

THE TWELVE
DEGREES OF
HUMILITY AND PRIDE

THE TWELVE DEGREES
OF HUMILITY
AND PRIDE

by
Saint Bernard of Clairvaux

TAN Books
Gastonia, North Carolina

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This edition of *The Twelve Degrees of Humility and Pride* was re-typeset from the edition published by The Macmillan Company, New York, 1929, and re-published in 2013 by TAN Books as part of *The Foundations of Western Monasticism*.

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Cover design by Caroline Green

ISBN: 978-1-5051-3395-0

Kindle ISBN: 978-1-5051-3397-4

ePUB ISBN: 978-1-5051-3396-7

Published in the United States by

TAN Books

PO Box 269

Gastonia, NC 28053

www.TANBooks.com

Printed in the United States of America

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PREFACE

LIGHT IN THE VALLEY—
FROM LAW TO DESIRE

By William Edmund Fabey, Ph.D.

The Roman mind of St. Benedict would have understood Leo XIII's re-organization (and rejuvenation) of the Benedictines in the nineteenth century. Finally recovering from the devastation of the Enlightenment and its Revolutions, the Catholic Church entered into a period of re-organization. Through the Papal brief *Summum Semper*, Leo brought together the scattered remnants of the Benedictine houses and—in an authoritative act—fashioned them into a single confederation or “order” under one Abbot Primate. Today, we bring to monasticism a largely nineteenth-century notion of a single, centralized order of Benedictine monks. Yet monasticism is again showing its diversity of forms and the Benedictines

themselves have long been progressing back towards a decentralized model. There are currently twenty loosely affiliated congregations of Benedictines, seven of which date from after *Summer Semper*.

For all his *Romanitas*, St. Benedict did not intend a monolithic idea of an “order.” His conception of monasticism was an attempt to understand how the Christian life could be lived purely and effectively. The confederation of monasteries that sprung out of his Rule was not a blueprint for a homogenized corporation. As the last chapter of the Rule makes clear, his directives were for beginners and envisioned modification and flexibility—much like the norms of classical Roman law and rule, in fact. By the tenth century, the various monastic communities in Western Europe had largely adopted the Rule of St. Benedict, while adapting it to local conditions and preserving, at least in part, ideas, customs, and rules taken from other authors. The Rule was successful in providing the essential architectural structure, but never envisioned uniformity, only unity of principles.

With its success came a diffusion of the vision and spirit of the Rule, as is often the case with organic and institutional growth: the further monasticism spread over geography and time, the less the fervor of the founding generation remained. Yet monastic literature and the Rule

itself contained the principles of western monasticism's own reform, and its elasticity was limited, of course, by the Gospel and the life of grace. By the tenth century the spirit of development and renewal awoke in Europe, taking a northern and southern form.

In southern Europe, the desire for austerity was voiced anew by St. Romuald and St. Peter Damian. The anchoritic or hermitical fervor limited by St. Benedict rose up again to call Italian monasticism away from its distractions and, in some monasteries, its decadence. At the beginning of the eleventh century in the mountain valley of the Apennines near Arezzo, the Camoldoli movement began, harkening back to the most primitive roots of monasticism; and the solitude that was largely an interior solitude amongst Benedictines became once again a structural solitude. Men were not to be alone and apart for God while still amongst men, rather they were to be alone and apart physically. The Camodolese monks organized themselves over whole sections of mountain valleys in a form similar to eastern monasticism.

In northern Europe, the desire for austerity had resulted in a massive internal reform of Benedictines, first initiated by St. Benedict of Aniane (747–821), and then a century later by William Duke of Aquitaine's successful foundation of an abbey at Cluny in 910. The initial Cluniac

reform was spurred on by a scholarly reawakening and a heightened sense of the world's fragility and the ultimate judgment of God.

