III. THE FIXING OF THE CHRISTIAN-FEUDAL MENTALITY

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As the society emerging from the conquest progressed towards the fixing of its economic, social and political relations, the landed military aristocracy succeeded in more precisely defining its aspirations as a dominant group, and its members the real objectives they were doggedly pursuing. Receiving and assimilating the image of the world offered by Christianity was not a difficult enterprise for the aristocracy as long as its transmission by the Church was kept within a very general framework. By reducing abstractions to concrete terms and assimilating certain subtle spiritual experiences into other less delicate ones, it captured a certain intimate sense of faith and perceived the cultural context of religion. It was, moreover, inevitable because Christianity took hold not just as a religion but as a cultural atmosphere so that the world of ideas transmitted by the Church formed a sort of common patrimony with which everyone felt at one. A more strenuous enterprise was to receive and accept the principles and norms of co-existence that Christianity entailed because its letter and spirit was steadfastly opposed to the principles and norms that real processes had actually wrought in the economic, social and political order.

Christianity yielded to the irrepressible force of traditional habits and the harsh pride of the aristocracy. But as the social situation stabilised and the aristocracy as a group and its individual members defined their own objectives more precisely, Christianity sought to influence the system of practical relations by its own principles, which could set the indisputable force of unreality against the force of reality.

The predominant groups engaging with the real situation defined their attitudes in step with the changes taking place within it. Imbued with primal urges, the baronial mentality gave way to a courtly mentality born in aristocratic environments that were being renewed by the influence of new living conditions. And in the fervour of religious faith emerged a chivalric mentality founded on a missionary image of life. Alongside these mentalities, strictly religious attitudes elicited other forms of mentality: those believing their spiritual calling was only fulfilled through catechesis and the struggle for faith; those beginning to emphasise the value of knowledge; those aspiring only to save their souls by renouncing the world.

Each of these forms of mentality corresponded to an ideal of life elaborated as a defiant response to the demands of the environment, and to groups or individuals who could and would try to influence the common destiny by imposing their lifestyle, their form of mentality. Below them were vast social groups of little prominence, lacking the autonomy to elaborate and impose their own tendencies inasmuch as they found themselves in a state of dependency. But they had very definite designs and aspirations, which would burst onto the scene as the Christian-feudal order began to crack.

I. THE FORMS OF SEIGNEURIAL MENTALITY

1. The baronial mentality

While the social instability of the period following the dissolution of the Carolingian Empire persisted, the psychological attitude of the barons of the landed military aristocracy retained traits similar to those from the days of conquest. Still fighting for land, wealth, prestige and order, they continued to confront reality – natural and social – as immediately and directly as dictated by the need for action. Later, an entire system of dogmatically sanctioned rational abstractions would be imposed between the man and his milieu. But even then, buried in memories and strong enough to burst into spontaneous action, the direct intuition of sensible reality would survive, manifested through nature and human relations. From the viewpoint of immediate action – predominant under the circumstances – sensible reality was the only reality, and faced with it there was no place for the intellectual dilemma of whether to accept or reject it, but simply the need to situate oneself in it appropriately through experience.

This attitude developed in the barony a mentality born of the demands of action. As glittering as the glory of the baron who stood out for his courage and strength might seem, as embellishing as the intention of the skald or jongleur might be in dignifying the virtues, the hero's social status or the aims of his conduct, that first instance in which the exploit was closely tied to necessity was never quite overshadowed in the epic. 'If we fight not with Moors, we will not be given bread,' as Álvar Fáñez Minaya put it simply to substantiate his view that it was necessary to engage in combat. It was necessity that had forced the Norman warriors southwards and that had driven the endless feudal wars between those wishing to preserve their domains and those seeking to wrest them from them, or those simply aspiring to improve their lot by serving a generous seigneur. Necessity then bred greed, and through the ennobling legend there filtered the memory of the conduct of those driven by the sordid urge to accumulate land, wealth and power, subjecting their behaviour to this design. Greed will be one of the favourite themes of moral literature, but both the epic and the contemporary chronical demonstrated the presence of this trait in the aristocracy – religious and secular – with facts. 'Greed has now become the queen of the world,' said the chronicler Raoul Glaber in the first half of the eleventh century. The phrase gradually became a commonplace but was coined to summarise an experience that revealed the allure of the world – condemned by the religiously-minded – for those who, with weapons in hand, felt capable of indefinitely annexing more land without being subject to any norm save that dictated by their fierce individualism. The Cluniac monk indignantly denounced the effect the gold of Constantinople's envoys had on the morale of Roman Church dignitaries. The thought should then come as no surprise that, a few years later and

not without a scandal, Guibert de Nogent ascribed to the pen of the Byzantine emperor: writing to the Count of Flanders, he pointed out that, if Christian knights were not moved by faith to come to his aid, 'they should at least take to the hope of seizing the gold and silver which the gentiles have in untold quantities,' and perhaps, he added, the beautiful women of that land. And if at the time Guibert de Nogent complained about such contemptuous propositions, the crusaders' subsequent behaviour later seemed to justify them, much to the indignation of ascetic spirits like Saint Bernard.

A world that unleashed greed was a valuable world indeed. This was the sentiment of the strong, proud barons, who believed it was worth devoting their lives to fighting tirelessly for its ownership and who remained steadfastly attached to it. The world – sensible reality, that is – was an incontrovertible presence denounced by the senses and subjected at every turn by action to the irrefutable proof of existence.

That reality, the contour of everyday life, awakened an intense desire to live and enjoy in those who felt it as an object of possession and dominion. 'I was a friend of bravery and joy,' said William of Poitiers, summarising his two fundamental passions: love and war. Such was the baron's response to the stimuli of sensible reality – his everyday world – in which it was not hard to discern the signs of a naturalistic attitude not entirely dispelled by the abstract image of creation that Christianity opposed to it.

It had the naturalistic attitude that had long been rooted in the Germanic tradition – which clung on so tenaciously in the seigneurial conception – and had revived in the favourable atmosphere fostered by the primacy of force and de facto situations. Everything came together to bolster the notion that posession hinged on strength, as in the legend of Gunther's conquest of Brunhild. Jealous of her boundless freedom, of her strength and her virginity, which was a token of her vigour, the Icelandic queen would only consent to give herself to the man who surpassed her in vigour. But once conquered, her dependence was fixed once and for all. Similarly, the ownership of land – the supreme asset – and of other worldly goods deemed desirable seemed to depend in the last instance on the sole law of strength.

The ultimate reason, strength retained its value as a decisive instance in the seigneurial conception of life and the image of the heroic baron was erected upon the excellence of that value. 'Courage is better than the sharpest sword,' went an old Germanic song. Through courage, unsuspected energies could be set in motion and every kind of derring-do and excess be unleashed. The heroic baron proved the quality of his spirit by venturing into unheard-of exploits with a joyful heart. The impassioned Bertran de Born unreservedly described his life of combat: 'I do assure you,' he said, 'that I take not as much pleasure in eating, drinking or sleeping as when I hear both sides cry "At

them!", and hear the riderless horses whinnying through the gloom, and hear the cry 'Help! help!', and see the great and small fall for the ditches in the field, and I see the dead with their sides pierced by splinters of lance with their sendals. Barons: rather than stop making war, pawn castles, villages and towns.' It was a primitive sentiment whose lucid attitude barely masked the original purpose of fighting to own things, to master the world and conquer sensible reality. The primitive ferocity of the barons, who thought nothing of drinking the blood of the fallen to slake their thirst, was barely concealed, and despite the poet's deliberate efforts to mask it, the radical value of strength, whose ordinary bounds he exceeded in the hero's 'geste' in order to make apparent the powers that nature had enclosed in man, showed through nevertheless. The heroic baron seemed, like Roland, 'fiercer than lion or leopard'. His arm was strong enough to bring a hefty sword down upon a rider and cleave his body in two, stopping only when it touched the saddle, and his throat could blast a roar from the oliphant that could be heard thirty leagues away. 'Gouts of blood spouted from the wounds' opened by Siegfried's fearsome sword. And for all the poet's efforts to conceal the desire for possession behind the mask of a playful exploit, the figure of Hagen preserved the aura of an indomitable force of nature, still alive and well in thirteenth-century courtly poetry and untamed by any kind of moderating influence, be it social or ethical in nature.

The baron found fulfilment not in society but in individual effort. He cut a solitary figure, residing in a castle with almost no openings where he would shut himself away like a wild animal in a lair, beleaguered and ready to strike back with feline ferocity whenever he decided to raise the portcullis and sally forth armed to the teeth and ready for battle. His way of life had been forged in a world that had witnessed the break-down of the traditional legal order, which had opened up limitless opportunities for individual adventure by the sturdiest. The barons themselves undoubtedly tried little by little to order the system of reciprocal relations, but only within certain limits compatible with the dogged individualism that drove them. And even when these relations had been stabilised, there was resistance from 'rebel barons' exalted by the epic as archetypes seemingly unable to control their extreme sense of independence, even towards those whose superiority they acknowledged. 'Pride,' wrote Ramon Llull, 'is a vice of inequality because, pride wants no peer or equal, and therefore loves to be alone.' Like Hagen and Volker, who 'held themselves in such high esteem that they would not rise from their seats for anyone,' the baron, jealous of his glory, ultimately recognised no other authority than that enshrined by strength and victory. 'Better to die than to live defeated,' said the fierce Bertran de Born, for defeat enshrined dependency and was a testament to inferiority. Social coercion eventually imposed a system of bonds of mutual dependency, but these had to be based on consent. And even then, the 'rebel baron' seemed exemplary in that he retained his capacity to rise up against any semblance of violation of the agreed limits, like William or Girart de Roussillon, who seemed to find even royal authority unbearable. The buoyant epic verse of skalds and jongleurs, which resonated so strongly among the populace, reflected the body of legends circulating in their milieu and recalling the improbable exploits and unreasoned excesses of barons;

and as they entertained their audiences and adulated the seigneurs, they helped – deliberately or otherwise – to legitimise the aristocracy's privileges by referring them to the supreme value of strength. Nothing could be more alien to Christian sentiments or to the norms of co-existence they entailed.

2. The courtly mentality

Only the certainty of reaching a safe state of hegemony in the bosom of a stable society triggered in the landed military aristocracy the desire to enjoy life to the full. Economic power, social power and political power were theirs. The sustained use of such powers led their members to the conviction that their rank was not just consolidated but even recognised as legitimate. This prompted in the barons the desire to indulge at leisure those possibilities of life only compatible with an orderly form of sociability. Indeed, it was the gradual disappearance of concerns over the conquest of land, prestige and power, along with the development of new wealth, that enabled the aristocracy's slow slide from the baronial to the courtly conception of life. A new legal order was beginning to emerge, erected at one and the same time on feudal norms, which had arisen out of de facto situations and by mutual consent, and the norms of Roman law, enacted by the monarchy to crown the feudal edifice with a more stable regulatory power: within it, the new generations of the old landed military aristocracy discovered they could start laying down their arms and giving themselves up to the enjoyments of courtly life.

Oliver – 'valiant and courteous' – taught Roland that 'sensible courage is not folly: better restraint than rashness.' A new idea of the heroic exploit began to emerge that was compatible with the irrepressible notion of vitality but liable to be subjected norms. It seemed reasonable to think that life should not be gambled in a reckless, hopeless adventure, and this thought began to spread among those who knew that, in peace, a noble life rich in satisfactions and joys awaited them. It was precisely there, in the southern lands where Emperor Charles's Franks 'remembered the fiefs and domains, the daughters and the noble wives,' that a style of life foreign to the Germanic tradition saw an early blossoming whose example would gradually spread, disseminating new ideals of hedonistic refinement.

It was Raoul Glaber, the Cluniac monk shrewd enough to seize on the critical phenomena of his day, who, midway through the eleventh century, described the impact of the French Midi's customs on northern regions and drew attention to their dire consequences. Where certain Roman traditions clung on more tenaciously and the Muslim world's influences were more direct, where a lyric poetry with a new, unmistakably erotic tone was just emerging, Raoul Glaber was discovering – half a

century before the troubadour William of Poitiers flourished – the origins of certain trends whose projections he already found alarming in his own time and feared would be compounded in the future.

