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THE INFLUENCE OF THE FRENCH SCHOOL OF SPIRITUALITY  
ON THE WRITINGS  
OF SAINT LOUIS MARIE DE MONTFORT

by

Sister Mary Lawrence Corvi, D.W., M.A.

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## PREFACE

The problem on hand is to ascertain the influence of the French School of Spirituality on the writings of Saint Louis Marie de Montfort. Granted that traces of the teaching of this school, as well as of the French Ignatian School and various minor figures are present in the works of Montfort, can he notwithstanding be considered an original writer and founder of a new school of spiritual thinking? In this thesis, having first treated of Montfort's major themes and then examined the extent to which his writings were influenced by his predecessors in France, especially Bérulle, I propose to reply to the foregoing question in the affirmative.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ..... page 1

Chapter One

Montfort's Teaching on Divine Wisdom and Consecration  
of Self through Mary ..... page 5

Chapter Two

Sources of Montfortian Spirituality ..... page 43

Chapter Three

Original Insights of Montfort ..... page 75

Conclusion ..... page 84

Appendix I ..... page 92

Bibliography ..... page 94

## INTRODUCTION

Louis Grignion was born at Montfort-sur-Meu, Brittany, France, on January 31, 1673. At his Confirmation he added Marie to his baptismal name, and after his ordination he styled himself very simply "le Père de Montfort", the priest from Montfort, which name became his identification in subsequent years. After his studies at the Jesuit College in Rennes and the Sulpician Seminary in Paris, he was ordained in 1700. Exceptionally endowed with gifts of nature and of grace, he devoted himself to preaching missions in western France where Jansenism had made great inroads. Never settling in a parish or benefice, Montfort was an itinerant preacher who used varied means to reach his audience: sermons, role playing, songs, the construction of Calvaries, letters and processions. His resourcefulness and zeal did not always sit well with his peers, nor did his sound doctrine always please the Jansen-tainted hierarchy under whom he worked. Staunchly supporting the Roman Pontiff and his loyal Bishops in France, Montfort was constantly heckled by the anti-Roman elements in Church and State authorities so that his life was a struggle against the forces of disunity.

After six years of ministry, in face of growing opposition, Montfort seriously questioned if he should not leave France to serve the Indian missions in North America. He travelled on foot to Rome where Clement XI unhesitatingly reassured him that his vocation was to maintain orthodoxy among his own people. Dubbed an Apostolic Missionary by His Holiness, Montfort resumed his missionary career on his native soil where



his labors kept firm the faith of the peasant people of Brittany, Poitou, Vendée, and the environs, with a tenacity that is still evident in western France today.

To continue his work of building up the Church among the poor, he founded a two-fold religious family, the Montfort Fathers and Sisters, also known respectively as the Company of Mary and the Daughters of Wisdom. He died only forty-three years old in the course of a mission at Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, Vendée, France, on April 29, 1716. He was canonized by Pope Pius XII on July 20, 1947.

Nourished from his earliest days on Berullian spirituality with its roots sturdily planted in the virtue of religion, with its affection, austerity, and great esteem for Mary, Montfort as a seminarian opened naturally to the doctrine of the Oratory as then taught at Saint Sulpice. However, he was temperamentally little inclined to accept ideas already made. He reflected deeply on Berullian spirituality and in re-thinking it he made it singularly his own.

Far from playing the role of a straight copyist or simple eclectic, more like an eagle soaring aloft the better to spot his prey, Montfort studied the spiritualities that had preceded his time in the hope of finding the most suitable expression for his personal insights into Christ. Captivated by the Sapiential Books and the Pauline themes concerning Wisdom, Montfort reflected long on the revelation of the Word of God in creation, in the scriptures, and in the Incarnation. The election or choice of Christ, the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom of God, he came to understand as of prime importance in a person's advance toward God. In order to share his conviction that everything starts with and terminates in Christ-Wisdom, Montfort in the third year of his priesthood set about writing a spiritual synthesis: Love of the Eternal Wisdom. In this work

he undertook to present Wisdom from every vantage point: the nature, manifestations, examples, words, and effects of Wisdom. But to put on the mind of Christ, which for Montfort is true Wisdom, the imitator of Christ needs to live according to the Gospel, that is, to practice a solid asceticism based on love and self-renouncement. To possess Christ fully, he needs to cultivate an ardent desire, continual prayer, universal mortification and total dedication to Mary. These are the four means Montfort proposes to acquire Wisdom. With this practical implementation of his theory, he brings his book to a close by a formula of consecration of self to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom through the hands of Mary. His synthesis is complete making a full circle from the first manifestation of Eternal Wisdom to man, to the latter's return by a complete and loving gift of self to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom.

During thirteen further years of priestly ministry, Montfort was to write other works: The Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, A Letter to the Friends of the Cross, The Secret of Mary, thousands of lines of "cantiques", directives for his religious families, but in none of these works is to be found an entire synthesis of his spirituality. The True Devotion itself, by which the Patron of the Legion of Mary is more popularly known, is subordinated to the Love of the Eternal Wisdom; this form of Marian cult is but a development of the fourth means for acquiring Divine Wisdom. The book, True Devotion, is an epilogue to the Love of the Eternal Wisdom and can be understood only in its light.

Montfort's synthesis on Divine Wisdom is, then, a thoughtful overview of the teaching of Wisdom literature, of the Gospels, and the Pauline epistles, of the doctrine of St. Augustine and of the French School of Spirituality. Thoughts gleaned from these sources interplay and mu-

tually enlighten one another. Montfort writes simply, pointedly, somewhat hurriedly, but by showing the beauty and wisdom of the divine plan of redemptive incarnation, he strives to move his readers to respond to the love of the Son of God.

These broad lines orient toward the particular aspect of Montfort's writings to be discussed in this thesis, that of the influence of the French School of Spirituality. A limitation within the works of Montfort must also be made for like a husbandman of the Gospel, he has drawn from his treasury many things new and old. Two themes that are dominantly and particularly Montfortian are the election of Christ-Wisdom as the goal of one's spiritual life, and the consequent dedication of self to the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom through Mary.

In this thesis a first concern will be to present Montfort's teaching on these two themes. Then an attempt will be made to discern the influence on his teaching of the French School of Spirituality as this school is typified in the works of Bérulle, its founder. Finally on the basis of this double presentation of Montfort's work and its sources, an appraisal will be offered of the originality of Montfort with regard to his writings on the election of Wisdom and on the Consecration to Divine Wisdom through Mary.

## CHAPTER ONE

## MONTFORT'S TEACHING ON DIVINE WISDOM AND CONSECRATION OF SELF THROUGH MARY

Montfort's earliest work, The Love of the Eternal Wisdom, can be summed up in the words of Saint Paul, "Christ lives in me." (Gal 2:20). Though Christ lives in all Christians who are in grace, Montfort early discovered that in the vast majority of them the Christian life is, as it were, only in embryo. To develop that embryo until Christ comes to His full age in the Christian, that is, until a man becomes a perfect member of Christ, with the mind of Christ - such was to be the goal of Montfort's priestly ministry among his fellowmen. Since he saw the election of Christ, Divine Wisdom, as the decisive factor in the Christian's spiritual life, he set about to put in writing what he understood of the divine economy of Redemption. Learning about the Wisdom of God, men might then respond to His eternal love for them.

In the dedicatory prayer to the Eternal Wisdom of God by which he starts his book, the Saint exclaims:

O Divine Wisdom! O Prince of heaven and earth!... Notwithstanding your great beauty and appeal, You remain so little known and so poorly esteemed! How can I keep silent? (1)

He goes on to protest that not only justice and gratitude for the abundance of divine favors granted to him, but also his own interests and those of his fellowmen compel him to speak.

...If I am trying to make You known to the world, it is because You have promised that all those who explain You shall have life everlasting... Kindly bestow much grace and light on what I intend to say about You so that all those who read my words may desire anew to love and possess You in time and in eternity. (2)



Following directly on this dedicatory prayer, Montfort quotes the entire Chapter Six of the Book of Wisdom. The wisdom envisaged in this chapter of scripture is primarily the art of prudent administration, yet on a secondary level, it is pertinent to the government of a soul. Montfort's comments following the scriptural passage disclose that he uses the Sacred Writ in reference to the soul. The following verses contain the gist of his considerations:

Wisdom is better than strength, and a wise man is better than a strong man; wisdom is glory and never fades away. She is easily seen by them that love her and is found by them that seek her. She anticipates those who desire her and shows herself first to them. Whoever wakes early to seek her shall find her seated at his door. (Wis 6:1,13-15).

A most severe judgment shall fall upon those who rule for God will not except any man's person, neither shall he stand in awe of any man's greatness. He made the little and the great and has equally care of all, but a greater punishment is ready for the more mighty. (Wis 6:6-9).

Now what wisdom is and what was her origin, I will declare, and I will not hide from you the mysteries of God. (Wis 6:24)

Montfort comments first on the meekness, accessability, and attractiveness of Divine Wisdom; second, on the misfortune that will befall rulers if they do not love the Eternal Wisdom; and third, on the intention of Solomon to give an exact description of Wisdom. Montfort proposes to follow the King's example by explaining in simple terms what the Eternal Wisdom is before His Incarnation, in His Incarnation, and after His Incarnation, and also what are the means to possess and keep Him.

