

ARHA 91-01: The 'art' of 'beholding'

Readings

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Mending Wall

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Lecture at Notre Dame, translated by Timothy J. Tikker, Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 2001

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MENDING WALL

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it
And spills the upper boulders in the sun,
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing: 5
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made, 10
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go. 15
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them. 20
Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across 25
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."

Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:

"*Why* do they make good neighbors? Isn't it 30
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall, 35
That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,
But its' not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there,
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed. 40
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying.
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors." 45

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Music may be adapted to the sacred in several ways. First of all, there is *liturgical music*, which follows the structure of the Office and finds its significance only in the Office.

Then comes *religious music* – and this term covers a vast field of epochs and diverse lands, diverse esthetics.

Finally, there is that break towards the beyond, towards the invisible and unspeakable, which may be made by means of *sound-color*, and is summed-up in the sensation of *bedazzlement*.

This will be the order of my reflection:

- 1) Liturgical Music
- 2) Religious Music
- 3) Sound-color and Bedazzlement.

Messiaen, Olivier. "Lecture et Notre-Dame", trans. by
Timothy J. Tikker. Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 2001.

LITURGICAL MUSIC

There is only one: *plainsong*. Only plainsong possesses all at once the purity, the joy, the lightness necessary for the soul's flight toward Truth. Unfortunately – with the exception of some monks in the monasteries, some great theoreticians like Dom Mocquereau, and some professional musicians who still know how to read it – plainsong is not well known. It is not well known mainly because it is not well sung. And the first mistake committed by our immediate ancestors was its harmonization. Plainsong was written in an epoch where the obstruction of conventional chords, of complexes of tones, and even of simple instrumental support were unknown. It must then be sung without any accompaniment. It must also be sung by all voices: men's, women's, children's. Finally, it must be sung with an appreciation and respect of the neumes. Music history texts speak much of the modes of plainsong: the Dorian mode, Phrygian mode, Lydian, Mixolydian – and it is certain that each of these modes has a particular poetry and color. But this only a matter of form. The marvelous thing about plainsong is its neumes.

The neumes are melodic formulae, analogous to the auxiliaries, appoggiaturas, passing-tones described in harmony treatises – but much more numerous.

They are also found in the songs of birds: the Garden Warbler, the Black-Cap, the Song-Thrush, the Field Lark, the Robin, all sing neumes. And the admirable quality of the neume is the rhythmic suppleness which it engenders. This rhythmic suppleness which comes to us from the *Anaklasis* of Ionic verse (Greek meter), from the *Candrakalâ* and its addition of dots (*deci-tâlas* of India), and that Chopin had tried to rediscover in his rubato, is here expressed in several ways: by the mingling of binary and ternary, by groups of unequal duration, by the strong and doubled values of the *Pressus*, by the soft and doubled values of the *Oriscus*, by the joyous carillon of the *Distropha* and *Tristropha*, by the extraordinary slowing which precedes the *Quilisma*. All of this brings about extremely delicate variations of rhythm and tempo.

The invisible advances with light steps, which do not touch the grass, and do not bend the flowers, like those of the resurrected by Fra Angelico...

Let us add that this delicacy of plainsong may only be manifest in quickness and joy. If plainsong is sung with appropriate liveliness and rapidity, it will be so loved that it will no longer be passed by.

A final difficulty is that of Latin. Plainsong is built upon magnificent Latin texts: it is impossible to separate them! I do not think that this should worry those who hold to the language of their native country. One may very well recite the "Eucharistic Prayer" in French (or in any other vernacular language), without depriving oneself of some magnificent pieces of plainsong which last no longer than a minute or two, or even half a

minute. When will we once again have the joy of hearing the *Tristropha* of the marvelous Offertory of Epiphany, *Reges Tharsis*, the *Salicus* and *Torculus* of the Alleluia for Easter, *Pascha Nostrum*, and the extraordinary sequence for the Feast of the Holy Sacrament, *Lauda Sion*?

RELIGIOUS MUSIC

All art which attempts to express the divine Mystery may be qualified as religious.

If we consider painting: immediately, we think of the very pure Fra Angelico (who was a monk as well), and of the brilliant author of the Isenheim altarpiece: Master Mathis (as was called Mathias Grünewald). But Michelangelo, Tintoretto, Rembrandt, and, in our own day, Marc Chagall, are also religious painters, each in his own manner.