Numerous intersecting circumstances converged in the French Midi – where, a century on, Saint Bernard would locate the main focus of heresy – to foster this idea of man and life, these customs and tendencies that so surprised and outraged the Cluniac monk. Just as numerous and intersecting were the circumstances that facilitated its gradual dissemination in the Christian West, predominated over by the fierce barony, who saw in all this nothing but a legitimate coronation of traditional concepts. The change in goals represented by the new courtly ideals vis-à-vis the barony's escaped its notice, and they were adopted by the new generations of landed military aristocracy, succumbing to the pressure of social reality and, in particular, to the allure of new possibilities of life filled with enchantment and tempting delights. The baron, strong and cruel, toughened in the harsh struggle for land, prestige and power, began to take on certain unfathomable shades of anachronism, and in the society that was beginning to stabilise, a cultural change crept in, displacing this human ideal with the ideal of the courtly knight.

'Courtesy' constituted a whole philosophy of life. It could be learnt, as the scholar of the *Reason of Love* pointed out, saying of himself:

A scholar versed it above

who did ladies always love;

yet ever had a stance

in Germany and France;

long dwelt in Lombardy

there to master courtesy.

Personified allegorically, courtesy was claimed to deserve to be 'empress or queen in every worthy heart' and came to be codified in such a way that it seemed possible to adopt it as a system of manners and customs to replace another. Geoffrey of Monmouth mentioned its establishment in the

kingdom of Arthur as a concrete fact: 'At the end of this time,' he wrote, 'Arthur drew to himself the bravest of knights from distant realms; he began to increase the number of those that lived with him in his house and to observe ways therein so courteous that it stirred rivalry in even distant peoples, to such an extent that, eager to compete with him, the most noble man of the region would have thought nothing of himself if he did not conform to the model of Arthur's knights in the shortening of his vestments or the style of his arms.'

A few outward signs seemed, at first, to characterise courtesy as a way of life. But the change ran deeper than that. The adoption of new forms of sociability and certain fashions in dress corresponded to a transformation in the very idea of existence. The new generations of landed military aristocracy went from the overestimation of the heroic exploit to the overestimation of pleasure. 'They lead a life filled with nobility, and they are perfectly happy,' said Gere of Gunther and Brunhild, as if nobility and happiness were synonymous. Essentially made of sensuality, earthly happiness was explicitly transformed into a supreme aspiration and seemed to consist above all in the enjoyment of uninterrupted joy and the display of luxury that put the social superiority of anyone who could afford it beyond doubt. 'How could you have happier lives in this world?' said Rumold to the Burgundian knights. 'You have nothing to fear from your enemies. You wear beautiful clothes, you adorn your bodies, you drink the best wines and love gentle ladies. You shall, moreover, be served fine fare, the best that any king has ever had in this world.' This was the reward for the efforts of ancestors who had secured possession of wealth, power and prestige.

Even the moralist who asserted that youth 'must use the power, valour and vigour of the heart in honour and profit of himself and his own' expatiated upon the need for the young to be cheerful and gracious: 'and must lead a happy life and must be courteous and generous, and welcome people warmly, and try courteously to please his own and strangers, according to the means at his disposal. It is never right,' added Philip of Navarre, 'for a young man to be melancholic and thoughtful.'

So deeply ingrained had this idea of life become in some that, where it was not seen to predominate, disenchantment and sadness set in. Guiot de Provins wrote this nostalgia-filled lament at the start of the thirteenth century: 'Those princes have no love for merriment or amusement. Never had there been a century so devoid of honour. Gone was the feasting and gathering. Life has become so wretched that nobody dares seek pleasure. Farewell beautiful habitations, sumptuous palaces which I miss, where princes had their courts!' Society offered unsuspected temptations to the new generations of the aristocracy, who were abandoning the old naturalism for a more refined version from which would derive a new system of ideals of life.

Of all these ideals, achieving a state of erotic fulfilment was considered the highest and most

sublime. Love appeared as an absolute. And courtesy made it the supreme purpose, viewing it as a natural human experience capable of producing an entrancement bordering on the supernatural. Lyrical poetry recorded the almost magical way love acted upon the soul, altering one's perspective on things. 'Such love have I in my heart,' said Bernart de Ventadorn, 'such joy and sweetness that ice to me seems like a flower and snow like greenery.' Transmuting both external and internal reality, love resembled a state of the soul kindled by an unknown force of nature, as in the legend of Isolde and Tristan. Like a magic spell, it could be triggered by a love potion, and there was no foreseeing the hazards that might ensue once unleashed. But as risky as this gateway to the unknown might have seemed, the adventure of love became more tempting the more it was contemplated and the more closely the transfiguration it wrought and the strange, mysterious pleasure it brought were studied: 'If your heart is one day to know happiness in this world,' said Uote to her daughter Kriemhild, 'it will be for the love of a man.' And the transmuted naturalism underlying the courtly conception of life knew no other possible happiness than that of this world.

In contrast to the ideal of the baron, who found outer fulfilment in heroic deeds, courtesy established the ideal of the man who finds inner fulfilment in enjoyment. Its possibilities revealed, love was pleasure before it was masked, and it drank deep from the elemental wellsprings of life, which is why it was naively described as an uncontrollable frenzy, a crazed impulse that knew no bounds, a desperate instinct promising plenitude. So appeared an Uther Pendragon, racked by desire and, like Tristan himself, disdainful of the ethical and formal obstacles in the way of its satisfaction. Like Uther, Jaufré Rudel himself, the troubadour of 'love from afar', thought of his love as an incoercible desire all the more formidable the more hopeless in its possession. It was a desire stirred by the charms of the beloved: 'I am longing for a love, because I know that no precious jewel of those I crave and desire would I find good were my lady to make me the gift of her heart, for she has a lithe, slender, graceful body, with nothing unbefitting, and her love is good and of good savour. This love makes me pensive while I wake, and then dreaming when I sleep; for then I have a wondrous joy as I have her, enjoying her and making her enjoy. But her beauty do I deem as nothing, for no friend teaches me how I may gain her pleasure.' It was enjoyment, vital plenitude, that was expected from love, which, like land, required total possession.

Little by little, this return to intimacy would lead to individualism and to distinct forms of contemplation. But the earliest transfiguration of the erotic sentiment consisted in cloaking it in a mantle of formal conventions imitated from feudal relations and in the transformation of relations between lovers through the ennoblement of the female figure. Courtesy demanded urges be covered with a mask of restraint and actions performed according to certain rules of harmonious co-existence. Lovers had to know what love was and behave in accordance with what courtesy asserted it to be. This was taught by Love itself taught in the *Roman de la Rose*, reasoned by Walter von der Vogelweide in his hymn to Minne and recollected in his sad lament by Lancelot in Chrétien

de Troyes's narrative. Words and deeds were meant to bear witness to the knight's devotion to his lady while not betraying the exuberance of his desire. An entire system of measured metaphors and judiciously coined tropes served to make clear the lovers' relationship of mutual dependency and the unbearable sorrow stirred in their hearts by the beloved's disdain or remoteness.

The shift in the baronial conception of life was indeed profound. The old prestige of heroic virility gave way in the courtly conception of life to a deep and complex sentiment that placed the man in a state of dependence on the woman and simultaneously obliged him to reject his propensity for brutal possession. The sentiment of love gradually became spiritualised, eventually acquiring the form of a pure inner state almost dissociated from its corporeal object and independent of the response it elicited in the beloved. Suffering for the one he loved was a token of refined love in the knight, as were engaging in battle against whomever dared deny her superiority over any other and publicly celebrating her virtues, like the knight encountered by Abbot Blanquerna, 'well equipped with all kind of arms, who went about seeking adventures for the love of his beloved.' And conclusive testimony of refined and unfading love was to stay faithful against all hope, as the exquisite Don Denis of Portugal, troubadour and king, declared in high style:

Friends, well I loved and shall love well

whom loved me ill without love's flame,

and yet my lips shall not her name;

they will but say what I shall tell:

I loved a woman and ever will

who loved and shall e'er love me ill.

Fulfilment in enjoyment, vital outpouring, love seemed to be thrusting existence towards profane ecstasy, the ultimate triumph of naturalism.

If love was the supreme manifestation of the tendency to enjoyment, its normal expression was the aspiration to a noble and joyful life. The coarse barons steadily turned away from the uses and customs of those who spent their days in a state of alert, weapons at the ready, in inhospitable

castles where an atmosphere of male sociability predominated, and began to seek a gentler life in which daily existence would be imbued with new values forged in the heat of new forms of spiritual co-existence. An ever sturdier, more unanimously recognised order authorised the new generations of landed military aristocracy to divert their attention from struggles for wealth, power and prestige in pursuit of new forms of sociability.

Within the environs of a seigneurial castle, the court was the perfect stage for the new forms of co-existence. A seigneur who aspired to spread the fame of his wealth, generosity and courtesy had to try to surround himself with the most glittering retinue of ladies and knights of noble birth imaginable so that he might spend his days on noble pastimes in an atmosphere of aristocratic dignity and refined spirituality. The legendary example of King Arthur's court stimulated romantic fancy, and the aura that graced the Round Table grew, enriched by the imaginations of ladies and knights and tinged with vivid hues by the delicate craft of the jongleurs. Arthur's court was brilliantly depicted by Wace, who no doubt imbued it with the features commonly observed in the most dazzling courts of his day, extolling the ways that life could be embellished in order to dignify leisure and stimulating the imaginations of nostalgic and romantic spirits. Unheard-of adventures and improbable wonders, refined customs, luxury and riches, all shone bright around the generous seigneur determined to revel in life wrapped in an atmosphere of youth, joy and love. The poet's ingenuity reached a peak when he succeeded in conjuring the image of a court in such vigour and detail that it could serve as a stimulus and example for the conduct of his contemporaries. Rüedeger, the 'father of all courtly virtues,' received the Burgundians with all pomp and ceremony, and the poet minutely recounted the rules that the hosts and guests were subject to, the objects adorning the castles, the garments worn by the ladies and knights, the attentions bestowed on the guests and the entertainments indulged in by guests and hosts alike. 'A hundred chandeliers hung in the hall they entered, furnished with many candles,' said Wolfram von Eschenbach, describing the castle of the Grail. 'A hundred settees were arrayed at the sides, and upon them a hundred cushions.' Chrétien de Troyes noted that the flowered silk coat worn by the knight Erec 'had been made at Constantinople' and described the attire of the knights made with brocades brought from Alexandria. Wace also elaborated at length when enumerating the gifts that King Arthur had made to the guests attending his coronation feast: goblets, destriers, jewels, greyhounds, birds, pelisses, garments, glasses, furs, rings, tunics, cloaks, lances, swords, arrows, quivers, shields, bows, darts, leopards, bears, footstools, harnesses, whips, coats of chainmail.

No man there was of any worth

who from far abroad hailed forth

to whom the king did not accord

a gift to honour such a lord.

Courtesy, wealth and generosity were inextricably linked in the minds of those wishing to enjoy a noble existence.

The court shone with particular brilliance in certain circumstances when important festivities were held, stages on which to flaunt the most magnificent luxury and parade the last word in refinement. The coronation of the king usually furnished an opportunity for the most lavish feasts, for to courtly luxury and worldly ostentation was added the solemnity of religious ceremony. The knighting of a king's son could also be the occasion for 'so brilliant a gathering of the grandees of the kingdom, such a multitude of men and such an abundance of victuals and gifts as was nowhere to be seen in those times,' said William the Breton, recalling the feast thrown by Philip Augustus in 1209, when he knighted his son Luis. It was no doubt a festivity similar to the one thrown twenty-five years earlier in 1184 by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa on an identical occasion commemorated in the description by the poet of the *Song of the Nibelungs* of the ceremony at which Siegfried is made a knight. Weddings were long-drawn-out affairs. El Cid's daughters' wedding to the Infantes of Carrión lasted a fortnight, as long as Alejandro and Rasena's, according to the poet of the *Libro de Alexandre*; Etzel and Kriemhild's lasted seventeen days, and Count Fernán González's wedding to Doña Sancha was interrupted only on its eighth day by the arrival of enemy forces. At that wedding, there was a bullfight, and at all of them, jousts and tournaments, long and sumptuous banquets, various generously distributed gifts and, above all, sundry entertainments provided by jongleurs, who, as at the wedding of Thiebaus and Orable described in the song of Count William's childhood, 'sang and played the crwth, the harp and the viol.'

