contra el próximo. (p. 233)

Miguel de Molinos' radical social function, then, was to reanimate the most important Christian beliefs and values, to raise to collective consciousness the power of Christian freedom. It is not without reason that Molinos has often been viewed as revolutionary:

Llegamos, pues, a la política, acaso a la política de Dios. Miguel de Molinos podrá ser, pues, un político peligroso, y la ciudad de Dios, arregladita y modosa, necesitará desembarazarse de él. Y de toda su obra. Desprestigiarla, extinguirla, eliminarla a sangre y fuego, será el empeño de las ordenadas falanges del Papa-Dios. 45

It is interesting, too, that as Asensio points out, the Guía espiritual tends to make its reappearance in Spain in times of social change, such as the present.⁴⁶ History shows, however, that in times of stagnation and inertia, the Guía will be condemned to obscurity, just as it was in the seventeenth century.

It was Søren Kierkegaard, the father of existentialism, who emphasised that 'Christianity in the New Testament has to do with man's will, everything turns upon changing the will ... everything is related to this basic idea in Christianity which makes it what it is - a change of will'.⁴⁷

But, 'the men of the seventeenth century', concludes J.H. Elliott, 'belonged to a society which had lost the strength that comes from dissent, and they lacked the breadth of vision and the strength of character to break with a past that could no longer serve as a reliable guide to the future ... they could not bring themselves at the moment of crisis to surrender their memories and alter the antique pattern of their lives. At a time when the face of Europe was altering more rapidly than ever before the country ... proved to be lacking the essential ingredient for survival - the willingness to change'.⁴⁸

It is in the particular context of this abject failure of seventeenth-century Spain to initiate change that the Guía espiritual of Miguel de Molinos stands as a powerful comment on the extent to which Spanish society had degenerated into a quietistic inertia. But although rejected in its own day and in its own country, Molinos'

eloquent and virile statement of the 'roca viva del espíritu' continues to exert a fascination for all those who discern in his Guía that quiet sanity beyond all contradictions of opposites that alone has the power to transform:

No hablando, no deseando ni pensando, se llega al verdadero y perfecto silencio místico, en el cual habla Dios con el alma, se comunica y la enseña en su más íntimo fondo la más perfecta y alta sabiduría.

A esta interior soledad y silencio místico la llama y conduce cuando le dice que la quiere hablar a solas ... Reposa en este místico silencio y abrirás la puerta para que Dios se comunique, te una consigo y te transforme. (p. 132)

NOTES

1. See LEA, A History of the Inquisition of Spain, Vol. IV, pp. 69-70.
2. TELLECHEA IDÍGORAS, José Ignacio, in Historia de la iglesia en España, p. 517.
3. Ibid., pp. 519-520.
4. MATÍAS DEL NIÑO JESÚS, O.C.D., 'El P. Antonio de Jesús María, O.C.D., primer delator en España de la 'Guía espiritual'', Revista de Espiritualidad, 9 (1950), pp. 180-91 (p. 186).
5. See PEERS, Allison, Studies of the Spanish Mystics, 3 Vols., London, 1960, Vol. III, p. 130.
6. TELLECHEA IDÍGORAS, op.cit., p. 518.
7. Ibid., p. 520.
8. ELLIOTT, op.cit., p. 365.
9. CASTRO, op.cit., p. 645.
10. SANTOS, Francisco, El no importa de España y La verdad en el potro, edited by Julio Rodríguez Puértolas, London, 1973, p. xlvi.
11. SANTOS, Francisco, El Arca de Noé, quoted in PUÉRTOLAS, p. xlvii.
12. Santos inveighs against religious decadence in other works. Cf. El Rey Gallo, pp. 61-62, 143; El diablo anda suelto, obras completas, IV, p. 327; El Sastre del campillo, O.C. II, 94; El escándalo del mundo, O.C. III, p. 189; El arca de Noé, pp. 40-42, 46-47, 134.
13. SANTOS, La verdad en el potro, in PUÉRTOLAS, p. lxx.
14. Op.cit., p. lxxi.
15. SANTOS, El no importa de España, in PUÉRTOLAS, p. lxxi.
16. MÁRQUEZ, Antonio, Los alumbrados: orígenes y filosofía, 1525-1559, Madrid, 1972, pp. 213-14.

It is interesting to note that the sociologist, Worsley, has demonstrated that historically chiliastic movements tend to span what he calls a passivity-activity continuum. Movements which have viewed the millennium as imminent have usually been much more activist than those movements which have tended to

view the millennium in vaguer terms. It appears that great expectations and a sense of immediacy regarding the millennium are far more likely to lead to active rebellion, while lesser expectations breed passivity and Quietism. The alumbrados of seventeenth-century Spain would appear to fall into the latter category, for we have no hint in the condemned propositions held against them that their expectations of the millennium - although socially unproductive - were of an activist nature.

See TALMON, Yonina, 'In Pursuit of the Millennium: The Relation between Religious and Social Change', in Sociology and Religion: A Book of Readings, ed. Birnbaum and Lenzer, New Jersey, 1969, (pp. 238-254), p. 241.