The dedicatory prayer along with the text of Wisdom 6 and its commentary comprise the prelude of his work. The leit-motif, already suggested by the title of the work, has been traced; Montfort is out to win hearts for Jesus, the Wisdom of the Father.

To justify the study of Wisdom that he is about to undertake in his

book, the author poses in Chapter One a basic question: Is it possible for a man to love what he does not know, to love ardently what he knows but little? Since the science of Jesus is the most noble, the most consoling, the most useful and the most necessary of all sciences in heaven and on earth, man should esteem it as he would a precious pearl and be ready to give up all to acquire it. So then that all may "grow in the grace and knowledge of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet 3:8), Montfort pauses to define his terms and to sketch the plan of his book before proceeding to the study on hand. (LEW #12).

(3a)

Etymologically (LEW #13), wisdom is a delectable knowledge which subdivides into several kinds:

1. true wisdom - fondness for the truth without guile or dissimulation  
(3b)  
tion

(a) natural - knowledge in an eminent degree of natural things in  
(3c)  
principle

(b) supernatural - knowledge of supernatural and divine things in  
(3d)  
their origin

i. substantial or uncreated - The Son of God, Second Person  
of the Trinity; Eternal Wisdom in eternity; Jesus  
(3e)  
Christ in time

ii. accidental or created - a share in Uncreated Wisdom com-  
(3f)  
municated to men, that is, the gift of wisdom

2. false wisdom - fondness for untruth disguised under the appear-  
(3g)  
ance of truth

(a) earthly

(b) sensual

(c) devilish (Jam 3:15)

(3h)  
to be treated in LEW Ch. 7.

Montfort asserts that he has in mind to speak of the Substantial and Uncreated Wisdom, the Son of God, Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom (Cf. 1. (b) i, above). Yet, because this Wisdom is communicated by created gifts, e.g. grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, <sup>(31)</sup> he will perforce also speak of accidental and created wisdom. A special significance attaches to the gift of wisdom spoken of by Montfort. He means an eminent role exerted by the gift of the Holy Spirit in the soul of a person striving to possess Divine Wisdom, a perfective element which implies a more activating influence on the part of the Holy Spirit and a more docile receptivity on the part of the Christian, which combination draws the soul toward a more loving union with the Person of Christ. Baptized and confirmed Christians are already disposed for this union, but Montfort laments the lack of desire for and the attitude of indifference toward greater charity due to ignorance of the Person of Divine Wisdom. Precisely to overcome this ignorance, Montfort hopes to reach by the written word a greater number of people than he could reach by his spoken word.

The plan of the book, already hinted at in his commentary on Wisdom 6, falls into the following parts and chapter divisions:

#### Part I

Chapter 1 - To love and seek the Eternal Wisdom, it is necessary to know Him

#### Part II - Before His Incarnation

Chapter 2 - Origin and Excellence of the Eternal Wisdom in se

- 3 - Power in the creation of the world and man
- 4 - Goodness and mercy before His Incarnation
- 5 - Wonderful Excellence with regard to the souls of men
- 6 - Desire of Eternal Wisdom to communicate Himself to men
- 7 - Choice of True Wisdom on the part of men
- 8 - Effects of Wisdom in the souls of those who possess Him



(4)

Part III - In and after His Incarnation

## Chapter 9 - Incarnation and earthly life of the Eternal Wisdom

- 10 - Beauty and Gentleness of Wisdom in His looks and words
- 11 - Gentleness of Incarnate Wisdom in His actions
- 12 - Solemn Utterances of Wisdom
- 13 - Summary of the Sorrows suffered for men
- 14 - Triumph of the Eternal Wisdom in and by the Cross

Part IV - Means

## Chapter 15 - Ardent Desire and Persevering Prayer

- 16 - Universal Mortification
- 17 - Tender and True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin

Formula: An Act of Consecration to Jesus through Mary (LEW, table of Contents, pp. 3-4)

The plan of the present Chapter One of this thesis rests on the plan of Love of the Eternal Wisdom just given above. A first section (A) developing the election of Wisdom theme includes Parts II and III, before, in, and after the Incarnation; a second section (B) developing the consecration of self to Wisdom through Mary theme corresponds to Part IV, the means.

A. The Election of Wisdom Theme

As indicated above, Montfort starts his plea in behalf of Divine Wisdom by devoting Chapters Two to Six to the aspect of Eternal Wisdom before His Incarnation. Firmly based on Scripture, the love story of the Son of God for men is recounted not as an academic presentation proper to one school or another, nor as a treatise so technical as to surpass the level of the ordinary reader to whom he addresses himself, but as a simple catechesis, an evangelical message drawn from both Old and New

Testaments. His thoughts move easily and loftily in an atmosphere of prayer, particularly in Chapter Two where he dwells on the depth, the immensity and the incomprehensibility of the Wisdom of God who is a vapor of the power of God and a certain emanation of His glory, the brightness of eternal light and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty. (LEW #16).

The Saint includes a complete chapter of Holy Writ, refraining as above to interrupt the inspired word by his comments. The Chapter in question, Ecclesiasticus 24, central to the Book of Sirach, tells of the origin of Divine Wisdom and the manifestation of the presence of God in the OT by creation, by the promulgation of the Law, and by the cult in the Temple. In this passage Wisdom likens Himself to cedar trees and other odoriferous plants; all men should come to Him to be filled with His fruits. In Him is all grace of the way and of the truth, all hope of life and of virtue; yet His gifts are lavished only on those who desire them. Here is a first reference to one of the means to obtain Divine Wisdom proffered by Montfort, namely that of an ardent desire.

In Chapters Three and Four, Montfort elaborates on the role of Divine Wisdom in the creation of the world and of man. All things are made by the Word for Wisdom is the parent and worker of all things. Nevertheless, the work of creation is like a game for Divine Wisdom who diverts Himself and His Father in establishing the beauty and order of nature. Yet if the power and suavity of Eternal Wisdom are so manifest in the universe, they shine forth more brilliantly in the creation of man, His masterpiece, the living image of His own beauty and perfections, the great vessel of His graces, the admirable treasure of His riches and His sole representative on earth. (LEW #35).

In a striking word picture, Montfort describes the misfortune that befell the first man who becomes like a broken vessel, a fallen star and a

spotted sun. In this state Adam is, as it were, without hope; neither angels nor any other creatures can save him. He is estranged from paradise and from the presence of God; he feels the justice of God pursuing him and all his posterity. He sees heaven closed and nobody to open it; he sees hell open and nobody to close it. (LEW #40). By a sequence of telling details, Montfort prepares the setting for the entry of Wisdom on scene. He pleads the cause of Wisdom from every vantage point, striving to arouse a response of love from men who have been the object of divine love even though they estranged themselves, in Adam and/or personally, from their beneficent and loving Creator.

At this juncture, Montfort introduces a strangely anthropomorphic picture of the Eternal Wisdom who is deeply moved by the misfortune of Adam. He writes:

It seems to me that this lovable Prince now calls to council **for a second time the Blessed Trinity for man's restoration as He had done for his creation. In this grand council there seems to be taking place a kind of contest between the Eternal Wisdom and the Justice of God.** (LEW #42), (5)

This literary device serves to emphasize the loving determination of the Divine Wisdom to intercede with the divine Justice on man's behalf. When His wise replies falter before the justice of God,

the Eternal Wisdom seeing that there is nothing in the whole of creation capable of atoning for the sin of man, of satisfying divine justice and appeasing the wrath of God, and wishing nevertheless to save man whom He loves, Himself finds an admirable means to do so. (LEW # 45), (6).

His offer, to atone for the sins of men and to merit eternal happiness for them, is accepted; a decision is reached and adopted. The Son of God will become man at the appropriate time and in fixed circumstances.

The story of the first advent is then sketched, and once again Montfort finds the sacred text a most apt means of advancing his argument. Quoting in its entirety Wisdom 10, he represents Wisdom as safeguarding His followers, speaking by the prophets, guiding their ways and enlight-

ening them in their doubts, sustaining them in their weakness and delivering them from evil. Seemingly deeply moved by the conduct of the Eternal Wisdom in his own regard, Montfort here interrupts the sacred story to exclaim:

Happy! A thousand times happy is the man into whose soul Wisdom has come to dwell! Whatever battles he has to wage, he will be victorious; whatever dangers threaten, he will escape; whatever sorrows afflict him, he will have joy and comfort; and through whatever humiliations he passes, he will be exalted and glorified in time and eternity. (LEW # 51). (7).

Chapter Five, The Excellence of the Eternal Wisdom with regard to men, is also largely composed of Scripture (Wisdom 7:22 - 8:18). "Wisdom reaches from end to end mightily and orders all things with mildness," (Wis 8:1), sets the tone of this pericope whose text Montfort this time intersperses with his commentary. The sacred writer, supposedly Solomon, approaches the height of OT speculation on the personification of Wisdom; he accentuates the divine character of Wisdom, lauding His powerful yet gentle manifestations. Since Wisdom is the indispensable companion of any sovereign, Solomon pleads to possess Divine Wisdom. "I have loved Wisdom from my youth and desired to take her for my spouse... I went about seeking that I might take her to myself." (Wis 8:1, 18).