Jongleurs were an essential feature of courtly life. Seeking the generosity of the seigneurs, they would enliven festivities and solemnities with their games and songs; in the interim, they would pass on news, spread mores and customs and helped to create a certain homogeneity in the seigneurial class, stimulating emulation among peers and lavishing imagination on wondrous adventures and refined ways of life held up as models and incorporated into the system of conventions sought by the aristocracy. Troubadours, jongleurs, skalds or segrers belonged to a group who sought out life at court because they saw it as a refuge for refined sensibilities, where art and love, talent and music brought forth new stimuli and awakened spiritual vocations hitherto dormant or disparaged as being incompatible with virile sentiments. Some were humble and sought the gifts of the powerful to survive; but emulating Duke William of Aquitaine, many knights and some kings, like Don Denis of Portugal and Don Alfonso I of Aragon gave themselves to the blandishments of art, and their

examples lent value to courtly spirituality. Mastery in the art of poetry became a badge of merit and was accorded by fame: the German Minnesänger Wolfram von Eschenbach calls Chrétien de Troyes master, and Giraut of Bornelh was hailed as master of the troubadours by his peers. Their refined appeal to sensitivity was favourably received among ladies, whose presence caused the old forms of baronial sociability to give way to the forms of courtly life. 'The courteous Ortwin said to the king: "If by this feast you wish to reap full honour, allow your guests to behold the charming young ladies who live with great honour in the land of the Burgundians. Where else for men would be the delights and joys of life but nigh beautiful young women and noble ladies? Allow your sister to appear before your visitors." That advice he gave to please many heroes: "I shall gladly follow that advice," replied the king. All who heard him speak thus experienced a keen joy. The king bade the lady Uote and her daughter, the beautiful Kriemhild, to come to court accompanied by the beautiful young women of their retinue.'

It was unquestionably to women, who were beginning to be incorporated into the life of society, that the troubadours and segrers preferred to address themselves. Their poetry, strongly lyrical in tone, extolled the ways of life of courtesy, but perhaps even more so, certain human values which the female temperament favoured and sought to impose on male esteem. 'It were just,' said Wolfram von Eschenbach at the close of his poem, 'if wise and virtuous women were to look on me with greater favour (if a woman may still smile upon me kindly) for having completed this work. If I made it in honour of a woman, may she grant me sweets thanks.' Little by little, women's presence ensured the establishment of certain rules, and the coarse barons, who were beginning to discover the charms of refined leisure, slowly began to bow to them. Manly modesty soon gave way, and courtly ways of life found in the barons their most resolute defenders.

But the prestige of manly values certainly did not decline completely, nor did it promptly give way. While war remained a necessity, such other manly pursuits as hunting or *behurst* seemed legitimate without any prompting. They were conventional adventures, subject to rules, where courtesy not only curbed impulses but imposed certain norms born out of sheer shows of daring, skill and strength, an exercise in which an aesthetic nuance appeared. The fierce passion for bloodshed was tamed in playful exercise, and the heroic exploit began to shed all finalism. Courtesy required no more than a kind of measured manliness manifesting more in potency than action and mindful of the principles imposed by the idea of the noble life, founded unquestionably on the conviction that existence transpired within an unassailable order.

This may perhaps explains a perceptible softening of the warrior spirit, which, though it stung those still attached to the old heroic ideas, seemed justified to those who believed the new forms constituted near perfection. As the poet of *Guy of Burgundy* has Ñuño Laymo, the author of the *Poem of Fernán González*, say to the hero Oliver, 'It is twenty-seven years past and gone since I have not

dwelt in hall or paved palace but amidst fields and land and valleys and meadows; and so have we suffered through rains and storms, through great famines and droughts and captivities, that no cleric, no matter how learned, could write it.' Fernán González's response in defence of the militant life was as categorical as Cador's was forceful when, in *Le Roman de Brut*, he highlighted the dangers of the easy life. But the conviction that 'good is the peace after the war' – as was Count Walewein's reply to Cador – was handed down through the new generations of the aristocracy together with the conviction that the order in which existence unfolded was now unassailable.

3. The chivalric mentality

It was this conviction that created an atmosphere conducive to the full acceptance of Christian ideals inasmuch as they were opposed to the ideals of both barony and courtesy. Over the naive, spontaneous naturalism of the old aristocracy, who only found fulfilment in the heroic deed, as over the veiled naturalism of the new generations of the aristocracy, who aspired to the intense enjoyment of life, there gradually began to loom a new image of existence and the world which came with an unusual approach to sensible reality. Suddenly it seemed to be acknowledged that, conceived as a simple occasion for enjoyment, human existence culminated in youthful experience and that the imperative *carpe diem* needed to be replaced by the *memento mori*. Hence William of Aquitaine's regret and Walter von der Vogelweide's melancholy lament: 'Where, alas, have fled my years? Was it life, or but a dream I did believe? Was what I thought it was in truth, or was it not? But if I think again on my joyous days, which abandoned me like a wake upon the waves… Woe is me! Smiles, singing, dancing, all have ended, and ended badly: never did any Christian behold a more mournful funeral!' The presence of sin began to be detected hidden in the twists and turns of sensible reality, and the enjoyment of love was tainted by the idea of punishment and death.

As heroic feats and enjoyment were inextricably linked to the experience of physical fulfilment, the passing of the years exposed the frustration of these yearnings without offering any other purpose for existence. It was the influence of the Christian idea of life that moved the euphoric young enjoyer of nature first to discover and later to lament the distressing void left by the passing of youth, yet despite the Church's secular efforts to alter the naturalistic outlook of the aristocracy, it was only from the thirteenth century onwards that it succeeded in influencing it. The order of society, the privilege of the owners, the patrimonial status of its members and the aristocracy's confidence that it could enjoy its wealth, prestige and power owed their consolidation to the growth of a legal system that fixed relations between groups to its benefit. These circumstances, which stimulated the development of courtesy by steering the new aristocratic generations towards the ideal of enjoyment also favoured the acceptance of new moral notions and principles of co-existence that entailed radical opposition to traditional naturalistic ideas. Compassion, charity, love for one's

neighbour, respect for the weak and many other Christian prescriptions ran counter to naturalistic impulses. The glorification of pure spirituality and the contemplative attitude devalued the dignity which the baronial conception attributed to action. The execration of sensuality and sin entailed the condemnation of enjoyment, which was the ultimate goal of the courtly idea. Fundamentally speaking, all sensible reality was implicitly condemned.

But it was now permissible to engage in the intellectual game of denying sensible reality: this reality had taken shape, been incorporated into experience and, in that form, already counted as a given permanently incorporated into the image of the world. Its value could be denied without risk of altering either its real forms or the system of human relations it entailed. And the aristocracy, whose naturalism had been forged in the struggle for land ownership, once this had been achieved and stabilised, escaped into the new adventure that lay before them. With the world as it was, any form of spirituality seemed admissible, even the kind that rejected sensible reality as the house of sin and launched man towards possession of the afterworld and the dazzling conquest of unreality. All that was needed was a concession, a way out for what was irrepressible, a justification for what remained indomitable in human nature and for the excesses that constituted a vital outpouring. The circumstances provided these in the idea of a mission deemed specific to the landed military aristocracy: to defend the faith against its enemies within and without the ambit of the Christian world.

On the subject of the development of monasticism in the latter years of the eleventh century, Guibert de Nogent, always a reliable witness of the things of his time, wrote: 'Amidst so many examples, the nobility hastened to embrace voluntary poverty and, comparing the monasteries it retreated to with the things it had scorned, it applied itself to the pious undertaking of attracting others. As a result, women of high rank renounced their marriages to distinguished men and, forgetting their tender maternal affections, took all their wealth thence and devoted themselves entirely to ecclesiastical exercises. Those who could not fully let go their possessions supported with large donations those who had renounced the century. They filled the churches and altars with rich offerings, and thus those who could not embrace that kind of life protected them and, at the same time, protected those who dedicated themselves to it, aiding them with all their wealth and striving to equal them as best they could.' And then, referring to the early years of the eleventh century, he added: 'But, since those days of such great splendour, the ever-growing wickedness of the men of our time seems to have wrought constant harm. Even now – oh sorrow! – the offerings which their fathers, driven by pious zeal, had made to the holy places, their sons today take back in full or continually try to reclaim them through repeated demands, thereby disregarding their ancestors' will and proving themselves degenerate.' Such was the pattern of the gradual penetration Christian ideals: indulged and perhaps admired, they aroused deep resistance for what they meant in terms of the seigneurial ways of life and naturalistic ideals. It still required a lengthy effort for

chivalry to establish itself as a set of norms, and even then it did not completely succeed in dispelling the prestige of barony and courtesy that it was struggling against. But the aristocratic content introduced into chivalry worked in its favour and served to provide the aristocracy with a supernatural foundation for its privileges.

Like courtesy, chivalry too could be learned, and it seemed so organic and precise in content that Ramon Llull advised 'that it should be set down as a science written in books and taught as an art in the way that other sciences are taught; and that the sons of knights should first learn the science of chivalry and then become squires who travelled the world with knights.' It was a philosophy of life with a Christian content, the ultimate meaning of which was proclaimed by Llull himself when he asserted that 'the office of a knight is to uphold the holy Catholic faith', but at its heart lay a serious internal tension between the religious and secular conceptions of life. Chivalry tried to be a formula whereby the profane world, while remaining such, would become totally saturated with religious content. The formula was only found, however, at the cost of hybridising both the religious and secular conceptions of life.

When chivalry sought to take its principles to an extreme, it resulted in a monastic conception of the secular life that proved unsuited to reality and crystallised in a doctrine of spiritual perfection that could satisfy only very narrow sectors of the aristocracy. It was this tendency that led to the formation of military orders, which were to be composed – as William of Tyre said of the order of the Knights Templar – of 'noble knights, men devoted to God and animated by religious sentiments, who dedicated themselves to the service of God and took vows before the Patriarch always to live in chastity, obedience and poverty, like ordinary canons.'

As a way of life, it therefore implied withdrawing from the system of prevailing relations, a serious matter if, as Ramon Llull claimed, it was the office of knight to exercise public authority. But, in an apparently firmly ordered society where the dominant groups seemed not to fear the movements of the subordinated classes, the Church believed it could – after several centuries of unsuccessful attempts to impose its ideals on the landed military aristocracy – aspire to establishing a group of high spiritual perfection within the aristocracy, which it deemed barbarous, in that it clearly retained the naturalistic tendencies of the baronial conception, and perverted, in that it inclined towards the naturalism of the courtly idea. Only in this way did it believe that it could – formal adherence aside – reach deep into the aristocratic spirit, imposing its moral principles and the norms of co-existence that flowed from those principles, and thereby achieve its paramount aspiration of endowing the feudal order with Christian meaning.

The mirror of this spiritual aristocracy, which was intended to leaven the landed military aristocracy

and wrest it from its adherence to sensible reality and naturalism, was the 'new militia', as Saint Bernard defined the military orders early on in the twelfth century. 'A new kind of militia is born, they say, on earth,' he enthused in his treatise on the Knights Templar. 'It is a militia of a new kind, unknown in past centuries, destined to wage unceasing double combat on flesh and blood, and on the spirits of evil that roam the air. It is not so rare to see men fighting a physical enemy with the body's strength alone as to astonish me; nor is it so extraordinary – praiseworthy though it is – that war should be waged against vice and the Devil with the soul's strength alone, for the world is full of monks who wage such a combat. But what to me is as admirable as it is evidently rare is to see the two united, to see one and the same man courageously gird himself with double sword and double baldric. The soldier who at the same time clothes his soul with the breastplate of faith and his body with the breastplate of iron cannot but be fearless and feel secure, for under his double armour he fears neither man nor devil. Far from fearing death, he desires it. What can he fear, whether he lives or dies, since Jesus Christ alone is his life and his death is his gain?'