17. LEA, op.cit., pp. 79-80.
18. JUNG, C.G., Psychology and Religion, Yale, 1972, p. 21.
19. GOOCH, Stan, Personality and Evolution, London, 1973, pp. 15-17.
20. Ibid., p. 34.
21. p. 180.
22. A. Castro suggests that if we wish to see how the Spaniard conceived his life, we should refer to The Bibliotheca Hispana of 1672. There are 48 pages of titles of religious works; 40 of historical works of largely religious character; 13 of jurisprudence and law; 6 of medicine and natural sciences; 5 of philosophy (in support of theology and religion); 4 of mathematics, astronomy, music, geography, nautical science, engineering, and architecture all together; 3 of political science. Op.cit., pp. 663-64.

A. Castro's statistics have been confirmed recently by Professor Whinnom, who makes the following interesting points in his article for the Bulletin of Hispanic Studies:

We ought at least to remember that for every work of pure literature there was at least one other book which was more widely read. Celestina was outdone by the Libro de Oración, Diana was overshadowed by Fray Luis de Granada's Guía de Pecadores, Don Quixote saw fewer editions than Pedro Mexía's Silva de varia lección, Lope's Arcadia does not match Guevara's Epístolas familiares. And, as I have tried to indicate, while we may have arranged our works of literature in some order of merit, we have done so without taking their contemporary popularity into account. (p. 194)

and significantly:

We cannot usefully distinguish an upper and lower class of reading public even in the seventeenth century. The purchasers of books must have belonged to the more well-to-do families; but there is little evidence that the tastes of the majority of them did not reflect the tastes of the population at large. (p. 195)

From The Problem of the 'best-seller' in Spanish Golden-Age Literature, B.H.S., LVII (1980).

(Amusing in this respect is the blurb on the cover of the Rescate Edition of the Guía: 'Un místico perseguido. El best-seller y el escándalo del siglo XVII'!)

23. LYNCH, John, Spain Under the Habsburgs, 2 Vols., Oxford, 1981, Vol. II, p. 276.
24. ELLIOTT, p. 368.
25. LYNCH, op.cit., p. 283.
26. Ibid., p. 288.
27. ELLIOTT, p. 378.
28. The terms 'manifest and latent functions' were first used by the sociologist Robert K. MERTON. See his Social Theory and Social Structure, New York, 1963, (pp. 60-61)
29. LEA, A History of the Inquisition of Spain, Vol. IV, p. 507.
30. DOSTOYEVSKY, Fyodor, The Brothers Karamazov, 2 Vols., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1966, Vol. I, pp. 288-311.
31. Ibid., p. 294.
32. KAMEN, Henry, Spain in the Later Seventeenth-Century, 1665-1700, London, 1980, p. 294.
33. DOSTOYEVSKY, op.cit., pp. 297-298.
34. BERGER, Peter, The Social Reality of Religion, p. 49.
The following verses from the Old Testament would seem to offer a vivid illustration of the concept of society as a 'memory'. They are taken from Numbers 15.32-41, describing the Israelites journey from Sinai to Edom.

During the time that the Israelites were in the wilderness, a man was found gathering sticks on the sabbath day. Those who had caught him in the act brought him to Moses and Aaron and all the community, and they kept him in custody, because it was not clearly known what was to be done with him. The LORD said to Moses, 'The man must be put to death; he must be stoned by all the community outside the camp.' So they took him outside the camp and all stoned him to death, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The LORD spoke to Moses and said, Speak to the Israelites in these words: You must make tassels like flowers on the corners of your garments, you and your children's children. Into this tassel you shall work a violet thread, and whenever you see this in the tassel, you shall remember all the LORD's commands and obey them, and not go your own wanton ways, led astray by your own eyes and hearts. This token is to ensure that you remember all my commands and obey them, and keep yourselves holy, consecrated to your God.

I am the LORD your GOD who brought you out of Egypt to become your God. I am the LORD your God.

35. BERGER, ibid., pp. 48-49.

36. HOCKING, William Ernest, 'Mysticism as Seen through Its Psychology', in Understanding Mysticism, ed. Woods, pp. 223-239 (p. 233).

It is surprising that the significance of the contribution of mysticism to society has received scant attention in literature on the mystics, although writers such as Hocking, Underhill, Bergson - and more recently Kenneth Wapnick and William Johnston - have noted its importance. Molinos' social significance lies in his attempts to popularise contemplative prayer, held at that time, as we have seen, to be the prerogative of the Orders. In this way he would seem to prefigure contemporary meditative movements, currently in vogue. Compare in this respect the enormously popular Transcendental Meditation of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

37. ECKHART, Meister, in The Perennial Philosophy, p. 344.

Compare also Eckhart's 'Not as if a man should escape from or be unfaithful to his inward being, but rather he should work in it and from it, so that his inner self breaks forth in activity and the activity is drawn into his inwardness' (cited in Mysticism East and West: A comparative analysis of the Nature of Mysticism by Rudolph Otto, New York, 1957, p. 176).