If we consider architecture: we think first of Paris' Notre-Dame, of the Cathedral in Chartres, of Saint-Philibert de Tournous. But the Japanese temples of Nara, the pyramids of Egypt, the staircased monuments of ancient Mexico, and the marvelous temple of Angkor-Wat in Cambodia, all of these also express the sacred, and with what grandeur!...

The same is true of music. The *Mass in B-Minor* and the *Passion According to Saint Matthew* of the great Johann Sebastian Bach, seem to be religious music *par excellence*. But the

Ave Verum of Mozart, and Sarastro's prayer in *The Magic Flute* of the same Mozart, and certain passages of *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* of Debussy, are also religious music – and, closer to us, the *Requiem* of Ligeti, the *Passion According to Saint Luke* of Penderecki, are again admirable religious music. Even the magnificent *Koskom* of the Vietnamese composer Nguyen Thien Dao is perhaps (unknown to its composer) religious music! And who will dare to say that Japanese *Gagaku*, the sounding of cymbals and the grave tones of the great horns of Tibet are not, themselves also, an extraordinary expression of Divine Majesty?...

Without doubt, the music of the organ has been more than any other the act of believers, those who knew revelation the best, because they were obliged to comment each Sunday upon the mysteries of Christ – and to cite the names of Frescobaldi, of Nicolas de Grigny, of Marcel Dupré, of Charles Tournemire, is to cite Christian musicians, Catholics, always close to the Office and the sacred texts.

If we try to summarize our first two points: there is only one liturgical music, and that is *plainsong*. On the other hand, all music which approaches with reverence the Divine, the Sacred, the Ineffable, is truly a religious music in the full strength of the term.

But we are not at the end of our meditation, and we must now undertake the third point, the most important and the most difficult.

SOUND-COLOR AND BEDAZZLEMENT

My first colored emotion happened quite long ago: I must have been ten years old when I saw, for the first time, the stained-glass windows of Sainte-Chapelle. The second was the discovery of paintings, of tapestries, of discs in "simultaneous contrast" by Robert Delaunay and Sonia Delaunay.

But that is not all... I had the chance to meet, in my youth, the painter of sounds: Charles Blanc-Gatti. Blanc-Gatti was struck with "synopsia", that is he suffered from a disorder of the optic and auditory nerves that permitted him to see colors as he heard sounds. The colors were superimposed on the subject. Thus, when he wished to represent an organ, one sees, in his painting, organ pipes, but pipes that are surrounded with strange colored circles that are the organ's music: thus, he painted what he saw.

Besides Blanc-Gatti, we must cite the extraordinary composer of music and painter (especially, painter!), the great Lithuanian Ciurlionis. Even the titles of his works – *Sun Sonata*, *Spring Sonata*, *Sea Sonata*, *Sonata of the Stars*, all divided into four tableaux: Allegro, Andante, Scherzo, Finale (like a sonata or a symphony) – illustrate to what extent his painting was musical.

After these tributes, I will permit myself to describe two related experiments, understandable to all, and which rest on natural phenomena each proceeding from a common origin: vibration.

If I hit, very strongly, the low C on a piano: after a few seconds, I will hear, in clear and successive stages, the first tones which are called the "natural resonance of a sounding body". If I possess a normal ear, I ought to hear another C, higher than the first (the octave), then a G (the fifth). If I have a more acute ear, I will then hear an E (the third); finally, a trained musician's ear will hear B \flat and D (seventh and ninth). Personally, I also hear the F \sharp (augmented fourth), rather strong, and an A \flat (minor sixth), very weak. Then comes a multitude of higher harmonics, inaudible to the naked ear, but of which we can gain an idea from listening to the complex resonance of a tam-tam or a great cathedral bell.

Second experiment. If I put on a piece of white paper a circle of red paint (for example, a fine, lively red, lightly violet, reminding one of purple), and I look long and intensely at the line of demarcation between the red and the white: after a moment, the red portion at the edge of the white will become more intensely red, and the white will take on a flaming green, a spasmodic flaming, which flashes, fades, flashes again, and gives a bright green of incomparable beauty (a bit like emerald, diopside or certain opals). If we do the same with blue, we will have a flaming orange. If we do the same with yellow, we will have a flaming pale violet or mauve. On the other hand, a green will give a red, an orange will give a pale blue, a violet will give a yellow. This is the phenomenon of "complementary colors".

In my opinion, one does not fully understand music if one has not often experienced these two phenomena:

- complementary colors,
- natural resonance of sounding bodies.

