

THE NATURAL
RECEIVES THE
SUPERNATURAL

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The Natural Receives The Supernatural

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By

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The Natural Receives The Supernatural

Two words are used to distinguish the type of progress which governs a person's life. These words are familiar to most of you, and both of them imply an activity within your own flesh. The question to consider is whether your life runs on sheer momentum or whether your vital activity proceeds according to the circulation of the Spirit. The distinction made by these two words in relation to your vital function is most important: Shall the circulation of your blood be a mere matter of momentum and your body only a machine, or, shall the Spirit govern your life, making every act a holy procession of truth?

To try to live and move and have our being without God is worse than death, for this kind of existence is as empty of soul as is an automaton. Human nature without God is a living death. To quote these words regarding the effectualization of the supernatural:

*Without the supernatural, the natural is not even natural. I mean that the natural begins to degrade itself unless the breath of heaven is in it.

Nature provides a certain functional momentum too frequently misnamed life, but there is no true life without the Spirit. The procession of Spirit is the breath of heaven circulating in the natural man. This breath of the supernatural in man is prayer, or, as we sometimes call it, meditation; energized by devotion, it is, technically, contemplation. Each of these terms conveys the same significance, that is, of the supernatural circulating of the Holy Spirit in your physical system, by the action of God.

Any other kind of action is really unnatural for man, who is made for God and cannot function naturally without God; for any nature not nourished and sustained by the supernatural degrades itself. Momentum left to itself runs down, because there is no self-energizing subsistence apart from the intelligence

*Chronicle of Reality 1175, by George Edwin Burnell, pages 21, 22

of the Creator. There are certain *aphorisms of our Instruction which provide the principles of our true life. The intention is to secure these true principles whereby the Creator's intelligence may proceed to satisfactory application in our daily experience.

It is correctly said that twenty errors in application are as nothing compared to one error in principle. For example, imagine that your intellect is a lens through which all your observations are made. One error in this lens multiplies over the entire field of observation. In the same way a defect in the principle of judgment is superimposed indefinitely over all matters within the range of consideration. For this reason it is necessary to clear away intellectual errors by establishing true and authoritative principles; then, and then only, will our platform of performance be reliable.

The circulation of the Lord's Precious Blood throughout the body of the faithful is not a function of momentum but is, rather, a vital necessity of Christian life. We are trying today to bring you this principle of devotion whereby

*Aphorisms: Notes and Headings; by George Edwin Burnell

truth may enter and circulate in your daily life as naturally as your own blood flows through your arteries and veins. We seek the application of these principles of new life; but to obtain this application, first the secret needs to be grasped in principle, that is, in what are called "the Aphorisms of Instruction."

*Aphorism 67 is titled "Momentum Immortality." This title may seem at first glance to be paradoxical, because momentum is not strictly immortality, nor is immortality attained through the momentum of experience. However, when the principle of vital subsistence enters your life this breath of heaven provides a supernatural vigor in your nature. Mere persistence in living is not immortality; you are not an immortal simply because you do not die. Habits of living form a momentum, but this is not true immortality.

A man who lived to be one hundred years old was asked the secret of his longevity; he replied, "Persistence; I just kept on living in spite of everything." But this is not immortality; mere momentum is not immortality. Yet,

*Ibid., page 33

on the other hand, true immortality provides an inexhaustible momentum to life. True immortality is something so wonderful that words cannot describe it. It is a constant renewal at every point: it is eternal life. We want to try to convey to you the significance of this renewed spiritual system in terms of your own blood circulating in your own natural system. The same vital necessity is presupposed. The soul is to your spiritual life what the circulation of the blood is to your natural life; both are vital necessities and both are renewed in the principle of the Lord's Precious Blood. By the recognition of this divine principle of life—natural and spiritual—is obtained the miraculous circulation of truth through your whole functional system.

A person may boast, "I can live my own life as I like." He may imagine himself as being a unit apart from all others, as an entity feeding on the circulation of his own blood; but in just the degree that he cuts himself off, by this disbelief, from the whole spiritual system, in the same degree he begins to die, spiritually

and physically. Yet, actually, the only thing that can ever separate anyone from the spiritual system is disbelief. Hence this system is known as the mystical body—the body of the faithful, where circulates forever the Precious Blood of our Savior. This spiritual action is referred to as a supernatural momentum, called immortality.

There is no other activity worth while. Going around in cycles of thought in your own mind, moving selfishly in your own little system is not true living. Life is found only where it is—in the fountainhead of spiritual being. There it pours itself out, eternally replenishing and regenerating the soul of man.