The 'new militia' undoubtedly demanded a total decision to turn away from the profane world; that was why it could not succeed as a unanimous way of life for an aristocracy that wanted only to think of the hereafter as a function of its privileged position in the world. Even the chosen failed again and again because sensible reality would renew its attractions and regain its hold over people's spirits. Yet it came to attain the status of a paradigm and projected itself in a less extreme version of chivalry which defined its terms by seeking to adapt to the real forms of social life without thereby abandoning its fundamental orientation. Chivalry offered the new generations of the aristocracy a mission on this earth in relation to the transcendental aims it judged to be inherent in man's spiritual essence.

In this form, chivalry gradually permeated the spirit of the landed military aristocracy. Those who only found fulfilment in heroic feats could ascribe them to the supreme purpose of defending the faith and would then feel justified, both themselves and their privileged position in the social order their ancestors had built with the sword. The layman was justified, and the cleric, if, keeping to the vocation of the class he belonged to, he considered the use of arms compatible with the system of his norms. This is why Bishop Don Jerónimo felt justified – according to the *Poem of the Cid* – that 'he could not keep count of the Moors that he has killed', or Bishop Turpin – according to the *Song of Roland* – 'who performed such exploits with his body as no tonsured man ever did that has sung mass', or Bishop Leofgar – according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronical* – who 'abandoned his chrism and his crucifix, his spiritual arms and took up spear and sword'. The baron, in the guise of the Christian knight, risked death not only with the joy of the hero but with the confidence that stemmed from his faith in the fulfilment of the promise that death in service of God brought with it eternal bliss. It was, in Christian terms, what Walhalla offered to the Germanic warrior. 'In Paradise shall they have their place,' said the Pope to Count William Fierebrace in the poem of the *Couronnement de Louis*,

glossing what the chronicler Fulcher of Chartres reported Urban II as saying at the Council of Clermont. The old baronial conception had changed sign and was transfiguring the very meaning of the heroic deed in an endless variety of shades, scorning the lucid intention of courtesy and infusing it with a strong missionary sense.

For chivalry, the idea of life was rooted in fulfilling the mission of defending the Christian faith, which was not merely a belief but the very essence of a culture. That mission appeared to be entrusted by God to the aristocracy, whose arms were ennobled in defending and extending the bornes of that culture's area, which in theory merged with the world, given its universal essence. This affirmed the principle that the Christian faith was fully identified with the existing social order. The memory of the historical process through which this order had been established slowly faded, or at least lost significance, notwithstanding the eloquence of the facts, the memory of which was preserved in legend and chronicle. The real situation was no longer considered historical and was affirmed as atemporal and founded on a supernatural order. Thus, the landed military aristocracy, which had previously found sufficient justification in the simple right of conquest, also deemed itself justified by its transcendental mission.

As a form of mentality and life and as a system of ideals, chivalry permeated the feudal order to make it the quintessential Christian order. The illusion of social and cultural stability was the result of a judgment that blended a view of historical processes and an ideology, a judgment for which the aristocracy, as the embodiment of the principles of chivalry, made itself the mouthpiece. The final adaptation of reality and unreality in a theory of seigneurial life supplied the architecture for an order whose culmination was, however, achieved only at the moment when signs of the emergence of new forces that could not be accommodated within it began to be noticed.

II. THE FORMS OF RELIGIOUS MENTALITY

1. The active and the contemplative life

As a form of seigneurial life, chivalry pointed to a duplicity in man's ends. As action, it drew him towards profanity and tempted him with concupiscence and vanity; as mission, it directed his spirit towards the sacred and set him on the path to salvation.

In reality, the landed military aristocracy kept to its firm conviction that its primary aims were profane and that baronial virtues were superior to all others. If the baron was not a brave and fearsome

warrior, said the poet of the *Chançon de Roland*, then 'he is worth less than fourpence and ought rather to be a monk in any monastery and pray all day for our sins.' But over and above this radical conviction, a transactional idea of social values gradually superimposed itself, particularly as the Church became more feudalised. It certainly did not succeed in banishing the original conviction, but it did gain enough force to become an accepted convention. It involved the assumption that the ecclesiastic possessed as much if not more nobility than the baron. In the poem in which he pretended to converse with King Robert, Bishop Adalberon argued in the early eleventh century that the priesthood constituted a class apart from society, whose members could not sully themselves with any 'vile and worldly task' and stood above all men regardless of their rank. This charismatic superiority was projected onto social values in a conciliatory formula whereby the offices of cleric and knight were seen to be on an equal footing in their nobility.

But nobility and dignity were concerns that only mattered to the world. While ecclesiastics were undoubtedly concerned to have their worldly dignity recognised, so too were those in whom the flame of faith burned brightest to exalt, in contrast to the seigneurial forms of life, forms of spiritual life directed not towards the world but towards God. All transactions aside, the supreme dignity of spiritual life could only be upheld by affirming the superiority of the contemplative over the active life.

The old Christian antinomy – always about Rachael or Leah, Mary or Martha – resurfaced time and again in ascetic minds, opposing the ends entailed by each of its terms. The seigneurial life was undoubtedly an active one and perhaps therefore deserved the reproaches of ascetic minds. But not all spiritual life was contemplative, and this diversified vocations and attitudes.

For those seeking to eschew *inanis gloria*, a dangerous opportunity for sin, and to direct their existence towards God, their true end, the path ahead lay in choosing the spiritual life, the home of which was the Church. Spurred by the thirst for enjoyments and the allure of vanities, the life of the world did not constitute the path to salvation. 'Consider,' said Saint Bonaventure in his *Soliloquium*, 'how unstable is the opulence of the world, how fickle its excellence, how false and wretched its glory.' And he recalled the words of Saint Bernard condemning riches, honours and glory. It was an well-worn theme, into which Saint Peter Damian had injected fresh life when he advised to fight 'not for field or city, not for sons or wives, but for your soul,' in a world obsessed by ownership. The path to salvation seemed only to be found in the spiritual life; but even within it the Christian had to choose his path.

The Christian had to choose between the sacred and the profane, between earthly enjoyment or eternal salvation. The common man believed he could serve two masters and was entitled to attain

remission of his sins even while devoting his existence to worldly action. But the ascetically-minded reproached him for his duplicity in such fiery terms as those used by Saint Bernard to address Suger regarding both his correspondent and Étienne de Garlande when he condemned the simultaneous exercise of ecclesiastical duties and courtly and military obligations. Salvation lay in the spiritual life alone, and whoever wished to attain it had choose his own path.

Two kinds of spiritual life were open to those who wished to save their souls: 'one is more useful and the other is sweeter,' said Saint Bernard. The active life was the more useful of the two, the contemplative life the sweeter: 'better is the latter,' remarked Saint Thomas, 'but the former is necessary, for in contemplation, there is only love of God,' had said Ivo of Chartres, and in action, there is also love of one's neighbour. In pursuit of its salvation, Christianity had, then, to choose between limiting itself to achieving its own or fighting to help others achieve theirs.

The choice was essentially vocational but often, no doubt, corresponded to a radical view of the world. The life of contemplation and the abandonment of the world seemed the most appropriate form of spiritual life to those persuaded by the horror of the world that the struggle against evil was futile: one's entire life and the full effort of every consciousness were barely enough to conquer temptation and sin. Born of *contemptus mundi*, the monastic attitude consequently spread. Yet the man who trusted in the possibility of redeeming his neighbour and fed the hope of the triumph of faith believed his place in the world was to face the battle in which the enemy operated as if in his own domain. The active life appeared in his eyes to be the justest form of spiritual life, and sometimes he inclined towards the simple exercise of the priesthood and the governance of the Church and sometimes to the investigation of the secret reasons of faith in order to instruct those who did not attain grace by way of reason.

In this way, the spiritual life adopted its divers forms and welcoming those seeking salvation rather than the attractions of the world. And these forms channelled a tendency that stood in contrast to the one inspired by the forms of seigneurial life without either being able to ignore the other because of their reciprocal influence.

2. 'Militia Christi'

Certainly not all who adopted the forms of religious life lived up to what should have been its deepest contents. The church was full of bad clerics, bad bishops, bad theologians and bad monks. But there were many who, in all sincerity and good faith, accepted the principles of the spiritual life, and it was they who kept that attitude alive, as a promise ever renewed and ever attractive to

restless spirits.

Less determined but not necessarily less fervent, the simple faithful tried to purify their daily existence through faith, observance and good deeds. But theirs were no model fates. Only those of whoever authentically and vehemently devoted their life to the cause of faith – regardless of the path – would become exemplary fates insofar as they carried a yearning widespread among ordinary souls and barely satisfied with naive faith or formal compliance with ritual to its ultimate consequences.

An exemplary fate was that of the cleric, the secular priest engaged in the care of souls. His ministry placed him in a privileged position, regardless of his birth or status, which public consensus recognised. Sometimes, depending on the degree of ambition, the simple status of cleric seemed insignificant, which angered Saint Bernard. But this public ministry, even if performed in with limited scope, offered satisfaction for profound spiritual calling, and also, undoubtedly, no less profound gratification, for, in the midst of the profane world, the priest enjoyed widespread recognition as part of the order of the sacred.

This was the typical status of one who was part of the religious state, which set anyone receiving orders on the path to perfection. A personal sense of vocation and public consensus contributed to raising the value of possessing charismatic power, whereby the priest could work on souls by administering the sacraments. Those administering them possessed not only immense influence and immeasurable strength but a tremendous inner force that fulfilled their spiritual calling. Ivo, Bishop of Chartres, described the priestly condition in vehement terms in his letter to Leudon: 'Just as divine fire,' he said, 'visibly consumed and by itself transformed the figurative holocausts always offered by legitimate priests and not only rejected the usurpers' victims but condemned them terribly, so divine virtue invisibly consecrates the sacraments of our time, administered by legitimate priests, transforming them into the reality of the body and blood of Christ.' And he added that no one 'should be admitted to the mystical blessings and the prayers whereby this consecration is performed lest they have been consecrated in the priestly order and surrounded by all the proper ornaments and ministries.' It was no doubt a profound experience to feel oneself an instrument of divine omnipotence, perhaps exceptionally revealed by miracle, and to find an answer to one's innermost designs while living a full existence ennobled by the highest prestige of the community.

The cleric certainly held an exceptional position, both within his parish and within his area of influence. He lived from the altar – according to the Pauline rule – and devoted his life to serving it, that is, to serving the ultimate transcendent purposes of existence, beyond everyday contingency, in constant attendance to the revealed word. But, while it was permissible and necessary for him to

turn inwards to meditate, his mission lay in the world, of whose militia he was part. He was required to assist his peers not only by administering the sacraments to them but, above all, by keeping watch over the world of sin and occupying his time with the care of souls.

This was what characterised the *militia Christi*: an intense love for one's neighbour incited the man spiritually inclined to withdraw from himself and turn his existence into action for the benefit of his fellows. Self-love resembled selfishness to one who was inflamed by the love of God and saw that feeling translated into love for his creatures. 'Let us not put our repose before the affairs of the world; let us carry out the ministry which we owe to the enlightening Church,' said Ivo of Chartres. In the world lay temptation and sin, a constant threat to souls. It was a supreme act of charity to forsake one's own edification in order to guide others on the road to salvation.

The priest had two fundamental means of direct action: one collective and directed towards his flock as a whole, the other singular and directed towards each of its members. The first was performed through preaching. Full of potential personal praises, preaching was also the ultimate proof of the priest's influence. Within or beyond the bounds of his parish, the preacher strove simultaneously to teach the word and instil the spirit of doctrine. Depending on his calling, one aspect might be pursued more intensely than another, but more generally the preacher sought to elicit an emotional state. A simple and almost always illiterate public surely allowed him to make use of all kinds of resources, but the most effective of all was the preacher himself becoming inflamed with emotion and partaking in the feelings he himself aroused. 'Yet if you wish to have a thundering voice when preaching, one which is effective for your prayers,' Saint Peter Damian advised, 'let divine love inflame you every moment and take care not to let the harshness of the cold make your voice hoarse, for the prayer and preaching of a cold soul is not heeded and reaches the ears like a voice grown hoarse.' A transcendent act, the sermon established communication between the preacher and his listeners within the sacred realm and provided the perfect opportunity to express a spiritual calling. Within the community, 'the preacher of the word of God' was individualised and, for a time at least, became, as the compiler of the sayings of Aegidius said, 'the banner, candle and mirror of the people.' And he added, 'Happy is the man who so guides others on the path to salvation and never ceases to tread that same path!' Such happiness was the inner reward for the toiling of the *militia Christi*.