What man, comments Montfort, reading these words of the Holy Spirit to express the beauty, excellence and treasures of Wisdom, will not love Him and seek Him with all his strength? (LEW # 63). Also, not only is Wisdom suited to man: "Wisdom is for man and man is for Wisdom", but<sup>(8)</sup> also Wisdom is infinitely desirous of communicating Himself to man. Such is the burden of Chapter Six. The reason for this affection on the part of Wisdom for man is that the creation of man is a summary of all His wonders. The longings of this eternal and supremely lovable Beauty for the friendship of men are so intense, Montfort asserts, that He has purposely composed a book which reads like a love letter of a suitor to His



beloved. Wisdom assures men that "I have loved them that love me, and they that watch for me early in the morning shall find me...sitting at their door." (Prov 8:32; Wis 6:13). The eager desire of Wisdom to communicate Himself to me, revealed by creation and the Scriptures, will be further shown by His becoming one of them.

"Let us then long for the Divine Wisdom and seek Him alone. If we but knew the infinite treasure of Wisdom laid up for us men, we would be longing for that treasure night and day; we would do anything to earn that treasure." (LEW # 73).

But, Montfort warns that caution is necessary in the pursuit and choice of Wisdom for there are several kinds of wisdom.

Thus two fairly long chapters, one on the choice of true wisdom and a second on the marvelous effects of Wisdom in the souls of those who possess Him, interrupt the "before, in, and after the Incarnation" plan that Montfort laid down for himself. The interruption occurs between Parts II and III, at the transitional point between before and in His Incarnation. Seemingly Montfort's insights and experience impel him to describe wisdom in all its aspects and varieties so that his reader can then proceed to choose his goal of life more deliberately because more fully informed. For Montfort, the election or deliberate option for Wisdom is of prime importance in a person's advance toward God. Besides enlightening his reader concerning the whole range of possible choices, Montfort is psychological at this point exposing a negative aspect of wisdom so that against this darkness, the beautiful light of Divine Wisdom will be all the more appealing.

The false wisdom that is described (LEW #75-7), e.g. compliance with the maxims and fashions of the world, a cleverness in covering over personal failings, making virtues of manliness, gallantry and such, these

instances of worldly wisdom do not seem to be particularly vicious failings. However, the terminology is deceiving to a twentieth century reader. The words used imply more than they say. The Saint is really exposing the corruption in morals, a culture of salons and mistresses, that was commonplace in early eighteenth century France.

Another dated attack of Montfort concerning false wisdom touches on the practice of chemistry or alchemy (LEW # 84-9). Besides providing insights into the existential milieu in which the Saint lived and worked, these passages have no scientific value to offer, nor can their details be applied to contemporary theological problems. They do, however, convey broad advice that is pertinent to all times: to remain with Jesus, the (Jn 14:6) way, the truth and the life/because away from Him there is but wandering, untruth and death.

This presentation of the differing types of wisdom hopefully brings the reader to discern the counterfeits from the genuine product. Further to insure the right choice, there follow the wonderful effects of the Eternal Wisdom in the souls of those who possess Him (LEW Ch. 8, # 90-103). These effects, observable eminently in men like Moses and Solomon though oftentimes hidden, are enumerated by Montfort as follows:

1. The Eternal Wisdom communicates to the soul that possesses Him His all-enlightening spirit, that is, a subtle and penetrating spirit to judge all things with great discernment and a keen intelligence. From this unbounded source which is full of unction and conducive to activity and piety, the great doctors of the Church, notably St. Thomas Aquinas, have drawn. (Cf footnote #3).
2. Wisdom gives men not only the light to know the truth but also a wonderful capacity for making the truth known to others. The words which divine Wisdom communicates are strong, effective, piercing words, such as

Stephen spoke and which his adversaries were not able to resist. (Acts 4:10).

3. The Eternal Wisdom is the source of purest joys and consolation, pouring into the heart ineffable sweetness and peace, even in the midst of trials and tribulations as St. Paul bears witness, "I abound with joy in all my tribulations" (2 Co 4:4). Solomon, too, affirms that there is great delight in the friendship of Wisdom (Wis 8:8) whereas the pleasures and joy found in creatures have but a semblance of pleasure.
4. Eternal Wisdom confers the gifts of the Holy Spirit and all the great virtues in an eminent degree. In this section the descriptive adjectives used by Montfort are particularly striking: lively faith, firm hope, ardent charity, well-ordered temperance, consummate prudence, perfect justice, invincible fortitude, perfect religion, profound humility, gentle meekness, blind obedience, universal detachment, continual mortification, sublime prayer. (LEW # 99). This same section indicates that by the gift of wisdom Montfort means more than the conventional gift of the Holy Spirit since in this passage he understands all gifts and virtues as part of the gift that Wisdom makes to men who have entered into possession of Wisdom. (Cf. p. 8 above).
5. Eternal Wisdom sets afire those who enjoy His friendship and proves their mettle so that they do great things for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

He gives them occasion for great combats and keeps in store for them contradictions and crosses in almost everything they undertake. He allows the devil to tempt them, the world to calumniate and abuse them, their enemies to have the upper hand and to crush them. Sometimes He will cause them to suffer the loss<sup>of</sup> their goods or of their health; at other times He will load them with reproach, sadness and despondency. In a word He will try them variously in the crucible of tribulation, but ...afflicted in few things, in many they shall be rewarded because God has tried them and found them worthy of Himself. (LEW 100), (9).



To particularize these general statements concerning the effects of the possession of Eternal Wisdom, an incident is recounted from the life of the Dominican friar Henry Suso, the ardent fourteenth century (10) lover of Divine Wisdom. Desirous of possessing Divine Wisdom, Henry vigorously protests that he would gladly endure fire and flame to prove his love. In a series of adverse situations, he unfortunately gives way to excessive self pity and melancholy. Wisdom appears to the Blessed and, chiding him for his puerility, tells him to wipe away his tears and "to put on a happy face." (LEW # 101-2).

Montfort concludes the story with reflections of his own. The cross is the portion and reward of all those who seek after or who already possess the Eternal Wisdom. But Wisdom, who numbers, weighs and measures all things, sends crosses to His friends only in proportion to their strength, and by the abundant unction of His own sweetness, He makes these crosses so delightful that they are borne with joy. (LEW 103).

With these sober yet exhilarating thoughts about the cross, Montfort leaves Part II of his book. He has spoken of the Wisdom of God before His Incarnation, hoping thereby to convince men of the longing which the Son of God manifested through creation and revelation to be with them. Then, having pointed out the need of a rightful choice of wisdom, the Saint proceeds to the third part of the Love story of the Eternal Wisdom, in and after His Incarnation.

In Chapter Nine, Montfort picks up the thread of his story with the implementation of the decision of the grand council of the Blessed Trinity that the Word of God should become incarnate in order to restore fallen humanity. He passes rapidly over the Messianic hopes of the just people of the Old Law, seemingly eager to come to the appointed time when Wisdom was to build Himself a house, a worthy dwelling place, in the person of

Mary. In half a dozen lyrical lines, Montfort brings on scene his Queen and Mother.

The impetuous current of the infinite goodness of God which from the beginning of the world had been violently checked by the sins of men...now spilled over into the heart of Mary... The plenitude of the graces of the Divinity...poured itself into Mary in so far as a mere creature is capable of receiving it. O Mary! O Masterpiece of the Most High! O Miracle of the Eternal Wisdom! O Prodigy of the Almighty! O abyss of grace! Only he who created you...knows the height, the depth, the breadth of the graces He has conferred upon you! (LEW # 106), (11).

After this poetic prelude, the events of the life of Jesus and Mary follow in close succession, covering only four pages of the Love of the Eternal Wisdom. Evidently this brief account of the life of Christ and His Mother is only the backdrop against which Montfort will detail select aspects of the life of Wisdom among men. One such aspect is the captivating beauty and the ineffable gentleness of the Incarnate Wisdom in His looks and words (LEW Ch. 10). Drawing as is his custom from Sacred Scripture, Montfort describes Wisdom as meek and good: (a) in His origins, the gift of love of the Eternal Father and the manifestation of the love of the Holy Spirit; (b) in the expectation of the Old Testament, the meek lamb of the prophets (Jer 11:19); (c) in His birth, the child of the sweetest of mothers; (d) in His appearance among men, the Lamb of God. Even His sacred name signifies charity, love and meekness, as St. Bernard notes. (LEW #120).

The topic of gentleness continues in Chapter Eleven, emphasis being placed here on the actions of Jesus. The missionary understands the "He did all things well" (Mk 7:37) to mean that Jesus acted with such exactitude, wisdom, holiness, and meekness that nothing faulty or wanting can be found in what He did (LEW # 123). The poor, children, sinners, enemies, and loved ones, - all drew near to Him in easy confidence.

Though He is presently triumphant and glorious, Jesus is still loving and

condescending, more desirous to display His mercy than His glory. Examples from hagiography bear out the fact that Jesus continues to love men, responding to their requests in meekness rather than in thunder, appearing in tenderness rather than in majesty. In particular he cites incidents connected with St. Denis the Areopagite and Blessed Henry Suso, both of whom urge great love for the Eternal Wisdom who has loved men so much and given striking proofs of His love. (LEN # 128-132).

The meekness of the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom evidently capti-  
vated Montfort for many of his writings and hymns touch thereon. (12) In fact "la douceur de Jésus" was the topic of the last sermon to be preached by him during the mission at St. Laurent-sur-Sèvre, a feat of heroic devotedness for he was already suffering from an attack of pneumonia that was to prove fatal.