Let us consider the essential character and function of the blood; then, having considered this scientifically, let us transfer its message to the spiritual science of the Precious Blood in the Christian system. There are three main and necessary factors in the human blood. First, it is by means of the blood that the cells of the body are nourished. Not all cells are close to the food-receiving surfaces of the body; there-

fore these more remote parts are fed indirectly by the blood. For this reason the blood nourishes both directly and indirectly. By the circulatory system the whole body is nourished.

Second, blood acts as a purifier; it carries away waste matter—that which ought not to be, and which, if it were to remain in the system, would poison all the body. To purify is the second important function of the blood.

Third, the blood acts as a sort of chemical messenger. It provides a sympathetic contact between various parts of the body, maintaining a source of unity in the body as a whole. These three natural functions of the blood are essential to physical life.

But now imagine what miracles take place when the breath of heaven enters into this natural circulatory system. The natural discovers the supernatural; hence it no longer degrades itself, but has the revelation of its truly natural perfection. The Sacred Heart is the Heart of all hearts. Divine Life is the fountainhead and source of all life; the Precious Blood is the circulation of healing, nourishment, and

love throughout all bodies. Heart goes back to Heart, life back to Life, blood back to Blood; for all creation is from God. God is the beginning and the end of all things; any existence that is not of God is less than nothing.

But, even as *Dr. Maritain insists, creation is not thrown out into space as a self-sufficient ball of matter, to whirl away on its own devices. If the Word of God's power—on which the life of the universe depends—were to be withdrawn, all creation would at once resolve into its pristine nothingness. As an image cannot subsist in a mirror without the reality, so man, God's image and likeness, cannot subsist without the reality of God; human blood cannot circulate without the Precious Blood of the divine Prototype.

We, as finite beings with finite minds and finite functioning, have no powers of subsistence within our own nature. But by turning the nothingness of our nature to the source of life we receive constant replenishment. This spiritual vitality is, according to Saint Thomas Aquinas, the "vigor of incorruption." The immortality

*Cf. "Existence and the Existent," by Jacques Maritain

of glory in human beings is the vigor of incorruption. Such a life is not humdrum—not a mere momentum or habit, not living on in spite of our defects. It is pure fulfilment of perfection in life; it is spiritual energy generating anew continuously; it is man's possession of divine life. He who holds the cup of his soul to the infinite source receives the infinite in a finite manner. The finite yielding to the infinite, becomes a miracle of the supernatural. The infinite flows and overflows; it flows inwardly as interior deification, and overflows outwardly as exterior radiation.

This flow of the Spirit does not need any human proselyting. Let me emphasize this point: The exterior radiation of God's grace is not accomplished by means of human aggression; it is not carried by proselyting. Oh, the damage that is often done by proselyting on your own momentum! Exterior radiation of the Spirit, rather than coercion by a human will, draws toward truth. This is a secret our hearts may well dwell upon. This exterior radiation of interior deification becomes a re-

velation of beauty and sweetness. One does not have to speak a word; one does not objectively attempt to convert his neighbors. He simply radiates what he *is* in acts of kindness, charity, understanding, and all that which is truth itself.

Thus the momentum of a person's life expresses the attributes of truth. No longer is he a creature of world habits; no longer is he a victim of the potter's wheel, for now the vital Spirit of truth proceeds in his life and affairs, moving him externally to deeper and greater good. Such supernatural momentum, such spiritual carrying force, develops no weariness, no exhaustion. Instead it is as though the activity is actually rest at every point of action. Why does this kind of momentum not run down? Because spiritual balance is incorruptibly preserved in a body consecrated to God.

There are several considerations which bear on this subject, but perhaps the first one to offer is that from Saint Thomas Aquinas on the necessity of devotion. A body nourished in the bloodstream of devotion is lifted above

the limitation of its own nature. Now devotion is one of the principal activities of the soul whereby the source of life is maintained; charity and devotion are inseparable companions. Saint Thomas compares these spiritual forces to the functioning of the human body, even as we explained a moment ago that by recognizing the natural characteristics of human blood we might be able to grasp analogically some of the mysteries of the Precious Blood in its circulation throughout the mystical body. First we found that the blood carries nourishment to the body cells; so also does the bloodstream of devotion, according to Saint Thomas Aquinas, feed the true body with its substantial nourishment. Every cell is thus filled with an overflowing glory, received through the soul.