38. TERESA, Saint, 'The Interior Castle', in Silent Music: The Science of Meditation by William Johnston, London, 1974, p. 87.
39. UNAMUNO, Miguel de, En Torno al casticismo, Madrid, 1961, pp. 97-98.
40. Ibid., p. 107.
41. p. 42.
42. p. 104.
43. p. 64.
44. UNAMUNO, El Sentimiento Trágico de la vida, Obras Completas, Vol. XVI, Madrid, 1964, p. 404.
45. ASENSIO, Jaime, 'Miguel de Molinos reaparece', Revista canadiense de estudios hispánicos, Vol. III, No. 1, (Autumn, 1983), 89-94 (p. 89).
46. Ibid., p. 94.
47. KIERKERGAARDE, Søren, in Existentialism by J. McQUARRIE, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1980, p. 55.
48. ELLIOTT, p. 382.

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4. Correspondence between Molinos and General P. Oliva, S.J., and between Molinos and the parish priest of Pomigliano. This correspondence is published by M. Martín Robles: 'Del epistolario de Molinos' Cuadernos de la Escuela Española de Arqueología e Historia en Roma I (1912), 61-79.
5. Two letters to D. Sancho Losada, published by M. de la Pinta Llorente, Estudios de cultura española (Madrid, 1964), 210-14.
6. Defensa de la contemplación. Complete M.S. Vat. Lat. 8604. A. Valente publishes excerpts in his edition of the Guía pp. 255-324.

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APPENDIX I

(From BIGELOW, J., Molinos the Quietist, New York, 1882,
pp. 107-110)

LETTER FROM THE CARDINAL CARACCIOLI TO POPE INNOCENT XI.,
WRITTEN FROM NAPLES, JAN. 30, 1682.

Very Holy Father:

If I have any reason to comfort myself and render thanks to God, that many souls confided to my care apply themselves to the holy exercise of mental prayer, the source of every heavenly benediction, I ought not the less to be afflicted by seeing others inconsiderately wandering into dangerous ways. For some time, Very Holy Father, there has been introduced into Naples, and as I learn into other parts of this kingdom, the frequent use of passive prayer, which some call the prayer of pure faith, or of quietude. They affect the name of Quietists, making no meditation nor vocal prayers, but in the actual exercise of prayer holding themselves in perfect repose and silence, as if mute or dead. They pretend to make a prayer purely passive. In effect, they strive to remove from their mind and even from their eyes every subject of meditation, presenting themselves, as they say, to the light and breath of God, which they expect from heaven, without observing any rule or method, and without preparing themselves by any reading or reflection. The masters of the spiritual life are accustomed to propose such aids to beginners, that by reflection on their own defects, on their passions, and on their imperfections they may ultimately correct them, but they

themselves pretend to lift themselves to the most sublime state of prayer and contemplation, which comes only from the pure goodness of God, who gives it to whom he pleases, and when he pleases - so they visibly deceive themselves, imagining that, without passing through the exercises of a purifying life, they may, by their own strength, open to themselves at once the way of contemplation, without thinking that the ancients and the moderns treating of this matter teach unanimously that passive prayer, or the prayer of quietude, cannot be practiced except by those who have attained to the perfect mortification of their passions and are already far advanced. It is this irregular method of making prayer through which the devil has finally transformed himself into an angel of light, about which I have to make this recital to your Holiness, not without very great horror.

Among them are some who reject vocal prayer entirely, and it has happened that some, long exercised in the prayer of pure faith and of quietude under the lead of these new directors, having subsequently fallen into other hands, have not been able to bring themselves to say the holy rosary nor even to make the sign of the cross, saying that they could not nor would not do it, nor recite any vocal prayer, because they were dead in the presence of God, and that these exterior acts were of no service. A woman brought up in this practice is always saying, "I am nothing, God is all, and I am in the abandon, where you see me, because it so pleases God." She does not wish to confess any more, but daily to take the communion;

she obeys no one, and makes no vocal prayer. Yet others, in this prayer of quietude, when the images of the saints and even of our Lord Jesus Christ present themselves to their imagination they hasten to drive them away with a shake of their head, because they say they separate them from God. They pursue this ridiculous and scandalous course even at the public communion, imagining that they ought then to leave Jesus Christ to think only of God. Their blindness is so great that one of them took it into his head one day to throw down a crucifix, because, he says, it prevented him from uniting himself with God, and made him lose the divine presence. They are in the error of believing that all the thoughts which come to them in the silence and in the repose of prayer are so many lights and inspirations from God, and that being in the light of God they are under no law, hence it happens that they believe themselves permitted to do everything without distinction that at such times enters their mind.