Having described the goodness and kindness of the Incarnate Wisdom, the Saint in Chapter Twelve places the reader in His very presence to hear the oracles of the Word of the Father. Throughout this work, Montfort's purpose is consistent: to draw people to the love of Jesus Wisdom so that He will become the chosen goal of their life. Such a union between Christ and the Christian implies a conformity of thought and will with the thought and will of Jesus. To help the Christian to put on the mind of Christ, the author opens the gospel accounts and draws from the sacred texts, from the lips of the Master, the great directives that the Christian needs to make his own in order to live in union with and in conformity to the Model. This chapter forms the basis of Montfortian spirituality, the ideal of Incarnate Wisdom, which Montfort epitomizes in his password: God Alone.

At first glance at the seventy texts grouped here (LEN #133-152),  
(13)  
Montfort's warning comes to mind, namely that there would seem to be no

order in what he was writing, so swiftly did his mind outrun his hand. (LEW #2). Yet there is a definite order among these texts, all selected from the New Testament. Basic to the acquisition of the Divine Wisdom is acceptance of His teaching, starting with the first great commandment of love of God and neighbor. This first practice entails eliminating selfishness and restraining greed for earthly goods. Such asceticism requires divine help, already assured if asked for by humble and sincere prayer. Perseverance implies courage to keep up the practice of virtue; prudence to discern good from evil intentions; and confidence to seek first the kingdom of heaven. The eight beatitudes are the reassurance that Christ sustains the Christian in his efforts if only he be grateful for the divine gifts. (LEW # 133-152).

Following the quotation of the seventy selected scripture texts, Montfort simply remarks that they are the summary of the great and important truths which the Son of God came to teach us on earth, after having first practiced them Himself. Blessed are they, the Saint adds, who understand these eternal truths; more blessed are they who put them into practice; but most blessed are they who believe them, who practice them, and who teach them to others for like brilliant stars they will shine in heaven for all eternity. (LEW #153).

After the solid lessons of Chapter Twelve, the reader is prepared for the presentation of Wisdom suffering and crucified. Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen form a diptych, the former giving a summary of the sorrows and sufferings which Wisdom endured for the love of men, and the latter singing the triumph of the Eternal Wisdom in and by the cross.

"Among all the motives which urge us to love Jesus Christ," writes Montfort, "the strongest is, in my opinion, the sorrows which He endured to show us His love." (LEW #154). Though our Savior has labored and suf-



ferred much to achieve the work of Redemption, Montfort argues, it is the circumstances which accompanied His sufferings that help men to realize His infinite love. These circumstances are: the excellence of the Person of Christ; the condition of the people for whom He suffers; the number, grievousness, and duration of His sufferings; the extent of His sufferings; in His possessions and person, in His body and soul. "From such meditation we must conclude with Saint Thomas and all the Holy Fathers, " the author pushes his line of argument, "that our good Jesus has suffered more than all the martyrs together, including those that have been and those that will be to the end of the world. (Cf. footnote #3). To know that Our Lord has endured so much for us, and yet not to love Him ardently, is morally impossible." (LEN # 163, 166).

Montfort now comes to the last and the longest chapter of his book, the triumph of Eternal Wisdom in and by the cross. The cross is so dear to his heart that he treats of it frequently in his writings; <sup>(14)</sup> in fact, his life is to unfold very noticeably marked by this sign of contradiction. Though written in praise of the Master, this Chapter Fourteen betrays the disciple who with Christ triumphed by the cross to such an extent that he could protest: "What a cross it is not to have a cross to endure!" <sup>(15)</sup>

The cross is the greatest mystery of the Eternal Wisdom! (LEN #167). To accomplish His mission of redemption, seemingly the Son of God would come to earth glorious and triumphant, glittering with majesty, honor and wealth. "Nothing less than all that!" exclaims Montfort, and in the presence of this delight of his heart, he becomes once again lyrical.

But, O wonder! He [Eternal Wisdom] perceives a thing which is a scandal and a stumbling block to the Jews, an object of foolishness to the Gentiles (1 Co 1:23). He sees a piece of vile and contemptible wood which is being used to humiliate and torture the most wicked and most unfortunate of men; it is called a gibbet, a gallows, a cross. Upon this cross He Casts His eyes; He takes de-

light in it; He loves it and chooses it before all that is great and resplendent in heaven and on earth! He chooses it to be the instrument of His conquests, the adornment of His majesty, the riches and delight of His empire, the friend and spouse of His heart. 'O the depth of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!' How amazing His choice! How deep and incomprehensible His ways of acting and judging! But how ineffable His love of the cross! (16).

In a series of reflections concerning the human consciousness of Christ, Montfort tells how the Incarnate Wisdom loved the cross from His infancy, how He sought it eagerly during His life; and how His wishes were fully satisfied on Calvary when He died in the embrace of His beloved cross. (LEN # 169-171).

After death Jesus did not reject His cross; in fact the bond between Jesus and the cross is so indissoluble that "never the cross without Jesus, nor Jesus without the cross!" (LEN #172). By His death the "ignominies of the cross were made so glorious, its poverty and bareness so opulent, its pains so sweet, its hardness so attractive" that it became an object of adoration for angels and for men. On the day of the last judgment, He will have the cross borne in triumph, preceding Him on a brilliant cloud, and accompanied by the chant of the angels; by it He will judge the world. While awaiting that day of triumph, Eternal Wisdom wants the cross to be not only the sign, the mark and the weapon of the elect, but also a treasury of grace, life and joy for them (LEN #173-4). Yet how humble one must be, how little, mortified, interior and despised by the world to learn the mystery of the cross which is ever an object of scandal and folly! The enjoyment of the actual possession of the cross is a gift which the Eternal Wisdom bestows only on His best friends and only after they have implored it with many prayers and ardent desires, as did Peter, Paul and Andrew.

The cross makes Christians resemble Jesus Christ; makes them worthy

children of the Father, members of the Son and temples of the Spirit; enlightens the mind and affords more knowledge than all books; when ~~will~~ borne, the cross is the cause, the nourishment and the proof of love; it brings joy, peace and grace to the soul; and finally, it works for the one who carries it an eternal weight of glory (2 Co 4:17). For these reasons (LEW #175-6) the cross is good and precious. Indeed, if Christians understood its value, they would pray for the grace to suffer something for Christ as did Peter of Alcantara, Theresa of Avila, Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, and John of the Cross, rather than shun their personal crosses or drag them unwillingly with murmurings and impatience as did the oxen when drawing the Ark of the Covenant.

Friends of the Cross, Montfort apostrophizes his readers, true disciples of the Eternal Wisdom, if you have trials and afflictions, be glad and thrill with joy because the cross you carry is a precious gift. Drink His bitter cup and your friendship will increase; suffer with Him and you will be glorified with Him. True wisdom is not to be found in the things of the world, nor in the heart of them that live in delights (Job 28:13). Rather He has fixed His abode so firmly in the cross that you will not find Him in this world save in the cross. He has so truly incorporated and united Himself with the cross that in all truth we can say: "Wisdom is the cross, and the cross is wisdom." (LEW # 180).

These summarily sketched thoughts on the profoundness of suffering (17) will be enlarged upon later in Montfort's life, particularly in an inspiring open letter to the association of the Friends of the Cross. (18)

These Friends, actually sturdy peasants, he envisages as a group of Crusaders united to fight against the world, a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people (1 Pet 2:9). They are chosen from among thousands; they are pilgrims and strangers, yet warriors on



the battle front, following the way of the cross traced by their barefooted, thorn-crowned and blood-stained Leader. The core of this 11,000 word epistle to his disciples is a paraphrase on the classic text in this regard, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." (Mt 16:24). Each phrase is analysed and commented on so that a master plan in asceticism develops for the meditation of the Friends, to wit: to become a saint, one must practice self-denial and be ready to suffer in a Christ-like fashion. Fourteen (19) directives are paternally spelled out so that the peasant men and women will know what this Christ-like fashion is and respond to God's call to them. Mary, the closest follower of Christ, will help these Christians to do as she did so that they may be worthy of the eminent name they bear.

In the Love of the Eternal Wisdom, the Chapter on the Triumph of the Cross, a last eloquent appeal on behalf of Jesus-Wisdom, brings to a close Part III of the book. According to his outline, Montfort has spoken of the Divine Wisdom before, in, and after His Incarnation. Supposing that the reader has become acquainted with and enamored of the Wisdom of God, the author is now ready to turn to the practical question of how to live once Christ-Wisdom has been elected as the goal of one's life. The means that he proposes for this purpose constitute the subject matter of the second section of this thesis.

#### B. The Consecration through Mary Theme

To live dedicated to Divine Wisdom, Montfort proposes four means: desire, prayer, mortification and devotion to Mary, which like four columns sustain the spiritual edifice wherein Wisdom can come to dwell. All four means are necessary; no one can be suppressed without jeopardizing the whole structure, yet dependence on Mary is the dominant feature of

this dedication.

First means: an ardent desire

This first proposal is simple psychology: one cannot love what one does not want. As long as the hearts of men remain heavy and inclined toward earth, they cannot rise to the pursuit of the Divine Wisdom, who of all that can be desired, is the most desirable. The desire of Wisdom is a grace, the reward of the faithful keeping of the commandments (Eccles 1:33). Solomon, the model of those who obtained Wisdom through the gift of the Spirit, did not receive that gift until he had desired, sought after and prayed for it for a long time. Like this wise king and the prophet Daniel, Christians must become "men of desire" (Dan 9:25) if they wish to acquire the treasure of Wisdom (LEN # 181-3).