Cluniac monasticism vigorously cultivated the private and corporate prayer life of its members. Corporate solitude was to be protected not only by the physical cloister, but by the aural cloister of near continual chant and vocal prayer. Under the dynamic direction of St. Hugh and with strong papal backing, Cluny, positioned in the very heart of France, became a vehicle for the far-reaching reinvention of monasticism and inspired two centuries of splendor in the liturgical arts and church architecture. In one of the most beautiful paradoxes in European history, a zeal for absolute concentration on the soul and a life of endless praise in the face of the end times led to one of the greatest bursts in material creativity and enrichment in Church history.

In response to the Cluniac development and the arguable departure from primitive Benedictine observance, a group of men originally associated with the monastery at Molesme, turned away for the marshy thickets of Cîteaux, twenty miles south of Dijon. On Palm Sunday in the year 1098, a monk named Robert (1028–1111) and a small group of disciples left their larger community to live as the early Christians, understanding the

Rule of St. Benedict as providing them a “formula of perfect penance” (*formula perfectae penitentiae*). A vision of this new life would soon be set out in the *Exordium Parvum*, one of the founding documents of a new kind of monastery. The members of the new association were to be poor men living with and contemplating a poor Christ, as they would say. Their common life, according to the Rule of St. Benedict, was to lead them back to a strict simplicity in all things exterior and interior. The perceived lavishness of the Cluniac-inspired Benedictines would be utterly rejected. Among the early founders was the English lawyer, St. Stephen Harding, whose hand was decisive in the *Exordium* and other early documents. These men were to be the Cistercians—the name originating from the simple place name for their new community: *Cistercium* in Latin (the site of modern Cîteaux), an abbreviation of *cis tertium* [*lapidem miliarum*] or “nearby the third milestone.” How appropriate that men questing for simplicity would take their name from nothing more than a wayside road marker.

Behind this somewhat romantic narrative about the origins of this new branch of the Benedictine family was the common reforming spirit of the age. St. Robert of Molesme was seventy years-old in 1098. He had held a variety of positions within various monastic communities

and clearly was restless in his pursuit of simplicity. At least three times prior to the attempt at Cîteaux, St. Robert had led groups of men into the wilds of France to establish hermitages. Molesme, which he would dramatically depart from and denounce, was initially his own attempt at a reformed Benedictine community. His early work had been fruitful; many were attracted to his austere zeal. St. Bruno, for example, who would eventually go on to found the most successful of the hermitical forms of western monasticism—the Carthusians—studied at Molesme under St. Robert in the 1070s. But ultimately St. Robert desired a more perfect form to structure his imitation and service of Christ. In his last attempt, he leaned heavily on St. Stephen Harding, a man marked by a deep understanding of the scholarship and legal reforms that were emerging throughout western Christendom.

For the new community at Cîteaux, law would take an almost mystical meaning. Law—the law of Benedict through his Rule and the laws or customs of the new Cistercian norms—was the means by which the Holy Spirit communicated His love. Obedience to the Rule of Benedict and the Cistercian documents led one to see the spiritual rectitude and purity that could be found in the selfless observations of rules in their integrity. Prayer life was simplified and the concept of pursuing

an “ordered life,” an *Ordo*, came to the fore. The “order” of Cistercian life re-emphasized things found in the Rule of St. Benedict—silence, mortification, manual labor—but recovered the centrality of charity as the objective. Observance of the law was not impersonal obedience, but the complete alignment of the monk’s heart to the heart of Christ and to the will of the Father. In so doing, he would become a vessel of grace and love, untainted or diluted by the material riches or worldly apostolates (such as education, ornate liturgical craftsmanship, or diplomacy) that were increasingly becoming the expertise of the Cluniac Benedictines. It was into this setting, in the year 1113, under St. Stephen Harding as the third abbot of Cîteaux that a young Burgundian noble then named Bernard of Fontaines arrived with thirty companions, seeking Christ according to the principles of the new monastery.