And these two phenomena are connected to the sensation of the sacred, to the bedazzlement which gives birth to Reverence, Adoration, Praise.

And now, some brief words on the theory of sound-color as I have conceived it.

It is childish to assign a color to each note. It is not isolated tones which produce colors, but chords, or better, complexes of tones. Each complex of tones has a well-defined color. This color may be reproduced in any octave, but will be normal in mid-range, diffused towards white (that is, lighter) rising to a higher range, and toned down by black (that is, darker) descending to a lower range. On the other hand, if we transpose our chord half-step by half-step, at each half-step it will change color.

Take, for example, a complex of tones which yields a group of colors: ash, pale green, mauve. If we move it into a higher octave, it will turn almost white, with some reflections of very pale green and violet. If we move it into a lower octave, it will turn almost black, with reflections of very deep green and violet. If, now, we transpose it up one semitone, it will become emerald green, amethyst violet and pale blue. If we transpose it up another semitone, it will give oblique bands of red and white, on a pink background with black patterns. In transposing it a semitone lower, it becomes white and gold; a tone lower we will have colored crystals of burnt earth, amethyst violet, light Prussian blue, warm and reddish brown, with stars of gold.

If then follows that there are, for each complex of tones, 12 combinations of colors changing with each of the 12 semitones, but the combination of colors remains the same in a simple shift of octave, lightening in a higher octave, darkening in a lower octave.

And as music uses thousands, millions of complexes of tones, as these complexes of tones are always in movement, coming and going endlessly, so too the colors which correspond to them give interspersed rainbows, blue, red, violet, orange, green spirals, which move and turn with the tones, at the same speed as the tones, with the same opposition of intensities, the same conflicts of duration, the same contrapuntal twists as the tones. Furthermore, the tones strike and knock our inner ear, and these multicolored things move and irritate our inner eye, and establish contact, rapport (as Rainer Maria Rilke said) with another reality: a rapport so powerful that it can transform our most hidden "me", the deepest, the most intimate, and dissolve us in a most high Truth which we could never hope to attain.

Let us allow *a priori* that we are all capable of connecting sound to color and color to sound. Let us allow *a priori* that we are all capable of being amazed, of being dazzled by these sounds and these colors, and of touching, through them, something of that beyond, and this means that all sacred art – be it musical painting or colored music – ought to be from the start a sort of rainbow of sounds and of colors.

What did Master Mathis (Mathias Grünewald) do when he wished to paint the Resurrection of Christ in his altarpiece at

Isenheim? "My Father, I am resurrected, I am again with Thee!" This cry of joy and of triumph is in the luminous majesty of the face, in the stasis of the arms contrasted to the flying movement of the feet and legs, in the extraordinary folds of the shroud, in the blowing wind and the starry night, but it is especially in the rainbow, in the blue-green, red, and gold circle, which seems to flash around Christ, the reflections shining into all the drapery. This is surely the Light of which Saint John (Gospel of John, 1:5) spoke: "Light which shines in the darkness and which the darkness does not understand..."

And what did the stained-glass masters of the Middle Ages do? What happens in the stained-glass windows of Bourges, in the great windows of Chartres, in the rose-windows of Notre-Dame in Paris and in the marvelous, the incomparable glass-work of Sainte Chapelle? First of all there is a crowd of characters, great and small, which tell us of the life of Christ, of the Holy Virgin, of the Prophets and of the Saints: it is a sort of catechism by image. This catechism is enclosed in circles, medallions, trefoils, it obeys the symbolism of colors, it opposes, it superimposes, it decorates, it instructs, with a thousand intentions and a thousand details. Now, from a distance, without binoculars, without ladders, without any object to come to the aid of our failing eye, we see nothing; nothing but a stained-glass window all blue, all green, all violet. We do not comprehend, we are *bedazzled!*...

"God bedazzles us by excess of Truth," said Saint Thomas Aquinas.

"Contemplation sees something, but what does it see? An excellence above all, which is not one thing, nor another," as Ruys-Broeck very mysteriously expressed himself.

And the Apocalypse (4:2,3): "A throne was placed in heaven, and, seated upon the throne, Someone... He who was seated was like stone of jasper and carnelian, and a rainbow, encircled his throne, like unto emerald."

One will note here that the Divinity is not named, and the the bedazzlement received produces a resonance of complementary colors: jasper and carnelian are red, the rainbow that flashes around this red is green, like emerald.