Second means: persevering prayer

Prayer is the usual channel by which God conveys His gifts, more particularly His great gift of Wisdom. The Just had asked for the Messiah during four thousand years; Mary prepared to receive Him during fourteen years; Solomon received wisdom only after a life-time of prayer. "If any one wants wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all men abundantly." (James 1:5).

Lively, pure and firm faith must be the hallmark of this prayer; so too, this prayer must be a persevering plea like that of the importunate midnight caller who wanted bread for his guests. (LEN # 184-190). As has been evident throughout Montfort's writings, he leans heavily in every juncture on Scripture. Here once again he quotes an entire passage, the prayer of Solomon for Wisdom as recounted in the Book of Wisdom Chapter 9. Very fittingly is Montfort hailed in his litanies: Tireless dispenser of the Word of God!

### Third means: universal mortification

Montfort wants to form strong souls, men and women who live by faith, detached from everything, mortified, capable of silence and obedience. "All those who belong to Christ," he writes plainly, "crucify their flesh with its vices and concupiscences; they bear in their bodies the mortification of Jesus; they continually do themselves violence, carry their cross daily, and are dead and even buried in Christ." (LEW #194). Such are the words of the Holy Spirit (1k 11:23; Rom 6:4,8; 2 Co 4:10; Gal 5:24), he points out. Wisdom, purer than the rays of the sun, will not enter a body sullied by the pleasures of the senses. This lovable Prince seeks for persons worthy of Him. To communicate Himself, He requires universal, continuous, courageous and prudent mortification, e.g., to give up entirely the possessions of this world or at the least to be detached in heart from them; to avoid the showy fashions of worldlings in dress, furniture, homes and food; to reject the false maxims of the world which tend to cover lies with cloaks of truth. To be profitable, exterior and voluntary mortification needs to be accompanied by mortification of the judgment and the will, and by obedience because without obedience exterior mortification is spoiled by self-will and often becomes more pleasing to the devil than to God. (20) "Leave all things and you will find all things in finding Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom." (LEW #202).

### Fourth means: a tender and true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary

In one final chapter, Montfort summarizes his teaching on devotion to Mary. The purpose of my present work invites me to by-pass this summary and to insert at this point a more extensive presentation of his Marian teaching since this teaching is what particularizes his life of dedication to Wisdom. His book, True Devotion, as it is popularly known though often misunderstood, is in reality a treatment of the last men-

tioned of the four means of growing to the age of Jesus Christ. To explain Montfortian Marian doctrine in this context of means is to situate it in its proper framework; whereas to consider it apart from the Love of the Eternal Wisdom is to dislocate it and by the same to render it as devitalized as a truncated limb. Consequently, though the following pages on devotion to Mary exceed the summary offered by Chapter Seventeen of Love of the Eternal Wisdom, they seem desirable for the present purpose. This fuller presentation is found mainly in two sources: The Secret of Mary and The Treatise on the True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>(21)</sup> In seeking the goal, Jesus-Wisdom, through the means, Mary, Montfort proffers the most perfect form of devotion to Mary which he calls voluntary slavery. To prove his assertion, he undertakes to put into writing, in a well organized treatise, his public preaching and personal practice.

Montfort's first concern in exposing the doctrinal foundation of the consecration through Mary that he has had the grace to learn is to show the role of Mary in the present dispensation. Like all creatures Mary is of herself less than an atom before the infinite majesty of God (TD #14); nevertheless, the Divine Persons, having wished Mary's cooperation in the Incarnation, continue to want her cooperation in the sanctification of souls. Her role in Redemption does not cease with the death of Christ any more than the mission of the Divine Son ends at His death. Her maternity is continued and completed on the supernatural level in the working out of the salvation of men. God the Father, having given His Son to the world through Mary, gives her the fecundity to be the mother of all the members of His Mystical Body; God the Son, having become man in her and through her, establishes her as the mother of grace; God the Holy Spirit, become fruitful in Mary whom He espoused, continues



through her to reproduce the members of the Body of Christ (TD #16-25). Thus to affirm his position concerning Mary, Montfort establishes the most fundamental truth in her regard, the very conduct of the Divine Persons Themselves toward her in the economy of the Redemptive Incarnation.

A second truth that Montfort puts forward is the fact of the Christian's belonging to Christ who redeemed him by His blood. (TD #68). A baptized soul, like a branch of a vine, should bear fruit for the owner. The baptized are to respond to the rights of Christ upon them, not as hired mercenaries but as slaves of love willingly dedicated to Him to serve Him. Differing from a servant who remains free to dispose of himself, a slave belongs to his master and is totally dependent upon him. Among the several types of slavery: by nature, by constraint, and by love, that which proceeds from love or free choice is alone perfect. Though man at birth is a slave by constraint of the devil, by baptism he freely becomes a slave of love of Jesus, servus Christi (Rom 1:1; Gal 1:10; Tit 1:1). But what is true absolutely with regard to Christ is true relatively with regard to Mary. Having chosen Mary as His indissoluble companion in His life, death and resurrection, the Incarnate Wisdom gives her by grace all the rights and privileges that He possesses by nature. Hence to be completely dedicated to Jesus is to be ipso facto dedicated to Mary for she is the means by which He came to us and by which we approach Him (TD # 69-75). The terms: "slave of Jesus" and "slave of Mary" are of equal significance; to be the loving slave of one is to be the loving slave of the other since they are so intimately united by will and by power that they have the same subjects. In contemporary terms, we would call this manner of living in dependence on Jesus and Mary a complete commitment or dedication.

As indicated above, Montfort calls his devotion to Mary the perfect renewal of the vows of Baptism. Though in some aspects of his teaching, he conforms to the human and intellectual culture of his day, e.g.,  
 (22)  
 a negative view of human capacity (TD # 79), in others he completely outstrips his contemporaries, e.g., in the re-evaluation of the renewal of the promises of Baptism. Montfort was aware of the teaching of Saint Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, the Council of Sens, and the Catholic Catechism of the Council of Trent (TD #127-9, 131) defining the nature of baptismal promises and urging all pastors to remind their people of the bonds of their consecration to Christ as slaves of their Lord and Redeemer. Yet, beyond the potential of such a renewal for the amendment of life, he perceived the value of a re-dedication to Christ in grace-dependence on His Mother. This dedication or consecration to Jesus, the Eternal Wisdom through the hands of Mary, is the full implementation of the teaching of Montfort. It is a manner of life that is the explicit and entire response of a soul to the love of the Eternal Wisdom.

The Saint is too apostolic, too aware of the demands of daily Christian living to let things go with general statements. God has shown His will for Mary by giving her a prime role in the Church of Christ, yet men remain free to ratify or reject this role of Mary. Montfort respects this freedom and though urging Christians expressly to ratify their belonging to Jesus and to do so through Mary's intercession, he nevertheless psychologically exposes the whole gamut of choice of devotions before inviting to a formal election: the partial and the false, the interior and the exterior (TD #105-114). But despite wide inquiry, Montfort protests, he has never come across the type of devotion that he has learned. He has not found one that unites more intimately with Christ, that gives greater glory to God, that is more helpful to one's fellowmen, and that is so perfective of the person who embraces it. Yet, because  
 of the all

of the all-inclusive nature of this devotion, some will accept only its exterior aspects; others will understand only an initial degree of its interiority; others will penetrate further; finally some, enlightened by the Spirit of Christ, who Himself will lead them to the fullness of His age, will embrace it as a state of life. (TD #115-9, 163).

The consecration in question is intended to inaugurate a state of life so that the practice of True Devotion is more a manner of living than an act of giving. To illustrate this point, Montfort compares Christians to statue makers (TD #219). The self-sufficient Christians who rely on their own efforts to attain holiness are like sculptors with hammer and chisel who work hard and long to achieve a faultless product. A single awkward blow can spoil the whole job. On the other hand, Christians who confide themselves to Mary are like workmen who use a mold. Provided that the material is sufficiently malleable, a mold yields readily and easily a faithful copy of the model. The analogy is evident. Christians who confide themselves completely to Mary, as long as they offer no resistance to her, will be formed to a manner of life in the same mold that formed the Incarnate Wisdom.

Mary, then is the mold, the forma Dei according to St. Augustine, (TD # 219) into which Montfort invites the Christian to throw himself entirely: body and soul, exterior and interior possessions, even his spiritual goods; in a word to dedicate his person with all that he has and ever will have to the Mother of Jesus (TD #121). By this dedication, the Christian gives God all the recognition that he can possible give Him since he thereby more closely resembles Christ who "gave more glory to God the Father by the submission that He had toward His mother during thirty years than He would have given Him by converting the whole world by the most stupendous works." (TD #18). The Christian, trying to be malle-



able in Mary's hands, will direct his intentions toward her, acting (a) through Mary, i.e., renouncing selfish aims in what he does; (b) with Mary, i.e., in imitating her virtues; (c) in Mary, i.e., letting himself be formed by the graces she gives; (d) for Mary, i.e., considering her as a proximate end leading surely to the Final End. (TD #258-265). These interior practices, seemingly multiple, make for a single reality just as the efficient, formal, material and final causes of a typewriter constitute but one typewriter. This four-fold interior practice sets up an attitude of mind which Montfort sees as the putting on of the mind of Christ.