The impossibility of adequately sketching the life St. Bernard of Clairvaux can be understood in Thomas Merton’s remark that “Bernard contained the whole twelfth century in himself.” Born for knighthood and adventure, St. Bernard (1090–1153) displayed his remarkable character most magnificently in his youthful rejection of either the straightforward pursuit of military and political prowess as a feudal lord or the apparently obvious route

towards authority by way of the Cluniac monasticism. An inner impulse drove Bernard toward the austere vision of a kingly power which demanded displays of love and loyalty in the miry woods of Cîteaux. Yet in choosing the harder path of nascent Cistercian monasticism, Bernard would discover that all the functions of a feudal lord or powerful Churchman were not removed from his life, but only purified and multiplied under the laws of charity and the *ordo* of the Cistercian life which he would do much to shape and develop. St. Bernard would have a life filled with drama: interventions (political and ecclesial), public preaching, the reform of the papacy, the countering of grave theological and moral errors, and the organization of Christendom's greatest military endeavor—the Crusades—as well as its most best-known military order—the Templars. Finally, St. Bernard would oversee the reform or foundation of more than sixty monasteries; he stands as one of the most charismatic leaders in history.

The work which follows this introduction—*De Gradibus Superbiae et Humilitatis* (or *The Degrees of Humility and Pride*) was composed before Bernard of Fontaines was transformed by trial, conflict, and ardent fidelity into St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the “Doctor Mellifluus” of the Church. This was Bernard's first work. He had recently

been sent by Stephen Harding along with a small group of followers to found a monastery in a marshy valley of Champagne, a site Bernard would name Clairvaux—"the clear valley"—testifying both to Bernard's humor and his faith-filled vision of what would rise up there. Despite a future punctuated by travel, he would remain the Abbot of Clairvaux until his death thirty seven years later. But 1115, the year of this work's appearance, witnessed little that could hint at future renown.

The life of the white-robed monks at Clarivaux was precarious, the health of their ascetic young abbot marked by illness, and the most basic material security of the establishment was a decade away. Those who know the restrained architecture that the Cistericians would later create or who envision something like that which inspired the "serene and blessed mood" which fell upon Wordsworth while walking near Tintern Abbey, must put aside such thoughts. The ideas fashioned to give monasticism its most mystical form were shaped under conditions on which men murmured for lack of food and the author spent many months in and out of the makeshift infirmary. Yet this is precisely what allowed the passionate heart of Bernard to develop the essential teaching of the Cistericians: that all the mortification and order of

the monastic life was but preparation for the mercy and rapture of God's love.

For Bernard, men would ascend or descend, and they needed formal guidance on how to steady their souls, but the goal of monasticism was *an experience* of God's love beyond mere knowledge. The rules of Benedict were to keep the monk humble in their observation *and* in their breach, for God's intervening mercy would move the monk from the austere bruising of justice back towards the soul's ascent. Humility was the ladder to climb or fall, but even in falling, the ladder would remain for all who accepted the monastic life—not as a set of Pharisaical “rules,” but as a path through one's own frailty and ever towards Christ. The Rule of Benedict was designed to strengthen the soul not only by successful ascent through the virtues, but through the hard yet necessary revelation of our vices. Only what was purified could be united to God. Bernard's early meditation marked a profoundly psychological turn into Catholic spirituality and the beginning of a sensual language that could strike some as distant from the spare *Romanitas* of St. Benedict. Yet these men are of a piece: without Benedict the lawgiver, Bernard the mystic would have no sturdy frame for his ardent contemplative journey. In the seventh chapter of Benedict's Rule, St. Bernard found the

means for exploring the soul and working with God to return it to its Source, as a spouse gives her body to her true love. Readers of the *Ladder* should read and re-read that chapter as they move through this text.

Readers should note also the essential structure of the treatise: there are two basic parts, an exploration of the relationship between humility and truth, followed by a detailed analysis of the degrees or steps of pride and humility. The steps upon which Bernard focuses his attention are largely the precipitous steps taken in pride—steps that move one away from God—yet in honestly recognizing them for what they are, the Christian recognizes that an ascent can again begin in truth and through grace and mercy.

