

2nd Manuscript

RESPONSE TO THE FIRST QUESTION FROM BRO.: LAJARD DE MONTPELLIER, DATED MARCH 22, 1818 CONCERNING THE ETERNITY OF SUFFERING

It is rather difficult, my beloved Brother, to reply definitively to your two questions of March 22nd. The first in particular, concerning the eternity of suffering, would require lengthy explanations which I cannot set down in writing; but not wishing to leave you with no reply on such an important subject, I will give you some observations which I hope will allay the concerns of our new Brother *Grands Profès*.

Men can barely agree on the meaning of the word *eternity* because they generally see only one, whereas there is more than one. Can one, for example, confuse the infinite eternity of God, Who has neither beginning nor end, which God alone can know and define, with that temporal eternity which began with the Law of Time at the time of the creation of the Universe, whose first period until the dissolution of the Universe had been given to the first guilty prevaricators as a means of return had they wished to take advantage of it; but whose second crime, which was to seduce and to be the cause of man's fall, being led by them into the abyss – because of their hatred for the Creator – had rendered this means completely useless to them, and Divine Mercy had instead fallen on man himself, who had become guilty and deprived, as well as over all his descendants¹. One may also compare it to other temporal eternities which, following the designs of justice and mercy, might succeed one another indefinitely up to the present time, when their law and duration have been accomplished. Doesn't St. John, in Chapter 21 of his Revelation, see a new Heaven and a new Earth be born and take shape, the first having completely passed away; here, then, is clearly a new order of things, a new time, a new eternity which begins. So let's maintain an excessive respect for expressions reflected in the Holy Books, which may have several meanings, and be more severe even than God's own justice, for the intellect is irresistibly reluctant to think that the Father-Creator of all beings, Who loves all with the most tender love, Who has only emanated them from His bosom to make them all eternally happy, would wish to condemn those of His children whom pride could make ungrateful and rebellious, who want to be forever be separated from him and hate and to curse Him forever, without His mercy leaving them with any means of rectification through their repentance. No: we may say it, we may repeat it, we may do our best to believe it by accepting certain definitions; but we cannot believe it sincerely and absolutely, so greatly does it contrast with the innate feelings so deeply engraved within us of the infinite goodness of God.

Let us say without fear of self-deception, which should at the same time reconcile all views, that since God is sovereignly good and just, His infinite justice should and shall be exercised

¹ This is a direct reference to Pasqually's *Treatise on the Reintegration of Beings*, in which God had created the Earth as a prison for the prevaricating spirits (the 'fallen angels' who rebelled) and set man over them as goaler and guide back to Him; who they tempted and flattered into attempting an act of creation in God's absence, which caused man's fall and imprisonment on Earth in a body of corporeal flesh. Willermoz is thereby contrasting God's eternity with the limited or temporal eternity in which He confined the prevaricating spirits, and the temporal imprisonment from which man will be released for judgment at the end of time.

unfailingly on all the guilty in just proportion to their guilt as long as evil and the least trace of evil shall exist, whatever the duration of the existence of that evil. But let us also say that since God's mercy is infinite, it should and will act by any appropriate way and means that His love and His justice may deem appropriate to fulfill their goals to assist the guilty, to show and make known to them some basic notion of the goodness they lost, and from which they have been separated; and as a result they have no reason which would incite them to repent of their straying, nor any desire to make amends for it, which is essential to satisfy Divine Justice. Anyone who tried to put limits to God's mercy would be indicating that it wasn't infinite, and would be guilty of attacking the idea of Divine perfection.

