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[REDACTED]
SECOND ARTICLE

B. THE ORIGIN OF FRIENDSHIP

1. Nature, custom, law as sources of friendship

We have seen what love is and what are its relations to affection and charity, and the place of friendship in this scheme. What, now, is the source of friendship? Aelred and his disciples agree that there is no man who does not want to be loved. What is the source of this desire? Yves asks whether friendship be from nature or chance or some necessity; or whether it be from a positive precept or law given to the human race; or whether it be the outgrowth of experience and custom. Aelred traces the development of friendship to show that these three are cooperating causes of friendship in the present state of humanity, though each has a different kind of causality. Nature impressed the affection of friendship first on the human soul; experience developed and increased it; the authority of law regulated it⁽¹⁷⁾.

Significantly Adam and Eve are examples of «natural» friendship, i. e. the good of society as intended originally by God, in which one had a helper, like to oneself, and equal to oneself. «Nature», i. e. God, impressed on man the affection of friendship and charity as one affection. This was increased by the actual experience of loving and being loved — the second cause. Friendship, then, is of Paradise, of the original image-likeness to God.

But the splendor of this union was destroyed by sin when charity grew cold. Yet both good and evil men still needed friends. Hence the third cause came into play; the true friendship among good men was distinguished by law from false friendship among the wicked⁽¹⁸⁾.

(17) DSA III, (690 D): «Putasne quemquam mortalium esse qui non velit amari?... Non scitimo». — *Ibid.*, II, (666 D): «Amicitiae, ut michi videtur, primum ipsa natura humanis mentibus impressit affectum; deinde experientia auxit; postremo legis auctoritas ordinavit». — Also 668 B: «Sic amicitiam quam natura instituit, quam reboravit usus, legis auctoritas ordinavit».

(18) *Ibid.*, (667 C-638 B): «Postremo cum hominem condidisset, ut bonum societatis altius commedaret: Non est bonum, inquit, esse hominem solum;

Aelred does not specify the nature of these laws; it might be that he means the writings of philosophers such as Cicero, for he says (*Prolog.* 659 A) that it was through Cicero that he learned first the «laws of friendship». Although these would hardly seem to have great authority, his language indicates that he does mean positive law.

In the *Mirror*, Aelred gives as source of friendship the «natural law». He is speaking of those bound to one another by bonds of spiritual friendship or by mutual services, i. e. a love of *affectus* or *effectus*, which demands love in return. It would be very wrong to neglect this return. Nevertheless, such friendship is that of the Pharisees, and does not merit a reward. The love of those who bear the same yoke of religious profession, however, does merit reward, for God is its cause⁽¹⁹⁾. Here, then, he points out two sources of friendship: love itself, and God. He is no longer speaking historically, but of friendship in the present life of man.

II. Love as source of friendship

The fount and origin of friendship is love, for it is the genus of which friendship is a species; love can exist without friendship, but never friendship without love. Love has five possible sources as we have seen — nature, service, reason alone, affection alone, or reason and affection together. The last alone is the love that produces friendship, for love is the key to the image doctrine and to the whole concept of union with God in contemplation.

Love is the origin of friendship. This statement has different shades of meaning. Love in one calls for a return of love in the other, as we have seen. Of Mary, Aelred says: «Let us love her, for she has indeed loved us», and of his friend Simon, «I have loved you, because from the beginning of my religious life you received me into friendship, because you have shown me more intimate familiarity than to others,

faciamus ei adiutorium simile sibi ... ut natura doceret omnes æquales, et quasi collaterales; nec esse ... superior vel inferior, quod est amicitie proprium. Ita natura mentibus humanis, ab ipso exordio amicitie et caritatis impressit affectum; quem interior mox sensus amandi quodam gustu suavitatis edauit. At post lapsum primi hominis, cum refrigescente caritate cupiditas subintrasset, ... amicitie caritatisque splendorem avaritia invidique corrumpit; ... Compacta sunt itaque etiam inter pessimos quædam societatis fœdera detestanda; quæ amicitie pulcherrimo nomine palliata, lege et præceptis a vera amicitia fuerant distinguenda;... »

(¹⁹) SC III. 4. (580 A D). Cf. 580 B C: « Hinc ad eos qui nobis spiritualis amicitie fœdere, vel officii vicissitudine copulantur, dilectio nostra progreditur ... Sed hæc dilectio Pharisæorum iustitiam non transcendit: ... Sane utraque hæc dilectio quanquam parum præmii servata conquirit, quippe cum ad illam lex naturalis impellat, ad istam gratia impertita nos provocet; neglecta tamen cumulum damnationis importat ...; Ut ergo in aliquid amplius dilectio nostra tendatur, amplectatur et eos qui nobiscum eodem iugo professionis subduntur. Hæc plane dilectio præmio non fraudabitur; quia Deus causa est cur exhibetur ».

because you took me into your inmost heart, together with Hugh.⁽²⁰⁾

Again, it means that friendship has its cause in itself. True friendship, i. e. that which he calls spiritual, has no cause outside itself in any worldly utility, but is desirable for its own value which answers the longing of the human heart. It is a good to be desired for its own sake, or as he says elsewhere, «to be sought through itself and because of God and itself». Whoever seeks another reward than that of friendship itself, has not yet learned what friendship is. It is its own fruit, its own reward. All the advantages it brings are by-products and, as Cicero taught (*De am.* 30) should follow from friendship, but not inspire it. It is the love of one's friend that is the first, and the true delight⁽²¹⁾.

In another sense, love is the exemplary cause, for self-love is the model for friendship. Certainly we do not look for any reward for loving ourselves and love ourselves just because we are dear to ourselves. Faithful to St. Augustine, Aelred explains that the self-love that is the exemplar for friendship is a true love, based on God's love. It is God in us, the image-likeness, that we love; so too it is God in our friend. If we do not love ourselves truly, then neither can we love a friend, for the one must follow the pattern of the other.

So friendship springs from a desire of the friend, not of anything else, and passes through all that is his to himself, loving the man himself, not anything he can do for us, embracing him with interior affection⁽²²⁾.

⁽²⁰⁾ DSA III, (679 C): «Fons et origo amicitiae amor est; nam amor sine amicitia esse potest, amicitia sine amore numquam. Amor autem aut ex natura, aut ex officio, aut ex ratione sola, aut ex solo affectu, aut ex utroque simul procedit». — *Serm.* 21 in *natiuitatem B. Mariae*, 324 B: «Amemus illam, quia ipsa utique amat nos». — SC I, 34, (543 C): «Dilexi te, qui me ab ipso initio conversionis meae in amicitiam suscepisti, qui te mihi prae caeteris familiarem exhibuisti, qui in ipsius visceribus animae tuae me Hugoni associasti».

⁽²¹⁾ DSA I, (666 B): «Amicitia enim spiritalis quam veram dicimus, non utilitatis cuiusque mundialis intuitu, non quolibet extra nascente causa, sed ex propria naturae dignitate, et humani pectoris sensu desideratur; ita ut fructus eius primumque non sit aliud quam ipsa». — *Ibid.*, 666 B: «... propter se ... appetenda». — *Ibid.*, III, (688 C): «... per se, et propter Deum et se expetenda, ...». — *Ibid.*, II, (677 C): «Necdum enim quid sit amicitia didicit, qui aliam eius vult esse mercedem quam ipsam». — *Ibid.*, I, (666 B): «... ita ut fructus eius primumque non sit aliud quam ipsa». Aelred adapts *John* 15, 16-17 to this: «to bring forth fruit», «... id est ut invicem diligatis». — *Ibid.*, II, (677 C): «... consilium in dubiis, consolationem in adversis, et caetera huiusmodi; haec utique ab amico expectanda sunt; sed sequi debent ista amicitiam, non praecedere». Cf. Cicero, *De amic.* 30; also Aelred, DSA II, (677 C): «Nam cum multas et magnas utilitates pariat amicitia fida bonorum; non illam tamen ab istis, sed ab illa istas procedere non ambigimus». He gives examples from Scripture: II Kings 17, 27-28; 19, 31-40; and repeats the same thought, 678 A: «Cum igitur in bonis semper praecedat amicitia, sequatur utilitas; profecto non tam utilitas parata per amicum, quam amici amor ipse delectat». Cf. Cic., *De amic.* 51.

⁽²²⁾ DSA III, (688 C): «Aliquam, rogo, a te ipso, huius tuae dilectionis mercedem

III. Friendship the creation of human effort

Friendship is in Aelred's mind not something that just happens to us but that has its origin in our own deliberate choice and effort. He writes to Gilbert Foliot of London that he «dares to aspire to his friendship», he knocks at his door, hoping to be brought into the inner room of friendship. The means to be used to win friends are described at length in the treatise on friendship, but they are in the main cautionary rules on how to avoid making a mistake in the man and the degree of intimacy to which he is to be admitted. Aelred's own way of winning friends is probably best described in the *Mirror*, where he counsels a sweet benevolence and quiet manner, adapted to the age and character of the other. One friendship was wholly his own making, and he tells how he was led to raise the young monk from being an inferior to a companion, from a companion to a friend, from an ordinary friend to a most intimate friend. To do this he made the monk his sub-prior, thus bringing it about that they worked together constantly. He then entrusted him with his secret plans and thoughts. Mutual intercourse and confidence made their love grow, their affection increase in warmth, their charity be strengthened, until there was between them only one soul and a complete openness and trust⁽²⁹⁾.

Spiritual friendship in particular is deserving of great pains and effort, because unlike the lower forms of friendship, it is something eternal. Aelred clearly does not dream that such a friendship is a

judicas exigendum? Minime profecto; sed quod per se sibi quisque carus est. — *Ibid.*, III, (700 BC): «... ab amore profectam amicitiam non dubitatis. Qui vero semetipsum non amat, alium amare quis potest, cum ex similitudine amoris quo ipse sibi carus est, amorem proximi debeat ordinare? Se autem non diligit, qui turpe aliquid vel inhonestum, vel a se exigit, vel sibi impertit... Sic vero se ipsum diligens, diligit et proximum, eandem regulam sequens». Note that Aelred is proving that love is the origin of friendship; in this case, love of self, which according to its form, determines the love that can be projected on another.) is a *similitudo*, a *regula*. — *Epist. ad G. (Gilbert)* (PL 195, 361-2): «Animus proinde meus amoris impetum sequens, omnia quæ tua sunt, non tu; omnia, quæ circa te sunt, quæ nec tua sunt, nec tu; spirituali quodam motu pertransiens, ipsam etiam corporis molem sui subtilitate trajiciens, in ipsum tuæ mentis sinum se totum infundit...» — SC III, 25, (598 A B): «Nec de his mihi sermo est, qui diligunt munera... sed de his qui obsequiis vel muneribus provocati, non jam munera, sed ipsum hominem quodam interno complectuntur affectu». Aelred is describing the development of «official» friendship that at this point may grow into true friendship.

(29) *Epistola ad G. Lundeniensem episcopum*, (PL 195, 361-362): «... ita tu aavidus effectus sum ut non solum ad tuæ serenitatis notitiam, sed etiam, quod te insipientia dicam, ad ipsam audeo aspirare amicitiam». — *Ibid.*, 363-364: «... et animum meum amicitie tuæ tunc fores pulsantem in ejus induci posse cubiculum non desperem». — DSA III, (681 A) ff. — SC I, 33, (538 D-539 A): «Plurimum enim sibi aliorum mentes benevolentie suavitate conciliat; qui quæta sui conversatione offendit neminem, obtemperans senioribus, contemperans æqualibus, junioribus condescendens;...» — DSA III, (699 D) ff.

pure gift of God: it must be prayed for and worked for with equal intensity. Its beginning must be full of circumspection and restraint; characteristically he points out that the sweetness felt in these beginnings is a guarantee that it is «in order». It develops under the guidance of the cardinal virtues, prudence directing, justice ruling, fortitude guarding, temperance moderating. Of the two examples he gives of his own spiritual friendships, in one he sought nothing but affection in the sharing of monastic life and spiritual sweetness; in the other he shared the burden of his responsibilities and sought a helper in his friend. The difference was due largely, as he points out, to the difference in circumstances and age. The first friend was the companion of his early years as a monk; the second was a son of his old age as Father Abbot. His first friend died soon; the second attained with him what he considered the summit of friendship possible in this life. As we have already seen, this achievement was the fruit of long trial and experience of one another and common sharing of responsibility⁽²¹⁾.

Such a friendship, then, even for Aelred's great heart, must be unique: «not any kind of friend, but the most intimate», a familiarity not shown to others, a singling out of one. This is inevitable, for it is doubtful if there is any man who can love everyone with affection as well as with reason⁽²²⁾, and added to affection must be the possibility of total trust and self-surrender in mutual openness and transparency. It is a revelation of his own soul that he considers this possible even with one or two.

IV. Friendship the command and the gift of God

But the ultimate source of friendship and love, — love of self and love of neighbor, — is God, whose love moves our love, God incarnate, the Word who is flesh and dwells amongst us. Therefore Christ is the beginning and the end of friendship, its origin and final cause. This encourages us in the hope of achieving so high a virtue, for we may attain it by prayer, unlike pagans who did not know Him, the bestower and Lord of virtues⁽²³⁾.

⁽²¹⁾ DSA II, (677 B); I, (661 D); III, (696 B — 700 B).

⁽²²⁾ SC I, 34, (543 C): «... qui te mihi prae ceteris familiarem exhibuisti, ...» Cf. *De sanct. Waltun*, 790 D. — SC III, 29, (618 D): «Pauci enim sunt si tamen aliqui sunt, a quibus omne hominum genus non solum rationali sed etiam affectuosa dilectione colatur.»

