

# LIGHT AND PEACE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PIOUS SOULS  
TO DISPEL THEIR DOUBTS AND  
ALLAY THEIR FEARS

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
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## Translator's Preface

These *Instructions for Pious Souls*, now published in English under the title *Light and Peace*, were written in 1795 by the illustrious and saintly Barnabite, Padre Quadrupani. They contain a summary of spiritual guidance for earnest Christians in the ordinary duties of life in the world. The author had formed his own spirituality on the model presented by the life and teaching of St. Francis de Sales, and in this little book he reflects the wisdom, prudence and sweetness of that "gentleman Saint."

The work has passed through uncounted editions in its original Italian, and through a large number of editions in both the French and the German translations. An English translation was published many years ago, but besides its present rarity, its many imperfections warrant the belief that a new rendition will not be unwelcome. The translator has, moreover, been encouraged by the persuasion that the maxims of Father Quadrupani are specially adapted to the American character. Unlike many foreign religious works, whose spirituality often fails to touch the Anglo-Saxon temperament, this author's teaching is decidedly practical and practicable, and appeals in every way to the common sense and fits in with the busy, matter-of-fact life of the average American Catholic.

The present translation has been made from the twentieth French edition and has been collated with the thirty-second

edition of the original Italian published at Naples in 1818. The many recommendations from the Episcopacy of France prefixed to the French translation are here omitted, as the Introduction by the Most Reverend Archbishop of Philadelphia is abundant testimony to the doctrinal solidity of the work.

I. M. O'R.

Overbrook, PA.

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## Chapter 10

**THE PRESENCE OF GOD***Walk before Me and be perfect.*

Genesis 17:1

*I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains,  
from whence help shall come to me.*

Psalm 120:1

1. The constant remembrance of God's presence is a means of perfection that Almighty God Himself prescribed to the Patriarch Abraham. But this practice must be followed gently and without effort or disturbance of mind. The God of love and peace wishes that all we do for Him should be done lovingly and peacefully.
2. Only in heaven shall we be able to think actually and uninterruptedly of God. In this world to do so is an impossibility, for we are at every moment distracted by our occupations, our necessities, our imagination. We but exhaust ourselves by futile efforts if we try to lead before the proper time an existence similar to that of the angels and saints.
3. Frequently the fear comes to you that you have failed to keep yourself in the presence of God, because you have not thought of Him. This is a mistaken idea. You can, without this definite thought, perform all your actions for love of God and in His presence, by virtue of the intention you had in beginning them. Now, to act is better than to think. Though the doctor may not have the invalid in mind while



he is preparing the medicine that is to restore him to health, nevertheless it is for him he is working, and he is more useful to his patient in this way than if he contented himself with merely thinking of him. In like manner when you fulfil your domestic or social duties, when you eat or walk, devote yourself to study or to manual labor, though it be without definitely thinking of God, you are acting for Him, and this ought to suffice to set your mind at rest in regard to the merit of your actions. Saint Paul does not say that we must eat, drink and labor with an actual remembrance of God's presence, but with the habitual intention of glorifying Him and doing His holy will. We fulfil this condition by making an offering each morning to God of all the actions of the day and renewing the act interiorly whenever we can remember to do so.

4. For this purpose, make frequent use of ejaculatory prayers. We have already spoken of them. Accustom yourself to make these pious aspirations naturally and without effort, and let them for the most part be expressive of confidence and love.

5. Should it happen that a considerable space of time elapses without your having thought distinctly of God or raised your heart to Him by any loving ejaculation, do not allow this omission to worry you. The servant has performed his duty and deserves well of his master when he has done his will, even though he may not have been thinking of him the while. Always bear in mind the fact that it is better to work for God than to think of Him. Thought has its highest

spiritual value when it results in action: action is meritorious in itself by virtue of the good intention which preceded it.



## Chapter 11

**HUMILITY**

*If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing.*

John 8:54

*For behold I was born in iniquities:  
and in sins did my mother conceive me.*

Psalm 50:7

1. Few persons have a correct idea of this virtue. It is frequently confused with servility or littleness.

2. To attribute to God what is God's, that is to say everything that is good, and to ourselves what is ours, that is to say, everything that is evil: these are the essential characteristics of true humility.