In the opening exposition on humility and truth, St. Bernard explains that our knowledge of the truth begins in humility and only with humility: we must understand ourselves as we really are. This perception of truth is then sharpened when we see others as ourselves—that is, as mortal men, limited and marred by sin and, like us, in need of mercy. The process by which we call for mercy on behalf of others and show mercy to others leads to the third stage of truth, the clear perception of what is true through contemplation of God. This contemplation is only possible because the heart has been utterly cleansed

by grace, cleansed precisely because we have shown and, therefore, participated in God's mercy. While parts of this analysis can be found in both Christian and pagan authors, Bernard gives this exploration of the truth a Trinitarian dimension, pointing to the progressive aspect of mystical union. Christ the Son teaches us through our intellect first the purpose of humility. This stage is chiefly directed towards the self. The Holy Spirit enables man to love in charity, act with justice and show mercy through his will and actions. This stage is chiefly directed towards neighbors. God the Father leads the thoughtful and merciful man—like St. Paul—into the rapture of true Wisdom. The second half of the treatise carefully portrays the descending grades of the spiritual life with a delightful, humorous, and painfully accurate depiction of human self-deception and frailty.

This treatise, penned by the man whom the seventeenth-century Benedictine scholar Jean Mabillon called the “last of the fathers,” displays the florid, patch-work style of the Patristic age, where a host of Church Fathers reinforce the principles of Scriptures and find themselves occasionally supported by unlikely pagan poets. The text is highly rhetorical. St. Bernard aims at the kind of delight alluded to in the words of the prophet Jeremiah: “Thou hast seduced me, Lord, and I let myself be seduced.” (*Jer.*

20:7—*Seduxisti me, Domine, et seductus sum*). A principle of Cistercian spiritual writing from Bernard on is the movement of the person from carnal desire to spiritual desire. The language of love and desire and, indeed, the whole range of secular literature remain in place, but purified gently and progressively so that the soul does not cease to desire, but desires all the more its truest object: God.

Further Reading

The two best introductions to the early legislation and literature of the Cistercians may be found in:

The Cistercian World: Monastic Writings of the Twelfth Century, trans. and ed. P. Matarasso (London: Penguin Books, 1993). Contains selections from the found documents of Cîteaux, Bernard of Clairvaux, William of St. Thierry, Guerric of Igny, Aelfred of Rievaulx, and others.

The Great Beginning of Cîteaux: A Narrative of the Beginning of the Cistercian Order—The Exordium Magnum of Conrad of Eberbach, trans. Benedicta

Ward and P. Savage; ed. R. Elder (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2012).

General Studies

Stephen Tobin, *The Cistercians: Monks and Monasteries of Europe* (Woodstock and New York: The Overlook Press, 1995). Tobin's work is replete with excellent photographs and embeds the Cistercians in the social and political culture of medieval Europe.

J. B. Dalgairns, *Life of St. Stephen Harding, Abbot of Citeaux and Founder of the Cistercian Order*, ed. John Henry Newman, with notes by Herbert Thurston, S.J. (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1898). Dalgairns was one of Newman's most committed students at Oxford and joined Newman in the founding of the English Oratorians. At Newman's suggestion he worked steadily with a company of scholars on the history of early English saints. This particular work provides important perspective for understanding the Cistercians and their significant English influence.

Louis Bouyer, *The Cistercian Heritage*, trans. E.A. Livingstone (Westminster, MD: The Newman

Press, 1958). The second and third chapters of this work focus on St. Bernard. Bouyer finally synthesizes the work of earlier generations with his own insights on Bernard. The book as a whole remains the best theological introduction to the Cistercian contribution.

L. J. Lekai, *The Cistercians: Ideal and Reality* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1977).

St. Bernard: his life and his impact on Catholic Spirituality

Cuthbert Butler, *Western Mysticism* (London: Constable, 1922).

G. R. Evans, *Bernard of Clairvaux* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Etienne Gilson, *The Mystical Theology of St. Bernard*, trans. A. H. C. Dowens (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1939). Gilson deftly applies a synthetic approach to St. Bernard's thought. On the one hand, the book is helpful for creating a structural unity to the varying creativity found in Bernard's writings. On the other hand, the coherence is at times more Gilson's than Bernard's—who like any prolific thinker develops his views from work to work and even within a single work,

sometimes to an exasperating degree. Readers should not expect from St. Bernard himself the same kind of coherence that Gilson discloses.