⁽²³⁾ SC III, 5, (581 C): «... sciendum quia ad hanc geminam dilectionem Dei nos dilectio movet et promovet, secundum id, quod *Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis*. — DSA I, (662 B): «... eius principium haemque Christum...» — *Ibid.*, 664 B: «Quamvis de nullius virtutis acquisitione desperandum sit christiano, cui quotidie ex Evangelio vox divina resultat: *Petite et accipietis* ... Nec mirum si inter ethnicos verae virtutis rari fuerunt, sectatores, qui virtutum largitorem et Dominum nesciebant, ...»

Friendship then as a form of charity is a diffusion of divine charity, a union of the human will with the Divine; this will is wholly transformed by the Holy Spirit into His own mode and quality: «this is done when the Holy Spirit, who is the will and love of God, and who is God, enters and pours himself into the human will, and, raising it up from lower to higher things, transforms it wholly into his own mode and quality, so that adhering to him by the indissoluble cement of unity, it is made one spirit with him». God has in fact laid on us the obligation of love, has given us the affection of love, and has enabled us to make it «effective». This is true not only of Divine Love, the «Sabbath of Sabbaths» as Aelred calls it, but of the lesser Sabbaths of love of self and of others; each Sabbath is, in varying degree, a gift of the Holy Spirit ⁽⁷⁷⁾.

The monks are bound together by the Holy Spirit, the heavenly fire that burns in their hearts and souls, and makes of many, one. The love that unites them is necessarily animated by a «portion of divine love». So too in friendship properly so-called, the love of God is its foundation, its principle. This has two implications: God is its final cause, God who is loved for his own sake, the friend for the sake of God; and God's love is its exemplary cause, model and the rule of love. This does not exclude affection that seems to spring of itself, lest we think that love must be always purely rational; provided it conform to the rule of charity, this too is of God ⁽⁷⁸⁾.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ SC II, 18. (566 C): «Quæ charitatis diffusio divini est et humanæ voluntatis conjunctio». — *Ibid.*: «Quæ tunc fit, cum Spiritus Sanctus, qui utique Dei voluntas et amor est, et Deus est, humani se voluntati ingerit et infundit, eamque ab inferioribus ad superiora sustollens, totam ipsam in sui modum qualitatemque transformat, ut ei indissolubili glutino unitatis adhaerens, unus cum eo spiritus efficiatur...» — *Serm. de oneribus* 3. (367 D): «Unde invocandus est a nobis ipse Spiritus, ut qui nobis primum onus imposuit charitatis, omne onus leve faciat, quod nostris possit servire profectibus; quatenus qui dedit affectum sui luminis infusione præstet effectum». — SC III, 6. (583 B): «Datur profecto in Sabbato primo, datur et in secundo, sed in Sabbato sabbatorum ejus infunditur plenitudo».

⁽⁷⁸⁾ *Serm. 23 in festivitate omnium sanctorum*, 347 A B: «Et primum videte quæ sit ista anima. Unusquisque vestrum, antequam huc veniret, unam animam habuit, quæ tantum sua erat. Conversi estis ad Deum; et ecce Spiritus sanctus, ille cælestis ignis... accendit corda vestra, accendit animas vestras, et de omnibus cordibus vestris facit cor unum et animam unam». The symbol of fire, the unifying action of love, has been met with not infrequently in regard to friendship. — SC III, 5. (581 C): «Verum, quia... hunc amorem... quo proximis puro affectu unimur, quadam divini amoris portione necesse est animari:...» — *DSA* III, (678 D): «Primo ponendum est solidum quoddam ipsius spiritualis amoris fundamentum, in quo eius sunt collocanda principia;... Fundamentum illud Dei amor est;...» — SC III, 4. (580 C): «Hæc plane dilectio præmio non fraudabitur; quia Deus causa est cur exhibetur». He is speaking of mutual love in a community. — *Ibid.*, I, 33. (539 B): «... Deum non nisi propter ipsum, se et proximum non nisi propter Deum». — *Ibid.*, III, 19. (594 B): «Quomocumque ergo varietur istius amatoriis affectus, si isti, quem amamus ejus affectuose complectitur, nec sui copiam, nec

In another way, also, God is the source of friendship. For friendship springs from a universal law that governs the universe. This concept that recalls not only Cicero, but also the tenth century Gerbert, and platonic thought in any age, is mentioned by Aelred not only in the treatise on friendship but in his letter to Gilbert and elsewhere. God who is Love has willed that love be the law of all creatures. The four elements, according to ancient philosophy, are moved by friendship; all creatures are bound together in a chain of love. Aelred sees a vestige of «social life» in the stones and trees, an image of human friendship in the affectionate intercourse of animals. Here he is following Cicero, but the scale of his thought is more vast, for he includes angels in the cosmic pattern of friendship. God has made a multitude of angels so that they may live in society with each other and the sweet love between them may create one will, one affection, without envy, without solitude, the happiness of each increased by their communion of love. (39).

While there is a vestige of friendship in all creatures of the visible world, joining, harmonizing, uniting, this is only a similitude of love; the truth of love is realized only in the rational creation; to «love» is common to God, angels and men. Yet from the first creature to the last, the lowest to the highest, the highest angel to the least little worm, the divine goodness and love is present, not by an infusion in place nor diffusion in space nor by any movement, but by the stable and incomprehensible simplicity of His substantial presence containing, surrounding, penetrating, uniting all things, «federating» opposites in a pact of peace so that the universal order may be in tranquillity. Thus He established all natures and willed as His eternal «reason» decreed, that peace would draw together all his creatures and society would unite them. Nothing in His design is solitary; he binds all in a «society» (40).

aliud quid præter rationem præbuerit, illi nihil, quod ratio impendendum esse monstraverit, præbere omiserit, charitatis utique regulam non excedit». Aelred here is comparing two friendships, one full of affection, the other the fruit of reason only. This problem is recurrent in his thought on the relations of man and God as well as of man and man.

(39) *DSA* I, (667 B): «Ita inter ipsa insensibilia quasi amor quidam societatis elucet, cum nihil eorum solum sit; sed cum quadam sui generis societate et creetur, et persistat». — *Ibid.*, 667 C: «... ita motibus simul et vocibus suum exprimunt, et produnt affectum; tam avide et locunde mutua societate fruuntur, ut nihil magis quam ea quæ amicitie sunt curare videantur». Cf. Cic. *De am* 81. Cf. DELMAYR, *Deux adaptations*, p. 381. — *Ibid.*, 667 C: «Sic etiam in angelis divina sapientia providit, ut non unus videlicet crearetur, sed plures; inter quos grata societas, et amor suavissimus eandem voluntatem, eundem crearet affectum; ne cum alter superior, inferior alter videretur, locus pateret invidiæ, si non obstitisset caritas amicitie; et ita solitudinem excluderet multitudo, locunditatem augetet in pluribus caritatis communitio». Cf. also II, (690 B C).

(40) *Epist. ad G.*, 8-9, (361); «Video præterea in omni creatura, vel irrationali, vel insensibili, quoddam amoris vestigium; per quod et diversa junguntur, et

V. Friendship and Image-likeness

Here we meet a doctrine that is basic to Aelred's concept of the meaning of friendship in human life, as it is to that of most of his predecessors: the doctrine of the image. All union, even the love that is the harmony of the material universe, is a reflection of the unity of God who is one most perfectly and purely. In animals there is an image of an image, in the likeness of their relations to human friendship and the society of love. The human soul is the image of God *par excellence*. Aelred does not call the Trinity the model of human friendship, save by implication, yet his trinitarian allusions are original. Each friend desires that the good loved in the other be loved at the same time by both in a third, and that also this third beloved, love it in them. And the third is Christ, the center of human friendship as he is the center of the Trinity itself⁽⁴⁾.

Love is the likeness of the rational soul to God that makes it a capacity for God. The soul itself is the image of the Trinity: « the memory is a capacity for eternity, knowledge a capacity for wisdom, love a capacity for sweetness. In these three man is created to the image of the Trinity ». The image corrupted by sin — memory by forgetfulness,

dissidentia concordantur, et unantur contraria. Amoris quippe in cæteris similitudo creaturis apparet; in mente vero rationali ejus veritas operatur ». — *Ibid.*, 11. (361): « Diligere enim Deo, angelis, hominibusque commune est ». — *SC I*, 21. (524 A): « Porro si omnem creaturam a prima usque ad novissimam, a summa usque ad imam, a summo angelo usque ad minimum vermiculum subtilius contempleris, cernes profecto divinam bonitatem, quam non aliud dicimus, quam ejus charitatem; non locali infusione, non spatiosa diffusionem, non mobili discursione; sed substantialis presentie stabili et incomprehensibili in se permanente simplicitate omnia continentem, omnia ambientem, omnia penetrantem, ima superis conjungentem, contraria contrariis ... concordii quadam pace fœderantem; ut in ipsa creature universitate ... nihil possit esse contrarium; ... sed in ipsius ordinis tranquillitate, quem ipsi universitati præfixit, cuncta quasi tranquillissima quadam pace quiescant ». — *DSA I*, (667 A): « Ipse itaque summa natura omnes naturas instituit ... Voluit autem, nam et illa ratio ejus æterna præscripsit, ut omnes creaturas suas pax componeret, et uniret societas ». *Summa natura* is God, not « Nature ». *Ibid.*, 667 B: « Hinc est quod nullam generum rerum solitarum reliquit, sed ex multis quadam societate connexit ».

(4) *DSA I*, (667 A): « ... et ita omnia ab ipso qui summe et pure unus est quodam unitatis vestigium sortirentur ». — *Ibid.*, 667 B: « Verum inter ipsa sensibilia quanta amicitie species et societatis amorisque fulgeat imago, quis facile dixerit? » Here he follows Cicero, *De amicis*, 81: animals seem to imitate the human soul, almost to act by reason. — *De anima*, I, TALBOT ed., p. 67, 2-4: « Anima proinde humana ad sui creatoris ymaginem facta quodam modo in suo agit corpore, quod Deus in creature universitate ». Here the likeness is to the nature of God in relation to creation, not to the Trinity. He goes on to say, for example: « Et ipsa igitur totum corpus suum implet, non tamen localiter ». This is like William of St. Thierry, *Dyson. op. cit.*, pp. LXXV-LXXXVI. Cf. Aelred, *DSA* 661 A; VANSTREMBURG, *op. cit.*, p. 507. For the centering of friendship in Christ, see also *DSA* 662 B C, 672 C.

knowledge by error, love by cupidity — must be restored by a return to God by the affection of the soul, that human lowliness may be renewed⁽⁴²⁾. Christ is the true image and likeness of the Father, and man receives in himself the impress of that image. Therefore the return from the «land of unlikeness» is by Christ, and in particular by the imitation of the love of Christ. This charity is most perfect in spiritual friendship which is close to perfect love of Christ himself⁽⁴³⁾.

The idea of image-likeness penetrates Aelred's thought in other ways; he sees self-love as a model, a «form», a mirror, for love of one's neighbor, according to the word of God Himself. The love of God he calls a rule, norm or foundation, according to which other love must be measured and ruled. Love is at the same time the mirror and the rays

(42) SC I, 3, (507 D - 508 A): «Aeternitatis quippe capax est memoria, sapientiae scientia, dulcedinis amor. In his tribus ad imaginem Trinitatis conditus homo, ...» — Cf. also *serm.* 24 in *festiv. omnium sanctorum*, 3, (352 A): «In hac sexta beatitudine, quasi in sexta die, homo creatur ad imaginem Dei, ut qui comparatus fuerat jumentis per ignorantiam, conformetur Deo per intelligentiam». *Serm.* 2, in *Natali Dni.*, 280 D: «Videtur, fratres, per universum mundum homines currere ad legatos Imperatoris nostri, ut digni habeantur scribi in illa gloriosa et excelsa civitate, et ut ei reddant imaginem, hoc est animas suas. ... Una est civitas, ad quam omnes tendimus, in qua omnes volumus scribi; sed quamdiu sumus in corpore, peregrinamur a Domino. (II Cor. 5, 6). ...» — SC I, 4, (508 D - 509 A): «Corrupta est itaque in homine Dei imago, non abolita penitus ... Perseverat adhuc in anima rationali in hac trinitate, et si misera, ipsius beatæ Trinitatis impressio, quæ ad ipsam animæ relicta substantiam, quæ et sui reminiscitur, se novit, se diligit; ... et ex natura imaginem, et ex peccato corruptionem. Nam et memoriâ corrumpit oblivio; scientiam error obnubilat, amorem cupiditas conungustat». Note that the «narrowing» of love is its corruption. The soul becomes an image of horror; SC I, 28, (531 C): «Itaque intendi meipsum, quis essem, ubi essem, qualis essem. Exhorruui, Domine, et expavi propriam effigiem meam; terruit me tetra imago infelicis animæ meæ». This is the «regio longinqua dissimilitudinis» of *Serm.* 8 *de oneribus*, 391 A, to which the soul goes not by steps but by affection; SC I, 8, (512 B): «Patet, ni fallor, quoniam, sicut non pedum passu, sed mentis affectu a summo bono recedens, et in seipsa veterascens humana superbia, Dei in se corrumpit imaginem, ita mentis affectu ad Deum accedens humana humilitas, renovatur in imaginem Dei, qui creavit eum». Cf. also SC I, 32 (537 A, B).