All these bedazzlements are a great lesson. They show us that God is beyond words, thoughts, concepts, beyond our earth and our sun, beyond the thousands of stars which circle around us, above and beyond time and space, beyond all these things which are somehow linked to him. He alone knows Himself by His Word, incarnate in Jesus Christ. And when musical painting, colored music, sound-color magnify it by bedazzlement, they participate in this fine praise of the *Gloria* which speaks to God and to Christ: "Only Thou art Holy, Thou alone art the Most-High!" In inaccessible heights. Doing this, they help us to live better, to better prepare for our death, to better prepare for our resurrection from the dead and the new life that awaits us. They are an excellent "passage", an excellent "prelude" to the unspeakable and to the invisible.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that sacred music may be liturgical, religious, colored, and this order of reflection reveals my preferences. It is true that I put religious music above liturgical music. Liturgical music is exclusively dependent on worship, whereas religious music reaches all times, all places, touches on the material as well as spiritual, and finally finds God everywhere.

It is also true that I put colored music above liturgical music and religious music: liturgical music celebrates God in His dwelling-place, in His Church, in His own Sacrifice; religious music discovers at every hour and everywhere, on our planet Earth, in our mountains, in our oceans, among the birds, the flowers, the trees, and also in the visible universe of stars which circle around us; but colored music does that which the stained-glass windows and rose-windows of the Middle Ages did: they give us bedazzlement. Touching at once our noblest senses: hearing and vision, it shakes our sensibilities into motion, pushes us to go beyond concepts, to approach that which is higher than reason and intuition, that is, FAITH. Now FAITH and its logical continuation, true Contemplation, the beatific Vision after death. Our resurrected body, notwithstanding its glory, its spirituality, will conserve this same flesh that has clothed us and accompanied us, with the same faculties of seeing and hearing; and we must be able to see and to hear well to appreciate all the music and all the colors which are spoken of in the Apocalypse!

"Eternal life," we read in Saint John (17:3), "is to know Thee, Thou, the only true God and Him whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ."

This knowledge will be a perpetual bedazzlement, an eternal music of colors, an eternal color of musics.

*In Thy Music, we will SEE the Music,
In Thy Light, we will HEAR the Light...*

Olivier MESSIAEN

A Mouse and a Frog

A mouse and a frog meet every morning on the riverbank.
They sit in a nook of the ground and talk.

Each morning, the second they see each other,
they open easily, telling stories and dreams and secrets,
empty of any fear or suspicious holding-back.

To watch and listen to those two
is to understand how, as it's written,
sometimes when two beings come together,
Christ becomes visible.

The mouse starts laughing out a story he hasn't thought of
in five years, and the telling might take five years!
There's no blocking the speechflow-river-running
all-carrying momentum
that true intimacy is.

The God-Messenger, Khidr,
touches a roasted fish.
It leaps off the grill
back into the water.

Friend sits by Friend, and the tablets appear.
They read the mysteries
off each other's foreheads.

But one day the mouse complains,
"There are times when I want *sohbet*,* and you're out in the water,
jumping around where you can't hear me.

We meet at this appointed time,
but the text says, *Lovers pray constantly*.

Once a day, once a week, five times an hour,
is not enough. Fish like we are
need the ocean around us!"

Do camel-bells say, *Let's meet back here Thursday night?*
Ridiculous. They jingle
together continuously,
talking while the camel walks.

Do you pay regular visits to *yourself*?
Don't argue or answer rationally.

Let us die,

and dying, reply.

*Spiritual conversation

(Mathnawi, VI, 2632-2669, 2681-2684)
Rumi, *This Longing*, Shambala
Jalāl ad-Dn Muhammad Balkhi Rumi

ANGEL SURROUNDED BY PAYSANS

One of the countrymen:

 There is
A welcome at the door to which no one comes?

The angel:

I am the angel of reality,
Seen for the moment standing in the door.

I have neither ashen wing nor wear of ore
And live without a tepid aureole,

Or stars that follow me, not to attend,
But, of my being and its knowing, part.

I am one of you and being one of you
Is being and knowing what I am and know.

Yet I am the necessary angel of earth,
Since, in my sight, you see the earth again,

Cleared of its stiff and stubborn, man-locked set,
And, in my hearing, you hear its tragic drone

Rise liquidly in liquid lingerings
Like watery words awash; like meanings said

By repetitions of half meanings. Am I not,
Myself, only half of a figure of a sort,

A figure half seen, or seen for a moment, a man
Of the mind, an apparition apparelled in

Apparels of such lightest look that a turn
Of my shoulder and quickly, too quickly, I am gone?