The Apostle Paul first presented the analogy between the human and the mystical body in his Epistle to the Corinthians. Now we continue this analogy throughout the contemplation and prayer, the heavenly breath of the Christian system. The mystical body of which

we are members is nourished through the Word of Truth in the bloodstream of devotion. And by this same circulating system all waste material—evil and sin and all that ought not to be—is carried away into oblivion. In God's Precious Bloodstream of love on earth, man is nourished, purified; and through this alchemy of love is made aware of a oneness with all other members of this same body; for there is established through devotion and love a sympathetic bond called friendship.

This is the way in which Saint Thomas Aquinas uses the example of the human body to illustrate the perfect balance of the mystical body:

*Bodily fatness is produced by the natural heat in the process of digestion . . . and at the same time the natural heat thrives, as it were, on this fatness.

What a wonderful system of interdependence has God provided in the body of man! The perfectly natural function of being needs the wisdom and love of God to preserve it. That is why without the breath of heaven the natural

*The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas,
Vol 11, page 26

cannot even be natural; but with the spiritual flowing through the natural, the natural is not destroyed but is perfected and glorified.

Bodily fatness is produced by the natural heat in the process of digestion . . . and at the same time the natural heat thrives, as it were, on this fatness.

Now let us see how this great doctor of theology lifts the example to throw light on the harmoniously functioning mystical body:

In like manner charity both causes devotion (inasmuch as loves makes one ready to serve one's friend) and feeds on devotion. Even so all friendship is safeguarded and increased by the practice and consideration of friendly deeds.

The sympathetic bond and union of this true and mystical body of the faithful is supernatural friendship, produced and maintained by devotion and charity. Charity and devotion are inseparable companions. There is no warmth of charity without devotion, and no fatness of devotion without the burning fires of charity. The perfect circulation between charity and devotion produces the wonderful supernatural circle that proceeds eternally in a world of momentum. The keynote of man's

well-balanced life is his power of friendship—friendship with God and with his neighbors. The severing of this bond of friendship in either direction breaks the continuity essential to Christian balance. In their ignorance, people may claim their self-sufficiency; but when the perfect circle of love and devotion is broken, man is like a withered branch, dead on the tree of life.

Self-sufficiency is man's great crime against himself, for by it he loses his true value. It is well to remember that as individuals we are finite and nothing in our own nature; only through God Who is infinite, do we receive our power to exist. One who cuts himself off from life's wonderful and infinite source of supply, ceases to receive even what is natural to him.

Charity and devotion constitute the momentum of the perfect circle of life, both universal and particular; without these man's existence is virtual death. Death entered into the world only when man turned away from the source of being. Man is said to have a two-fold life;

the life of his body which is his soul, and the life of his soul which is God. Therefore, a soul severed from God no longer preserves the body from death and thus consciously or unconsciously man begins to die. Strange to say, many who profess to be alive are unconsciously dead; for he who moves merely on the habits of existence is dead without knowing it.

The whole secret of life is to keep yourself close to the source; to keep yourself at the fountainhead through devotion and charity. Thus is formed within your own flesh a supernatural vigor of incorruption, called immortality of glory. This immortality is not static, it is dynamic—an eternal momentum, constantly replenished and regenerated by the fire of charity and the fatness of devotion. These make the perfect circle of truth. There is no stopping-point on this circle of perfection, no place where one can lie back and say, "I have achieved; I have received all I need." No one can ever be satiated with truth; for were he to be surfeited, it would not be with truth, which is new and refreshing at every point of

procession. There is no weariness, no restlessness, when we maintain our place at the fountainhead of life; instead, the consciousness is that of continuous rest. The momentum of spiritual life, unlike the treadmill of daily existence, has no stopping-point. Again we can see this spiritual action prefigured in nature, for, even with human life, to stop the common functioning of the body is physical death; and according to the sages, weariness is recurring death. But in the bloodstream of devotion and love there is no weariness, no death; for the infinite, proceeding through our finite nature, is an eternal refreshment and joy.

The second vital function of the blood is purification, in the same way that the universal bloodstream of our Lord carries away all the waste materials of sin and evil. This divine bloodstream washes us clean of all that ought not to be. We are washed in the blood of the Lamb, according to the Book of Revelation. All impurities that tend to clog the perfect functioning of God's image and likeness are carried away, and man breathes the breath of heaven.

The familiar name for that which clogs our perfect functioning is sin. Sin means failure, mistake; it means accepting errors for truth. If you do not like the plain word "sin" you may use its synonyms—error, mistake, failure. Literally, sin means missing the mark of human and divine perfection.