(43) *Serm.* 8 *de oneribus*, 391 B: «... ipse [Christus] est imago et similitudo Patris ... At ille filius ... factus ad imaginem et similitudinem ejus, id est non ut ipse esset imago et similitudo ejus, sed ut impressam et expressam in se haberet imaginem et similitudinem Dei; ...» — *Tract. de Jesu puero duod.*, 3, (PL 184, 852 A): «Quis dabit mihi, bone Jesu, tuis inherere vestigiis et sic currere post te, ut quandoque apprehendam te? Ego prodigus ille filius, qui ... profectus sum in regionem longinquam, regionem dissimilitudinis, comparatus jumentis insipientibus, et similis redditus illis». — SC I, 31, (535 B): «Quid tandem divinæ tranquillitatis tam proximum, quam ... inimicum et amicum eodem oculo intueri; ad ejus similitudinem conformare. ...» Also cf. SC III, 4, (581 B): «ad huius divinæ similitudinis statum gratia pleniore progreditur, ut omne hominum genus uno mentis amore complectens ...» These texts refer specifically to charity, the highest form of which is *amicitia spiritualis*, which lacks universality *per accidens* — i. e. man's present fallen state and the temporal order.

that converge on it; as only in light can a mirror reflect light, so only one in whom there is love can see the face of love (⁴⁷).

A friend too must be an *exemplar*, a model whose guidance one can follow. Therefore friends grow into a conformity with each other, that is reflected even on their faces. Diversity can be overcome by charity, as in a monastery where the monks are so different in origin and character, some like lions, some like wolves, some like lambs. But God binds them together in one society by concord and peace, and they become like each other; the wolf does not dwell with the lamb, but becomes a lamb. Only the presence of God can do this. True friendship, however, must be based on an initial likeness and congeniality which he describes in Cicero's terms: agreement in things human and divine with benevolence and charity. Hence he advises the choice of a friend who is like you and sympathetic, as Simon was to him (⁴⁸).

(⁴⁷) *DSA* III. (688 C): «... nec in se ipsis naturale amoris continentur exemplar ... Ipse Dominus ac Salvator noster verò nobis amicitiam formam præscripsit: Diliges ... proximum tuum sicut te ipsum. Et speculum: Diligis te ipsam ». *Ibid.*, 700 C: « Sic vero se ipsum diligens, diligat et proximum, eandem regulam sequens ». — *Ibid.*, 679 D: « Fundamentum illud Dei amor est; ad quem omnia ... referenda sunt, ... » Cf. also *SC* III. 38 (618 A): the love of Christ is the *lines rectior*. — *SC* I, præf. 503: « Et quidem in hoc charitatis speculo, nulli, nisi in dilectione manenti, vultus se charitatis infundet; sicut nec nisi in luce existenti, sua cuique in quovis speculo redditur facies ».

(⁴⁸) *Ibid.*, I, 34. (513 B C): « Ecce quid perdidit: ecce quid amisit. Quo amissu, o exemplar vitæ meæ, compositio morum meorum ... Quid faciam? ... Quem mihi jam sequendum proponam? » — *Ibid.*, 543 C: « ... dux itineris mei, magisterium conversationis meæ ». — *DSA* III, (700 D): « Accedat paulatim consiliorum communio, assiduitas parilium studiorum, et quædam conformatio vultuum ». They are so « conformed » that as soon as they see each other, they reflect one another's expression: « Sic enim conformari sibi debent amici, ut statim cum alter alterum viderit, etiam similitudo vultus unus in alterum transfundatur; sive fuerit delectus tristitia, sive iocunditate serenus ». — *Serm.* I in *adventu Domini*, 215 C-216 B: « Considerate, quomodo vos hac Deus congregavit; de quam diversis regionibus, de quam diversis moribus. Alius vestrum, quando erat in sæculo, quid erat per similitudinem, nisi leo, quando propter superbiam suam et divitias suas despiciebat alios, et se extollebat super alios? Alius vestrum nonne erat quasi lupus ... Pardus est animal quoddam plenum varietate; ... hædus ... agno ... oves ... Videte modo, fratres, quanta concordia et pace Deus congregavit omnes istos in una societate ... non solum lupus habitat hic cum agno, sed hic lupus factus est agnus ... Quare hoc totum evenit, nisi quia descendit Dominus noster, ... » — *DSA* I, (665 C): « ... spiritalem [amicitiam] inter bonos vitæ morum studiorumque similitudo conglutinat ». — *Ibid.*, 666 C: « Amicitia itaque spiritalis inter bonos, vitæ, morum, studiorumque similitudine parituritur, quæ est in rebus humanis atque divinis cum benevolentia et caritate consensio ». — *Ibid.*, 683 D: « Præcipue utile est, ut cum eligas qui tuis conveniat moribus, tum consonet qualitati. Inter dispares quippe mores, ut beatus ait Ambrosius [*De offic.* 3, 22] amicitia esse non potest; et ideo convenire debet sibi utriusque gratia ». — *Ibid.*, 698 B: Quorum primum in istis meis conversionis, quadam michi morum similitudine, et studiorum parilitate comparaveram, cum adhuc essem adolescens ... »

VI. Likeness in Virtue as basis of friendship

Another aspect of likeness as basis for friendship appears in the importance set on virtue. For Aelred follows Cicero in making virtue a source of friendship. The contemplation of virtue forms the love of friendship, and sweetness of character is its beauty. Friendship can therefore exist only between good men, and the very desire for it, as for any virtue, is itself a proof of virtue ⁽⁴⁶⁾.

Friendship is impossible between good and evil men for there could be no communion of will and counsel. And how could it exist between the wicked, since its very origin is in the esteem of virtue? It can then be born only between good men, grow only between better men, but be consummated only among perfect men. Hence the degree of virtue determines the depth and intimacy and 'perfection' of friendship, and true spiritual friendship can be only between perfect men, wisely chosen, cautiously tried. Between such there could be no dissension, no division: 'For since friendship makes two into one, and as *one* cannot be divided, so friendship cannot be separated from itself' ⁽⁴⁶⁾.

The return of love for love is, in fact, a duty of the virtue of justice. This is true above all of God: 'What is more just than that your creature should love you, for from you he has received the very power to be able to love?' Justice that gives to each what is his due is, as it were, the incentive of fraternal love. But this requires that one love what should be loved and in the measure it deserves to be loved. Therefore the perfection of justice depends on the perfection of charity to such a degree that justice can be defined as ordered charity ⁽⁴⁷⁾.

Again like Cicero, Aelred makes the virtue required for friendship

⁽⁴⁶⁾ *Ibid.*, III, (679 D): 'Hic ... quem et virtutis contemplatio format, et morum suavitas ornat.' — *Ibid.*, II, (675 B): 'Cernitis igitur, nisi inter bonos amicitiam stare non posse.' Also I, (865 C, 866 C); Cic. *De am.* 18. — SC III, 24, (597 B): 'Etenim non modicum virtutis indicium est ipse amor virtutis.' — DSA I, (868 A): '... cum inter bonos et pessimos esse non possit voluntatum vel consiliorum ulla communitio.' — *Ibid.*, III, (674 D): 'Quamdiu enim quemquam ex studio malum delectat, ... quomodo ad amicitiam vel aspirare eum fas est, cum ortus eius ex virtutis opinione procedit?' Cic. *De am.* 37. — *Ibid.*: 'Inter bonos oriri potest, inter meliores proficere; consummari autem inter perfectos.' — *Ibid.*, III, (685 D): 'Cum enim amicitia de duobus unum fecerit, sicut id quod unum est non potest dividi, sic et amicitia a se non potest separari.'

⁽⁴⁷⁾ SC I, 2, (506 A): 'Et quid justius, quam ut creatura tua amet te; qui hoc ipsum accepit a te, ut possit amare te?' — *Ibid.*, I, 33 (538 D): 'Porro iustitiam, qua cuique quod suum est tribuitur, ... fraternae dilectionis quoddam dixerim incentivum, cujus quidem initium est nulli nocere; profectus, sine querela se ornatus exhibere.' — *Ibid.*, 539 B: 'Verum ut altius ipsius iustitiae regulas contempleris, nemo melius, nemo perfectus unicuique quod suum est tribuit, quam is qui diligit diligenda, et tantum diligit, quantum sunt diligenda.' — *Ibid.*, 539 B: 'Vides, ... ex charitatis perfectione perfectionem pendere iustitiae, ut nihil aliud videatur esse iustitia, quam charitas ordinata; ...'

possible of attainment « according to the condition of our mortality ». Combining Pauline and Ciceronian thought, he calls a man « good » who lives soberly, justly, piously in this world, asking nothing dishonorable from anyone and doing nothing dishonorable for anyone. He specifies the virtues required in a friend: he must not be a great talker, nor bad-tempered, nor inconstant nor suspicious. All these qualities, — silence, sweetness, constancy, trustfulness — he points out, make possible the mutual trust and self-abandonment of the friends by the security they create. Walter asks him, « where could you ever find such a man? ». Aelred clarifies the requirement: perfect virtue is not necessary, provided a man is able to control his temper, weigh down his lightness with gravity, put suspicions aside for the sake of love. But his disciples are not satisfied. With pleasant frankness Gratian asks Aelred about two friends of the Abbot, one still living, the other dead. The latter had been a most irascible man, yet to the end of his life Aelred had cherished their friendship with greatest reverence, never wounding, however often he was wounded himself. The former had offended Aelred deeply a few days before, to the knowledge of all, yet all knew that Aelred's friendship for him was in no way affected. Walter is shocked at Gratian's daring, but Aelred answers both objections. Of the dead monk, he says loyally, that his bad temper was only for others, never for his friend, and that for the sake of Aelred he had restrained his anger even in public. The second is a man very dear to him; and, once he has given his friendship, he cannot withdraw it. He excuses him: Aelred himself has more strength; so, when they disagree, it is his place to yield, provided nothing of faith or honor be at stake.

Even if the testing program reveals such defects, then, friendship should not therefore be abandoned as long as hope of amendment exists. However, speaking, it would seem, from bitter experience, as well as in a tradition that goes back to Xenophon's Socrates, Aelred warns us to resist the first impulse to love; friends are worth more care and scrutiny than property or stock, and virtue is their value. But to ask a friend to have virtue to which one cannot oneself even aspire is to act perversely and rashly⁽⁴⁹⁾.

This love originating in love of virtue is rational. Even if no affection moves the soul, reason alone can move it. For the love of virtue is naturally present in the rational soul, and even the report of virtues will attract it and draw after it the affection. Such love is most « useful » and most pure; it is the ordered love that is justice, — this is implied

(49) DSA II, (675 B). Cic., *De am.* 18; *Ep. to Titus.* 2, 12. — DSA II, (683 B C). — *Ibid.*, III, (681 A - 682 A); (683 D - 684 C). — *Ibid.*, 689 C D. — *Ibid.*, 689 A: « Quidam perverse satis, ne dicam impudenter, talem amicum habere volunt, quales ipsi esse non possunt. » Cf. Cic., *De am.*, 32.

when Aelred addresses his friend and relative Laurence of Westminster as « beloved and deserving of love »⁽⁴⁹⁾.

What are the virtues that Aelred looks for? To Gilbert Foliot he writes that what has won his love is that Gilbert is a cultivator of wisdom, a friend of quiet, most earnest in pursuit of spiritual knowledge, taking pains to read and frequently meditate on scripture in the sweet delights of prayer in spite of the weariness of ever pressing anxieties: he is good, wise and lovable. Walter d'Espece was of keen intelligence, prudence, modesty and foresight, loyal to his friends and king. The young prince, son of king David, was fair of face and gracious to behold; his humility equalled his authority, and he was so sweet, so lovable, so affable that he was loved by all. He describes his virtue as very complete — a monastic king and a kingly monk in whom are joined the two ideals of ruler and ascetic⁽⁵⁰⁾.

Aelred describes also the virtue of monastic friends that won his love. « My Simon », his most sweet friend, was a man of humility, tranquillity, gravity. His recollection, his measured walk, his grave words, his silence without bitterness were eloquent in the Cistercian silence. In his last year especially, what tranquillity, what peace, what circumspection marked his life; he seemed forgetful of all the outer world, « even of me », comments Aelred; he was the man whom Jeremias describes, « It is good for a man to have borne the yoke from his youth; he shall sit solitary, and be silent, for he has taken it upon himself » (Lam. 3, 27-28). Enclosed in the inner solitude of his soul, he went as one deaf, and as one dumb, opening not his mouth. Yet when occasion allowed

⁽⁴⁹⁾ SC III, 17, (591 B): « Nam animum, quem ad Dei proximique dilectionem nullus movet affectus plerumque movet ratio. . . » — *Genealogia Regum Anglorum*, (PL 195, 712 D): « Quoniam igitur animæ rationali naturaliter inest amor virtutum, odium vitiorum, quicumque bonis moribus virtutisque studuerit, facile sibi omnium illicet et inclinât affectum. » — SC III, 17, (591 B): « . . . rationabili amorî nihil utilius potest esse, vel purius. » — *Ibid.*, I, 33, (539 B). — *Vita S. Edwardi regis, Prefatio ad Laurentium Abbatem Westmonasterii*, (PL 165, 739 B): *dilecto et diligendo*.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ *Epist. ad G.*, 2, 361: « Audiens te, Pater beatissime, . . . cultorem sapientiæ, quietis amicam, spiritualia scientiæ studiosum, lectioni operam dare, et inter suaves orationum delicias, irruentium curarum molestiam saectarum Scripturam crebra meditatione solari . . . » — *Ibid.*, 15, (361-362); « Ibi intueor, quam bonum es; ibi amplector et sentio quam sapiens es; ibi dilector et gusto quam amabilis es. » — *De Bello Standardii*, (PL 195, 703 D): « Adfuit et Walterus Espec, vir senex et plenus dierum, acer ingenio, in consiliis prudens in pace modestus, in bello providus, amicitiam sociis, fidem semper regibus servans. » — *Ibid.*, 708 A: « Erat autem adolescens pulchra facie et decorus aspectu, tantæ humilitatis . . . tantæ auctoritatis . . . tam dulcis, tam amabilis, tam affabilis, ut ab omnibus diligeretur. . . ut et in rege monachum et in monacho regem prætereundum videretur. » Cf. the ideal of union of imperialism and asceticism in the Ottonian Empire, as found in St Adalbert and Gerbert. It is also the old tradition of the philosopher-king and the kingly philosopher.

the friends to speak, his words were as fragrant with sweetness as his face was beautiful with joy. 'Behold what I have lost, behold what I have been deprived of', Aelred cries, as he recalls these virtues. At the end of the *Spiritual Friendship* he speaks again of Simon, perhaps, without naming him. Looking back after many years, he feels that his friendship for him was based on their similarity of character and taste, more from feeling than from reason, although that element was not lacking. This friend died when their friendship was still only in its initial stages; he had been chosen in the prescribed manner, but not tried⁽⁵¹⁾.