The Saint furthermore proposes exterior practices: a special regard for the feast of the Incarnation, the recitation of the Rosary, the wearing of a chain, and others (TD #226-256) which obviously play only a supporting role to the leading practice which is the interior disposition of Christ-like dependence on Mary.

What will be the fruits of living in such Christ-like dependence? The Christian faithful to his dedication to Divine Wisdom and to a manner of living in dependence on Mary will become more and more disposed or available to the promptings of the Spirit because, since Mary with the Holy Spirit brought forth the Head of the Body, with Him she will also bring forth the members of the Body. "When the Holy Spirit finds Mary in a soul, He flies there, He enters that soul with His fullness, He gives Himself to that soul in the measure that that soul is related to Mary (TD 35-6). This relation of a soul to Mary will be realized in the Christian particularly by a participation in the faith of Mary (TD #214). While she was on earth, Mary's faith in God was the most profound of all the faithful. Now that she is glorified, enjoying the vision, Mary no longer needs faith; yet she has in a way conserved her faith so that she

might confirm the faith of her sons and daughters in the pilgrim Church so that they in turn may be blessed because they believe.

Also Mary purifies and embellishes her client's good works. Here Montfort uses another colorful comparison, that of an apple offered in tribute by a peasant farmer to his lord. (TD # 147). The Queen who protects the peasant personally presents his tribute to the king, taking care first to clean and polish it, and then to set it on a silver platter attractively fixed with flowers. Thus it is with man's good works, assures Montfort. Confided to Mary and offered by her to God, they will be all the more agreeable to Him. But does not Mary thus become an obstacle between a soul and Jesus; does she not deflect people from Him? Quite to the contrary! Mother of Jesus as she ever is, she continually orients to Jesus and through, with, in, and for Him, she continually refers all to the Father. First of all Christians, she ever magnifies the Lord and rejoices in God. (TD # 151).

Other fruits of the manner of life envisaged by this devotion are: a great interior liberty by which Montfort understands an intensification of a filial attitude with growing confidence in the Father (TD #169); a marked benefit for one's fellowmen since they profit from the spiritual treasures placed at Mary's disposal (TD #171); an assurance of final perseverance because Mary's fidelity is like a firm anchor cast into the sea of life (TD #173-5).

As mentioned above (cf. footnote #21), Montfort calls this treatise on devotion to Mary "the preparation for the reign of Jesus Christ". Without belittling the obligation and excellence of personal sanctification, he envisions a perspective that is more far-reaching and eschatological; he is first and foremost preoccupied with the reign of Christ, of

God. In the opening phrase he announces: "By Mary Jesus Christ came into the world; by her He must reign in the world." (TD #1). A little further on he writes, "...the knowledge and reign of Jesus Christ in the world...will be a necessary suite of the knowledge and reign of Mary who brought Him into the world the first time and will do so gloriously the second." (TD #13). And again,

Jesus is the alpha and omega of all things. We...work only to make every man perfect in Jesus Christ... He is our only Master who must teach us, our only Lord on whom we depend... If then we establish a solid devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, it is only to establish more perfectly that of Jesus Christ. (TD #61-2), (23).

The final exhortation of the treatise is: "Glory to Jesus in Mary! Glory to Mary in Jesus! Glory to God Alone! (TD #265).

The coming of the reign of Jesus and Mary is associated with the coming of the latter days (TD #49-59). At the parousia Mary's reign will be manifested more than ever because Christ's reign will then be in its final stage of overthrowing the anti-Christ. Realizing that the countdown for his kingdom of darkness has come, Satan will then fight more vigorously than ever against his arch enemy, the humble Mary. In exhilarating pages, Montfort describes the apostles of these latter times aroused, formed, directed and upheld by Mary to accomplish by their virtuous lives their admirable mission, the establishment of the reign of Mary which will be the dawn of the reign of the Sun of Justice. (TD #50).

This prophetic (in the sense of future vision) and apocalyptic tone of Montfort is all the more impressive because of a similar visionary passage (TD #114) wherein he foretells that the treatise he is writing will be torn apart and lost in the "obscurity and silence of a coffer" so that it will not be able to be published. Actually the manuscript was found accidentally only in 1842 in a case of old books in the library of the Motherhouse of the Montfort Fathers located at Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre,

(24)  
France, and as predicted, it is torn apart.

In this first chapter of the work concerning the influence of the French School of Spirituality on the writings of Montfort, the dominant themes of the Saint have been described. In summary, he teaches that the election of Christ is of prime importance in the advance toward perfection. For such an election, or conversion, the Christian is lead to reflect upon the personal love of the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom for him. When the choice is made by an act of total dedication of self, there follows the obligation of leading a manner of life characterized by ardent desire, continual prayer, universal mortification and dependence on Mary. This spirituality is synthesized in the formula of consecration to the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom through Mary which concludes the book, Love of the Eternal Wisdom. A contemporary version of  
(25)  
the formula follows this summary. The original formula will be found in Appendix I to this thesis. Marginal notes to highlight its structure are added. These notes are not part of the formula proper.

#### AN ACT OF TOTAL COMMITMENT TO CHRIST THROUGH MARY

O Risen Christ, Head of the new People of God, as a member of this chosen race, I consciously place myself in your presence. In your divinity as Eternal Wisdom you dwell in inaccessible light, the Image of the Father. Yet you have willed to veil this divine brilliance beneath ordinary flesh. Incarnate Wisdom, you have become one of us, taking on our humanity, being made like to us in all things, except sin.

I come before you, my God and my Brother. You are the great Sacrament making visible to men the saving will of God. Through you we have



come to know his loving kindness; we see it with shocking clarity in your liberating death. By dying, you have taken away our guilt; by your Resurrection you have given us new life. And so, it is in a spirit of profound gratitude that I come before you, I who have new life from you.

But since it is as God-man that you have done this, I feel a special sense of gratitude toward the woman who freely consented to give you human flesh, who accepted your saving action for us all. Such was your decision, that without Mary's "yes" you would not have come; without her consent we would still be sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Thus Mary is joined by an inseparable link to your saving action. And I cannot think of my liberation and sanctification without recalling the poor handmaid who, by her consent, made it possible.

But the more I think of your goodness, O Lord, the more my own unworthiness and insufficiency weighs upon me. Time and again I have been unfaithful to you. Despite my Christian dignity, despite the new life within me, despite my intimate union with you, I have ignored your grace and sought after vain and selfish desires. The fight between the old and the new man rages within me, and it is only by your help that I am ever victorious. Without you, I am truly nothing.

Still, I do not hesitate to approach you, Lord, since I do not come alone. I come as a part of the new family of God, as a member of your Mystical Body, the Church. And especially do I come in the company of Mary, the most perfect member of that Church. She it is who sums up within herself all that you want the Church, and me, to be. It is true, we cannot forget that she depends on your grace for everything, that without you her whole life and being are meaningless. Yet it is through her that all of us receive an ever-increasing share in this divine life.



Mother of the Mystical Body in its origin, heart of the Mystical Body in its functioning, type of the Mystical Body in its fulfillment, she is the most perfect means I can have for living my life in the Church, and for pressing ahead to the day of your Coming.

I am aware of what you are, O Lord, and of what you have done for me. I recognize also Mary's indispensable role in my liberation from sin and entrance into new life. And now, my mind turns to that moment when all this became a personal reality for me, my Baptism. I look back with joy at the loving kindness you showed me; I look back with pain and sorrow because of my wholly inadequate, sometimes cowardly response to this great reality. It is to remedy this situation, and to begin my Christian life anew, that I now want to renew my Baptismal promises.

Before the entire Church, I renounce the devil; I cast his influence out of my life; I reject his trickery and temptations. And turning my back on the kingdom of darkness, I reach out to you, the Light of the world. O Christ, I re-affirm my total commitment to you. I take you to be the principle reality, the basic influence in my life. I pledge to live as a son of the Father, plunged into Christ, penetrated by the Spirit; to live in a word as a true Christian. Jesus, Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom, I am totally yours.

And now I look to you, Mary, to preserve this new life within me. Without your consent, I would not have it; without your help I cannot keep it. Holy Mother, teach me to use those means which your Son has given me to make me God-like. Give me a great love for the Liturgy so that it may permeate my life, a sincere devotion to the Church, a strong

apostolic spirit, a dedication to duty, a confident acceptance of the Father's will in all he asks me to do or receive. With your guidance, may my whole life ascend before the Throne of God, a sweet-smelling and acceptable sacrifice.

Above all, Mother, teach me to love and serve the Lord, both in himself and in his members. Give Christ to me, that like you, I might give him to others.

## FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE

1. In this thesis all quotations in English from the writings of Montfort are my own translation. The numbers used in reference pertain to the paragraph enumeration which is identical in all editions.

Published editions are: L'Amour de la Sagesse Eternelle, Librairie Mariale, Pont-Château, Loire Inf., France, 1929; Love of the Eternal Wisdom, (designated hereafter as LEW), Montfort Publications, Burleigh Press, Bristol, 1949.

Because of the frequency in this thesis of references to the works of Montfort, it seems more helpful to the reader to have the references accompanying the text of the thesis rather than locating them in a remote footnote.