These disorders oppress me, who am, however unworthy, the vine-dresser appointed to the culture of this vineyard, and render an exact account of it, with all the respect which I owe to your Holiness, as to the great father of the family, in order that, knowing through your wisdom the poisoned root which produces such growths, he may employ all the strength of his apostolic arm to cut them and tear them out by the very roots; the more so because on this subject opinions are spreading which deserve to be condemned. Since I have been here, a

manuscript treating of the prayer of Quietude has been presented to me for permission to print it; it contained so many censurable propositions that I have refused permission and retained the book. I perceive that pens are being prepared on all sides to write some dangerous things. I pray your Holiness to give me such lights and means as you may judge fitting, that I may anticipate the graver scandals with which this city and diocese are threatened. I cannot prevent myself from also giving your Holiness notice of the usage of daily communion introduced here among even the married laity, who, without exhibiting any progress in spiritual life, as they should do in so frequently approaching the holy table, give, on the contrary, instead of edification, much scandal. Your Holiness cannot ignore what you have ordered in a general decree specially recommending to confessors by whose judgment the daily communion of the laity should be regulated that in permitting it they should remember above all to make manifest the large preparation and the great purity which the soul should bring to the holy table, and yet experience shows but too plainly that, without any regard to the pious notifications of your Holiness, most of the laity frequent the holy communion daily, of which I feel myself obliged to complain to your Holiness as a manifest abuse, for which I pray you to prescribe a suitable remedy with special instructions, which I shall follow as the guide which ought to lead me safely in the direction of souls. I very humbly kiss the feet of your Holiness.

(Signed)

THE CARDINAL CARACCIOLI.

APPENDIX 2

(BIGELOW, op.cit., pp. 70-80)

ABSTRACT OF THE TRIAL AND SENTENCE OF MICHEL DE MOLINOS, SON OF PETER MOLINOS, SIXTY YEARS OF AGE, A SPANIARD, OF THE PROVINCE OF ARAGON, OF THE DIOCESE OF SARAGOSSA.

He was declared, by witnesses, to have taught divers doctrines which treated as lawful the commission of filthy, obscene, and beastly acts; with using to this end the sacred robes and instruments; also with having taught the lawfulness of detraction, resentment towards one's neighbor, anger, blasphemy; with cursing God and the saints, and with execrating the consecrated robes. He assigned for his excuse that these acts were the works of the devil, who operated as God's instrument, and that such violence should be regarded as necessary. Moreover, that they were not called to do penance for acts thus provoked, neither ought they to praise them nor to confess them, but to leave them unpunished, and, if scruples on account of such acts came, to make no account of them, because they were done without the consent of the higher nature, but solely by the force of the devil.

Moreover, he was suspected of having committed acts of sensuality with seventeen persons, and, besides, with sixteen between sex and sex, also with abusing the confessional. Being questioned on these last accusations, he denied absolutely the commission of such obscenities. He confessed to have esteemed many of the above-mentioned acts lawful, by reason of the demoniac pressure aforesaid, which, however, did not obscure the light of the superior

part of the reason which remains illuminated, to consider these acts lawful, in proof of which he produced a writing he had made, which contained several examples from the sacred Scriptures, such as Samson, Jacob, David, Jeremiah, and Elias, all of whom, by constraint of the devil, perpetrated acts of wrath, sensuality, of blasphemy, and others like them.

In this writing are thirteen assertions, as may be seen in the printed propositions.

Hence, a rule for knowing if such constraint emanates surely from the devil, and if the soul assents to it. The rule is to notice whether the soul is conscious of not being disunited from God, and that it is not abstracted from prayer and union with God, being assured of this, - that all things come from God.

He says that, beyond this, a man ought to make no effort to provoke such constraint, but to act entirely as moved by God, to whom in all things he is submitted.

He confessed to have not counselled all kinds of persons in this way, but with some he proceeded differently, because of the shame they had for such acts, and not to frighten them from the confessional.

In the second place, he taught another prayer, called "Contemplation," consisting of an entire abandonment to the will of God, and in this prayer the soul is totally dead to itself and to its own powers, and does not either do or think but what God wills; and, though they should experience from this prayer no sensible advantage, they must not, on that account, be

discouraged. On this point, fourteen approved good witnesses testified that they had been instructed by him to bring themselves into the presence of God without using any acts of external devotion, not even the sacraments, and in this way satisfied their highest affections without knowing if they were real affections or merely sensual desires.

The remedy he proposed for the temptations which might arise in such exercises was to assume a state of indifference and passive submission, without renewing any acts of will or other powers, they being obstacles to the quiet which the soul enjoys. All the powers should passively concur in this prayer, which the intellect cannot bend to its operations; nay, the whole soul, by becoming dead to the world, might esteem it proper to go naked through the Piazza Navona.

Moreover, he taught that, while in such prayer they ought not to do reverence to the sacraments or sacred images, because it impaired the effect of its operations; nay, he broke and caused to be broken the crucifixes and sacred images as impediments to prayer; and if one feels a desire to break forth into such acts of self-indulgence, he ought not to complain and make resistance with thinking of Paradise, or of Hell, or of death, nor have recourse to the saints for succor or assistance in liberating him, because he should be in all things and always submissive to the will of God, even joined to Him, and when people appeal to God through the saints as a matter of habit, they are like so many parrots who scream but want nothing;

and, further, that one ought not to pray God to be delivered from sin, nor for any favour, nor to be spared chastisements, because that would evince a disposition to resist the will of God and to question his justice.