The other friendship that Aelred contrasts with Simon's, was conformed to all his own rules, and based more on reason than feeling, i. e. on esteem for the virtue of the monk much younger than the Abbot. He loved him from his childhood, and together they ascended all the degrees of friendship, as far at least as their imperfection allowed. It was admiration for his virtues that first drew Aelred's heart to him, and as he saw him grow in virtue, it was a glory and delight to the Father Abbot. He instructed him in the principles of friendship, for he was a humble, gentle youth, severe in self-discipline, speaking little, untouched by irritability, murmuring, rancor, detraction. He too, like Simon, went his way as one deaf and dumb, opening not his mouth. Like a beast of burden, he too bore the yoke of regular observance in body and soul until death.

When, to make of his inferior a companion and a friend, Aelred raised him to the office of sub-prior, this change brought out virtue in both that increased their mutual love. For his friend, fearing that this charge would make him love Aelred less or be less loved by him — perhaps because more contact might mean friction or reveal unsuspected flaws — entreated him to change his mind, pleading youth, ignorance, and their very friendship. When this failed, he tried to offend Aelred by telling him 'haughty and modestly' all that displeased him in the Father Abbot. This very sincerity and liberty crowned their friendship, for because of it Aelred desired to make him 'no ordinary friend'. At the same time, Aelred's unfeigned pleasure in the unsolicited correction, his humility and humble friendship, bound the young monk far more closely to him than before, and he began to loosen the reins of his affection, and pour himself wholly into Aelred's heart. So the frankness of the one, and the patience of the other cemented their union. Aelred had found a man to whom he could entrust himself as he so longed; the two were transparent to each other, no round-about ways, no corners, everything bare and open. His friend's virtue became Aelred's support,

(51) SC I, 34. (539 C) ff. — DSA III, (898 B D). See EGENTER, *Gottesfreundschaft*, p. 226 n. (a).

his comfort; each could bear, leaning on the other, what would have been unbearable alone. Was this not heaven already, asks Aelred⁽²¹⁾.

In all these friends, Aelred seeks the same qualities, though in the monks he does not speak of love of learning. Grave and tranquil and true, such were the men he loved. In them he loved their likeness to the silent and suffering Christ, and the mysterious joy that their silence and pain did not wholly hide. His friends mirrored his own soul.

By these examples we see, therefore, how friendship is virtue. Cicero had put it not among those goods that are passing and perishable, but among those virtues that are eternal, and so did St. Ambrose, following him. But this virtue is so high and of so great perfection that it is not strange that in antiquity there were very few true friends. Of the several named by Cicero, Aelred mentions only Pylades and Orestes, and with some skepticism. They may have been ready to die for each other, or they may never have existed. But there is no doubt that among Christians there have been, not three or four, but many such friends. The examples Aelred gives rather weaken the force of what he has said, for martyrs and martyrdom hardly represent friendship as such. This discussion is in the first dialogue, and Yves is twice discouraged by what Aelred says. In the first place, friendship, he thinks, is as rare among Christians as it was among pagans, because of the perfection it demands; he is so terrified by its sublimity that he despairs of attaining it. When Aelred has assured him that there have been many friends among Christians, and goes on to describe it, Yves is still more overwhelmed: it is too high an ideal. Aelred's answer is this: friendship is as 'natural' as virtue, as wisdom, as the other things that are, as it were, natural goods to be sought and kept for their own sake. These goods are such that merely to possess them is to make good use of them; they cannot be abused or turned to evil. By 'natural' it is clear that Aelred means according to man's nature as God created it and as Christ redeemed it. Virtue, wisdom, are other names for the image of God; friendship is here put on a par with them. To Yves' objection that friendship is not at all on the same level with wisdom, Aelred admits that it is in a sense lesser. But it is *like* wisdom, as lesser virtues are like greater ones, — conjugal chastity, widowhood and virginity, for example. Thus while the last is highest, the others keep their value as virtue. They are close, neighboring to the higher virtue. So too friendship is neighbor to wisdom — so close that he dares say it is nothing else but wisdom itself⁽²²⁾.

(21) DSA III, (698 D - 700 B).

(22) *Ibid.*, I (663 C); Cicero, *de am.* 32: «Inter ipsas virtutes quæ æternæ sunt. . . .» — *Ibid.*, III, (688 D): «. . . virtus est enim, non quæstus; . . .» — Ambrose, *De offic.* 3, 22. — DSA III, 684 A - D. — DS = I, (668 B): «Manifestum

Yves finds this hard to accept. But Aelred does not retract his claim. Friendship is so close to wisdom that he can almost say *amicitia* is nothing else but wisdom. Interpreting *Prov.* 17, 17, rather freely to his argument, he reasons that if a friend is one who loves (in all times), and if, as our Jerome says, a friendship that is true can never end, and if friendship can exist only in charity, then in friendship there is truth, eternity, charity; and what are these but wisdom? Since therefore in friendship eternity flourishes, truth shines forth and charity spreads its sweetness, see whether you ought to deny the name of wisdom to these three.

Yves understands what Aelred implies. Wisdom is divine, it is God Himself, the Word: "O what is this? Shall I say of friendship what John, the friend of Jesus, said of charity: God is friendship?" Aelred acknowledges that this is unusual and has not the authority of Scripture, but holds that he can at least, without fear, apply the following words to friendship: he who abides in friendship abides in God and God in him (*).

This sudden ascent that amazes his listeners, and presumably, since Aelred himself describes this reaction, amazed other listeners in real life, leaves Cicero and his virtue far behind. Can Aelred be speaking of the same human relationship that Cicero called friendship, when he says that it is God Himself, that to have this relationship is to be taken up into the mystery of God?

Yet Aelred is only drawing the logical conclusion from Yves' own premises in his search for friendship. For Yves — or really, perhaps, Aelred himself, as Yves' account of his experience is paralleled in the prologue by Aelred's account of his own, just as in the *Mirror* the novice

profunde est amicitiam naturalem esse, dicit virtutem, sicut sapientiam, et cetera que propter se, quasi bona naturalia, et appetenda sunt et servanda; quibus ornatis, qui ea habet, bene utitur, quibus nullus prorsus abutitur. — *Ibid.*, (668 D-669 A): "Sæpe minora maioribus, bona melioribus, inferiora fortioribus, etsi non consequantur, coniunguntur tamen maxime in virtutibus; que licet a se graduum diversitate discrepent, quadam sibi tamen similitudine vincuntur. Victoria enim est virginitati viduitas; viduitati conjugalis castitas; et quamvis inter has virtutes magna sit differentia, in eo tamen quod virtutes sunt, nonnulla est convenientia. Neque enim ideo pudicitia conjugalis virtus non est, quia precellit continentia vidualis; quibus licet sancta præferatur virginitas; earum tamen gratiam non obliterat. Quamvis si ea que de amicitia dicta sunt diligenter advertas, invenies eam sapientiam sic vicinam vel inferam, ut pene dixerim amicitiam nihil aliud esse, quam sapientiam."

(*) *Ibid.*, 669 A: "Cum igitur in amicitia æternitas viget, et veritas luceat et caritas dulcescat, utrum nomen sapientiam tribus his debess abrogare, tu videris." — *Ibid.*, 670 A. Cf. I *Jos.* 4, 16: "O quid est hoc? Dicamne de amicitia quod amicus Iesu Iohannes de caritate commemorat: Deus amicitia est?" Ailredus: "Inusitatum quidem hoc, nec ex Scripturis habet auctoritatem; quod tamen sequitur de caritate, amicitiam profecto dare non dubito, quoniam: Qui manet in amicitia, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo."

voices Aelred's own problems — had once found Cicero's words profitable and sweet, until he had learned to know Christ. After that, nothing had savor for him or light unless the name of Jesus were there, for it had stolen all his affection. He still desired, still needed human friendship, but Cicero's words were now so dead. Yet perhaps, he thought, he could test them by reason, and prove their value by the authority of Scripture and thus translate them into a new world⁽²⁵⁾. Friendship among the lovers of Christ would be both new and old; for the old terms and principles would be applied to a friendship that would begin in Christ, be preserved according to Christ, and have its end and value referred to Christ. Since Christ is the Wisdom of God, such a friendship will necessarily grow in new dimensions. Yet the reactions of Aelred's disciples are understandable — Yves' despair and amazement; Walter's first movement of delight, almost ecstasy, and his later rejection of such friendship as too sublime and perfect; Gratian's more moderate response, that it was not «popular», nor the kind they were used to dream of. The dialogues have, in fact, a kind of rhythm: the interlocutors speak of friendship on the ordinary level; Aelred lifts it up suddenly to the mystical; they gasp, and bring it back to earth again. It seems here as if he is doing more than merely decorating the ancient temple of friendship; rather he is using the old columns and freizes to build up his new concept⁽²⁶⁾.

⁽²⁵⁾ DSA I, (662 A): «Yvo. Non usquequaque ipse michi ignotus est liber [Cic., *De am.*], utpote qui in eo aliquando plurimum delectabar; ...» — Cf. also prologue, 659 A, and 659 B - 660 A: «Igitur cum sacra Scriptura dulcesceret, ... occurrebant animo, quae de amicitia in praefato libello legeram; et tam mirabar quod non michi more solito sapiebant. Iam tunc enim nichil quod non dulcissimi Ihesu fuisset melle mellitum; nichil quod non sanctarum Scripturarum fuisset sale conditum, meum sibi ex toto rapiebat affectum». — The same is said by Yves, 662 A. In the prologue, Aelred speaks of having found many passages in the Fathers on friendship and of his intention to write on «spiritual friendship» and prescribe for himself rules for a chaste and holy love (660 A). In Yve's words, he gives his method (662 A B):

«Eapropter vel ea ipsa quae dicta sunt, si tamen sunt consona rationi, vel certe alia quae disputationis istius possit utilitas, velim michi Scripturarum auctoritate probare; et quemadmodum ea ipsa quam inter nos oportet esse amicitia et in Christo inchoetur et secundum Christum servetur et ad Christum fins eius et utilitas referatur, plenus edoceri».

⁽²⁶⁾ *Ibid.*; also, 664 A: «... eius mirabili sublimitate territus, iam pene despero.» 669 A: «Obstupesco fateor; nec facile id michi persuaderi posse existimo». — *Ibid.*, II, (671 D): «Sed hoc quod ultimum posuisti, quod me totum rapuit, et pens abruptum a terrenis, ...» — *Ibid.*, III, 691 C: «Hae amicitia tam sublimis et perfecta est, ut ad eam aspirare non audeam». — *Ibid.*, II, (673 D): «Amicitia haec, ut video, non est popularis, nec qualem eam somnare consuevimus. Nescio quid hic Galterus hactenus senserit: ego nichil aliud amicitiam esse credidi, quam inter duos tantam voluntatum identitatem, ut nichil velit unus quod alter nolit; ...» — Cf. *Ibid.*, III, (691 C), where Walter says: «Michi et huic Gratiano illa sufficit, quam tuus Augustinus describit. ...» (*Confes.* IV, 8-9). Aelred answers: «Amicitia

C. ORDER AND HIERARCHY OF FRIENDSHIP

Friendship therefore not only springs from virtue and is itself a virtue, but also is an indispensable means of attaining virtue. It is not a decorative but an essential element of Christian supernatural life. Aelred does not affect the stoic attitude that the perfect man needs no friend, save to exercise on him the virtue of friendship, not even in the Christianized form of this attitude, that has perhaps sometimes appeared in later writers. His 'perfect man' needs a friend. God has no need of our goods, nor of our love; but no other relationship is comparable to His love. For human beings are not God; each needs the other. Woe to the man who is alone, and he is alone who has no friend.

What is this need? It is especially to draw each other on to virtue, made easier by mutual affection; it is to draw near to God in and through one another; by enjoying each other in God to come to enjoy God in himself. When in the beginning of the treatise Aelred greets Yves with: 'Here we are, you and I; and Christ, I hope, is the third between us', it is implied that Christ is there with the two in a way that neither could attain alone. Friendship is Aelred's interpretation of 'When two or three are gathered together in my name...'. And, at the end, he tells how he and the beloved sub-prior were each Jacob's ladder to the other: 'Was it not already a participation in beatitude thus to love and be loved; thus to help and be helped; and thus from the sweetness of brotherly charity to take flight to that more sublime splendor of divine love; and on the ladder of charity now to God to the embrace of Christ himself, now to come down to refresh ourselves sweetly in the love of the neighbor?' It is already heaven, union with God: the sweetness of human love flies to the splendor of divine love; in the consciousness of the human awakens consciousness of the divine. The human is not discarded; together the friends go up to mystical union, and together come down again to rest sweetly in their mutual love⁽⁷⁾.