One of the chief functions of the Lord's Precious Bloodstream of love is the carrying away of this waste and this failure of man's life. All that ought not to be is cancelled at the Cross, from which the effectuality of healing proceeds. There is wonderful healing power in the Lord's Precious Blood, for this vital fluid was chosen by omnipotent wisdom as the instrument of redemption. Whether the world knows it or not, this bloodstream of love is constantly healing us and protecting us from evil. The following is an account of this eternal miracle, written by one who was an authority on the subject:

*Everywhere on the earth the Precious Blood is warring down this evil in detail. Here it is obliterating it: here it is cutting off its past growth . . .

*The Precious Blood, Frederick William Faber, page 45

So much of the human complexity in life is due to a belief in today's penalties for yesterday's mistakes. In principle this is a belief in original sin, resulting in all our present-day consequences. Blind acceptance of this most pessimistic philosophy leads to complete despair and frustration.

When one of my beautiful little grandchildren was born, the frustrated nurse looked at the baby and shook her head despairingly. "Poor little mite, just think what misery there is ahead of you." Pessimism and momentum of misery! She saw no breath of heaven in this beautiful infant. From her own mind she had superimposed on an innocent child the principle of failure. But our Lord with His own Precious Blood put a stop to all such errors.

Everywhere on the earth the Precious Blood is warring down this evil in detail. Here it is obliterating it: here it is cutting off its past growths, or making its future growth slower or of less dimensions.

The Precious Bloodstream carries away the waste materials of cause and effect which at present seem to produce our momentum of

natural experience, obliterating what ought not to be, rooting out all causes of evil, thus freeing us from our need of penalty. The wonderful healing action of this Precious Blood washes away the sins of the world; washes them away in principle and simultaneously removes all evils.

There it is diluting it with grace, or rendering it sterile, or wounding and weakening it, or making it cowardly and cautious. Upon all exhibitions of evil the action of the Precious Blood is incessant. At no time and in no place is it altogether inoperative.

The action of the Precious Bloodstream is invisible to the eyes of men, but it is nevertheless, continuous and efficient. If this Precious Blood should at any moment withdraw from its incessant warring against what ought not to be, the state of the world would indeed be desperate. But because the constant protection of God's love is available, we can, as individuals, effectively deal with the poisonous waste materials in our own affairs.

How shall we deal with the appearance of evil and sin, with these troubles that loom up in our experience, with these obstacles in our

path of virtue? Even though failures, mistakes, and all errors have been renounced in principle, our ignorance still seems to deal with them in the field of appearances. There is an intelligent way of meeting and dealing with even such conditions as failures and mistakes; and the secret of this deliverance is obtained through the healing action of prayer, which is, to the natural system, the breath of heaven.

This breath of heaven comes to us as mental prayer, and is a very, very practical direction for daily life.

*The truth is that sins do not hinder our spiritual progress so long as we do not remain in them for long.

In other words, it is not the sins themselves, the mistakes themselves, that form our hindrance; it is our acceptance of them, our submission to them, our remaining under their dominion. It is not temptation that damages us; it is our submission to temptation. It is not the appearance in the world of what ought not to be, that is our despair; but, rather, our acceptance and submission to these things as though they were

*The Art of Mental Prayer, by Bede Frost, page 230

truth. Strength is developed in knowing how to meet and deal with what ought not to be. Fortitude is the virtue that proceeds from the Precious Blood as our immunity to evils, therefore:

The truth is that sins do not hinder our spiritual progress so long as we do not remain in them for long. The true remedy for sin is not disquietude . . .

Being unhappy, fretting over one's mistakes and failures, does not solve the problem; but true contrition—the prayerful, spiritual sorrow which contains a breath of heaven—is the perfect remedy. Saint Thomas Aquinas says that even a spark of true contrition will wipe out a whole lifetime of sins. Why? Because it has in it the efficiency of the Precious Blood. It is an infinite and spiritual act which, when applied to our finite conditions, acts supernaturally.

The true remedy for sin is not disquietude, but contrition, and the right way to treat our sins is to make an act of contrition . . .

Contrition has its true action in the heart, where it crushes out pride and resistance to truth.

. . . beg for grace . . .

Beg for grace. Prayer is humility of the heart and mind; it is petitioning God to do what we of ourselves cannot do.

. . . beg for grace and go on again as if nothing had happened.

Now I wish I could underline that third requirement; Go on again as if nothing had happened! And truly, nothing has happened; but by dwelling on mistakes and failures we become more and more convinced that there is an insurmountable obstacle in the path. One of our first practical lessons in life is to pick ourselves up from our many falls and failures.

How can we practice this? Not by overlooking our mistakes nor by disregarding our failures, but by looking through them and healing them. In this way we do not merely rename them "nothing," but we see that truly they have no existence because they are not truth.