The second form of action was performed either through catechesis or charity. The cleric who made a faithful believer of the catechumen had added one more to his good deeds and felt that he had, slowly but surely, succeeded in guiding a soul on the path to his salvation. But in personal contact, the priest could make an even deeper experience by exercising charity. It was not only sin that was a threat to man in the world; so was despair. As a counter to sin, the priest held threat of punishment, but also counsel and example. Counsel and example were fruits of charity, and for those threatened

with despair, the charity of the priest could take the form of advice and moral encouragement. As confessor and counsellor, the priest acquired immense influence but also fulfilment as an individual, making his mark in communication with his fellow men. The priest who only saw his function as a routine, a job to justify the income furnished by his parish, may not have achieved spiritual satisfaction. It was, all said and done, a job. 'Will you demand a salary when you have done nothing?' said Saint Bernard to a group of monks. 'Christen the children, bury the dead, visit the sick, marry the husbands and the wives, catechise the ignorant, reprimand the sinners, excommunicate the rebels, absolve the repentant and reconcile the penitents.' Such were the duties of the parish priest and could be considered rough, tough work if they were approached as mere routine. But for the spiritually inclined priest who felt himself possessed of charismatic power, who knew the intense trance of emotional communication through preaching and was moved to charity by intense love for his neighbour, these duties were a real and tangible opportunity to engage in the struggle against sin and for faith. These were the tangible forms taken by the *militia Christi*.

Besides the immediate action of priests, whose existence was spent in direct contact with their faithful, prelates exercised their militia as shepherds of souls, watching not only over their flock but over the priests who ministered in their diocese. Within religious life, the episcopate was the highest expression of the active life, encompassing both spiritual activity over souls and earthly activity in the governance, defence and direction of the Church in the world. Two wisely combined vocations had to coincide in those wishing to exercise the prelacy correctly, as they had to attend both to the edification of the faithful and to the administration of an institution that effectively shared in the governance of the world.

A 'bishop' could be anyone upon whom chance conferred the dignity. But the good bishop, the bishop realising a deep calling of militancy in this mission, was the only one able to govern others and keep them within the principles of virtue and faith. This was a rare ability, according to Saint Bernard, but one which revealed greater perfection than in those who could only be held to these principles by the vigilance of others, and which had its reward, for 'those who lead their brothers wisely receive the effects of the Lord's promise and are established over all their goods.' Equally rare was that ability whereby, elevated to the prelacy, a good monk might become a bad bishop, as Gerald of Wales delighted in pointing out when speaking of Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury.

If the bishop was a religious spirit who had chosen the Church over the world, once he reached the prelacy, he had to resolve to act in the world within Church norms. It was his mission 'to ensure his subjects observe ecclesiastical institutions and to bring those who stray from them back to due order through paternal severity'; to defend the ecclesiastical hierarchy, even against the dignitaries of the Church themselves, because, in the words of Thomas Becket, the implacable defender of the Church's rights against the king of England, it is harmful 'to arrange the members of Jesus Christ

differently from the way He himself has'; and to oppose the intrusion of the state 'in matters related to God's honour'.

The post of bishop was, then, one of combat against the enemies of the faith and the Church. But it was also a post from which to watch over the faithful, who were in constant danger of giving in to temptation or faltering in their obligations of observance, and were sometimes prone to heterodoxy or heresy. As a prelate, the religious man with a militant calling could devote his existence tirelessly to the protection of his flock. A bad bishop was one who accepted the mitre and did not settle in his diocese; the good bishop had to 'reside in the midst of the congregation entrusted to him' and exercise his ministry and authority there because the cathedra 'is a post for observation,' said Saint Bernard, from where the bishop must survey what lies around him. From there, he must exercise authority, while endeavouring to be more loved than feared and to be like a 'father to his brothers, not a lord.' Only when the stubborn disobedience of the faithful jeopardised the health of the Church was it right to resort to 'the iron rod to smash the clay pots.'

But religious spirits were uneasy at the idea that pastoral dignity might be confused with the domination inherent in civil authority. Saint Bernard protested vehemently against this misunderstanding in his treatise *De consideratione*. Being an apostolate, the prelacy primarily involved duties: nothing could be more harmful than to confuse it with a seigneurie. And being an apostolate, only the care of souls was to concern the bishop zealous about his earthly militancy, without confusing this with care of goods or material interests.

A zealous dedication to the care of souls fully satisfied the militant calling of those who wished to serve their neighbour for the love of God and was willing to be 'the least of all'. Such a mission certainly required the possession of the highest virtues inherent to the priesthood but also demanded others that were peculiar and specific to the prelacy. Prudence and benevolence, said Saint Bernard; prudence and discernment, advised Pope Urban II; and, summarising a vast tradition, Saint Bonaventure outlined the fundamental virtues of the prelacy in his treatise *On the Six Wings of the Seraph*: zeal for observance, compassion, patience, the exemplary life, prudent discretion and devotion to God.

Equipped with such virtues, the religious militant spirit could answer its calling to benefit those placed themselves under its care, governing their souls and seeking their edification. Furthermore, the bishop had the notable role of preaching, of 'spreading the seed of the Word with divine grace'; his cathedra was not only a post for observation but a 'rostrum' from which the correct interpretation of the dogma was spread. From there, hearts were inflamed and observance urged with meticulous vigilance. Eight canons were tasked by Bishop Blanquerna with devoting

themselves to 'serve the eight beatitudes', preaching and practising poverty, meekness, mourning, affliction, mercy, cleanliness, peace and the persecution of sinners: this was how Ramon Llull imagined the bishop fulfilled his mission as custodian of souls. And at the same time as he helped prevent half-heartedness in observance, he kept watch for signs of heterodoxy or heresy, which required much knowledge and precise discernment to uncover.

Faced with the emergence of heresy or the presence of infidels, militant spirits had to call on all their fighting ability in defence of the faith. Religious sanction necessitated the study of errors and doctrinal controversy. Saint Bernard set out to refute Abelard's thesis point by point at the Council of Sens, but he believed it was the bishops' responsibility to 'judge the doctrines'. And having reached this point, the militant spirit called for extermination, appealed to the strength of the secular arm and proclaimed it a universal duty to combat dissident. Abbot Arnaud of Cîteaux 'would go about on foot or on horseback disputing with treacherous heretics, obstinate in the error of their ways', but when he became convinced of the grave danger posed by the spread of Catharism, he counselled the Pope to wage a crusade and entreated everyone to join the ranks of defenders of the faith: 'may he who does not cross himself,' he said, 'have no more right to drink wine or eat from tablecloths, at either morning or evening, or to wear on his body hemp or linen cloths, or to be buried as no better than a dog.' This was the same voice as had been heard when the decision was taken to fight the Muslim infidels and as urged knights to don 'the blessed arms of Christians.' Only rarely did other voices speak out advising catechesis for the misguided. Ramon Llull saw himself as an advocate for schismatics and infidels and lamented their damnation. 'Every day they are lost to the everlasting fire for ignorance Him. And they are wasting the everlasting glory of your glorious Son,' said the monk to whom Llull confided his thoughts to the Virgin, 'because none preaches to them or teaches them the truth of the holy Catholic Faith.' Thus spoke the *Doctor Illuminatus*, in whom the ideal of a spiritual life took on the loftiest forms of the *militia Christi*, practised stubbornly to the point of sacrifice and death under the banner of universal love.

Joining the *militia Christi* used certainly to be a stepping stone on the ascent to privilege in feudal society. But it was also the path to fulfilment of a spiritual calling that sought realisation through immersion in the world of sin and the earthly city in order to face the enemy there and wrest from it the souls of the misguided and the half-hearted. Ultimately, the *militia Christi*'s sole desire was to remain in the world in order to fight it, or indeed, deny it. The militant's supreme mission was to help his fellow man in thrall to the light of 'outward things' to contemn them and direct his attention to 'greater things' as Saint Bonaventure described them. By these means, the *militia Christi* would achieve its ultimate goal, which was to destroy the certainty in the spirit of man regarding the one true existence of sensible reality and supplant it with another born of faith which claimed a more secure existence for unreality. This unreality could only be discovered by the eyes of the soul, through which it became intelligible to man. It was 'the only good, in which lie all goods', as Saint

Anselm put it, and he described them in his conclusion to the *Proslogion*, opposing heavenly goods, true and eternal, to earthly goods, illusory and fleeting. It was for the triumph of the heavenly over the earthly city that the *militia Christi* fought, the triumph in the spirit of man, whose salvation depended on him finding lodgings – while still alive – in the world promised to the dead and on garnering sufficient depth to perceive the unreality that permeated sensible reality by distinguishing the diversity of values differentiating the former from the latter.

3. 'Cupiditas scientiae'

Guided also by the sense of militancy, those drawn to the spiritual life could steer themselves towards the conquest of wisdom. Possessed of wisdom, it was possible to set out the perfection of the Christian faith for unbelievers and a rational conviction of truths taught by revelation for those untouched by grace. Such missions really served to justify those drawn passionately to an intellectual calling and propelled them towards wisdom.

The ideal of the pious sage may have derived from the highest figures of the Church: Saint Jerome, Saint Augustine, Saint Isidore of Seville or Saint Gregory the Great. The figures of Saint Anselm and Saint Bernard still had the same characters. But, from the eleventh century on, the spiritual life underwent a most profound crisis, and a new ideal of wisdom emerged from it whose features differed from those typically associated with the Fathers' pious wisdom. Saint Peter Damian defined it as a *cupiditas scientiae*, an unmoderated desire for knowledge which threatened to go beyond the bounds of what it was reasonable for man to glean.

He was not wrong. Certain spirits began to be seized by a general curiosity under whose momentum spiritual life took on new accents. The conflict between the criteria of authority and reason was beginning to insinuate itself, and in the controversy, it was authority that was covered with the force of tradition while reason was condemned with the stigma of a dangerous novelty. Imitating traditionalist theologians and prelates, the chronicler of Philip Augustus, William the Breton, said: 'Attempt not, man, to breach the bounds imposed on man, nor consume yourself in the vain search for that which you do not know.' But imprecations could not hold back the force of the momentum towards the new wisdom, which, indeed, would not be confined to the bounds of the old knowledge. An unmistakable intellectual calling was at work in those given to this new *cupiditas scientiae*, channelling a new image of the life of the spirit. And to justify this attitude in their eyes, an urge to lead towards faith those who did not come to it spontaneously via the path of reason came in useful. The world required a new means of catechesis. Cities were abuzz with the advent of unprecedented throngs, and Saint Peter Damian's observation on recalling that the

preaching of the new faith had been entrusted by God to 'simple men and illiterate fishermen' sounded naive and anachronistic. A different attitude was now needed. And those who felt moved by the intellectual calling could argue that the conditions of spiritual life had changed.

The new wisdom undoubtedly found a place in the world during the feudal-bourgeois period. In the unstable society stirred up by the rise of the bourgeoisie, knowledge became a weapon for the 'sons of good men seeking more esteem,' as Gonzalo de Berceo pointed out in reference to those attending the 'school of singing and reading' in the town of Borges. And those who felt capable of providing instruction at the different levels met with a warm welcome and a large audience. The teaching of philosophy became a profession, modest indeed when compared to others that allowed the pursuit of wealth, but sufficient for one who felt himself aflame with the spirit and, 'having not the strength to work the land, was ashamed to beg' to live devoted to the cultivation of his calling.