Jean Leclercq, O.S.B., *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Cistercian Spirit*, trans. C. Lavoie (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1976). Dom Leclercq is perhaps the most thoughtful of Bernard's Benedictine students; his *Bernard of Clairvaux* is a delightfully written meditation.

Ailbe Luddy, *The Life and Teachings of St. Bernard* (Dublin: Gill, 1927).

Thomas Merton, O.S.C.O., *The Last of the Fathers: Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and the Encyclical Letter, Doctor Mellifluus* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1954). Merton's own introduction carefully glosses and contextualizes the more visionary and general pronouncements of Pope Pius XII's encyclical.

Basil Pennington, O.C.S.O., "Introduction" in Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Steps of Humility and Pride*, trans. M. Ambrose Conway, O.C.S.O. (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1989), pp. 1–24. This is the most careful analysis of Bernard's treatise in English.

John R. Sommerfeldt, *The Spiritual Teaching of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1991).

AUTHOR'S CORRECTION

In order to strengthen and support a certain opinion expressed in this little book I quoted the passage in the Gospel (*Mark* 13:32) in which Our Lord states that He was unaware of the date of the final Judgment. To this I inadvertently added a word which, as I have since discovered, does not occur in the Gospel. For the text has simply "*neither the Son knoweth,*" whereas I, thinking rather of the sense than of the wording, and with no intention to mislead, by mistake wrote: "*The Son of Man Himself knoweth not.*" (*Mark* 13:32) On this I based the whole of the subsequent argument, in which I attempted to prove the truth of my assertion by means of an inaccurate quotation. I did not discover my mistake until long after the publication of the pamphlet, and when a number of copies had been made. It is impossible to correct a mis-statement in a book which has had a wide circulation, so I have thought it incumbent on me to resort

to the only possible remedy—an admission that I was wrong. And in another passage I have expressed a definite opinion about the Seraphim which I never heard, and have nowhere read. Here also my readers may well consider that it would have been more reasonable on my part to have said “I suppose,” as I had certainly no desire to offer more than a conjecture on a matter which I was unable to prove from Scripture. It is also possible that the title chosen *Concerning the Degrees of Humility* may incur censure—but this will come only from those who overlook or misunderstand the meaning of that title—an explanation of which I have been careful to give in the conclusion of the tract.