- Wallace Stevens

FINAL SOLILOQUY OF THE INTERIOR PARAMOUR

Light the first light of evening
In which we rest and, for small reason, think
The world imagined is the ultimate good.

This is, therefore, the intensest rendezvous.
It is in that thought that we collect ourselves,
Out of all the indifferences, into one thing:

Within a single thing, a single shawl
Wrapped tightly round us, since we are poor, a warmth,
A light, a power, the miraculous influence.

Here, now, we forget each other and ourselves.
We feel the obscurity of an order, a whole,
A knowledge, that which arranged the rendezvous.

Within its vital boundary, in the mind.
We say God and the imagination are one...
How high that highest candle lights the dark.

Out of this same light, out of the central mind,
We make a dwelling in the evening air,
In which being there together is enough.

- Wallace Stevens

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, "Where I Lived and What I Lived For"

"Little is to be expected of that day, if it can be called a day, to which we are not awakened by our Genius, but by the mechanical nudgings of some servitor, are not awakened by our own newly acquired force and aspirations from within, accompanied by the undulations of celestial music, instead of factory bells, and a fragrance filling the air - to a higher life that we fell asleep from . . ."

"The millions are awake enough for physical labor, but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?"

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep."

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

"Wisdom does not inspect, but behold. We must look a long time before we can see." from "Natural History of Massachusetts"

CONTRADICTION



The contradictions the mind comes up against – these are the only realities: they are the criterion of the real. There is no contradiction in what is imaginary. Contradiction is the test of necessity.

Contradiction experienced to the very depths of the being tears us heart and soul: it is the cross.

When the attention has revealed the contradiction in something on which it has been fixed, a kind of loosening takes place. By persevering in this course we attain detachment.

The demonstrable correlation of opposites is an image of the transcendental correlation of contradictories.

All true good carries with it conditions which are contradictory and as a consequence is impossible. He who keeps his attention really fixed on this impossibility and acts will do what is good.

In the same way all truth contains a contradiction. Contradiction is the point of the pyramid.

The word good has not the same meaning when it is a term of the correlation good–evil as when it describes the very being of God.

The existence of opposite virtues in the souls of the saints: the metaphor of climbing corresponds to this. If I am walking on the side of a mountain I can see first a lake, then, after a few steps, a forest. I have to choose either the lake or the forest. If I want to see both lake and forest at once, I have to climb higher.

Only the mountain does not exist. It is made of air. One cannot go up: it is necessary to be drawn.

An experimental ontological proof. I have not the principle of rising in me. I cannot climb to heaven through the air. It is only by directing my thoughts towards something better than myself that I am drawn upwards by this something. If I am really raised up, this something is real. No imaginary perfection can draw me upwards even by the fraction of an inch. For an imaginary perfection is automatically at the same level as I who imagine it – neither higher nor lower.

What is thus brought about by thought direction is in no way comparable to suggestion. If I say to myself every morning: ‘I am courageous, I am not afraid’, I may become courageous but with a courage which conforms to what, in my present imperfection, I imagine under that name, and accordingly my courage will not go beyond this imperfection. It can only be a modification on the same plane, not a change of plane.

Contradiction is the criterion. We cannot by suggestion obtain things which are incompatible. Only grace can do that. A sensitive person who by suggestion becomes courageous hardens himself; often he may even, by a sort of savage pleasure, amputate his own sensitivity. Grace alone can give courage while leaving the sensitivity intact, or sensitivity while leaving the courage intact.

Man’s great affliction, which begins with infancy and

accompanies him till death, is that looking and eating are two different operations. Eternal beatitude is a state where to look is to eat.

That which we look at here below is not real, it is a mere setting. That which we eat is destroyed, it is no longer real.

Sin has brought this separation about in us.

The natural virtues, if we give the word virtue its authentic meaning, that is to say if we exclude the social imitations of virtue, are only possible as permanent attributes for someone who has supernatural grace within him. Their duration is supernatural.

Opposites and contradictories. What the relation of opposites can do in the approach to the natural being, the unifying grasp of contradictory ideas can do in the approach to God.

A man inspired by God is a man who has ways of behaviour, thoughts and feelings which are bound together by a bond impossible to define.