The intellectual calling began to feel stimulated, as depraved as Gerald of Wales could still consider his time for the scant attention it paid to study. The Welsh cleric – who spoke so personally of his literary work – declared that, ever since childhood, he had felt an intense love of learning, in words similar to those written by John of Salisbury to Thomas Becket not long before, extolling his devotion to letters. They each took pleasure in ancient poetry, and Guibert de Nogent or Abelard – before inclining to theological or philosophical studies – devoted themselves to imitating it in spite of the imprecations of those who saw in it a threat to the faith. But theology and philosophy were the disciplines that most caught the attention of the intellectually inclined, perhaps because of the polemical intention and the affirmation of a militant spiritual attitude that they concealed. The growing individualism that accompanied the awakening of the new wisdom may also have been influential in the development of the philosophical calling. Individualism permeated John of Salisbury's correspondence, laced as it was with displays of subtle wit, and was affirmed in Gerald of Wales's dictum, 'more honourable is it to produce works worthy of being quoted than to quote the works of others.' Those who proved the uncommon flight of intellect in reasoning or polemic were seized by an intense sense of individual superiority. Abelard, who confessed to having thought of himself as 'the only philosopher on earth', advised everyone to have his own source to be able to interpret the meaning of Scripture for themselves: 'you have in you,' he added, 'a font of living water, an inexhaustible wellspring, a stream of intellect and reason: let it not be dammed up by earth and stones. Dig your ground with a firm hand, cleanse it, that is to say, cultivate your spirit, remove from it the softness and the dullness. Harken to what the Holy Scripture says: "excite your eye and from it shall come intellect." Purify your spirit that you may drink the water of your wellspring and draw the living water from your well.'

The individualism of the new wisdom stemmed ultimately from a new faith in intellect and reason. Intellect appeared as an enemy to those who clung to the criterion of authority and the principle of

traditionalism. They deemed it limited and weak, but those attracted by the new wisdom placed full trust in it: Roscelino possessed an eloquence – sterile, said Ivo of Chartres – 'armed with human reasonings'; Gilbert of Poitiers, 'by virtue of his exceptionally subtle intellect and the acute power of his reason, was wont to say many things beyond what is usual among men,' said Otto of Freising; and Abelard, whose enemies concurred in admitting his intellectual pride, presumptuously declared that 'he was wont to rely on his intellect.'

Such confidence in the intellect began to recognise no bounds. Those who felt themselves in possession of such a marvellous instrument began to flex their muscles in the thrilling game of utilising it to submit everything they received from tradition and everything that reached their spirit backed by the criterion of authority to analysis. The practical stakes were high, and sometimes retraction – formal, at least – was in order. But the subtle allure of exercising the analytical intelligence spurred them to adventure, especially because the social atmosphere in cities stimulated the defiant outlook of the new discoverers of reason. Those tempted by this new spiritual form of life were seduced by fame, and it spread through an elite public, drawn in by eloquence or subtle wit and often indulging in turns of phrase honed to the predominant new sensibility. Otto of Freising noted that Abelard was possessed of great wit, not only in formulating philosophical questions but in rousing 'social entertainments and pastimes'. A streak of snobbery seemed to be percolating through the educated classes, and a large public – according to the testimony of friends and enemies – heeded the prophets of the new wisdom and read their books with a passionate interest that alarmed traditionalists and revealed a crisis in intellectual sensibility.

Perhaps the most alluring aspect of the new wisdom was its daring foray into the field of logical reasoning, which challenged the limitations imposed on intellect by the criterion of authority. The challenge was of less significance if conducted within the bounds of the knowledge of nature. Adelard of Bath collated Judaeo-Christian and Arab sources while learning to strike a critical attitude. His Arab teachers instructed him under the aegis of reason, he claimed, and added that the principle of authority is a halter whereby man is led like some irrational brute. This complaint 'against writers of the past' and those who do not seek 'a rational judgment but simply trust in the mention of an old title' related to Adelard's observations – and those of William of Conches – on the prejudices opposing the new intellectual attitude. They both dared to dissent from scripture in order to explain natural phenomena. It was risky, to be sure, but riskier still to tackle the theological problems themselves and subject them to the same kind of critical examination. Yet that was precisely what the philosophers and theologians of the new wisdom undertook, Abelard more boldly perhaps than anyone.

Saint Bernard carefully detailed the traits of the *temerarius scrutator*'s new attitude, more dangerous for him no doubt than his actual assertions. He reproached him for hazarding opinions on the

fundamental problems of faith 'as if it were possible for everyone to think and say whatever he please, as if the mysteries of our faith depended on the whim of the human spirit.' He reproached him for daring to disagree with the Fathers and expound original thinking that was, moreover, explicitly presented as such; 'Abelard opens by expounding the Fathers' unanimous sentiment on that point,' he wrote to the pope, 'but only to reject it forthwith, boasting of having a better one.' And he upbraided him for not referring his opinions to an authority: 'What you say you take from yourself and obtained from no one.'

Even before this, in confronting this new intellectual attitude, Saint Anselm had controversially declared he was not attempting to penetrate the profundity of God, 'for I do not in any way compare my intellect to it.' But those to whom he referred maintained their stance, confident of the new mentality's legitimacy. Abelard argued in their favour that it was their followers who required a new approach to the problems, different from the traditional one: 'I composed,' he wrote, 'a treatise on the divine unity and trinity for the use of my followers who called for human and philosophical reasoning on this subject and for whom demonstrations were more necessary than speeches. Indeed, they claimed they had no need of vain words, that nothing can be believed but what is comprehended and that it is foolish to preach to others that which one does not better comprehend oneself than those whom one addresses.' Abelard would insist on this idea because the advantage of demonstration for catechesis constituted a solid justification of his intellectual attitude.

A justification certainly seemed necessary faced with the forceful assertion of the superiority of simple faith. Those galvanised by *cupiditas scientiae* started from an intellectual calling and experienced what Ramon Llull would define as 'the pleasure man has in understanding'. It was 'the greatest pleasure man's intellect can have' and the greatest of all was 'understanding the work of God'. Intellect was its own justification. 'Understanding,' added Llull, 'when it is well ordered and follows the purpose for which it is created, takes pleasure in understanding sin and falsehood for three reasons: the first because it recognises in sin and falsehood no semblance or work of God; the second because, upon understanding sin and falsehood, the will is inclined to abhor them; and the third because, in understanding them, it begets its likeness, that is to say, understanding, in whose likeness or semblance the mind finds pleasure, though neither in sin nor in falsehood be there any semblance to God.' Intellect sought its justification in the purpose for which it had been created and found legitimacy in its ultimate convergence with revelation. But it was also justified because of its potential for service. Llull claimed that faith could be proven, for otherwise 'God could not blame Christians if they did not demonstrate it to unbelievers, who could justly complain of God if He did not allow the greatest truth to be proven, so that the mind may assist in loving the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation and other articles, and, in understanding them, man may better resist falsehood'.

This justification may have been valid, and perhaps sincere. But Saint Bernard was not wholly

mistaken when he foresaw the ultimate, necessary consequences of the new intellectual attitude in those who trusted in the intellect and delighted in exercising it. 'They despise the faith of the simple and aspire to penetrate the secrets of God,' he said and added, 'I have it that human intelligence wishes to straddle everything and leaves faith nothing.' Whether reasoning on the mysteries of faith or examining and explaining nature, the new wisdom certainly promised to attain an understanding of mystery. It was the mystery itself that the custodian of traditional faith felt was in danger. Adelard of Bath and William of Conches, and other observers of nature, like Alexander Neckam, Thomas of Cantimpré, Bartholomew the Englishman, Robert Grosseteste, the first two more critical, the others more naïve, answered their intellectual callings by scrutinising the 'nature of things' and describing their appearance, while attempting to explain the enigmas and unravel the underlying causes of phenomena. The comparison of natural reality with scriptural details gave rise to a critical attitude that undoubtedly exceeded its intentions. But even the mildest discussion about the exact value of the scriptural detail opened up a path whose dangers could be guessed by the custodian of traditional faith. Even more serious was the attempt to understanding theological enigmas rationally. Saint Bernard called for the simple acceptance of mystery as such and condemned, with piercing insight, the characters of the new intellectual attitude, which he epitomised in Abelard: 'He is no longer the man who contemplates things as in a mirror and in enigma, but a man full of vanity and swollen with pride who gazes upon them face to face.'

This was the sign of the new form that spiritual life was taking. The enjoyment provided by the exercise of the intellect led the spirit towards comprehending mystery and offered the possibility of drawing back the veil concealing unreality. Once attained, contempt of the world, undervaluing of sensible reality, subordination of the earthly city, everything that theology and mysticism aspired to perpetuate in the spirit of man had to be subjected to fresh scrutiny. *Cupiditas scientiae* spurred militant spirits to fight for the spiritual perfection of the world by stimulating the exercise of the intellect, which was fuelled by the belief that it was necessary to understand in order to believe.

4. 'Contemptu mundi'

Confronted with the world, those who became convinced it was more important to save their souls than to try to steer them to impossible perfection sought the possibility of reaching God in shunning its horrors and temptations. The ascetic calling found an atmosphere conducive to achieving the highest ideal of spirituality in solitude, and the only hope of avoiding sin in abandonment of the world.

'You well know you cannot serve two masters at the same time and that "whoever wishes to be a

friend of this world becomes an enemy of God",' said Saint Bernard, paraphrasing James the Apostle. Notwithstanding its efforts to compromise with reality, this radical aspiration to perfection, which involved a choice between the source of all good and the source of all evil, sprang from the heart of the Christian attitude. The ascetic spirit looked at worldly pleasures and saw their foulness. It could then think it was on the path to inner perfection and repeat the words that Saint Bonaventure placed on the lips of the soul: 'Now I despise the world, now I know the false joy and true sorrow, the false sweetness and true bitterness of the world, and for that reason, according to your counsel, I despise all such things and not without reason.' As a result, the man ascetically inclined succeeded in casting off diabolical earthly temptations to become a 'new man'.

Perhaps what the spirit of asceticism ought to have shunned more than anything was the very body that housed it, through whose foulness man himself became foul. Man was contemptible for what was material and earthly in him: 'shaped from earth, conceived in guilt, born in pain, he does wicked things that are unlawful, dishonest things that are unbefitting, vain things that are unnecessary; and he shall become fuel for the fire, fodder for the worms, the epitome of filth,' as Pope Innocent III pitilessly put it in *De contempla mundi*. The idea that the body was nothing more than the prison of the soul made it an enemy for the ascetic spirit to guard against. If its urges plagued the soul, it should call to mind its 'rottenness and corruption' and the image of sickening corpses; even smelling flowers might be harmful, as 'the soul, by this delight, is in danger of bending to the desire for some vanity of the flesh.' The senses made the body an enemy of spiritual perfection.

This sentiment was the inspiration behind many a page against women, who seemed to be the embodiment of the temptations suffered by men. The example of Eve was often invoked, who 'seduced our first father;' of Delilah, 'for whom Samson lost the strength that made him defeat his enemies and was defeated by them;' and of Solomon who, 'driven by his lust for women, renounced God and so lost the wisdom that set him above others. Women possessed of an ascetic spirit were to avoid using their powers of seduction, and Guibert de Nogent was led to extol the example of his mother, who, driven by piety and still young, acted in such a way that 'the wrinkles of age appeared already to have led her to the years of decrepitude.' Youth was the age of sin because the senses were a threat to virtue, and there was a passionate longing to grow old. Bodies ravaged by pain and indifferent to the sense of physical beauty offered traditional Byzantinising images in churches and monasteries for the edification of those contemplating them.

But however much it shunned the body, the ascetic spirit did not escape all dangers unless it was also capable of despising all the vanities presented to it by the world – the glory, the wisdom and the wealth. These all took man out of himself and, by involving him in the struggle of the passions, removed him from what ought to be his sole obsession, namely the salvation of the soul. They were all occasions for sin, and courting their attractions heralded damnation. 'Do not keep your linen by

the fire,' Gonzalo de Berceo reported Saint Dominic of Silos as saying. Only withdrawal and contempt for worldly pleasures could pave the road to perfection.