—Saint Bernard

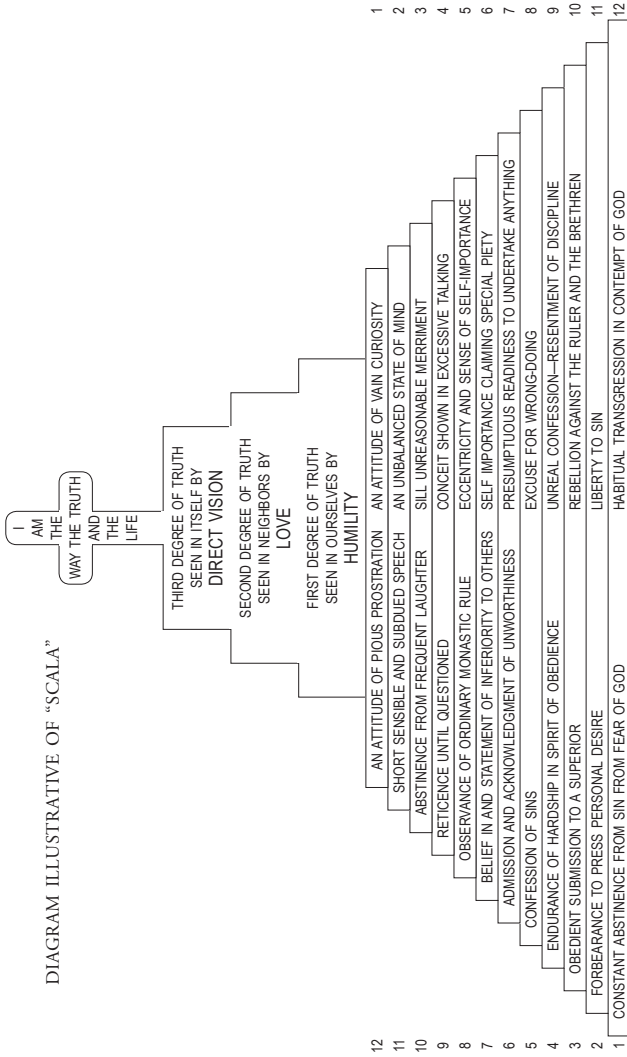
AUTHOR'S PREFACE

YOU have asked me, brother Godfrey, to expand and put in writing the substance of the addresses *On the Degrees of Humility* which I had delivered to the brethren. I admit that, anxious as I was to give to this request of yours the serious answer that it deserved, I was doubtful whether I could comply with it. For with the evangelist's warning in my mind, I did not venture to begin the work, until I had sat down and calculated whether my resources were sufficient for its completion. Then, when love had cast out the fear that I had entertained of ridicule for failure to complete my work, it was replaced by misgiving of a different kind; for I was apprehensive of greater danger from the credit that might attend success than of the disgrace that might attach to failure. So I found myself, as it were, at the parting of the ways indicated respectively by affection and by fear; and I was long in doubt as to which was the safer choice. For I was afraid that if I said

anything worth saying about humility, I might myself be found wanting in that virtue, whereas if, on grounds of modesty, I refused to speak, I might fail in usefulness. And I saw that, though neither of these courses is free from peril, I should be obliged to take one or the other. So I have thought it better to give you the benefit of anything that I can say, than to seek personal safety in the harbour of silence. And I earnestly trust that, if I am fortunate enough to say anything which commends itself to you, I may have in your prayers a safeguard against pride, whereas if—as is more likely—I produce nothing worthy of your attention, there will be no possible cause for conceit.

—Saint Bernard

DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATIVE OF "SCALA"



The first two stages of the ascent must be made before admission to the monastery.
 The last two of the descent can be made only after departure or expulsion therefrom.

SUMMARY

THE TWELVE DEGREES OF HUMILITY

*The heads of the following book.*¹

1 These twelve degrees of humility are taken from the seventh chapter of the Rule of St. Benedict, the title of which is *Concerning Humility*. Its second paragraph runs thus: "Brethren, if we wish to arrive at the highest point of humility and speedily to reach that heavenly exaltation to which we can only ascend by the humility of this present life, we must by our ever-ascending actions erect such a ladder as that which Jacob beheld in his dream by which the Angels appeared to him descending and ascending. This descent and ascent signifieth nothing else than that we descend by self-exaltation and ascend by humility. And the ladder thus erected is our life in the world which if the heart be humbled, is lifted up by the Lord to heaven. The sides of the same ladder we understand to be our body and soul, in which our divine vocation hath placed various degrees of humility or discipline which we must ascend." (*Rule of St. Benedict*. Eng. Trans. by D. Oswald Hunter Blair, p. 43.)

This *scala* or "ladder" as constructed by St. Bernard, exhibits the plan and purpose of the treatise. The chart appended is an attempt to show how, in his opinion, the degrees of humility and of pride correspond to and counterbalance each other.

- XII. A permanent attitude of bodily, and spiritual prostration.
- XI. The speech of a monk should be short, sensible and in a subdued tone.
- X. Abstinence from frequent and light laughter.
- IX. Reticence, until asked for his opinion.
- VIII. Observance of the general rule of the monastery.
- VII. Belief in and declaration of one's inferiority to others.
- VI. Admission and acknowledgment of one's own unworthiness and uselessness.
- V. Confession of sins.
- IV. Patient endurance of hardship and severity in a spirit of obedience.
- III. Obedient submission to superiors.
- II. Forbearance to press personal desire.
- I. Constant abstinence from sin for fear of God.

These degrees of humility are set out in an ascending scale. The first two stages must be passed outside the monastic cloister. He who has so risen may thus in the third degree, make his submission to his superior.