That a soul in this prayer should not pray that he might again do the will of God, because that would be an exercise of free will, nor should one pray God for the conversion of sinners, nor for the dead, nor to be delivered from evils.

That the saints had not attained to this perfection, because they walked by sensuous ways. Besides, there were many other propositions, which are given to the press.

Twenty witnesses testified that in these exercises they did not scruple at acts of impurity, of kissing, and of complaining, because the superior parts of their nature were rendered insensible; and they took the communion without confessing themselves or other preparation as they would partake of a cake.

That the performance of these external acts of devotion were for little children, not for perfected men. On this point, many original letters of Molinos were produced, in which he confessed his approval of these practices, calling them by various titles - the "prayer of quietude," "fixed contemplation," "the state of indifference," "mystic death," "holy idleness."

Interrogated upon this point, he said that this doctrine could only be verified by those who followed

the extraordinary ways, and by no others. He admitted that all the petitions of the Lord's Prayer were useless, except "thy will be done."

He confessed that for many years he had found many persons at the confessional without need of absolution, because they were perfect in the extraordinary ways of quiet.

He confessed that God wills the physical act of sinning, - "il materiale del peccato," - denied having taught that the interior fear of offending God was useless, only the external and sensible fear; and moreover, he declared that he had taught that a soul mystically dead is not subject to divine precepts, and that the divine law is for sinners and not for such souls.

Moreover, he confessed to having taught that it was lawful to eat flesh on Friday and Saturday in Lent, and other prohibited days, because the annihilated soul is not subject to this law. He confessed upon interrogation that he had never kept Lent here in Rome; to have frequently violated it on Fridays and Saturdays, by secretly eating fish and flesh. He said that making vows to God trenched upon God's freedom, and therefore was not a good thing. He declared that the mystic souls should believe themselves incapable of sin - impeccabili - because God, who operated in them, was impeccable. This was confirmed by two letters, in which he said that God bound the powers of the soul; that God operated in mystic souls, whereby they were rendered impeccable.

Being interrogated, he confessed to have never asserted the impeccability of a soul which does not see beyond the practical act of sinning.

He was declared to have said that the mystic death alone lifts the soul into the beatific vision on the earth; this was confirmed by a responsive letter, in which he cites the example of St. Paul, who was lifted into the third heaven, and by another letter in which he asserted that to such a soul may be said, Beati mundo corde, and here on earth, and he confessed it all.

It was declared by more than a hundred witnesses that he had approved of private meetings (li conventicoli) for men and women, although he denied this. Moreover, he caused himself to be esteemed a saint, saying, when taken to prison by the policeman who bound him, "Know you who I am? I am Doctor Molinos. Oh, how many there are in Rome who would pay something handsome to have the good fortune to stand here and speak to Doctor Molinos! This is a favor which God has conferred upon you. How many there are who have come to speak with me and I have declined to receive them, causing them to be told that I was not at home, or that I slept! But I could not say this to you. You have at last found your guardian angel." Then he exhorted him to quit the trade of a policeman, as dangerous to his salvation, and apply himself to the comprehension of his dogmas. "Yes, think well of it," and so beating his hands now

and then as he went along the streets, dropping his eyes and then raising them, he said to the officer, "What have you concluded?"

It was further deposed that he had received and much commended many anagrams on the name of Michel Molinos, which were writ in his praise, calling them prophetic and divine sayings, and among them were three in which he was represented as a holy man of God and the honey of God, and such as were most acceptable to him, he corrected and sent to some persons.

A friar said to him that a certain monk was a saint. He replied that this was a very great mistake, because to know a holy man it required a most holy man, and he alone could know it. To another he pretended to have received one of his shirts all stained and dirty, and said, "Keep this, because I wore it on my journey from Spain to Rome, and after my death it will be a precious relic." Being interrogated, he replied that, in regard to the policeman, as in regard to the anagrams, he had not said any of those things to praise himself, but by the manner of his speech to make a stronger impression upon the policeman in favour of becoming acquainted with his dogmas. To the monk's statement, he replied that he had intended to say that no one was able to shine with a brighter light than his, which was another way of acknowledging his own nothingness. As to the shirt, he denied having given it to any one whomsoever; that it had been taken from him.

Two witnesses asserted that he spoke evil to them of the Holy Office (the Inquisition), saying it was incapable of comprehending his writings. This also he denied having said.

Propositions against the Holy Office attributed to him:

First. Superiors ought to be obeyed in external things only; as to interior things, God alone.

Second. It is a ridiculous doctrine which says that we should regulate our consciences in submission to bishops or prelates.

Third. The exposure of the interior life is a secret fraud.