This is one of the most necessary lessons to be learnt.

When you can learn to keep your eyes on God, on truth, rather than on indiscretions, mistakes, and failures, you have the secret of dissolving your problems. Keep your eyes on

the source of life, on truth, on God; and you will experience that wonderful sense of spiritual vitality circulating in your own bloodstream, replenishing, nourishing, purifying your whole system with the vigor of incorruption. Thus the momentum of your life will be spiritual rather than natural.

In "The Goad of Divine Love" Saint Bonaventure explains the spiritual procession in charge of our momentum of life; the kind of vitality that rests as it proceeds, because every point is refreshment. The act of ascending the spiritual mountain of contemplation is its own rest. When climbing a material mountain we go just so far and then must stop to catch our breath, to renew our strength; but the mountain of contemplation is a mystical ascent which finds no rest in stopping but, rather, in climbing higher in ecstasy and in securing the breath of heaven.

The higher levels of contemplation are attained through—

*. . . ascending by the elevation of his mind. For in this ascension not to rest is indeed truly to rest:

*The Goad of Divine Love, St. Bonaventure, pages 204-205

But on the other hand he that always has to stop to rest finds that he grows tired. Because the moment you stop to rest you have stopped receiving that spiritual replenishment that is your vitality, and your life.

*For in the climbing of a material mountain, because the flesh of man is weak, there is therefore necessarily required ease and rest; but in the climbing of this same spiritual mountain, because the spirit is prompt and willing, the contrary is required — that is to say, that the spirit does not rest, but when it begins to be weary that it ascend swifter and run faster. And by this means he will become fresher, and more eager to perform greater and higher matters, and he will seem to himself to be a great deal lighter, going forward with more sweetness, pleasure, and delight, and making it his rest not to rest at all.

And if anyone cannot reach this same, but must needs rest, and yet hath a desire still to ascend, he hath this help — namely, that although he cannot in all points fulfill those those things that have been said before, yet let him be sure that he do not materially leave the manner of ascending.

If a person were to attempt to climb a mountain and then, every time he felt tired, were to go back to the foot of the mountain to rest,

*Ibid.,

he would never reach the heights. In our spiritual ascent to the source of life we cannot go back to the shadows of the valley, to the valley of the material shadows, or we shall never reach the top. It would be impossible to reach the heights of glory if we returned constantly to the momentum of our old life and to the old way of viewing experience. There is no retrograde action in the procession of spiritual life. What may seem to be the reversal in the recollective faculty, called memory, is really the act of the same devotion fulfilling the *gestalt* of its circle. A wheel moves along in traction with its threefold motions—one along the ground, one forward, and one backward—yet always the wheel is moving according to its nature; all three actions are natural to the wheel. So in the climbing momentum of spiritual ascent, our whole and complete life is carried to the height of the mountain of God.

*. . . in like manner are they to be counted fools, and will never get up to the top of contemplation, who in their contemplation ascend today a little, or it may be much, and, being weary, return back to take their

*Ibid.,

rest to the place or state from whence they came, and think that by resting in the valley of sins and worldly vanities, or in the plains of imperfections, they are made stronger and apter for ascending . . .

The tendency of the human mind to return to its natural momentum must be healed. No man who has glimpsed the truth can ever return to falsity without destroying his own nature.

If, therefore, a man would get up as high as he can, and there rest, and not go back at all, [he will eventually reach the Court of heaven].

*He that by contemplation would come to the top of the hill of our Lord, let him not once stand still, nor go back, until he hath gotten as far as he intended, unless perchance he will descend to sorrow for his own sins and the sins of others. And out of doubt by how much the nearer the spirit of the contemplative draws to the increated Spirit, it is made so much the more spiritual and lively; and by approaching nearer unto that eternal fire, it is more inflamed and quickened, and those forces which it lost by being absent from God are restored and renewed. And if he happen to fall, let him rest by not resting; and by how much the more he looks into the sovereign good, and doth most clearly behold himself

*Ibid., page 206, 207, 208

therein, approaching nearer and nearer to the same, by so much the more doth he become retired from himself. Provided that on his part he make no resistance, but enforce himself thoroughly to adhere thereunto, as if he had already tasted the sweetness thereof.

Silent Meditation

*All the Presence there is,
All the Power there is,
All the Consciousness there is,
Is *Love*, the *Living Spirit Almighty*.

GENEVIEVE BURNELL FORGEY

*Axioms: Book of Health,
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The Instruction

A compilation of excerpts from the works of George Edwin Burnell, Mary Lamoreaux Burnell and Genevieve Burnell Forgey.