« Hence it would appear at first sight that simple good sense ought to suffice to make men humble. Such would be the case were it not that our faculties have been impaired and vitiated in their very source by pride, that direful and ineffaceable consequence of original sin. The first man, a creature owing his existence directly to God, was bound to dedicate it entirely to Him and to pay continual homage for it is as for all the other gifts he had received. This was a duty of simple justice. The day whereon he asserted a desire to be independent, he caused an utter derangement in the relations of the creature with his Creator. Pride, that tendency to self-sufficiency, to refer to self the use of the faculties received from God—pride, introduced into the soul

of the first man by a free act of his will, has attached itself as an indelible stigma to the souls of all his descendants, and has become forevermore a part of their nature. Thence comes this inclination, ever springing up afresh, to be independent, to be something of ourselves, to desire for ourselves esteem, affection and honor, despite the precepts of the divine law, the claims of justice and the warnings of reason; and thus it is that the whole spiritual life is but one long and painful conflict against this vicious propensity. Divine grace though sustaining us in the combat never gives us a complete victory, for the struggle must endure until death—the closing chastisement of our original degradation and the only one that can obliterate the last traces thereof. (See *The Imitation of Christ*, book 3, chapter 13-22) »

3. As God drew from nothingness everything that exists, in like manner does He wish to lay the foundations of our spiritual perfection upon the knowledge of our nothingness. Saint Bonaventure used to say: *Provided God be all, what matters it that I am nothing!*

4. When a Christian who is truly humble commits a fault he repents but is not disquieted, because he is not surprised that what is naught but misery, weakness and corruption, should be miserable, weak and corrupt. He thanks God on the contrary that his fall has not been more serious. Thus Saint Catherine of Genoa, whenever she found she had been guilty of some imperfection, would calmly exclaim: *Another weed from my garden!* This peaceful contemplation of our sinfulness was considered very important by Saint Francis de Sales also, for he says: “Let us learn to bear with

our imperfections if we wish to attain perfection, for this practice nourishes the virtue of humility.”

5. Some persons have the erroneous idea that in order to be humble they must not recognize in themselves any virtue or talent whatsoever. The reverse is the case according to Saint Thomas, for he says it is necessary to realize the gifts we have received that we may return thanks for them to Him from whom we hold them. To ignore them is to fail in gratitude towards God, and to neglect the object for which He gave them to us. All that we have to do is to avoid the folly of taking glory to ourselves because of them. Mules, asses and donkeys may be laden with gold and perfumes and yet be none the less dull and stupid animals. The graces we have received, far from giving us any personal claims, only serve to increase our debt to Him who is their source and their donor.

6. Praise is naturally more pleasing to us than censure. There is nothing sinful in this preference, for it springs from an instinct of our human nature of which we cannot entirely divest ourselves. Only the praise must be always referred to Him to whom it is due, that is to say, to God; for they are His gifts that are praised in us as we are but their bearers and custodians and shall one day have to render Him an account for them in accordance with their value.

7. The soul that is most humble will also have the greatest courage and the most generous confidence in God; the more it distrusts itself, the more it will trust in Him on whom it relies for all its strength, saying with Saint Paul: *I can do all*

*things in Him who strengtheneth me.*<sup>1</sup> Saint Thomas clearly proves that true Christian humility, far from debasing the soul, is the principle of everything that is really noble and generous. He who refuses the work to which God calls him because of the honor and éclat that accompany it, is not humble but mistrustful and pusillanimous. We shall find in obedience light to show us with certainty that to which we are called and to preserve us from the illusions of self-love and of our natural inclinations.

« Saint Francis de Sales:

We should be actuated by a generous and noble humility, a humility that does nothing in order to be praised and omits nothing that ought to be done through fear of being praised. »

8. It is even good and sometimes necessary to make known the gifts we have received from God and the good works of which divine grace has made us the instruments, when this manifestation can conduce to the glory of His name, the welfare of the Church, or the edification of the faithful. It was for this threefold object that Saint Paul spoke of his apostolic labors and supernatural revelations.

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<sup>1</sup> St. Paul to the Phillippians, 4:13

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