Fourth. In the world there is no tribunal competent to require a revelation of the contents of letters in matters of conscience.

Being interrogated, he replied, that one ought not to reveal interior acts, neither to superiors nor to prelates, nor to the Holy Office, except in judicial proceedings.

Finally, he was declared to have for a long time been in the habit of indulging with two ladies the habit of kissing and embracing one another, of taking immodest liberties with their persons respectively; with frequently passing naked through their rooms, with rubbing one against another, with witnessing these women frequently when urinating, and many other things which it would be immodest to mention. And he gave the women to understand that such acts were not sinful, but that

they ought to become accustomed to them to the end that in the hour of death they might have no scruples.

Being interrogated of these allegations, he admitted them all, affirming that they were not sinful, because they were the work of the senses without the assent of the superior nature which was united to God.

Being interrogated de credulitate, he replied that he believed himself superior to the danger of falling into sin, because of his habit of mortifying the flesh in this way. He finally said that he recognized the Holy Office as superior to his doctrines, and that he submitted himself in all things to the Holy Mother Church, confessing that he had erred and that he repented.

He was condemned as a dogmatic heretic to close imprisonment for life (ad arctos carceres in perpetuo), to wear the penitential habit with the sign of the cross over his garments for the rest of his life; and the further penance was imposed of reciting the Apostles' Creed every day, the third part of the Most Holy Rosary every week, to confess sacramentally four times a year, and with the license of his confessor to partake of the communion.

When the record of the trial and the series of condemned propositions had been read through, Molinos was conducted to the feet of the Commissario of the Inquisition, before whom he is reported to have solemnly abjured all the errors attributed to him by the tribunal, after which he received absolution from the Commissario, who then required him to remove his monkish frock and

clothe himself with the customary penitential garment with the cross on the back. He was then conducted to a cell in the dungeons of the Holy Office, which he was destined never to leave again till death mercifully opened its door for him.

The decree of the Inquisitors was immediately confirmed by the bull (Cœlestis Pastor) of the Pope, in which the sixty-eight propositions that are alleged to have been extracted from the writings of Michel de Molinos and condemned as heretical were recited.

APPENDIX 3

(BIGELOW, op.cit., pp. 114-124)

1. Man should annihilate his powers: that is the interior way.
2. To wish to operate actively is to offend God, who wishes to be sole agent; hence, we should abandon ourselves wholly to Him, and remain afterwards like an inanimate body.
3. The wish to do any good work is an obstacle to perfection.
4. Natural activity is an enemy of grace; it is an obstacle to the operations of God and to true perfection; for God wishes to act in us, but without us.
5. The soul annihilates itself by inaction, and returns to its beginning, which is the divine essence in which it remains transformed and deified. Then, also, God remains in Himself; for then there are no more two things united, but one single thing. It is thus that God lives and reigns in us and the soul annihilates itself, even in its operative power.
6. The interior way is that in which one knows neither light nor love nor resignation, nor is it necessary even to know God. In this way one advances directly to perfection.
7. The soul should never think of recompense, nor of punishment, nor of paradise, nor of hell, nor of death, nor of eternity.

8. It ought not to desire to know if it is following the will of God, nor if it is sufficiently resigned to that will or not; nor is it necessary that it should know its own state and proper nothingness; but it should remain as an inanimate body.

9. The soul ought not to be mindful either of itself or of God, or of anything, for in the interior life, reflection is pernicious, even such as one makes on his own human acts and defects.

10. If by his own defects he scandalizes others, it is still not necessary that it should be made the subject of any reflection, provided there was no actual will to scandalize, and it is a great grace of God to be unable to reflect on one's own short-comings.

11. If in doubt whether we are in the right or the wrong way, it is not necessary to reflect.

12. He who has given his free will to God ought to have no further anxiety about anything, neither of hell nor of paradise; he ought not to have a desire of his own perfection, of virtues, of his sanctification, nor of his salvation, of which he ought to purify himself of the hope.

13. After remitting our free will to God, we must also abandon all thought and care of what concerns ourselves. Even the care of doing in ourselves, without ourselves, His divine will.

14. It does not become him who is resigned to the will of God to ask of Him, because to ask is an imperfection, being an act of the personal will and of the personal

choice. It is to will that the divine will be conformed to our own; hence this word of the Evangel, "Ask and ye shall receive," was not intended by Jesus Christ for interior souls who have no will. In this way, truly, souls reach the point that they cannot ask anything from God.

15. Even as the soul ought to ask from God nothing, so it ought to thank Him for nothing, both being acts of the personal will.

16. It is not proper to seek indulgences to diminish the penalties due to our sins, because it is better to satisfy divine justice than appeal to the divine mercy - the one springing from the pure love of God, and the other from selfish love of ourselves, and is neither grateful to God nor meritorious, because it is seeking to flee the cross.

17. The free will being remitted to God with the care and the knowledge of our soul, we need have no more concern about temptations, nor trouble in resisting them, unless negatively and without any other effort. If nature asserts herself let her assert herself - it is but nature.