Should the ascetic spirit allow itself to be seduced by worldly glory? 'Illustrious birth, physical beauty, elegance of forms and manners, keenness of spirit, in short, knowledge and probity. What an array of advantages! But rightfully glory returns to Him from whom you have received it; and should you claim it for yourselves, you usurp what is His, and He shall treat you accordingly.' So said Saint Bernard, adding that the only thing left on earth of all this would be a memory, nothing lasting, for 'the glory of the world is as brief as the world itself.' More unsafe and still less noble, wealth was all the more contemptible for unleashing greed and hardening hearts. Disinterest in worldly goods, however, testified to observance of the 'sublime glory of the highest poverty', in the words of Saint Francis, who taught not only to despise goods but to love the sweet improvidence of the birds, 'for they keep nothing from one day to another', in the conviction that poverty was a virtue in itself. Even earthly knowledge seemed wretched to ascetic spirits, who feared pride and sought instead the 'wise folly of Christ'.

If everything led to the conviction that the wickedness of the world was essential and incorrigible and that the baseness of man lay in his own nature, ascetic spirits had reason enough to strive to distance themselves from them. But on top of this essential, perennial wickedness and baseness time would pile fresh vices. The spectre of the present as being worse than the past and constituting a distinctly depraved and corrupted age loomed in the thinking of those who saw in the wilderness or the monastery an oasis of peace. In the first half of the eleventh century, Raoul Glaber recounted the evils of his age: the greed and corruption of the powerful, kings as well as seigneurs and prelates, compounded by the evils revealing divine wrath, which this Cluniac monk associated with John the Theologian's apocalyptic revelation. Not long after, Guibert de Nogent in France and Saint Peter Damian in Italy described the state of society and religious life in particular in the darkest of tones, both exercised by the desire to promote and improve monasticism. All concurred in preferring withdrawal from the world to aggravation of the familiar evils manifest in the hearts of men and even the forces of nature: 'It was believed,' Raoul Glaber told, 'that the order of the seasons and the laws of the elements that had hitherto governed the world had fallen into an eternal chaos, and the end of the human race was feared.' Ascetic spirits discovered the wrath of God and clung to the idea that the world's fate was sealed.

All that mattered, then, was to save one's own soul. It was a radical demand which stood above all earthly considerations and required a different measure from that used to gauge the obligations and duties born of worldly relations. 'Fight not for fields and cities, not for children or women,' said Saint Peter Damian, 'but for your soul, whose well-being is more important than all affections born of kinship.' To stay joined to the world of sin was to choose the perishable and to disdain the eternal:

'You keep heaven for yourself and want to leave the earth to me,' complained his brother to Saint Bernard, who had entrusted the family property to him. Only in solitude, penitence and prayer could the ascetic spirit find hope and consolation.

There was a deep yearning for total solitude among some ascetic spirits aspiring to emulate the Fathers of the Thebaid. One day, all ties severed, those aspiring to perfection would abandon populated centres and venture forth on the road to solitary wilds as if called by some irresistible voice. Forest or moor, the wilderness, ravaged perhaps by vermin or lacking food and water, put their calling to the harshest of tests, but the hermit would throw himself on God's protection and endure the most stringent privations. A hermitage or icy cave would serve as his dwelling, and there he would devote himself to prayer and penance, resisting temptations and directing all the strength of his spirit solely towards God.

But the absolute solitude of the hermit appeared not to be the only path to perfection. In congregation, those who shared the same ideal of holiness could also order their lives by submitting to a strict rule in order to attain the soul's perfection. The monastery appeared to be the perfect home for retreat and pursuit of the perfect life, detached from the interests of the world and devoted to the service of God.

With the example of the monastery at Cluny held up before them but determined to step up the hardships of monastic rule, many would, from the end of the eleventh century, sought to congregate and devote their lives to holiness. Like the oldest monasteries of the Camaldolese and Vallombreuse, those of the Carthusians and Cîteaux retained certain eremitic traits; communal life, however, exalted religious faith, and there was a strong ascetic movement. Guibert de Nogent recorded testimonies of this thrust. 'These were the saintly folk who set the first examples of a holy conversion. They were soon joined by a vast flock of men and women; people of all orders hurried there in their droves. Shall I mention their different ages? Children of ten or eleven thought old folk's thoughts and endured a far harsher life than their tender years appeared to allow. These conversions were like what used to be seen in the old martyrs; a faith was found in delicate, tender bodies that was still more alive than in those who shone with the authority of age or great learning.' Orderic Vitalis expressed himself in similar terms when speaking of the origins of the Cistercian order. And of all the newly founded monasteries, Clairvaux, under the stern hand of Saint Bernard, shone like a beacon of strict asceticism.

The monastic life seemed the very pinnacle of the ideal of holiness and brought together the purest spiritual callings. One entered a monastery to be rid of the accidental and prepare the soul for contemplation of the absolute; this was the supreme aspiration in attainment of which one reached

inner peace. 'Our entire conversion and renunciation of the world,' wrote Saint Peter Damian, 'is inclined to nothing other than peace; but this peace is conquered only if a man trains himself in the effort of combat, so that, later, when the din of the passions ceases, the spirit is led by the grace of contemplation to see the face of truth.' Riddance of the accidental and shunning of the world required not only the constant reflexive practice of such rules as obedience, chastity, poverty or silence but also the engagement of the spirit in contempt for the world to such an extent that the earthly became a source of nothing but loathing and sorrow. 'The office of a religious man is to lament,' reminded Saint Bernard, for, in pious meditation, the ascetic spirit was meant to discover the blindness afflicting man, through which he crawls and perpetually wallows in sin.

The monastery's disciplined cohabitation created a life-style that not only had general common features but nuanced differences across different religious orders. There was a preference for the monastic life over the practice of the secular clergy and, generally speaking, for the religious over the worldly life. But there was also a preference for the singular life-style practised in the monasteries of the black monks or the white monks: Cluny nurtured certain skills, while Cîteaux offered a certain spiritual atmosphere. For all that monastic vocations fundamentally coincided, they sometimes clashed over the specific ways in which they were practised. The conversation between the Abbots of Clairvaux and Cluny, Bernard and Peter, encapsulated the fundamental and the occasional sides of the opposition between the two monastic conceptions. Some of these certainly significant differences raised profound questions: how intensely to go about contemplation; how intensely to go about study or manual work; how far to moderate satisfaction of the senses.

But, these differences in orders apart, monastic life was an ideal that epitomised an attitude towards the world that it seemed possible to attain even beyond monastery walls if one possessed enough self-discipline to manage one's behaviour and emulate the monks' example. This was what Saint Bernard's sister did, and, according to Ramon Llull Evast and Aloma did likewise. For those preferring to follow the discipline of an order, 'third orders' offered a halfway house of asceticism without completely severing one's ties with the world. Either through actual withdrawal from the world or voluntary indifference to its appeals, the ascetic spirit turned to the heavenly city to escape the necessary damnation awaiting those in whom the flesh prevailed.

Notes

^ 1. *Poema del Cid*, 34.

^ 2. *Le Couronnement de Louis*, l. 1369; *Enfances Guillaume*, ll. 3123 ff. and 3359 ff.

^ 3. Raoul Glaber, *Histoires*, IV, I.

^ 4. Ordericus Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III, 1066; Guillaume de Poitiers, *GestaGuillelmi Ducis*; *Anglo–Saxon Chronicle*,yrs. 1127, 1128, 1131, 1132 et al.; Wace, *Le Roman de Brut*, l. 11004 ff.; *Poema del Cid*, 72, 74; Robert de Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, LXXX–LXXXI; *Beowulf*, l. 1–11. Cf. María Rosa Lida de Malkiel, *La idea de la fama en la Edad Media castellana.*

^ 5. Guibert de Nogent, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, I.

^ 6. Saint Bernard, *De consideratione*, II, i; *Epistolae*, CCLXXXVIII.

^ 7. Guillaume IX, Duc d'Aquitaine, *Pos chantar m'es prestalenz*, Alfred Jeanroy (Ed.), 26.

^ 8. *Das Nibelungenlied*, l. 326 ff.

^ 9. *The Poetic Edda*, 'The Lay of Fafnir', 28.

^ 10. Bertrand de Born, *Bem platz lo gais temps de pascor*, Carl Appel (Ed.), 92.

^ 11. *Das Nibelungenlied*, ll. 2114 ff.

^ 12. *Chanson de Roland*, l. 1155; *Cantar de la hueste de Igor*, trans. Yakov and María Rosa Lida de Malkiel, 53 and 55.

^ 13. *Chanson de Roland*, l. 1973.

^ 14. *Das Nibelungenlied*, l. 230.

^ 15. Ramón Llull, *Llibre del orde de cavalleria*,VI, 13.

^ 16. *Das Nibelungenlied*, l. 1786.

^ 17. *Le Couronnement de Louis*, l. 2248 ff.; *Enfances Guillaume*, l. 2284 ff., 2330 ff.; *Gerard de Rossillon*, Francisque Xavier Michel (Ed.), 288, 325 ff.; 344 ff.

^ 18. *Chanson de Roland*, l. 601.

^ 19. *Chanson de Roland*, ll. 1944–5.

^ 20. *Chanson de Roland*, l. 864–5.

^ 21. Raoul Glaber, *Histoires*, III, ix.

^ 22. Saint Bernard, *De consideratione*, III, i.

^ 23. 'Razón de Amor con los Denuestos del agua y el vino', Ramón Menéndez Pidal (Ed.), in *RevueHispanique*, 1905, XIII, 608.

^ 24. Guillaume de Lorris, *Le Roman de la Rose*, ll. 1243–1244.

^ 25. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Histories of the Kings of Britain*, IX, xi.

^ 26. *Das Nibelungenlied*, l. 750.

^ 27. *Das Nibelungenlied*, ll. 1467–8.

^ 28. Philippe de Navarre, *Les quatre âges de l'homme*, 64.

^ 29. Guiot de Provins, *Bible*, l. 167 ff.

^ 30. Bernart de Ventadorn, 'Tant ai mo cor ple de joya', Carl Appel (Ed.), 257.

^ 31. *Das Nibelungenlied*, l. 16.

^ 32. Wace, *Le Roman de Brut*, ll. 8659–8667; Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Histories of the Kings of Britain*, VIII, xix.

^ 33. Jaufré Raudel, 'Quan lo rossinnolselfolhos', Alfred Jeanroy (Ed.), 1; Wolfram von Eschenbach, 'Sîneklâwendurh die wolkensintgeslagen' and 'Den morgenblicbîwathaeressangeerkôs', in Francesco Politi (Ed.), *La lirica del Minnesang*, 104 ff.

^ 34. Guillaume de Lorris, *Le Roman de la Rose*, ll. 2060–2764; Walther von der Vogelweide, 'Ichfreudehelfeloser man', Francesco Politi (Ed.), *La lirica del Minnesang*, 154 ff.; Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la charrette*, ll. 4263–4414.

^ 35. Guillaume de Lorris, *Le Roman de la Rose*, ll. 865–904.

^ 36. Ramón Llull, *Blanquerna*, II, LXIV, 1–6.

^ 37. Spanish translationby Francisco Luis Bernárdez in *Florilegio del Cancionero Vaticano*, 1952, 35.

^ 38. Wace, *Le Roman de Brut*, l. 9731 ff.

^ 39. *Das Nibelungenlied*, l. 2202.

^ 40. *Das Nibelungenlied*, ll. 1648 ff.

^ 41. Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, 229.

^ 42. Chrétien de Troyes, *Érec et Énide*, ll. 99 and 2019.

^ 43. Wace, *Le Roman de Brut*, ll. 10597–10620; Ambroise, *L'Estoire de la guerre sainte*, ll. 1053–1108.

^ 44. Wace, *Le Roman de Brut*, l. 10359 ff; Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Histories of the Kings of Britain*, IX, xiii–xiv; Robert de Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*,XCVI–XCVII; Ambroise, *L'Estoire de la guerre sainte*, ll. 190–204.

^ 45. Guillaume le Breton, *Chronique*, yr. 1209.

^ 46. *Das Nibelungenlied*, ll. 27–42.