Pythagorean idea: the good is always defined by the union of opposites. When we recommend the opposite of an evil we remain on the level of that evil. After we have put it to the test, we return to the evil. That is what the Gita calls 'the aberration of opposites'. Marxist dialectic is based on a very degraded and completely warped view of this.

A wrong union of contraries. The imperialism of the working class developed by Marxism. Latin proverbs concerning the insolence of newly-freed slaves. Insolence and servility are aggravated by each other. Sincere anarchists, discerning, as through a mist, the principle of the union of opposites, thought that evil could be destroyed by giving power to the oppressed. An impossible dream.

What then differentiates the right from the wrong union of opposites[?]

Bad union of opposites (bad because fallacious) is that

which is achieved on the same plane as the opposites. Thus the granting of domination to the oppressed. In this way we do not get free from the oppression-domination cycle.

The right union of opposites is achieved on a higher plane. Thus the opposition between domination and oppression is smoothed out on the level of the law - which is balance.

In the same way suffering (and this is its special function) separates the opposites which have been united in order to unite them again on a higher plane than that of their first union. The pulsation of sorrow-joy. But, mathematically, joy always triumphs.

Suffering is violence, joy is gentleness, but joy is the stronger.

The union of contradictories involves a wrenching apart. It is impossible without extreme suffering.

The correlation of contradictories is detachment. An attachment to a particular thing can only be destroyed by an attachment which is incompatible with it. That explains: 'Love your enemies. . . . He who hateth not his father and mother . . .'

Either we have made the contraries submissive to us or we have submitted to the contraries.

Simultaneous existence of incompatible things in the soul's bearing; balance which leans both ways at once: that is saintliness, the actual realization of the microcosm, the imitation of the order of the world.

The simultaneous existence of opposite virtues in the soul - like pincers to catch hold of God.

We have to find out and formulate certain general laws relating to man's condition, concerning which many profound observations throw light on particular cases.

Thus: that which is in every way superior reproduces that which is in every way inferior, but transposed.

Relationships of evil to strength and to being; and of good to weakness or nothingness.

Yet at the same time evil is privation. We have to elucidate the way contradictories have of being true.

Method of investigation: as soon as we have thought something, try to see in what way the contrary is true.¹

Evil is the shadow of good. All real good, possessing solidity and thickness, projects evil. Only imaginary good does not project it.

As all good is attached to evil, if we desire the good and do not wish to spread the corresponding evil round us we are obliged, since we cannot avoid this evil, to concentrate it on ourselves.

Thus the desire for utterly pure good involves the acceptance of the last degree of affliction for ourselves.

If we desire nothing but good, we are opposing the law which links real good to evil as the object in the light is linked to its shadow, and, being opposed to one of the world's universal laws, it is inevitable that we should fall into affliction.

The mystery of the cross of Christ lies in a contradiction, for it is both a free-will offering and a punishment which he endured in spite of himself. If we only saw in it an offering, we might wish for a like fate. But we are unable to wish for a punishment endured in spite of ourselves.

From *Gravity and Grace*, translated by Emma Craufurd, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1952. Originally published as *La Pesanteur et la Grâce*, Plon, Paris, 1947.

¹ This aphorism gives us the key to the *apparent* contradictions scattered throughout the work of Simone Weil: love of tradition and detachment from the past, God conceived of as the supreme reality and as nothingness, etc. These contradictory ideas are true on different planes of existence and their opposition is smoothed out on the level of supernatural love. Reason discerns the two ends of the chain but the centre which unites them is only accessible to undemonstrable intuition. [Gustav Thibon]

May our sense of reality not be dissolved by this thought but made more intense.

Each time that we say 'Thy will be done' we should have in mind all possible misfortunes added together.

Two ways of killing ourselves: suicide or detachment.

To kill by our thought everything we love; the only way to die. Only what we love, however ('He who hateth not his father and mother . . .') but: 'Love your enemies . . .').

Not to desire that what we love should be immortal. We should neither desire the immortality nor the death of any human being, whoever he may be, with whom we have to do.

The miser deprives himself of his treasure because of his desire for it. If we can let our whole good rest with something hidden in the ground, why not with God?

But when God has become as full of significance as the treasure is for the miser, we have to tell ourselves insistently that he does not exist. We must experience the fact that we love him, even if he does not exist.

It is he who, through the operation of the dark night, withdraws himself in order not to be loved like the treasure is by the miser.

Electra weeping for the dead Orestes. If we love God while thinking that he does not exist, he will manifest his existence.

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