18. He who in prayer serves himself with images, figures, ideas, or even his own conceptions, does not adore God in spirit and in truth.

19. He who loves God in a way that the reason proves and the understanding conceives that he ought to be loved, does not truly love God.

20. It is ignorance to say that in prayer we should aid ourselves by reasoning and reflections when God does not speak to the soul; God never speaks His speech in His actions, and He acts in the soul whenever it makes no obstacle to His action by its thoughts and its operations.

21. In prayer we should remain in a faith obscure and universal, in quietude, and in forgetfulness of all particular thought, even of the distinctive attributes of God and of the Trinity. We should also remain in the presence of God to adore Him, to love Him, and to serve Him, but without the production of acts, because in them God takes no pleasure.

22. This knowledge by faith is not an act produced by the creature, but it is a knowledge given of God to the creature, which the creature does not know is in him and does not know to have been in him. The same may be said of love.

23. The mystics with St. Bernard distinguish in the scale of the cloisters four degrees - reading, meditation, prayer, and infused contemplation. He who stops always at the first round cannot mount to the second. He who remains continually at the second cannot arrive at the third, which is our acquired contemplation, in which we must persist through life unless God lifts the soul without any desire on its part up to infused contemplation, which, ceasing, the soul should descend to the third step and there so fix itself that it may not again return either to the second or to the first.

24. Whatever thoughts occur in prayer, even impure ones, or against God and against the saints, the faith, and

the sacraments, providing one does not entertain them voluntarily, but only tolerates them with indifference and resignation, do not prevent the prayer of faith; on the contrary, they perfect it, because the soul then remains more resigned to the divine will.

25. Although asleep and altogether insensible, he does not cease to be in prayer and actual contemplation, because prayer and resignation are but the same thing, and while prayer lasts, so long resignation lasts.

26. The distinction of three ways - purificative, illuminative, and unitive - is the absurdest thing which has been said by mystics, for there is but one only way, and that is the interior way.

27. He who desires and stops at sensible devotion neither desires nor seeks God, but himself, and he who walks in the interior way sins in desiring it and in exciting himself in holy places and at solemn festivals.

28. Disgust for spiritual goods is profitable, for it purifies self-love.

29. When an interior soul revolts from intercourse with God or virtue, it is a good sign.

30. All sensibility in the spiritual life is an abomination and nastiness.

31. No contemplative practices the true interior virtues, because they ought not to be recognizable by the senses: it is necessary then to banish the virtues.

32. Before or after communion, interior souls do not require any other preparation or actions of grace, than to abide in ordinary passive resignation, because that

supplements in a more perfect manner all the acts of virtue which are or can be made in the common way; that if at communion there rises in the soul sentiments of humiliation, of requirement, or of gratitude, they should be suppressed whenever you see they do not come from a special inspiration of God. In other cases they are the emotions of nature which is not yet dead.

33. The soul that is walking in the interior way does wrong to awaken in itself, by any effort at solemn festivals, sentiments of devotion, because all days to the interior soul are alike; all are solemn festivals. I say the same of sacred places, for to it all places are alike.

34. It does not become interior souls to give thanks to God in words and with the tongue, because they should remain silent without opposing any obstacle to the operation of God in them. Thus they find as fast as they resign themselves to God they are less able to recite the Lord's Prayer or Pater Noster.

35. It is not fitting for interior souls to do virtuous actions of their own choice and by their own forces, for then they would not be dead. Nor should they testify love to the Blessed Virgin, the saints, and the humanity of Jesus, because that, being sensible objects, the love of them must be of the same quality.

36. No creature, neither the Blessed Virgin nor the saints, should have a place in our hearts, because God alone wishes to fill and possess it.

37. Under the strongest temptations even, the soul ought not to resist them with explicit acts of opposing virtues,

but rest in the aforesaid love and resignation.

38. The voluntary cross of mortifications is an insupportable burden and without fruit, hence it should be laid aside.

39. The holiest action nor the penances of the saints suffice to efface from the soul the slightest stain.

40. The Holy Virgin has never done a single exterior act, and yet she has been the holiest of all saints.

One may, therefore, attain to holiness without exterior acts.

41. God permits and wishes to humiliate us and to conduct us to a perfect transformation, that the devil should do violence to the bodies of some perfected souls which are not possessed, even to the making them to commit animal actions, even while awake and without any mental obfuscation, even to physically moving their hands and other members against their will. The same is to be understood of other actions, bad in themselves, but which are not sinful in this connection, because there has been no consent.

42. These acts of earthly violence may occur at the same time between persons of opposite sexes, and even push them to the accomplishment of a wicked action.

43. In past ages, God made saints by the agency of tyrants, now he makes them by the agency of demons, who, exciting in them these violences, lead them the more to despise and annihilate themselves, and abandon themselves totally to God.

44. Job blasphemed and yet he did not sin, because it was a violence of the demon.

45. St. Paul felt in his body the violences of the demon. Hence he wrote, "The good I would, I do not; the evil I would not, that I do."