LEW #1. O Divine Sagesse! Souveraine du ciel et de la terre!... Vous avez tant de beautés et de douceurs,... et vous êtes d'ailleurs si inconnue et méprisée. Comment voulez-vous que je me taise?

2. LEW #2 Si je tache de vous faire connaître en ce monde, c'est parce que vous-même avez promis que tous ceux qui vous éclaireraient et découvriraient auraient la vie éternelle... Donnez du haut de votre trône, tant de bénédictions et de lumières à ce que je veux faire et dire de vous, que tous ceux qui l'entendront soient enflammés d'un nouveau désir de vous aimer et de vous posséder dans le temps et dans l'éternité.
3. (a) II, II, 45, 2 ad 1. Wisdom, sapientia, insofar as it denotes a certain sweetness takes its name from sapor.
- (b) II, II, 45, 1 ad 1. A thing is said to be good in two senses: first in the sense that it is truly good and simply perfect; secondly by a kind of likeness, being perfect in wickedness... With regard to those things which are truly good, we find a highest cause, namely the sovereign good which is the last end, by knowing which man is said to be truly wise...
- (c) II, II, 45 1c. It belongs to wisdom to consider the highest cause.
- (d) Ibid. He who knows the cause that is simply the highest, which is God, is said to be wise simply because he is able to judge and set in order all things according to Divine rules.
- (e) I, 38, 7 ad 2. The Son is called the Wisdom of the Father.
- (f) II, II, 23, 2. Wherefore we are said to be good with the goodness which is God, and wise with the wisdom which is God, (since the goodness whereby we are formally good is a participation of Divine goodness, and the wisdom whereby we are formally wise, is a share of Divine wisdom.)
- (g) II, II, 45, 1 ad 1. Whoever turns away from his due end must needs fix on some undue end, since every agent acts for an end.
- (h) Ibid. Wherefore, if he fixes his end in external, earthly things, his wisdom is called earthly; if in the goods of the body, it is called sensual wisdom; if in some excellence, it is called devilish wisdom because it imitates the devil's pride.

- (i) I, 68, 5 ad 1. [Wisdom and knowledge [as gifts of the Holy Ghost] are perfections of the mind, rendering it amenable to the promptings of the Holy Ghost in knowledge of things Divine and human.

Saint Thomas Aquinas, though not included within the scope of this thesis, is a source of Montfort's doctrine. E.g., LEW #12: Montfort's argument in favor of the science of Jesus is suggestive of the opening question of the Summa; LEW #94: "From the Eternal Wisdom...the great doctors of the Church, notably Saint Thomas, as he himself confesses, have drawn the wonderful learning which made them so worthy of commendation"; LEW #163: "We must conclude with St. Thomas and the Holy Fathers that our good Jesus has suffered more than all the martyrs together..."; [This opinion of St. Thomas is not commonly held today.]; TD #40: St. Thomas is included among the Fathers teaching devotion to Mary, based on II, II, 104 ad 2: Hyperdulia...is the greatest reverence due to a man by reason of his having an affinity to God.; TD #127: "Men, says St. Thomas, make a vow at their Baptism to renounce the devil and all his pomps." (II, II, 88, 2 ad 1).

4. Montfort does not have a development of the Resurrection or the life of the Risen Christ. In speaking of "in the Incarnation", he seems to mean only the act of the assumption of the human nature by the Son of God so that "after the Incarnation" would mean the historical life of Christ following on the moment of the Incarnation.
5. LEW # 42. Il me semble voir cette aimable Souveraine appeler et assembler une seconde fois, pour ainsi dire, la Sainte Trinité pour réparer l'homme, comme elle avait fait pour le former. Il me semble que dans ce grand conseil, il se fait une espèce de combat entre la Sagesse Eternelle et la Justice de Dieu.
6. LEW #45. La Sagesse Eternelle, voyant qu'il n'y avait rien dans L'univers qui fut capable d'expier le péché de l'homme, de payer la Justice de Dieu et d'apaiser sa colère, et voulant cependant sauver le pauvre homme qu'elle aimait d'inclination, trouve un moyen admirable.
7. LEW # 51. Heureuse mille fois une âme dans qui la Sagesse est rentrée pour y faire sa demeure! Quelques combats qu'on lui livre, elle demeurera victorieuse; de quelques dangers qu'elle soit menacée, elle en sera délivrée; de quelques tristesses qu'elle soit accablée, elle sera réjoie et consolée; et en quelques humiliations qu'elle soit tombée, elle sera relevée et glorifiée dans le temps et dans l'éternité.

Montfort's biographers place the composition of LEW during the winter 1703-1704. Having been forced by difficulties with a jealous administration to leave the Hôtel-Dieu at Poitiers, Montfort had walked to Paris. There his zeal earned another rejection, from the Salpêtrière. Father Leschassier, his former director at Saint-Sulpice, coldly refused to be further responsible for him. Uncertain of his future, Montfort took refuge under a staircase on the Rue du Pot-deFer. From there he wrote to his spiritual daughter at Poitiers " I know no more friends here but God Alone; all those I used to have have abandoned me, " (Cf. Le Crom, op. cit. p. 117) With limited opportunity for mission work because of a generalized doubt as to his sanctity, Montfort spent the winter in solitude, passing almost all his time in prayer. Understandably his biographers look on his treatise on love of the Eternal Wisdom as autobiographical.



8. LEW #64. La Sagesse est pour l'homme, et l'homme est pour la Sagesse.
9. LEW #100. Pour les éprouver et les rendre plus dignes d'elle [la Sagesse], elle leur procure de grands combats et leur réserve des contradictions et des traverses dans presque tout ce qu'ils entreprennent. Elle permet tantôt au démon de les tenter, tantôt au monde de les calomnier et de les mépriser, tantôt à leurs ennemis de les surmonter et de les trahir. Ici elle leur procure une perte de biens, là une maladie; ici une injure, là une tristesse et un abattement de coeur. Enfin elle les éprouve en toute manière dans le creuset de la tribulation. Mais...leur affliction a été légère et leur récompense sera grande parce que Dieu les a tentés et les a trouvés dignes de lui.  
  
This passage seems autobiographical in view of the predicament of the author at the time of writing. Cf. footnote #7.
10. The incident concerning Suso is set in quotation marks in LEW; apparently Montfort copied from a source which he does not indicate. The library at the Jesuit Seminary on the Rue du Pot-de-Fer, which was accessible to him (cf. Le Crom, op. cit. p. 453), could well have been the source of his information. Another possibility is his citing the incident from memory from his library work during his seminary days; the passage is not inscribed in his Cahier de Notes.  
  
Montfort highly esteemed the Dominicans; he was professed as a Tertiary of St. Dominic at Pontchâteau on November 10, 1710.
11. LEW #106. Le torrent impétueux de la bonté infinie de Dieu, arrêté violemment par les péchés des hommes..., se décharge avec impétuosité...dans le coeur de Marie... Toute la plénitude de la Divinité...se répand en Marie autant qu'une pure créature en est capable. O Marie, ô Chef-d'oeuvre du Très-Haut, ô miracle de la Sagesse Eternelle, ô prodige de la Toute-Puissance, ô abîme de la grâce..., il n'y a que celui qui vous a créée qui connaisse la hauteur, l'étendu et la profondeur des grâces qu'il vous a faites.
12. Les Oeuvres de Montfort: ses Cantiques, Ed. by Fradet, S.M.M., (Beauchesne, Paris, 1928); pp. 348-352; 369-374. St. Louis Marie de Montfort, Louis LeCrom, S.M.M., (Librairie Mariale, Pont-Château, Loire Inf., 1942). pp. 368 ff.
13. More than one scripture text is at times assigned to a single paragraph number; hence scripture texts and paragraph numbers do not mathematically relate to each other.
14. Letter to the Friends of the Cross, (Montfort Publications, Bay Shore, N.Y., 1950); Oeuvres, Ses Cantiques, op. cit. p. 820, Table Analytique where one and one-half columns refer to hymns on the cross: its praises, beauty, mystery, necessity, advantages; as throne of Wisdom, instrument of victory, source of grace, sign of the Christian, trial and measure of love.
15. Le Crom, op. cit. p. 215.
16. LEW # 168. Chose étonnante! Elle [la Sagesse] voit parmi les juifs un sujet de scandale et d'horreur, et parmi les païens un objet de folie; elle voit un morceau de bois vil et méprisable, dont on fait la confu-

sion et le supplice des plus scélérats et des plus malheureux, appelé un gibet, une potence ou une croix. C'est cette croix sur laquelle elle jette les yeux; elle y prend ses complaisances; elle la chérit parmi tout ce qu'il y a de grand et d'éclatant au ciel et sur la terre, pour être l'instrument de ses conquêtes et l'ornement de sa majesté, les richesses et les plaisirs de son empire, l'amie et l'épouse de son coeur, 'O profondeur de la Sagesse et de la science de Dieu! Que son choix est surprenant et que ses desseins et jugements sont sublimes et incompréhensibles! Mais que son amour pour cette croix est ineffable!

The anthropomorphic slant of this passage, as well as the reflections concerning the human consciousness of Christ in LEW #169-174 need re-evaluation in the light of contemporary theology; nevertheless, they served well Montfort's purpose of making the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom more understandable and accessible to men of the early eighteenth century.