Each love progressively enlarges man's capacity for love. His love

hinc carnaliter est, et maxime adolescentium; ... As he does not deny the possibility of friendship among pagans, neither does he totally reject this form of friendship, but hopes that with maturity it will develop into a higher friendship that will raise the friends to the friendship of God (692 A). Cf. DELMAYE, *Deux adaptations*, p. 303.

(7) SC III, 22, (596 A): '... in mutua autem dilectione, quoniam mutuo indigemus, necesse est ut nobis invicem consulamus'. — DSA II, (671 A): 'Solutus omnino est, qui sine amico est'. — SC III, 24, (597 B): '... pro ... emulatione virtutum, quae ipso affectu facillius excitatur. ...' — *Ibid.*, 22 (596 A): 'Debet quippe desiderium ad hoc esse: ut, sicut decet, mutuo nobis fruamur in Deo; et ut Deo invicem fruamur in ipso'. — DSA II, (661 A); III, (700 B): cf. *infra*, n. 118.

of himself is the beginning of the love of God; his love of another demands an enlargement of his heart's capacity. Both loves are, as it were, sparks of that divine love that through them little by little is enkindled and absorbs them in a marvelous way into its own fullness, leading the whole love of the soul to that sublime and ineffable good, stealing it away. In his figurative interpretation of the three Sabbaths, Aelred teaches the same doctrine: the seventh day, love of self, is the beginning; the seventh year, love of neighbor, is the development; the fiftieth year, love of God, is the fullness of love that is Sabbath peace.

The same qualities that Aelred is always seeking distinguish each Sabbath. In the first, man retires into the secret interior of his own soul and closing the door, contemplates his interior treasures. Nothing is unquiet, unordered; all is joyful, in harmony, peace-making, tranquil, and from this springs a marvelous security, from the security a marvelous joy, from the joy a certain «jubilus». This «self-love» is Cassian's purity of soul; in Aelred's words, purity of conscience, tranquillity of conscience.

To love another, is to leave this secret dwelling and go to the «reception room» of one's heart. Here one is enlarged, for one's own soul is felt united to the souls of others by the cement of charity. Again all is peaceful, there is no agitation of envy, no fire of anger, no arrows of suspicion, no gnawings of sadness: all tumult is silenced, and in the sweetness of a friend's love there is freedom and rest. The two souls are burned into one by the fire of charity.

Finally, the mind, purified by these two loves, enters all the more totally and securely into the embrace of the divine love, the Sabbath of Sabbaths, that is an entering not into one's own secret place but into the sanctuary where Christ Jesus absorbs the spirit before his face into His ineffable light and sweetness. Here too is silence, tranquillity, joy.

In each of the three loves there is rest and spiritual Sabbath. In the first, the soul is gathered within itself; there is rest in purity of conscience, cessation from evil-doing, and an experience of how sweet is Jesus in his humanity. In the second — love of neighbor — the soul is extended beyond itself; there is rest in the most sweet union of minds, cessation of cupidity, and a vision of how perfect Jesus is in his love. In the third, the soul is ravished above itself; there is rest in the contemplation of God, cessation of all dissension, and vision of how sublime Jesus is in his divinity⁽¹⁰⁾.

(10) SC III, 2. (578 A B); 6. (583 C); 3. (578 D — 579 A): *puritas conscientie, conscientia tranquillitas*. Also: *inchoatio, promotio, plenitudo* *Ibid.*, 4. (579 B): «... sicque ad quemdam tranquillissimum mentis sue sinum omnes rapit, ubi dulci quodam affectu omnes amplectatur et fovet, ac secum unum cor, et unam animam facit; ...» — *Ibid.*, 579 D: «... ex multis animabus unum cor et una

1. Order of love, *amor*: Self-neighbor-God

Love must be «ordered», and so too must the love of friendship. This order is primarily in the object: God, neighbor, self; but also in the mode: God must be loved *above* self, the neighbor *as* oneself. But this does not mean that God, the Absolute, is in the same scale with the created.

Self-love is, in a manner, the measure of love for other men, but all three loves must co-exist if any one is to be true. You do not love yourself or your neighbor, if you do not love God; nor can you love your neighbor as yourself unless you love yourself, nor love God unless you love your neighbor. Hence while they are distinct, there is in this triple love a marvelous unity. Aelred here seems to imply a trinitarian image-likeness in man.

Love of self precedes love of neighbor in order of time, Aelred holds. He is not really following St. Bernard's order of the priority of «carnal love», for his «self-love» is a purified love; it is, in fact, *puritas mentis*. In time also, love of neighbor precedes love of God, «in order, but not in dignity». But a «portion», if not the fullness, of divine love must precede both these loves, without which they are dead. For love of God is not in competition with love of man, rather it is the very soul of that love, living most fully of its own life and by its presence giving participation in its vital essence. Such a concept of love explains Aelred's total acceptance of human friendship with no fear of rivalry with the «friendship of Christ», such as we find in the *Imitation* ⁽²⁹⁾.

anima charitatis igne conflatur». Cf. St. Paulinus of Nola and St. Anselm: constare in unum. — Ibid., 6, (582 D - 583 D); (583 D): «Primo requies in puritate conscientiae; deinde in multarum mentium dulcissima conjunctione; postremo in ipsius Dei contemplatione. In primo Sabbato vacatur a crimine; in secundo a cupiditate; in tertio ab omni prorsus disensione. In primo gustat mens, quam dulcis est Jesus in humanitate; in secundo videt quam perfectus in caritate; in tertio quam sublimis in Deitate. In primo colligitur ad se; in secundo extenditur extra se; in tertio rapitur supra se».

⁽²⁹⁾ *Ibid.*, I, 33, (539 B): «... Deum scilicet supra seipsum, proximum tanquam seipsum; ...» — *Ibid.*, III, 2, (577 D): «Nam neque se diligit, qui vel proximum, vel Deum non diligit; nec proximum diligit tanquam seipsum, qui non diligit semetipsum. Porro Deum non amare coarvincitur, a quo proximus non amatur.» *Ibid.*, 2, (577 D): «Nunc vero considerandum est quia, licet in hac trina dilectione manifesta sit distinctio, inest tamen eis mira quaedam complexio; ita ut singulae in omnibus, et omnes inveniuntur in singulis; nec una sine omnibus habeatur; et non vacillante ab omnibus recedatur.» — 578 B: «Interim hi tres amores et ab invicem coarvincuntur, et ab invicem nutriuntur, et ab invicem accendantur: porro simul omnes perficiuntur.» — 578 A: «Nam profecto quaedam hujus dilectionis portio, et si non plenitudo, et sui et proximi dilectionem praecedat, necesse est, sine qua utraque illa mortua est, ac proinde nulla est. Videtur enim mihi Dei dilectionem quasi aliarum dilectionum animam esse, quae et in seipsa plenissime vivit, et aliis sui praesentia essentiam vitalem impertit, absentia mortem inducit.»

II. Hierarchy within the love of neighbor

Aelred further elaborates the order-concept within the « love of neighbor » itself. Any private love (*amor*) must come second to religion, faith, charity to fellow-citizens and the welfare of the people. Religion and faith here seem to mean obligations of loyalty, fidelity to Church and ruler; if so, this recalls Alcuin and Gerbert who put loyalty, « friendship », for the prince before that for any private individual. Therefore reason must order friendship, rule affection, so that the advantage of many shall come before the sweetness enjoyed by the friends.

Ordered love also demands that a man should love only what ought to be loved, and in the measure in which it should be loved. He must not put two friends that are unlike on the same level of friendship, nor discriminate between two whose claims are equal ⁽⁶⁰⁾.

This is explained in an elaborate interpretation of the heart as the Ark. Its vastness is a spiritual capacity or ark; its virtues are the incorruptible wood that fashions it; its compartments and floors are « spiritual receptacles » where each kind of neighbor is housed according to his dignity or rank.

In the lowest floor of the ark are enemies, compared to raging wild beasts to whom is due only the help of prayer, and, only after all others, material aid. The reptiles and beasts of burden are those who are not our enemies nor adverse to us, nor inhuman and cruel in their ways, but whose wisdom is wholly earthly and who are slaves of vile passion. To them is due prayer, correction and material help, before enemies but after anyone else. The third rank are those described not as beasts but men; they are not slaves of passion, yet are not desirous, either, of high perfection. Their dwelling in the heart is the more « interior », the more they are bound to us by kinship, friendship or service. A higher place goes to those likened to birds, whose spiritual wings carry them above purely human virtue. The closer they are to God, the higher their place in the spiritual ark. Among them too are degrees of intimacy. The more interior and secret places of our heart are for those bound to us by the most sweet chain of spiritual friendship; they are to be treasured more lovingly, embraced more closely, cherished more sweetly. But the highest place of all is for the maker and repairer of the spiritual ark itself, « Jesus most fair, alone, with no companion ».

(60) DSA III, (685 C): « Non enim amor praeponderare debet religioni, non fidei, non caritati civium, non plebis salutis. » — *Ibid.*, 698 B: « Hæc est enim amicitia ordinata, ut ratio regat affectum, nec tam quid illorum suavitas, quam quid multorum petat utilitas attendamus. » — SC III, 18, (302 B): « Hic est enim amor ordinatus, ut nec diligat homo quod diligendum non est, diligat autem quidquid diligendum est, amplius tamen non diligat quam diligendum est; nec æque diligat quæ dissimiliter diligenda sunt; nec dissimiliter quæ æque diligenda sunt. »

Again Aelred does not put the love of Jesus in competition with the other loves. That divine love informs and orders the others by its own sweetness and in each is the fragrance and light, the delight and beauty of love. He alone is loved in all, before all; he possesses the innermost sanctum of our heart⁽⁶¹⁾.

In speaking of the Sabbaths, Aelred gives a similar hierarchy of human relations. The six years that precede the Sabbath of fraternal love are compared to six kinds of men in whose love it is necessary for the soul to be exercised before it can attain perfect love of neighbor, which is fulfilled most perfectly in friendship. The order is reversed here, or rather it is somewhat difficult to see what order he is following, except that of detachment from self. The first love is «natural»; i. e., for those of our own blood. The second, those bound to us by spiritual friendship and, third, by exchange of services. This does not transcend the pharisaic level, for one loves those who love in return. The fourth love is for those who are subject to the same yoke of monastic discipline; the fifth, those who are outside the Church, — pagans, Jews, heretics, schismatics; the sixth, enemies. Here he puts love of enemies as the high point of fraternal charity, in which a man is made son of God and most fully restored to the image of the divine goodness. This is true if man, like God redeeming man, forgives his enemy and makes him his friend.

He comments later on this, however, and qualifies the apparent conclusion, inconsistent with his thought, that friendship is low in the scale. On the contrary, it is highest, the other relations remain incomplete; their perfection will come only in heaven, when affection as well as reason, «enjoyment» as well as «use», will give them fulfillment. In this life most men are only «used». For enemies can be loved only as a source of purification in trial and suffering; teachers are loved only for the learning and elders for the consolation they give; those who serve only for their support and help. But those whom we embrace with tender affection give our life its sweetness, our spirit its delight, and even now we can «enjoy» as well as «use» them; that is, «use» them with joy and delight⁽⁶²⁾.

(61) SC III, 38, (617 A-618 A); (617 D-618 A); «... in omnibus sapiat, in omnibus fragret, in omnibus luceat, in omnibus splendeat, totamque inferiorem latitudinem ad unum suae dilectionis cubitum linea rectiore traducat. Ipse solus in omnibus, ipse solus praes omnibus, et affectum nostrum afficit, et amorem exigit; ipse sibi . . . interiorem in pectoris nostri mansione requirit.»

(62) SC III, 4, (579 D-581 B); 39, (518 A-619 C).

III. Hierarchy of friendships: kinds of friendship

Besides determining the hierarchical place of friendship in human relations, Aelred distinguishes an ascending order within friendship. Cicero and Aristotle deny the name of friendship to any but the highest form; for them it is only that purely disinterested love that is itself virtue. Aelred however sees lower forms as deserving the name, and being potentialities for the development of higher forms. There are, then, three forms corresponding to Aristotle's *bonum delectabile*, *utile* and *honestum*: carnal friendships, worldly friendships and spiritual friendships. But those whose only bond is a communion in evil cannot in any way be called friends, and the noble name of friendship cannot be applied to their relations. For a friend is one who loves, and he who loves evil cannot love either himself and his own soul or the soul of another. A deceptive likeness to true friendship is found in the most depraved, in the affections and the sweetness found in even them. Yet this sweetness is precarious and perilous, as he himself experienced, and the purer and nobler the friendship is, the more secure and sweet the happiness it gives ⁽⁶²⁾.

a) Carnal friendship

Carnal friendship can, then, be of two kinds. The first is created by a common love of vice, and is wholly reprehensible. The second is childish, created by a changeable pleasure-seeking affection. Aelred uses the same terms to describe these two kinds of carnal friendship, and reproduces the description of the first as given in book I (665C ff.), almost word for word in book II (676A ff.), when speaking of the second, save that in the latter case, he allows hope that good may come from it, despite its defects.