46. These violences are more suited to annihilate the soul and conduct it to a perfect union and transformation. Indeed, there is no other way so short and sure.

47. When these violences occur, we must let Satan act without opposing with any effort or endeavour, but to remain in nothingness, and although there should result illusions of the senses or other brutal acts, or even worse, we should not disquiet ourselves, but put away our scruples, doubts, and fears, because the soul is thereby more enlightened, fortified, and purified, and acquires a holy liberty. Above all, we should avoid confessing. It is well not to accuse ourselves of our acts, because that is the way to subdue the demon and to lay up treasures of peace.

48. Satan, the author of these violences, strives, afterwards, to persuade the soul that they are great sins, in order that we may be disquieted and advance no farther in the interior way. Hence, to render his efforts abortive, it is better not to accuse ourselves, especially as they are not sins, even venial sins.

49. By the violence of the demon, Job was betrayed into strange excesses at the very time that he raised his pure hands to heaven in prayer, as is explained in the sixteenth chapter of his book.

50. David, Jeremiah, and many holy prophets suffered these violences from without in like shameful external actions.

51. There are many examples in the Holy Scripture of these violences in external actions, bad in themselves, as when Samson killed himself with the Philistines, when he married an alien, and sinned with Delilah, things forbidden and sinful; when Judith lied to Holofernes; when Elisha cursed the children; when Eli burned the chiefs of King Ahab, with their troops. One is only in doubt whether this violence came directly from God or from the agency of demons, as happens to other souls.

52. When these violences, even shameful ones, happen without troubling the mind, then the soul may unite itself to God, as, in fact, it is all the time united.

53. To know in practice of such if any act in other persons proceeds from this violence, the rule which I have is not only derived from the protestations which souls make that they have not assented to these violences, nor that it is impossible that they have sworn falsely that they had not consented, nor that they are souls advanced in the interior way, but I judge rather from an actual light, superior to all human and theological knowledge, which makes me know certainly, with an interior conviction, that such an action comes from violence. Now I am certain that this light comes from God, because it comes to me joined to the conviction that it comes from God, so that it leaves not the least shadow of a doubt to the contrary, just as it happens sometimes that God, revealing something

to a soul, He convinces it at the same time that the revelation comes from Him, so that he cannot doubt it.

54. The spiritual, who walk in the common way, will be much confused and deceived at death with all the passions they will have to purify in the other world.

55. By this interior way one succeeds, though with much trouble, in purifying and extinguishing all the passions, so that one no longer feels anything whatever, nothing, nothing, nor does one feel any more inquietude than if the body were dead, nor does the soul experience any more emotion.

56. The two laws and the two lusts, the one of the soul and the other of self-love, subsist so long as self-love subsists; hence, when it is once purified and dead, as happens in the interior way, then also perish the two laws and the two lusts; one falls no more, - one feels nothing any more, not even a venial sin.

57. By acquired contemplation, one reaches a state in which one commits no more sin, mortal or venial.

58. We reach this state by not reflecting on our acts, because faults come from reflection.

59. The interior way has nothing to do with confession, confessors, cases of conscience, theology, or philosophy.

60. God renders the confession impossible to advanced souls, when they once begin to die to reflections or are already dead to them. He supplies their place with as much preserving grace as they would receive from the sacrament. Hence, in this state, it is not good for

souls to frequent the confessional, because it is impossible to them.

61. A soul arrived at the mystic death can wish nothing but what God wishes, because it has no more a will, - God has taken it from him.

62. The interior way conducts, also, to the death of the senses. Besides, an evidence that one is in a state of annihilation, which is mystic death, is that the exterior senses no more represent to us sensible things than if they were not, because they can no longer make the intellect apply itself to them.

63. By the interior way one attains to a fixed state of imperturbable peace.

64. A theologian has less disposition for contemplation than an idiot: first, because he has not a faith as pure; second, he is not so humble; third, he has less anxiety for his salvation; fourth, he has a head full of phantasms, chimeras, opinions, speculations, so that the true light can never enter it.

65. We should obey superiors in exterior things. The vows of obedience only extend to things of this nature, but for the interior it is otherwise. There but God and the Director alone enter.

66. It is a new doctrine in the Church, and a laughable one, that souls in their interior should be governed by bishops, and that, the bishop being incapable, they should present themselves to him with their director. It is, I say, a new doctrine, since it is not taught either in the Scriptures or by the Councils, in the

canons or bulls, or by any saint or author, nor can it be, the Church not judging things concealed and every soul having the right to choose what seemeth to it good.

67. It is manifest fraud to say that one is obliged to expose his interior to the exterior forum of superiors, and that it is sinful not to do it, because the Church does not judge things concealed, and souls are prejudiced by these deceptions and dissimulations.

68. There is no faculty nor jurisdiction in the world competent to order the letters of directory of the interiors of souls to be communicated, hence it is well for people to be advised that this is an enterprise of Satan.