THE TWELVE DEGREES OF PRIDE
TAKEN DOWNWARDS

- I. Curiosity, when a man allows his sight and other senses to stray after things which do not concern him.
- II. An unbalanced state of mind, showing itself in talk unseasonably joyous and sad.
- III. Silly merriment, exhibited in too frequent laughter.
- IV. Conceit, expressed in much talking.
- V. Eccentricity—attaching exaggerated importance to one's own conduct.
- VI. Self-assertion—holding oneself to be more pious than others.
- VII. Presumption—readiness to undertake anything.
- VIII. Defence of wrong-doing.
- IX. Unreal confession—detected when severe penance is imposed.
- X. Rebellion against the rules and the brethren.
- XI. Liberty to sin.
- XII. Habitual transgression.

The two last named downward steps cannot be taken inside the cloister. The first six denote disregard for the brethren, the four following disrespect for authority, the two that remain contempt for God.

PART ONE

The Twelve Degrees of Humility

CHAPTER ONE

The search for Truth—Christ the goal and the road

I propose to speak of the degrees of humility, as St. Benedict sets them before us, as not only to be enumerated but to be attained. And I will first indicate, to the best of my ability, the goal that may be reached by their means, so that when you have heard the result of its attainment, the toil involved in the ascent may be less severely felt. So let our Lord set before us the difficulties that we shall encounter, and the reward that we shall receive for our toilsome journey.

I *am*, saith He, *The Way and the Truth and the Life*. (*John* 14:6). He calls humility “the way” because it leads to the truth. In the former lies the labour, in the latter is the reward. But, you may ask, how am I to know that He was here speaking of humility, since He says without further explanation, *I am the Way*? Listen to His more

explicit statement, *Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart.* (Matt. 11:29). In this He exhibits Himself as a type of humility, a model of meekness. If you imitate Him, you are not walking in darkness, but you will have the light of life. What is the light of life, unless it be the truth, which lightens every man that comes into the world, and shows us wherein true life consists? For this reason, to those words of His *I am the Way and the Truth*, He added *and the Life*, as though He meant to say, I am the way because I lead to the truth, I am the truth because I promise life, I am myself the life which I give. *For this, saith He, is life eternal, that they may know thee the true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* (John 17:3). But admitting this, you may still say, I recognize humility as the way; I long for truth as the reward; but what if the toil of the journey be so great that I am unable to reach the desired goal? To this He replies, *I am the life*, that is the provision for the journey by which you will be supported on the way. So He exclaims to the wanderers and to those who do not know the road, *I am the way*, to the doubters and disbelievers, *I am the truth*, to those who have begun the ascent and are getting tired, *I am the life*.

I think that it has been made sufficiently clear by the passage quoted from the Gospel that the reward of humility is

the apprehension of the truth. And take another passage, *I praise thee, Father of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things* (that undoubtedly means “secret truths”) *from the wise and prudent* (that is from the proud) *and hast revealed them unto babes* (that is to the humble). (*Matt.* 11:25).

This affords further evidence that the truth which is withheld from the proud, is disclosed to the humble. And the following may be taken as the definition of humility. It is the virtue which enables a man to see himself in his true colours and thereby to discover his worthlessness. And this is the characteristic virtue of those *who are disposed in their hearts to ascend by steps* from virtue to virtue, until they reach the summit of humility; where, standing on Sion as on a watch-tower, they may survey the truth. For, saith the Psalmist, *the law-giver shall give a blessing*. He then who gave the law will also provide the blessing—that is to say, he who has prescribed humility will conduct us to the truth. And who is this lawgiver but the kind and righteous Lord who has given a law to those who fail in the way? And surely those who have forsaken the truth have failed on the way. But are they on that account forsaken by the kind Lord? Nay, but it is for these very persons that the kind and righteous Lord prescribes the path of humility, by their return to which they may

discover the truth. He allows them an opportunity of regaining salvation because He is kind, yet not without the discipline of law because He is righteous. In His kindness He will not permit their ruin, in His righteousness He cannot omit their punishment.