Evil is not a real being. It is the opponent of Good, and it will endure as long as that opposition. Evil is the child of the prideful thought which conceived it, and the bad will which adopted it and put it into action, by identifying with it. Evil is so unlike a real being that if the thought that conceived it and the will which adopted it were to change, it would be destroyed. If the Principle of Evil and all its professed adherents to evil were to be reconciled through a complete renunciation of their prevarication, and an expiatory repentance, they would enter once more into the realm of unity. But it has been said that such a return would be impossible by themselves alone. Most certainly it is not possible, since that return would already be an act of good, and separated from Good, they don't have and couldn't have within themselves any idea or tendency towards good: all their actions are motivated, exercised and concentrated on evil and for Evil. But that is the work of mercy: it can still work in their favor by supportive means, proportional to its justice and their needs, as it did after their first crime, and as it did in man's favor after his Fall, in order to prepare his rehabilitation through an expiatory repentance.

Soon after the prevarication of the rebellious spirits had been consummated, so far as it could be, since it wasn't in their power to accomplish the project of creating spiritual beings which would belong to them alone, with the insane claim of making themselves equal to the Eternal Creator to Whom alone belongs the creation of spiritual beings, Divine Justice had to expel them, had to banish them from His immediate presence, and do this at that very instant from the Divine immensity which the scandal of their crime had just defiled. The physical universe, and universal space with everything it contains, were created at that moment by the will of the Creator and exercised by His Spiritual Agents who were appointed and clothed with all the powers necessary for that, henceforth to be their place of exile, their punishment, and in which they would exercise all the malice of their demonic action². They were all cast down; but their chief, who had become the Principle of Evil with his principle disciples were thrown down to the very depths of the abyss, where he exercised his perverse action upon the multitude of his Agents and disciples who were spread throughout space, and where our divine mediator and reconciler, Jesus Christ, who through His voluntary death overcame all the powers of hell has bound and chained him even more tightly until the consummation of the ages.

In this state, what will become of those unfortunate beings? Having become incapable of any leaning towards the good which they no longer know and moving endlessly in the element of Evil

² In Pasqually's *Treatise*, God empowered six Spiritual Agents to accomplish the act of creation – which is also used to explain the plural concept of the Elohim in the Bible – Himself not being involved until the end of the sixth day when He created man; and finally undertaking the action of blessing all Creation on the seventh (for Pasqually didn't see the seventh day as one of rest, but rather one of positive action by God).

which has become their own, they will be eternally unfortunate unless the Almighty deigns to send them some relief. But justice and mercy which always act together move in their favor. When the creation of the universe which must be their prison was undertaken, on the sixth day, and before the sabbatical act which completed it, general man – that is to say, the class of human intelligences – was emanated by God in the circle of the immensity for which he was intended. He whom we call Adam, head of this new class of beings, was set free in the space created to demonstrate the divine power, as an Agent and representative of the Divinity. He was placed at the center of the four celestial regions referred to as terrestrial Paradise, for which the greatest geographers have sought in vain and never discovered on the surface of the Earth, any more than the four rivers which irrigated it, the lofty place he would have still occupied along with all of his fellow men had he remained faithful to his Creator, but from which he was ignominiously expelled following his crime, and sent to crawl materially on the Earth. It was in that glorious center, established as the chief and ruler of all created things and of all good and evil spiritual beings contained within universal space, that he received from his Creator the title of Man-god of the Earth. Intended to perform his work in the universal circumference, where all beings are subject to elemental corporeal forms, God clothed him in a corporeal form which was pure, glorious and impassive, by which he could at will manifest his actions and make them physical, as he could also reintegrate them into himself and render them invisible.

If any carnal man, buried through habit by the material senses, and who sees only matter in all apparently corporeal forms, would wish to doubt the truth of our assertion, let him reflect carefully on the two bodies or corporeal forms which Jesus Christ manifested on Earth, the one during His temporal life, and the other following His resurrection. In the first and by this first he wished to make Himself completely identical to the state of present man. He was born of a chaste virgin, but in a material body like the others, in which he experienced the same needs, in which he suffered, died and was buried. Yet after his death he laid aside that borrowed body in the tomb, wishing to show mankind a model of what they had been in their first estate and to which they must return after their full and perfect reconciliation. He appeared to them in a bodily form completely identical to the first one, but which could enter and depart without the need for any door, and which could disappear and be resumed in Him each time at will³. Righteous men, meditate on what we have said, and don't fear being in error by adopting such models.