Carnal friendship springs from blind affection with a certain violence, an impetus that carries one away without deliberation, trial or reasonable control. It runs its course regardless of restraint, honor and even convenience, doing all things inconsiderately, indiscreetly, frivolously and immoderately. It distorts the principles of true friendship, interpreting «union of will» to mean readiness to commit any outrage for

⁽⁶²⁾ Cic., *De am.* 51. Cf. DELHAYE, *Deux Adaptations*, 316-317. — Aelred, *DSA I.* (665 A-C). — *SC I.* 28 (531 D): «... vinculabat me catena pessimæ consuetudinis meæ, vinciebat amor sanguinis mei, stringebant vincula socialis gratiæ, maxime nodus cuiusdam amicitie. dulcis mihi super omnes dulcedines illius vitæ meæ. ... Placebat amicitie grata connexio, sed semper timebatur offensio, et certa erat futura quandoque divisio. ... » In *DSA II.* 677 B. Aelred mentions the worst form about which he refuses to speak; presumably homosexuality. Cf. I, (665 C) for the likeness of false and true friendships. — *DSA I.* (665 B): «... quanto honestior est tanto est et securior; quanto castior, tanto [et] iocundior; quanto liberior, tanto et felicitior ».

the « laws of friendship ». It is therefore agitated, unquiet, as if driven by the Furies, and in the end either destroys itself by this very violence, or is dropped with the same lightness with which it was first formed.

Such friendship is in conflict with God; and one who wishes to leave the world and be converted to God is attacked by it and other carnal affections that oppose him, hold him back and cry out against his conversion. Such a struggle Aelred himself had experienced, and he condemned such friendship as being reprehensible in its origin, objectionable in its course, and leading to damnation. For it neglects the moderation of the spirit, and draws the friends to what is of the flesh.

Therefore, like a cloud, it obscures the mind and hides all spiritual joy; « man whose heart is in such a love is as much in Babylon, i. e. in confusion, as he who sets his heart on money or pleasure or his own will. Therefore a monk must set Jesus against all these affections, and turn from earthly to heavenly desires.

Yet, as we have said, Aelred does not wholly condemn them, especially, in the young. Provided they do not involve anything disgraceful, they should be tolerated in the hope of richer grace. They are even potentially seeds of a more holy friendship⁽⁶⁴⁾.

b) *Worldly friendship*

The second type, worldly friendship, springs from hope of material gain. Aelred expresses its greediness as rapacious fire: the consideration of some profit sets it ablaze. Its real nature is betrayed when you find a friend more interested in what you possess than in yourself. Worldly love is really cupidity, avarice, that weighs down to earth and curves the

(64) *Ibid.*, I, (659 A); II, (676 D - 677 A). — *Ibid.*, (665 C): « Et carnalem quidem creat vitiorum consensus; ... » — Cf. 665 C - 666 A. — *Serm.* 21 in *Natiuitate B. Mariæ*, 332 B: « ... incipiunt impugnare carnales affectiones, scilicet patris et matris, fratrum et amicorum ... obstant omnes, retinent, clamant ». Cf. also 332 C. — SC I, 28 (531 B - 532 D): Aelred's struggle. — *Ibid.*, (531 D - 532 A): « Vidi nec inuita reprehensione, nec media offensione, nec finem carere posse damnatione ». — DSA II, (677 B): « ... cum in ea amoris nunquam modus possit seruari legitimus, qui est ab animo ad animum ... neglecto spiritu ad carnis desideria trahat ». — *Serm.* 21 in *Natiuitate B. Mariæ*, (332 C): « Istæ certe affectiones, quasi quædam nubes obscurant animam, et abscondere nituntur omnem spirituales delectationem ». — *Ibid.*, (333 B): « Quando homo habet cor suum vel in diuitiis ... vel in delictis, vel in amore carnali parentum et amicorum suorum, et in propria voluntate, utique in Babylone est, id est in confusione ». — *Ibid.*, (332 D): « Ipsum Iesum ponamus contra omnes carnales affectiones, ... » — *Serm. de oner.* 3, (370 D - 371 A): Aelred describes how a certain holy virgin, having set aside all carnal affections, « ... cepit quodam mentis æstu et fastidire terrena, et desiderare celestia ». — DSA III, (691 D - 692 A): « Amicitia hæc carnalium est, et maxime adolescentium; ... quæ tamen ... si nulla intercesserit inonestas, spe uberius gratiæ toleranda est, quasi quædam amicitia sanctioris principia; ... » Cf. Cic., *De amic.* 22.

soul toward lower things. It too is of Babylon. There is nothing tranquil in this manner of loving and being loved; it is full of envy, suspicion, and fiery desires, and can lead to serious enmity among those who were closest friends. Even though this does not happen, it cannot last beyond this life, and death will destroy the unity it made.

Aelred includes in the material goods on which such friendship is based, all temporal prosperity — fame, friendship of the rich, good-will and fidelity of equals, popularity with inferiors. These are all gifts of fortune, and fortune is fickle. Such friendship « follows the purse », and its course is one of deceit and insecurity; nothing in it is certain, nothing constant, nothing secure. To it applies the word of scripture: « There is a friend according to the times; and he will not survive in the day of tribulation ». Take away profit, and he is no longer a friend, for his friendship was not for the person but his fortune.

Yet even such friendship can develop into a certain « portion » of true friendship. The bond, first made for gain, if kept faithfully can lead to a very great mutual grace and agreement ⁽⁶⁵⁾.

c) Analogies of spiritual friendship:

Monastic friendship or community

Before describing Aelred's concept of spiritual friendship, certain analogical forms of friendship will throw light on it: monastic, angelic and heavenly friendship, each of which is a reflection of the other.

Aelred attributes all the spiritual sweetness that monks find in their mutual charity to the teaching of their father St. Benedict. He conceives monastic life as a city within the great city of God that is the Church, and his order as a strongly fortified city within that inner city, walled around with good observances. In that city the monks claim fellow-citizenship not with Romans but with angels; they are then truly free, for they are not of servile Rome but the society of angels ⁽⁶⁶⁾. Here we see a link between monastic and angelic friendship.

The law of this city is the will of one man, and Aelred marvels to see three hundred men with one will, and that not their own. Obedience thus binds them, and also holy poverty, which is a great help to spiritual

⁽⁶⁵⁾ DSA I, (665 C - 666 A). — *Ibid.*, II, (377 C): *accendit*. — *Ibid.*, III, (689 A). — *Serm. in Adventu Domini de undecim oneribus Ysaie*, (PL 184, 820 B). This « curvature » recalls Bernard: « Babylon significat mundum, cujus amor cupiditas est; onus itaque grave multos premit, et ad inferiora incurvans ». — SC I, 25, (528 B); *Serm. de oner. 14*, (417 C - D); Eccl. 6, 8: « Est amicus secundum tempus; et non permanebit in die tribulationis ». — DSA I, (666 A).

⁽⁶⁶⁾ *Serm. 5 in Natali Sancti Benedicti*, (239 A): « . . . omnem spiritualem dulcedinem quam habetis in charitate . . . de doctrina ejus est ». — *Serm. 2 in Nat. Domini*, (221 A - C): « Munitissima civitas est ordo noster, . . . »

friendship. So great is the unity and concord among the brethren, that what belongs to each belongs to all. This is true of spiritual goods also. What one does, all do; what all do, each shares. They are members of one body, and what the one lacks, he possesses in his brethren, whether it be labors, vigils, fasting, prayer, reading and meditation: our community of goods « must not be understood, brethren, only of cowl and tunic, but much more of virtues and spiritual gifts ».

Nothing is their own; the weak can say: I am strong. Although some are superiors, some inferiors, unity and concord frees them from envy as it does the angels⁽⁵⁷⁾.

« To love and be loved », the phrase of Augustine that runs through all Aelred's thought as a recurrent theme, is the unique delight of friendship, its true happiness, and, in a monastery, this happiness is multiplied. Loving all and loved by all, the monk has rest, most sweet tranquillity, never torn by suspicion or shaken by fear. Aelred tells Walter and Gratian that two days previously, as he was walking through the cloisters, he seemed to be in the midst of a garden of paradise. The brethren sitting there were a most loving crown; he marveled at the leaves, flowers and fruit of each tree; in all that multitude there was not one whom he did not love and by whom he did not trust that he was loved. He was filled with a joy that surpassed all delight this world can give. He felt his spirit transfused into the spirits of all his brethren, and the affection of all passing over into him. This is what the prophet meant when he said: « Behold how good it is for brethren to dwell together in unity »⁽⁵⁸⁾.

(57) SC II, 17 (563 B): « Quam illud quoque mirandum, quod trecentis, ut reor, hominibus unus hominis voluntas est lex, . . . » — DSA, (694 D): « Magnam certe præstat spiritali amicitie firmitatem sancta paupertas, quæ ideo sancta est, quia voluntaria ». Poverty purges away avarice, *cupiditas*, that is the deadly enemy of true friendship. — SC II, 17, (563 A): « Inter fratres tanta unitas, tantaque concordia, ut singula videantur omnium, et omnia singulorum ». — *Serm. 23 in festivo omnium sanctorum*, (348 A): « . . . quidquid unus facit erit omnium, et quicquid omnes faciunt erit singulorum; . . . » Also *serm. 7 in nat. acti. Ben.* (249 A-C): « Quod non tantum intelligendum est, fratres, de cuculla et tunica; sed multo magis de virtutibus et spiritualibus donis ». — *Ibid.*, (249 C): « Infirmus ergo dicat: Fortis sum, quia . . . in alio est robor fortitudinis ». Cf. *serm. 23*, (347 C). — DSA I, (667 C).

(58) DSA III, (690 D): « Ergo et ipsum felicissimum non negabis qui in eorum inter quos vivit visceribus requiescit, amans omnes et amatus ab omnibus, quem ab hac suavissima tranquillitate, nec suspicio dividat, nec timor excutiat ». This applies to heaven also. — *Ibid.*, (691 A): « Nudiusertius cum claustra monasterii circuitrem, consedente fratrum amantissima corona, et quasi inter paradysiacas amoenitates singularum arborum folia, flores, fructusque mirarer; nullum inveniens in illa multitudine quem non diligerem, et a quo me diligi non confiderem; tanto gaudio perfusus sum, ut omnes mundi huius delicias superaret. Sentiebam quippe meum spiritum transfusum in omnibus, et in me omnium transmigrasse affectum, ut dicerem cum Propheta: Ecce quam bonum . . . » (Ps. 132, 1).

Yet, when questioned, he admitted that this is not friendship properly so-called; although he loved all, all were not admitted to his complete confidence. Friendship consists most especially in that revelation of all the secrets and plans of the heart (⁶⁹).

Angelic friendships

As Aelred compares monastic life to angelic society, so he speaks of a communion between angels and men which he calls friendship. Gabriel is one of the « friends of the true bridegroom ». Angels then are « friends » of the Word. They also have a certain society among themselves, and are united by a most sweet love. Man too can enter this society. The « spiritual man » should pray to them as to his familiar friends — for they are such — and should live always with them. Happy is he who merits to have them with him especially at death, where, like friends and neighbors, they help him in his departure. Aelred describes the nuns at Wattun whose lives were spent in spiritual offices and heavenly contemplation and were often rapt in ecstasy, so that they seemed to be united with the angelic choirs. But it is above all in the next life that man will thus enter the society of the angels, in which they enjoy each other in the pure unity of minds. In view of these statements, it is of interest to note that Walter Daniel describes Aelred's last years as spent in frequent converse with « supercelestial spirits », the light of angelic visitations often resplendent on his head, and their voices heard as he talked with them as he would with men (⁷⁰).

(⁶⁹) *Ibid.*, (691 B): « Plerosque omni affectu complectimur, quos tamen ad amicitie secreta non admittimus, quæ maxime in omnium secretorum, et consilliorum nostrorum revelatione constat ».

(⁷⁰) *Serm. 9 in Ramis palmarum*, (255 A): « ... loquantur amici veri sponalium quorum unus est iste Gabriel. ... » — *DSA I*, (667 C): « ... Inter quos grata societas, et amor suavissimus eandem voluntatem, eundem crearet affectum; ... » — *Serm. 6 de orat.*, (382 C): « Itaque, fratres charissimi, quicumque spirituales estis. ... orate ... aliquando amicos vestros, beatos, qui vobiscum sunt, spiritus. ... » — *Serm. 10 de orat.*, (399 A): « Felix, qui vitæ munditia et morum honestate angelicos spiritus ita sibi meruerit habere propinquos, ut quasi amici et proximi egredienti assistentes, velut bene cognito adgaudeant ». The concept of monastic life as an angelic life is a very old patristic idea and of frequent appearance in the writings of the Fathers. Cf. the chapter on this subject in Louis Bouyer, *The Meaning of Monastic Life*, tr. by K. Pond, New York, Kennedy, 1955. — *De sanct. de Wattun*, (790 C): Ecstasies and brutality do not seem to fit. — *Serm. 21 de Nativ. B. M.*, (335 D): « ... In illa beata vita frui conspectu conditoris nostri, interesse angelorum societati. ... » — *SC III*, 39, (618 C): « ... sicut et figuratur angelus pura mentium unitate ». — *Vita Aelredi*, 43, p. 50: « Set non erax in vobis pater noster in illo loco, in quo, ut pro certo quidam affirmant, sepe per illos annos illius lux angelica visitationis resplendit super caput eius, et quædam cum hominibus ita cum spiritibus supercelestibus loquebatur, ut cum solus ibi esset plurimorum audiebantur ibi voces. » — *ibid.* — « ... »

Friendship in Heaven

Friendship that is true is eternal; it is only begun here, in heaven it is perfected. Heaven is « a vast friendship ». Here only a few are friends; there friendship will include all, where all are good. Friendship on earth is a foretaste, the first fruits of that peace in which all will be brethren and live together in unity. If to have one friend is so unspeakable a grace and immeasurable a joy, what would it be to have, not many, but *all* as such friends: « This is that great and marvellous happiness that we look for, God himself acting and pouring himself out ... in this great friendship and charity ». Then we shall see and experience how good and sweet it is to share in the society of angels before the face of our Creator. All the orders and ranks of being will be found in so great friendship and charity that each will love the other as itself, rejoice in his happiness as in his own. As he said of monks, so he says of dwellers in heaven, the happiness of one belongs to all, and that of all to each. There will be no thoughts hidden, no affections dissimulated. Of that happy state, he concludes, the true friends we have even now are an image and foretaste, the friends who even now love us and are loved by us with utter trust and to whom all is open in firm, stable and constant security. Then shall be the fullness which not even the best friends now possess. Then fear shall be taken away, and there will be no solicitude for one another, no adversity to repel, or endure, above all no dread death to threaten separation, but the security of eternity itself will enfold the friends⁽¹⁾.

d) *Spiritual friendship proper*

Against this background of monastic, angelic and celestial friendship, each a form of the restoration of the original plan of God, all « paradisaical », Aelred's concept of spiritual friendship can be seen in its true light. It is movement toward the restoration of the lost Paradise, the lost Image. And it is the actual achievement, in part, even in this life, of that restoration.