^ 47. *Enfances Guillaume*, ll. 1796–7; *Poema del Cid*, 111; *Libro de Alexandre*, 1796–1799; *Libro de Apollonio*, 240–241; *Poema de Fernan González*,682–684, *Das Nibelungenlied*, ll. 1361 ff.; Chrétien de Troyes, *Érec et Énide*, ll. 2025–2291.

^ 48. *Le Couronnement de Louis*, ll. 313–14; SnorriSturluson, *Heimskringla*: 'Harald the Fairhaired', XXXIX; *Gui de Bourgogne*, ll. 4135–37; *Das Nibelungenlied*, ll. 38–41 et al.; Giraut de Borneilh, *Per solatzrevelhar*, A. Kolsen (Ed.), I, 412; Ramón Llull, *Blanquerna*, XLVIII. Cf. R. Menéndez Pidal, *Poesía juglaresca y juglares*, I.

^ 49. Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, 827; *Vida de Girauts de Borneill*, M. de Riquer (Ed.), in *La lírica de los trovadores*, I, 325.

^ 50. *Das Nibelungenlied*, l. 273 ff.

^ 51. Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, 827.

^ 52. Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, 171; Wace, *Le Roman de Brut*, l. 10525 ff.; Chrétien de Troyes, *Érec et Énide*, l. 863 ff.; *Enfances Guillaume*, l. 2732 ff.; *Das Nibelungenlied*, l. 34; ll. 584 ff.; 807 ff.; 1868 ff.

^ 53. *Gui de Bourgogne*, ll. 1048–1053; *Poema de Fernán González*, 338–54; Wace, *Le Roman de Brut*, ll. 10737–10764.

^ 54. Guillaume IX, Duc d'Aquitaine, *Pos chanter m'isprestalentz*, A. Jeanroy (Ed.), 26; Walther von der Vogelweide, 'Owe war sintverswunden', F. Politi (Ed.), *La lirica del Minnesang*, 176 ff.

^ 55. Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, I, xi.

^ 56. Ramón Llull, *Llibre del orde de cavalleria*, I, 13.

^ 57. Ramón Llull, *Llibre del orde de cavalleria*, II, 2.

^ 58. Guillaume de Tyr, *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinisgestarum*, XII.

^ 59. Ramón Llull, *Llibre del orde de cavalleria*, II, 6.

^ 60. Saint Bernard, *Liber de laude novaemilitiae ad milites templi*, I.

^ 61. *Poema del Cid*, 95; *Chanson de Roland*, ll. 1714–15; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, yr. 1056.

^ 62. *Le Couronnement de Louis*, l. 395; Foucher de Chartres,*Gesta Francorum Hierusalemperegrinautium*,I.

^ 63. *Chanson de Roland*, l. 2096–2102; cf. Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, I, vi.

^ 64. Adalberon, *Carmen ad Rotbertumregem*, in Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, CLIII, 782.

^ 65. Philippe de Navarre, *Les quatre âges de l'homme*, 14–15; Ramón Llull, *Llibredelorde de cavalleria*, II, 4.

^ 66. *Genesis*, 29–30; *Luke*, 10, 38–42.

^ 67. Saint Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, 'Secunda secundae', q. CXXXII.

^ 68. Saint Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*,'Prima secundae',q. I.

^ 69. Saint Bonaventure,*Soliloquium de quatuor mentalibusexercitiis*,II, 1.

^ 70. Saint Bernard, *Sermo XLII* 'De diversis',3; cf.*Epistolae*LXIV, 3; CIV; CLXXXV; *De consideratione*,II, ix; *De conversione*,III and VIII; *De moribus et officioepiscoporum*,V–VI.

^ 71. Saint Peter Damian, *De perfectionemonachorum*, XXI.

^ 72. Saint Bernard, *Epistolae*, LXXVIII; cf. *Epistolae*, CLVIII; *De consideratione* III, v; John of Salisbury, *The Letters of John of Salisbury*, William James Millor (Ed.),94.

^ 73. Saint Bernard, *De consideratione*, V, ii.

^ 74. Saint Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, 'Secunda secundae', q. CLXXXII.

^ 75. Yves de Chartres, *Epistola* 4, Jean Leclerq (Ed.).

^ 76. Adalberon, *Carmen ad Rotbertumregem*, in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*; Philippe de Navarre, *Les quatre âges de l'homme*, 15.

^ 77. Saint Bernard, *De moribus et officioepiscoporum*, VII; *De conversione*, XIX.

^ 78. Saint Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, 'Secunda secundae', q. CLXXXIV.

^ 79. Yves de Chartres, *Epistola* 63.

^ 80. Saint Bernard, *De consideratione*, II. I.

^ 81. Saint Paul, 1 *Corinthians*, 9, 13.

^ 82. Yves de Chartres, *Epistola 4*.

^ 83. Saint Peter Damian, *De sanctasimplicitatescientiaeinflantianteponenda*,IV.

^ 84. Aegidius, *I Detti*, XIII.

^ 85. Saint Bernard, *Epistolae*, CCCXCVII.

^ 86. Saint Bernard, *Sermo XXIII in canticumcanticorum*, 8.

^ 87. GiraldusCambrensis, *ItinerariumKambriae*, II, xiv.

^ 88. Yves de Chartres, *Epistola* 31.

^ 89. Saint Bernard, *De consideratione*,III, iv.

^ 90. *Vie de Saint Thomas of Cantorbéry*, Feuillet II, l. 53, Paul Meyer (Ed.); cf. *The Quadrilogus*, James Craigie Robertson (Ed.), *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, IV, 360.

^ 91. Yves de Chartres, *Epistola* 31.

^ 92. Saint Bernard, *De consideratione*, II, vi.

^ 93. Saint Bernard, *Sermo XXIII in canticumcanticorum*, 2.

^ 94. Saint Bonaventure, *De sexalisseraphim*, III, 4.

^ 95. Yves de Chartres, *Epistola* 25.

^ 96. Saint Bernard, *De consideratione*, II, vi; III, i.

^ 97. Saint Bernard, *De consideratione*, I, vi; IV, vi.

^ 98. Urban II, 'Edictum', in Yves de Chartres, *Correspondence*, J. Leclerq (Ed.): Saint Bernard, *De moribus et officioepiscoporum*, III.

^ 99. Saint Bernard, *De moribus et officioepiscoporum*, I.

^ 100. Urban II, 'Edictum', in Yves de Chartres, *Correspondence*, J. Leclerq (Ed.).

^ 101. Saint Bonaventure, *De sexalisseraphim*, passim.

^ 102. Yves de Chartres, *Epistola*, 12.

^ 103. Ramón Llull, *Blanquerna*, III, LXVIII.

^ 104. Saint Bernard, *Epistolae*, CLXXXIX, 4.

^ 105. *La Chanson de la croisade albigeoise*, 6.

^ 106. Saint Bernard, *Epistolae*, CCCLXIII.

^ 107. Ramón Llull, *Blanquerna*, II, LXI.

^ 108. Saint Bonaventure, *Soliloquium de quatuor mentalibusexercitiis*, II and IV.

^ 109. Saint Anselm, *Proslogion*, XXV.

^ 110. Saint Peter Damian, *De sanctasimplicitatescientiaeinflantianteponenda*, I.

^ 111. Guillaume le Breton, *Philippide*, VIII.

^ 112. Saint Peter Damian, *De sanctasimplicitatescientiaeinflantianteponenda*, III.

^ 113. Gonzalo de Berceo, *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*, XVI, l. 354.

^ 114. Abélard, *Historia calamitatum*.

^ 115. GiraldusCambrensis, *ItinerariumKambriae*, first preface.

^ 116. GiraldusCambrensis, *De rebus a se gestis*, passim;
cf. *ItinerariumKambriae*and*DescriptioKambriae*, prefaces.

^ 117. GiraldusCambrensis, *DescriptioKambriae*, second preface.

^ 118. John of Salisbury, *The Letters of John of Salisbury*, W. J. Millor (Ed.), 28.

^ 119. Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, I, xvii; Abélard, *Historia calamitatum*, Epistola II.

^ 120. Saint Peter Damian, *De vera felicitate ac sapientia*, IV.

^ 121. GiraldusCambrensis, *DescriptioKambriae*, secondpreface.

^ 122. Abélard, *Historia calamitatum*.

^ 123. Abélard, *Historia calamitatum*.

^ 124. Saint Peter Damian, *De divina omnipotentia*; VI, XI, XIII; Saint Bernard, *Epistolae*, CLXXXIX.

^ 125. Yves de Chartres, *Correspondance*, 7.

^ 126. Otto von Freising, *Gesta FridericiImperatoris*, I, xlviii.

^ 127. Otto von Freising, *Gesta Friderici Imperatoris*, I, xlix; Saint Bernard,*Epistolae*, CXCI.

^ 128. Abélard, *Historia calamitatum*.

^ 129. Otto von Freising, *Gesta Friderici Imperatoris*, I, xlix.

^ 130. Saint Bernard, *Epistolae*, CLXXXVIII, CLXXXIX, CXCI; Abélard, *Historia calamitatum*.

^ 131. Saint Bernard, *Epistolae*.

^ 132. Adelard of Bath, *Quaestiones naturales*, 6; cf. Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, II, 29.

^ 133. L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, II, 58.

^ 134. Saint Bernard, *Epistola contra quaedam capitula errorumAbaelardi*, V.

^ 135. Saint Anselm, *Proslogion*, I.

^ 136. Abélard, *Historia calamitatum*.

^ 137. Abélard, *Epistolae*,VIII.

^ 138. Ramón Llull, *Llibre de meravelles*, VIII, 54.

^ 139. Ramón Llull, *Desconhort*, XXIV.

^ 140. Saint Bernard, *Epistolae*, CLXXXVIII.

^ 141. Saint Bernard, *Epistolae*, CXCII.

^ 142. Saint Bernard, *De moribus et officioepiscoporum*, II.

^ 143. Saint Bonaventure,*Soliloquium de quatuormentalibusexercitiis*, II, 2.

^ 144. Yves de Chartres, *Correspondence*, 34.

^ 145. Lothar theDeacon (Innocent III), *De contemptumundi*, I, i.

^ 146. Ramón Llull, *Blanquerna*, II, XXVI, 3; XXXV, 6; XXXVII 2.

^ 147. Ramón Llull, *Blanquerna*, II, XXVII, 1.

^ 148. Yves de Chartres, *Correspondence*, 15.

^ 149. Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, I, xiv.

^ 150. Gonzalo de Berceo, *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos*, 51.

^ 151. Saint Bernard, *Epistolae*, CIV and LXIV.

^ 152. Saint Francis, *Regola seconda dei frati minori*,VI.

^ 153. Aegidius, *I Detti*, VII.

^ 154. Saint Peter Damian, *De sancta simplicitate scientiae inflanti anteponenda*, V.

^ 155. Raoul Glaber, *Histoires*, II, vi–xii; IV, passim.

^ 156. Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, I, viii; Saint Peter Damian, *De perfectionemonachorum*, I.

^ 157. Raoul Glaber, *Histoires*, IV, iv.

^ 158. Saint Peter Damian, *De perfectionemonachorum*, XXI.

^ 159. Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, *Sancti Bernardi vita et resgestae*, I, iii.

^ 160. Guillaume de Berneville, *La Vie de Saint Gilles*, ll. 1229–1502; Gonzalo de Berceo, *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos*, 65–81; Ramón Llull,*Blanquerna*, V, XCVIII.

^ 161. Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua* I, ix–xi.

^ 162. OrdericusVitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, VIII.

^ 163. Guillaume de Saint Thierry, *Sancti Bernardi vita et res gestae*, I, v ff.

^ 164. Saint Peter Damian, *De perfectionemonachorum*, VIII.

^ 165. Saint Bernard, *Epistolae*, CCCLXV.

^ 166. Peter the Venerable, *Epistolae*, CCXXIX; Saint Bernard, *Epistolae*,CCXXVIII; *Apologia*.

^ 167. Guillaume de Saint Thierry, *Sancti Bernardi vita et res gestae*,I, VI; Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, I, xiv; Ramón Llull, *Blanquerna*, I, IX.