The principle function of man emancipated in the universe was to restrict the demonic action and contain it within the bounds which Justice had assigned to it, to molest the Principle of Evil and annihilate the results of his perversity, and by means of this series of annoyances to force him to recognize his inferiority, his dependency, and the superiority of the Sovereign Creator, and as a result to recognize how he had strayed; and to submit himself to justice and seek expiation in the material corporisation in which he knew he was destined to be. God, wanting to assure the success of man's important mission, and to provide him with the means to fulfill it, clothed him in the temporal quaternary power⁴ which he entrusted to him to use according to his wishes, but always conforming with to Creator's intentions.

³ Those unfamiliar with Pasqually's teachings will note that this theosophy is distinctly Pre-Nicaean, focusing on an Arian interpretation of Jesus.

⁴ This is not the place to discuss Pasqually's and Saint-Martin's *gematria*. However, while not completely accurate, perhaps the quickest way to explain this is by stating that their Theosophy envisaged the materials universe being

Wishing, too, to convince him of the great immensity of power which he had been granted, He had him understand the three major parts of universal creation, and told him: “I have placed in you the Word of command which constitutes you in My likeness: use it for the glory of the Eternal One and for your own satisfaction. Command the land and all its inhabitants will obey you. Command the regions of the air and its inhabitants will obey you. And command all of universal creation, and all of its inhabitants – both good or bad – will obey you also, and you will recognize that I have submitted all to your command. So was everything executed. After these three acts, Adam, dazzled by the brilliance of such great power which he should have attributed entirely to Him from Whom he had received it, surrendered to a prideful thought, and believing this power to be his, he delighted in himself.

This prideful thought which was the beginning of Evil was known instantly to the Prince of daemons, who immediately seized upon the opportunity to attack man. He began cunningly in a seductive manner; saying that he had been sent by the Eternal One and praising his great power. Finding Adam in a kind of spiritual sleep he insinuated his demonic intellect, of which Adam regrettably retained a deep impression.

Adam had within him a Word for the reproduction of glorious and impassive forms similar to his, as man still has for the reproduction of passive and material animal forms. It was into those glorious forms that the Creator had promised that He would send human intellects to inhabit, when he shows a desire for this to take place; and so it was that man would have had the satisfaction of seeing all his descendants emancipated like him in the universal circumference, set in place to oppose the multiplicity of demonic spirits, and working with him to molest them, and for the great aim of Divine Mercy.

This reproduction of glorious forms was the action of the quaternary power, and that for which the Creator who had led him by His presence in the three prior actions had left him alone and left to his own free will to allow him the glory that he would draw from it. But instead of using the means that his Creator had placed at his disposal to recognize, repel and confound his enemy, he entered into an alliance with him, adopted his counsels and gave his free will over to him, after which he operated his fourth action which attracted to him and all his descendants the jus condemnation with which he had been threatened.

By this terrible catastrophe all the designs of Mercy were overthrown, if they were not completely destroyed. The Principle of Evil, which hoped that he had won a fatal victory over God which had come from carrying away man, His image and cherished likeness, only became even more insolent, more persistent in his revolt and a more ardent enemy of God and man. The Prince of Demons, having become even more guilty by this second crime, also made himself more unworthy of the mercy which watched over him. The paths of return which had been saved for him were withdrawn; and from then on he remained no doubt for an eternity given over to his own perversity for having perpetuated his torment.

composed of three elements – Earth, Water and Fire – and that the quaternary power, which was later taken away from man, was that of Spirit, or Life.

God's justice, rightly irritated by the excessive ingratitude of man who had just abused His love and His gifts so terribly, pronounced an appalling judgment against him, and it necessarily followed against his entire posterity. He condemned him to the death with which He had threatened him in the event of his infidelity. He expelled him and chased him ignominiously from the glorious center which that he had just desecrated, and threw him into the entrails of the Earth, where he was subjected to take on a material body, in which he came to crawl upon the surface with the other animals which he had now come to resemble.