Spiritual friendship is therefore for Aelred the only « true friendship ». Aelred speaks of it also in the *Mirror* where, as we have seen, he fits it

(1) DSA III, (690 C): « Hæc est vera et æterna amicitia quæ hic inchoatur, perfectitur; quæ hic paucorum est, ubi pauci boni; ibi omnium, ubi omnes boni ». — *Serm. 16 de orat.*, (422 C): « Hæc est pax, cujus primitiis interim refocillati gustatis quam bonum et quam jucundum sit habitare fratres in unum ». (Ps. 132). — DSA III, (690 B): « Hæc est illa mira et magna felicitas quam expectamus. Deo ipso operante, et diffundente ... tantam amicitiam et caritatem, ut sic quisque diligat alium sicut se ipsum; ... » — *Ibid.*, (690 C): « Ad hanc proinde similitudinem comparemus amicos quos non secus ac nos ipsos diligamus; quorum nobis nuda sint omnia, quibus omnia nostra pandamus secreta; qui firmi sint, et stabiles, et constantes in omnibus ». — *Ibid.*, (702 A B).

into his scheme as the highest, because most complete, human love. It is neither affection only, nor reason only, but both together. And in it there are degrees, in the most intimate of which alone he finds the full reality of friendship. A friend is not anyone whom we love both by reason and affection, but one who is joined to us more intimately, bound more closely than all others by the most pleasing alliance of spiritual friendship. It is the most sacred kind of charity, and, lest anyone think it censurable, our Jesus Himself has taken it to himself, transforming it by the revelation of his own love, a love for one in particular, not for all, shown especially when John rested his head on that most sweet breast. Not only is he the model, but all true friendship begins and ends in him: he is its end, its utility. What more sublime can be said of friendship than this, and what more true and profitable? Friendship, then, is a kind of trinity; between the friends is Christ, not to separate but to unite them to each other and to himself⁽⁷¹⁾.

This is the direction Aelred's thought on friendship always takes. Spiritual friendship is union in and with Christ.

Friendship with Christ

Aelred speaks of Christ in terms of human friendship. Love for him is secure, for he is always the same, always good and «delectable». He is all desirable, desired and to be desired; the good Jesus is the love of Aelred's heart, his mind, his soul; he embraces him, his one and only good, his sweet and delectable joy. To love him is sweeter than any other love, and in order to love all else, he placed all his affection in the sweetness of the Lord's flesh. That flesh he touches by the hand of holy desire, and clings to with «spirituali glutino», and, above all, kisses with a mystical kiss of surpassing sweetness⁽⁷²⁾.

(71) DSA I, (561 C): Yves begins with «... volo me aliquid de spirituali amicitia docere. . . .» — SC III, 4, (580 B); 39, (619 B C): «... spiritualis amicitia gratissimo fovere. . . .». Because Christ is thus the model of friendship, true friendship was unknown to pagans, according to Yves, who here seems more logical than Aelred (DSA I, 565 A B). — DSA I, (662 B): «... ea ipsa quam inter nos oportet esse amicitia et in Christo inchoetur et secundum Christum servetur et ad Christum finis eius et utilitas referatur. . . .» *Ibid.*, 662 C; 661 A: «Ecce ego et tu; et spero quod tertius inter nos Christus sit».

(72) *Serm. 1 de adv. Domini*, (212 A): «Et ideo secure amemus illum, qui semper est, et eodem modo semper bonus est, et eodem modo delectabilis est». — *Serm. 21 in nativ. B.M.*, (335 A): «... quid restat, nisi ut desideremus presentiam Christi; . . . Et quis illo desiderabilior, . . . Desideratus plane et desiderandus». — SC I, 1, (505 B): «Sonet ergo vox tua in auribus meis, bone Jesu, ut discat quomodo te amet cor meum, amet te mens mea, amet te ipsa viscera animae meae: amplectatur te intima medulla cordis mei, unum et solam verum bonum meum, dulce et delectabile gaudium meum». — *Ibid.*, II, 17, (562 B): «... plerumque expressius ac dulcius me Christum amare percipit». — *Ibid.*, III, 5, (582 D): «... omnem affectum suum ad suavitatem Dominice carnis

Christ then is the model of friends. Aelred quotes Ambrose: Christ has given the 'form' of friendship, to do the will of the friend and to reveal to him our secrets. Aelred emphasizes the latter, which is his own deep conviction. It is a great comfort to him to see Christ, the Lord of majesty, reveal Himself as sharing human affections, not only those of the strong, but also of the weak. For He wept at the death of His friend Lazarus. The mother of the Maccabees did not weep at the terrible fate of her sons; but God wept at His friend's death. These tears are more to Aelred than all the fortitude of philosophers. Moreover, Christ's friendship was not given to all in the same way; only one man rested on His breast⁽⁷¹⁾.

Christ is our friend also, for He has poured out His blood for us. Aelred thinks of death as of His coming, and of running to meet Him with great longing, as to one's most intimate friend. All he says of the love of Christ is full of most tender human affection, as when he thinks of the lost twelve-year old boy, whose beautiful face won all hearts. 'I think', he adds, 'they all wanted to draw him apart, kiss and embrace him. How sweet was his presence, and how familiar'. The reality of this love is seen in the touching account of Aelred's last days, when the image of the crucified Christ held his dying eyes and heart, and all he said was: 'Hasten, hasten... Hasten for Christ love... Release me, let me go free to Him whom I see before me', fixing his eyes like lamps of fire on 'the image of truth on the wood'⁽⁷²⁾.

Friendship with man

In his love of Christ, as in human friendship, Aelred seems to identify love and friendship itself with presence. Although the love of neighbor is an 'outer room', a kind of 'inn of the heart' to which the soul goes

extendat ». — *Serm. 24 in Festo omn. actorum.*, 3. (349 A): « Et nos, fratres, si aliquando Jesum manu sancti desiderii tangimus; si ei vel ad momentum spirituall glutino laboremus, . . . » These figures of sense knowledge are of 'experience'. — *Serm. 21 de nativ. B. M.*, (335 D): « Videbimus tunc illum, cujus spiritus super mel dulcis, et hereditas super mel et favum, et spiritualibus brachiis amplexabimur, et mira quadam dulcedine osculabimur ». — *SC II.*, 7. (553 B): « . . . quodam mentis osculo ipsum [Jesum] videretur amplecti ». — *Tract. de Jesu puero duod.*, 24. (PL 184. 865 A): « . . . sicque caeleste et divinum quoddam tuæ menti imprimens osculum, omnia viscera tua ineffabili jucunditate perfundet, . . . ».

⁽⁷¹⁾ *DSA III.* (691 B C). — *Serm. 2 in Nativ. Domini*, (295 D-226 B). — *SC III.*, 39 (619 B C): « . . . uni, non omnibus, . . . ».

⁽⁷²⁾ *Serm. 21 de nativ. Domini*, (332 D). Cf. *Joan.* 15. 13: « Greater love . . . » — *Serm. 1 de ado. Domini*, (212 A B): « . . . cum magno desiderio statim curramus ad eum quasi ad familiarissimum amicum ». — *Tract. de Jesu puero duod.*, 5. (PL 184. 851 B. 853 A B). — *Vita Aelredi*, 54. pp. 59-60; 57, p. 61; cf. also l. p. 19: « The whole strength of his mind was poured out like a flood upon God and his Son; . . . » — See Erik Pettersson, *Der Gottesfreund*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte XLII* (1923), 161-202. Also Eakerna, *Gottesfreundschaft*, pp. 241-242.

out, leaving the more interior room of the mind, friendship on the contrary is the reception of another into that secret place (*secretarium*) where even when absent in body they are present in spirit, and confer together, « alone with the alone », (*solus cum solo*),⁽⁷⁶⁾ — a remarkable transference of the famous phrase about God to a friend. He graphically describes the way a friend grew into his soul, rooted himself therein⁽⁷⁷⁾. It is memory by which the friend lives in him, memory that is a continual embrace, a real life. As memory means the realization of the presence of God within, so is it with the presence of a friend. Yves is always with him, even after twenty years; his spiritual face is alight before him, his sweet eyes smile at him, his loving words speak to him, so that he feels that either he is with Yves in a better world, or Yves has returned to converse with him in this lower existence. Nearness is not spatial, but measured by love⁽⁷⁸⁾.

The face signifies presence; it is also a reflection of the soul itself, its mirror, its conscience. Therefore the mere sight of a friend is a grace and the face of Simon was enough to make Aelred recollect himself in God. A friend's presence is, therefore, to be desired, for by it we are corrected if bad; spurred on if good; and confirmed by mutual encouragement if equally perfect⁽⁷⁹⁾.

⁽⁷⁶⁾ SC III. 3. (570 C): True love is an entering « *intra secretarium suae mentis* »; 4. (579 B): love of neighbor is to go out « *ab hoc secretiori cubiculo . . . ad illud pectoris sui diversorium . . .* »; 6. (583 A): love of God « *intran:que in illud sanctuarium, ubi spiritus sit ante faciem suam Christus Jesus, . . .* » 39. (619 B): « . . . quem vinculis charitatis in illud secretarium tuae mentis inducas, ut licet absens corpore, spiritu tamen praesens sit, ubi solus cum solo conferas; . . . »

⁽⁷⁷⁾ DSA III. (699 A): « *Hæc eum mihi in visceraverent multis modis, . . .* ». Dubois translates with regard to modern sensibilities: « *embraciné dans mon cœur* ».

⁽⁷⁸⁾ *Ibid.*, (698 B): « *Recordor nunc duorum amicorum meorum qui licet exempti praesentibus, michi tamen vivunt, semperque vivant* ». (Cic., *De am.*, 102). — *Ibid.*, (669 D): « *Equidem carissimi mei recordatio. Imo continuus amplexus et affectus, ita michi semper recens est, ut, licet humanis exemptus, conditioni satis dederit, in meo tamen animo nunquam videatur oblitte* ». — DSA III, (669 D-670 A): « *Ibi [in meo animo] enim semper mecum est; ibi michi religiosus eius vultus elucet; ibi michi dulces eius ardent oculi; ibi eius locunda michi verba sic sapiant, ut vel ego videar cum eo ad meliora transisse; vel ipse mecum adhuc in inferioribus conversari* ». — *Serm. 10 in Romis palms.*, (986 A): « *Nos itaque appropinquamus ei, quando profectus in illius amore; ille appropinquat nobis, quando dignatur misereri nobis* ». This refers to God, as does the following text (in n. 108).

⁽⁷⁹⁾ *Ibid.*, (268 A): « *Facies ejus significat praesentiam illius, praesentiam misericordiae ejus, praesentiam salutis nostrae per adventum ejus* ». — *Serm. 10 de oner.*, (399 C): « *Vultus animae, ut mihi videtur, conscientia est: quae omnium actionum, sermonum et cogitationum testis est. . . Conscientia quippe quasi speculum animae est: . . .* »

The face is the « conscience of the soul, » in that it is the witness of all actions, speech, thought; in it the conscience is reflected. — SC I. 34. (542 C D): « *Memini me saepe, cum oculis huc illucque discurrerem, ad unum ejus aspectum tanto pudore perfusum, ut subito intra memetipsum receptus, manu gravitatis*

It is no little solace in this life, to have one with whom you are united by intimate affection, in whom your spirit rests, into whose heart your soul can pour itself, and, in the secure harbor of friendship, be anchored safe from the scandals of the world. To his loving heart you can entrust all your thoughts without hesitation; the spiritual kiss of his understanding heals all your sicknesses; he weeps with you, rejoices with you, puzzles over your doubts; and in silence, peace, the embrace of charity and kiss of unity, you find refreshment and surcease; so closely do you join yourself to him that soul mingles with soul, and the two become one. So does Aelred recall what Simon was to him⁽⁸⁰⁾, and what the presence of a friend means, — all of friendship itself, really. The grace of a friend is an actual grace, that demands the actual contact of a common life.

Yet the presence of friends in this life, desirable and profitable as it is, is less desirable than the eternal dwelling with them and Christ in heaven. Although we long for both presences with the same desire, the former can be attained by travel, if friends are separated, but the latter only by holiness. Hence the one, while it may always be desired, may not always be sought, for reason may deny what affection longs for⁽⁸¹⁾.