In the excesses of his afflictions, and aroused by the salutary counsel of a divine emissary who was sent to him, he asked for the Creator's mercy, recognized and admitted his crime, and submitted himself to atonement. Mercy accepted his repentance, and saw him threatened by all the fury of his enemy whom he had come to make his slave, took him under His protection to preserve him from the new dangers to which he had been delivered; and to humiliate His insolent enemy even more strongly, a powerful Mediator and Repairer was promised to him to come and rehabilitate him in the passage of time. He was indeed sent. He came, and by His voluntary sacrifice atoning for man's crime, He has brought to life eternal all those who have wished and shall wish until the end of time to recognize His potent mediation.

That, my beloved Brother, are the explanations that you have requested concerning the eternity of suffering. They have led me to discuss many other details no less important for the necessary explanation of the sublime doctrine of the Grands Profès. I give them to you such as they have been given to me. Make the use of them which prudence, the love of the good and the nature of our obligations will permit you.

RESPONSE TO THE SECOND QUESTION FROM BRO.: LAJARD DE MONTPELLIER, DATED MARCH 22, 1818, PUT THUS: HOW CAN ONE EXPLAIN FREE-WILL, AND DIVINE POWER AND PRESCIENCE WITHOUT BEING CONTRADICTORY

Men, even the most pious, extending the dogma of divine prescience out of all proportion by their human definitions, and applying it to everything indefinitely without any restrictions, no doubt believe that they do honor to the Divinity. However, without intending to, and contrary to the Divine intention, they attack and destroy so far as it is in their power to do so, and thereby exceeding the limits that dogma itself has established against their definitions, the free will of man which is his characteristic and indestructible prerogative, and that of all sentient beings; because these beings can only be rewarded or punished for the good or bad use they make of it; and if it is dominated by Divine prescience, as they would have it, they do not operate freely through their own will, and then they are no longer free.

God is Being, the sole Being necessary and of all perfection. He is Good by His very essence and cannot wish for Evil. He is therefore not free to choose between Good and Evil. Good is His own Law, and He extends His Law over the beings emanated from Him, to unite them to Him through the love of Good. Yet they are all free to follow His Law or to depart from it, and that freedom is a weakness and a flaw in them, since it exposes them all continually to the greatest dangers, until each of them, following the example of the Divine Man-god in the Garden of Gethsemane, has made the total sacrifice and complete abandonment of their will to that of their Creator, and it has been accepted.

God knows everything that is, but, despite the extent of His omniscience He cannot know and decide that which is not, that is to say the Nothingness, since Nothingness is nothing. As soon as the thinking being has conceived any thought at all, that thought strikes the throne of Who sees and judges it. He welcomes it if it complies with His Law, and He rejects it if it is contrary to it. The being who conceived it then works in the daily circumstance according to his own will. God, knowing the thought which was shown to Him, knowing also the inner disposition of the subject who has conceived it and his natural inclination to Good or Evil, prejudices through His Divine prescience the use that he will make of it and will forewarn him through salutary hints, which in no manner will constraint his liberty, against the danger which threatens him; and it is this which sets up that inner struggle, that state of hesitation of the mind that all men so often experience: it is a result of the grace of God which doesn't upset free will at all, and only serves to indicate a more fortuitous direction. Here we are not talking about those specific interventions which floor a person, such as happened to St. Paul who had his will subjugated and swept away: one much feel that this was an exception to the general rule.

So Divine prescience, whose effects are generally so helpful to man, neither destroy nor contradict his free will, which always remain entire in him, with the honor and satisfaction of making good use of it. It even contributes much, by supporting him in the daily combat to which he is exposed during his temporal course to the happiness and the triumph which his perseverance in the good use he makes of it, will ultimately procure for him.