Presence, colloquies

Presence meant, above all, «colloquies». Although as the novice says to Aelred, Cistercians speak only to three men, and that rarely and only of what is necessary, Aelred's life and writings seem full of converse. It may be because he was abbot. Sometimes indeed it seems as if his teaching on friendship could hardly apply to any simple monk

omnem illam compererem levitatem, ac me ad me colligens inciperem mecum aliquid utile acitare. Simul quidem loqui ordinis nostri prohibebat auctoritas, sed loquebatur mihi aspectus ejus, . . . Aspectus pudicus, maturus incessus, gravitas in sermone, silentium sine amaritudine ».

This brings up the problem of Aelred's recommending friendship to Cistercians who have no intercourse by word. He commends Simon's gravity in speech; — he has already said: «loqui ordinis nostri prohibebat auctoritas, sed loquebatur mihi aspectus eius». *Gravitas in sermone* need not be interpreted as conversation with Aelred, for the latter could have heard him speaking to superiors or in chapter. Cf., however, note 82, *infra*. — SC III, 24, (597 B): « . . . nihil enim obest, imo et prodest plurimum, si ejus desideremus presentiam cujus exemplo corrigamur, si mali sumus; si boni, promoveamur; si æque perfecti, mutua collatione firmemur ».

⁽⁸⁰⁾ SC III, 39, (619 A B). This description of what Simon was to Aelred does not seem to tally with what he wrote later (*DSA* 468 B - D) about the friend of his religious youth, who died before their friendship was really tested. Hence one may question the identification of the two.

⁽⁸¹⁾ SC III, 24, (597 B C). The end of sermon 15 and the beginning of 16 show Aelred in the act of leaving his monastery and returning after a journey, and the joy of that return was a day of exultation and gladness, a foretaste of heaven.

who would not, one would think, have the right to have such contact with others. Moreover, to make one monk his friend, as has been noted above, he had him raised to the office of subprior. In any case, he had apparently daily gatherings in his own cell of ten, twelve, even twenty monks, who conferred together about the spiritual joys of scripture and about the discipline of the Order. And from Gilbert's comment on Aelred's patience, these were animated assemblies of the silent men.

Aelred himself describes such meetings as turbulent — all in an uproar — one asking questions, another disputing, one bringing up Scripture, another Ethics, one vices, and yet another virtues. One who is silent is such an exception that he attracts the abbot's attention. «It is unnecessary», comments Knowles, «to dwell upon the combination of qualities, natural and spiritual, essential to the successful conduct of such reunions»⁽⁸²⁾.

Aelred recommends to friends conversation on virtue and on scripture, together to bemoan the miseries of life, to renew each other by revelation of mutual secrets, and to sigh together for the blessed vision of Jesus and heavenly goods. Such conversation could be only in a private talk; it is close to spiritual direction. «Solitude» meant not to be alone, but rather to be with the brethren, or with one brother, in friendly conversations, free from seculars. Such conversation was like spiritual food and drink, a banquet⁽⁸³⁾. His treatises, cast in dialogue form (the *Mirror* only in part) represent, if they do not reproduce, the conversations which he praises so highly.

(82) *Ibid.* (SC) II, 17, (562 D): «... quod tribus solum hominibus, et hoc rarissime, et vix de necessitate loquimur». The silence of 12th century Cistercians is not, however, to be identified with that of present-day Trappists. — *Vita Aelredi* 31, p. 40: «... de spirituali locunditate scripturarum et ordinis disciplina». — *In Cant. serm.* 41 (St. Bernardi *Opera*, ed. Mabillon, vol. 5, p. 287): «Memini me frequenter illum, cum coeptum de assidentibus aliquis interrupisset sermonem importune...», etc. — DSA I, (661 A): «... in turba fratrum me residente, cum omnes undique circumstrepent, et alius quæreret, alius disputaret; et iste de Scripturis, ille de moribus, alter de vitiis, alter de virtutibus quæstiones ingerent, tu solus tacebas;...» Yves was conspicuous by his silence! Cf. Knowles, *Monks Order in Eng.*, p. 260, n. 1. Knowles calls these discussions half-Platonic, half-scholastic in character. In Aelred's case the aim was primarily spiritual, not intellectual, but the monks were all steeped in Cicero, Augustine and, moreover, «they had even given themselves to a newer spirit, that of Arthurian romance; they had much to learn and leave before they could follow Aelred with the fourth gospel to the Cross». (*Ibid.*, p. 260).

(83) SC III, 40, (620 B): «Ergo si mutua delectat verborum collatio, sit sermo de moribus, sit sermo de Scripturis; nunc de miseris hujus vitæ congemiscamus; nunc in spe futurorum bonorum congaudemus; nunc mutui secreti revelatione recreemur; nunc simul ad illam beatam visionem Jesu, ac bona cælestia suspiramus». He warns against wasting time in trivialities. — Cf. DSA I, (661 A): «amica colloquia»; II, (669 B C); SC III, 39, (619 A): «... ad cuius grata colloquia ad consolatoria quædam carmina inter tristitia quæque confugas;...» —

Relation between friendship with Christ and man

All this indicates the relation between the love of Christ and human love. Yet is the latter to him only a detour, only a preparation and prefiguration of heavenly friendship? Its only value this, that by it we approach God through Christ? Each time we give ourselves to others, above all to a friend, we give ourselves to God, for God is love; God is friendship. This is again the heart of our problem, and Aelred suggests, as we have seen, the solution by the concept of analogy through which the Absolute, instead of destroying lesser values, is the very source of their existence.

Aelred himself in a platonic dialectic always rose, says Walter Daniel, from the beauty and usefulness of the creature, to him who is above all change. The conflicts of the secular friendships in his early life turned him to the joy, tranquillity and security that was in God alone, in whom no choice could err, no hope deceive. He praises those who lose all movement of thought and affection, even the sensible presence of Christ, in ecstasy, or in the deep silence of a soul wholly surrendered to suffering⁽⁹⁴⁾. Yet he never praises a total renunciation of friendship.

He no doubt makes friendship a means to union with God. The « spiritual kiss » that is his name for spiritual friendship, can be called, he says, the kiss of Christ, but a vicarious kiss by the lips of another.

It is in prayer that this kiss is transformed into the mystical kiss of Christ himself. For while praying for his friend with great intensity and longing, suddenly and insensibly one affection passes into another, and « touching » the sweetness of Christ himself, he begins to taste how sweet he is and to feel how dear he is. He describes the same transition in a sermon, adding that, all thought ceasing and even the spiritual love for the friend being extinguished, the soul is carried above itself and taken

Ibid., II, (669 C; 672 A): « . . . ad spiritale convivium . . . » — Aelred describes the sweetness of Simon's conversation, *SC* I, 34, (543 B): « Verum si quis eum accepta occasione quolibet conveniret affatu, tanta mox redolebat in eius sermone suavitas, tanta in vultu sine omni dissolutione apparebat hilaritas, ut quam fuerit attentum ejus vacuum amaritudinis, plenum dulcedinis, et modus loquendi, et humilitas proderet audienti ». Twenty years later he says (*DSA* III, 701 A): « Interea quam dulce habent conferre invicem, suæ studia mutuo patefacere, simul examinare omnia, et de omnibus in unam convenire sententiam! » To the nuns at Warton he attributes similar conversations with angels (790 C).

⁽⁹⁴⁾ *Dunois. op. cit.*, p. LXXVII; LXXIX; *DSA* I, (670 A). — *Vita Aelredi*, 2, p. 19. — *SC* I, 28, (532 A B): « Cœpti ergo conicere, quantum inexpertus potui. Imo quantum tu dedisti, quanta in tui dilectione jucunditas, quanta cum jucunditate tranquillitas, quanta cum tranquillitate securitas. Non ejus qui te amat errat electio, quia te nihil melius; non spes fallitur, quia nihil amatur fructuosius; non modi excessus timetur, quia in tui dilectione nullus modus præscribitur; non . . . mors formidatur, quia vita non moritur . . . » etc. — *Serm.* 3 *de oner.*, 371 A: « . . . omnes insuper spirituales, quos circa amicos habebat, extinxerit affectus, . . . » — *SC* I, 34, (542 D-543 A).

up in an ineffable and incomprehensible light, seeing only Him who is, and who is the being of all things⁽⁶⁵⁾. This is, however, a passing state of prayer, not a permanent stage of spiritual growth.

Objections were made by a good nun to this kind of prayer for she could not accept to forget her friends even for a time. «What», she said, «shall I not pray for my friends and benefactors?». She was answered: «At the time when you wish to rise to the higher contemplation of soul, it is necessary to commend and commit to God all whom you love, and, as if you were leaving this world, say farewell to every creature and aspire to the sight of Him whom you love». Prayer is a going outside this world, a flight to a spiritual desert⁽⁶⁶⁾.

But at the same time friendship is the highest step in the ascent to perfection; it is next to that perfection which consists in the love and knowledge of God; there is a natural transition from being a friend of a man to becoming a friend of God; there is between the two a certain similitude that makes this ascent easy. Friendship as a step to the love and knowledge of God is an easy transition from sweetness to sweetness, from affection to affection. For the love of the friend is inspired by Christ, who offers himself also as friend:

And so the friend, adhering in the spirit of Christ to his friend, is made one heart and one soul with him; and thus by the steps of love going up to the friendship of Christ, he is made one spirit with him in one kiss⁽⁶⁷⁾.

(65) DSA II, (673 C): «Hoc osculum non inconvenienter osculum dixerim Christi, quod ipse tamen porrigit non ore proprio sed alieno; ...» — *Ibid.*, III, (701 B-702 A) (701 C D are omitted in the text of Dubois): «Ita pro amico orans Christum et pro amico volens exaudiri a Christo, ipsum diligenter et desideranter intendit; cum subito et insensibiliter aliquando affectus transiens in affectum, et quasi vicino ipsius Christi dulcedinem tangens, incipit gustare quam dulcis est, et sentire quam suavis est». Cf. also 673 C D. — *Serm. 3 de oner.* (371 A): «Accidit autem aliquando, ut, cum amore solito orationi incumberet, mira quaedam suavitas superveniens omnes animi motus, omnes cogitationum excursus, omnes insuper spirituales, quos circa amicos habebat, extinxerit affectus: moxque anima ejus ... rapitur supra se, et ab ineffabili quadam et incomprehensibili luce excepta, nihil aliud videbat, nisi quod est, et quod omnium esse est».

(66) *Serm. 3 de oner.*, 371 D; SC II, 15 (561 A).

(67) DSA II, (672 A): «... amicitia optimus ad perfectionem gradus existit». — *Ibid.*, (671 D): «... quidam gradus est amicitia vicinus perfectioni, quae in Dei dilectione, et cognitione consistit; ut homo ex amico hominis Dei efficiatur amicus. ...» — *Ibid.*, III, (692 A): «... sicut hesternis die ab hominis ad Dei ipsius amicitiam, ob quamdam similitudinem diximus facillius transeundum». — *Ibid.*, II, (672 B C): «Verum quomodo ad Dei dilectionem et cognitionem gradus quidam sit amicitia, paucis advertite. ... Non igitur videtur nimium gravis, vel innaturalis ascensus de Christo amorem inspirante quo amicum diligimus, ad Christum semetipsum amicum nobis praebentem, quem diligamus; ut suavitas suavitati, dulcedo dulcedini, affectus succedat affectui». — *Ibid.*, (672 D): «Itaque amicus in spiritu Christi adherens amico, efficitur cum eo cor unum et anima una; et sic per amoris gradus ad Christi conscendens amicitiam, unus cum eo spiritus efficitur in osculo uno».

The three kisses symbolize the ascent from flesh to spirit, from human to divine. The kiss is a mingling of the breath, by which we live, without which we cannot survive an hour. In a kiss, two «spirits» or lives meet and mingle and become one, and in this there is born great sweetness; the affections of the two are roused and bound together. The bodily kiss is a symbol of union, whether of reconciliation, hospitality, peace, or love, — as when friends meet after separation. The «spiritual» kiss is proper to friends who are held under one law of friendship. It is a contact not of lips but of affection of heart, a commingling of spirit, in which the Spirit of God himself is present, into which He infuses a participation of heavenly sweetness. When the mind has become accustomed to this kiss and realizes that all its sweetness is from Christ, it longs to meet him himself, and cries out «Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth». (*Cant.* 1, 1). This is the «intellectual» kiss; the kiss of mystical union with Christ. It is the spiritual fruit of friendship and of its holy love and embrace⁽⁸²⁾.

The most explicit statement that indicates that Aelred does not contemplate the total extinction of the human in the divine comes at the end of his treatise where he describes the friends together going up together to the splendor of Christ's mystical embrace, coming down again to the sweetness of their mutual love⁽⁸³⁾. If friendship then is a ladder, or a step on the ladder of perfection, it is not one that is left behind forever, but rather one that must be ever present that the friends may together ascend and descend. It is moreover not only the way but also in a certain sense, an anticipation of the end; a portion of that beatitude not yet possessed in plenitude. This interpretation would seem to conform to his thought taken as a whole, and to his attitude toward friendship.

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(82) Powicke. *op. cit.*, p. xxii, mentions other versions of the three kinds of kisses. — Walter Daniel's and Bernard's — all of which differ. — *DSA* II. (672 D-673 D); (702 A).

(83) *DSA* III. (700 B): «Quid ergo? Nonne quædam beatitudinis portio fuit, sic amare, et sic amari; sic lavare et sic lavari; et sic ex fraternæ caritatis dulcedine in filium sublimiorem dilectionis divinæ splendorem altius evolare; et in scala caritatis nunc ad Christi ipsius complexum conscendere: nunc ad amorem proximi tibi suaviter repausandum descendere?»