17. At times the saint's statements concerning the happiness and delight that accompany failures, illness, and the usual litany of painful "crosses" that mark one's life seem to be a pious overstatement. Yet there is no reason to doubt his sincerity even though he was only thirty years old when he wrote LEW. In fact, he naively betrays his own sanctity. In adverse circumstances he is so intimately united with Christ, so transcendent in a sense, that like the Master the disciple finds his meat and drink in doing the Father's will. The advantages of the cross that he lists (LEW #176) are another instance of his seeming to write from personal experience.
18. Montfort organized the Friends of the Cross at Nantes in 1708. He commonly organized such groups of piety in the parishes he evangelized to perpetuate the fruit of the mission, visiting them whenever possible. Early in 1714 the Jansenists succeeded with the Bishop of Nantes in having their redoubtable adversary silenced in that diocese. At Rennes during the summer of the same year, Father de Montfort once again met with the diabolical hatred of the Jansenists who succeeded in having him silenced in that diocese also. Welcoming this humiliation, for his greatest cross was to be without a cross, he took refuge at his Alma Mater, the Jesuit College at Rennes. Here under the direction of Father de Préfontaine, S.J., he buried himself in an eight day retreat. On the last day of the retreat, Saint Louis communicated to his fervent followers at Nantes the fruits of his sublime meditation. From the "sweet retirement of his interior", he comes to "trace on paper a few little arrows from the cross with which to pierce the noble hearts of the Friends of the Cross." Letter to the Friends of the Cross, pp. 7-9.
19. Ibid. p. 21 ff.
20. "Exaggeration!" is the censure often levelled in modern times at Montfort in matters of mortification. True, contemporary theology places emphasis on the positive commandment of love, yet we of the twentieth century must be mindful of the milieu in which he operated. Strong counter-balances are needed to move heavy loads. In his own lifetime Montfort faced this criticism which he turned away by his soft answer, "Is not poverty, mortification, and trust in Providence the simple Gospel teaching?" Cf. Le Crom, op. cit. p. 328.

21. Both works are available from: Montfort Publications, Bay Shore, N.Y., 1950. Hereafter in this work, quotation from True Devotion will be indicated as TD with paragraph number references as for LEW.

The Secret of Mary, a letter on the practice of slavery addressed by Montfort to a religious, is a nutshell of the conferences that he gave during his many missions in western France. The date and place of the composition of the letter are not known.

Very likely the True Devotion was written in the autumn of 1712 at Saint-Éloi, a canton of La Rochelle, in a small house charitably placed at the missionary's disposition and appropriately called "the hermitage." Here Montfort sought respite between missions and so the writing of a book was perforce relatively hasty with little research possible on the spot. Yet, so well read was the author, so frequently had he consulted learned men, and so foreefully had he formulated his thoughts in spoken words over his many years of preaching (TD #110, 118) that he set about this task eagerly, "his heart dictating with a special joy all that he wrote." (TD #13). Montfort's wide reading has already been established (cf. above pp. 2, 3 and footnotes 3, 10). He does not name any of the "learned men" in question but his biography reveals that he frequently consulted Tronson, PSS, Descartes, S.J., Grandet, Msgr. de Champflour, Msgr. de Lascure, Poullart des Places, and Colluson, S.J. (Cf. LeCrom, op. cit., pp. 56, 114ff, 124, 252, 302, 366 ff, and 385)

The title of the book is not Montfort's. His manuscript incomplete when discovered, did not include the title page. In the course of the text Montfort styles it: the preparation for the reign of Jesus Christ (TD #227), and again, the perfect renewal of the vows of Baptism (TD #120).

22. In harmony with 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> century anthropology, Montfort describes the weakness of man, the "body of sin" of Saint Paul (Rom 6:6), with colorful terms and insistence on the consequent obligation of hating and renouncing self. Following St. Bernard and St. Bonaventure, he also argues that we need a mediator even with the Mediator Himself since man is not worthy to approach the all-pure and the divine (TD #85). These attitudes toward man and toward the one Mediator are so indigenous to his time that we can move along without delaying to evaluate them as his, though they inevitably did influence his thinking.
23. TD #61-2. Jésus-Christ est l'alpha et l'oméga de toutes choses... Nous ne travaillons...que pour rendre tout homme parfait en Jésus-Christ... Il est notre unique maître qui doit nous enseigner, notre unique Seigneur de qui nous devons dépendre... Si donc nous établissons la solide dévotion de la très Sainte Vierge, ce n'est que pour établir plus parfaitement celle de Jésus-Christ.
24. An entire first part of the work, seemingly a detailed thirty-day preparation or exercise, to which Montfort refers in the present text (TD #227-233), is missing; from the second part of the book, the Marian text on hand, several pages at the beginning and end of the work are missing, but the body is intact. This thirty-day period of preparation in question has been reconstructed on the bases of textual analysis of the available portions of TD. This is the exercise connected with the

act of consecration as a preparation for the reign of Jesus Christ, (cf. footnote #21).

In TD #227-233, Montfort suggests as an exterior practice that the act of Consecration of self to the Divine Wisdom through Mary be preceded by a thirty day period of preparation, as just mentioned above. Here I can only allude to a possible, but interesting, connection that may exist between this preparation and the thirty day exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, which connection is quite probable because of Montfort's relations with the Jesuits as professors and friends, at Rennes and in Paris, during the greater part of his life time. During his college days, and again from 1703 onwards, they also served as his spiritual directors. Cf. J.M. Hupperts, Vie et Doctrine: St.L.-M. de Montfort, (Editions Beyaert, Brussels, 1961) p. 24.

25. Modern version by Anthony Prete, Graduate Theology Student, Marquette University.



## CHAPTER TWO

## SOURCES OF MONTFORTIAN SPIRITUALITY

In speaking of his True Devotion (TD #114), Montfort refers to himself as "the one whom the Holy Spirit used to write it." Only in this sense does Montfort consider the work to be his. Nevertheless, having studied the works of the spiritual authors who had preceded him, he rethought them and in so doing, he made them his own. Though he announces no absolutely new ideas, the importance that he gives to some, the ties that he establishes between others, the conclusions he draws from them - (1) all imply a perception that is personal and not found prior to him.

Men per force repeat each other when they speak within the circle of the truth, but like scientific discoveries, moral ideas belong to him who marks them with his imprint. Thus Montfort deserves to be called a master (2) of a new spirituality.

As to Montfort's sources, these are many. Appointed librarian at Saint Sulpice, Montfort as a seminarian had at hand a valuable collection of works. The Fathers, especially Saint Augustine, and spiritual writers, in particular Bérulle, Olier and Boudon, became familiar to him. Very (3) likely it was while he had this charge as student librarian that he had the opportunity to make the collection of texts that was to serve him so well during his ministry, particularly in composing his True Devotion. He admits himself that he had read "almost all the books that treated of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary." (TD #118).

(4)  
Because of his training at Saint Sulpice, a spiritual offshoot of the Oratory, and because of his characteristic Berullian doctrines and ex-

pression, Montfort is considered to be the last of the great figures in the Berullian School. (5) Among the propagators of Berullian spirituality outside the Oratory he deserves a special mention because, though his treatise on devotion to Mary has its roots substantially in Bérulle, yet it is a new and prophetic presentation of the Berullian doctrine, adding much from his personal experience to the teaching of his master. (6)

Even at this introductory glance, traits of the Montfortian spirituality are becoming distinct. On the one hand, he has borrowed from many available sources, yet on the other, he has synthesized these borrowings to produce a spirituality that is peculiar to him. A study of this dialectic in his writings follows according to the two dominant themes that have been presented in Chapter One: first, the election of Wisdom theme will be considered against the background of Bérulle and devotion to the Incarnate Word, Olier and Saint Sulpice, and minor sources especially the French Ignatian School; second, the consecration through Mary theme will be seen in the light of the teaching of Bérulle on the vow of slavery, Olier on spiritual maternity, and of minor figures especially Boudon.

#### I - The Election of Wisdom Theme

By circumstances of time and place, Montfort grew up in the mentality of the French School of Spirituality, the golden age of religious history in France. By knowing choice, he accepts its principles, recognizing them as an unfolding of the Pauline doctrine of the Body of Christ. The prime figure and founder of the French School was Pierre Cardinal de Bérulle (1575-1629), acclaimed by Urban VIII as the Apostle of the Incarnate Word.

Born in a confused period of history when the Church of France was spiritually and materially ruined by the wars of religion, Pierre de Bé-

rulle surprised his masters by the precocity of his spiritual maturity. On the one hand he developed a fervent humanism with admiration for the Platonists, and on the other he knew a sincere ardor for personal perfection. Ordained in 1599, he entered the ranks of a clergy that was in a pitiful state due politically to the prevailing system of benefits, and ecclesiastically to the feudal-lord type of living among the Bishops. Through the establishment of the Oratory in France in 1611, Bérulle undertook to restore the spirit of perfection in the clerical state. In addition to outstanding services to Church and State, e.g. the establishment and spiritual direction of houses of Carmel in France, and a diplomatic mission to England to arrange the wedding of Henriette of France with Charles I of England, he revived Christian piety by his insights concerning the Person of Christ, the Incarnate Word. For the founder of the Oratory, Jesus is the object, the principle and the model of the cult of adoration due to God. Thus associating dogma and piety, he sparked a renewal of the Church in France by a school that was to become noted more for its spirituality than for its theology. (7) In an age that exalted humanism, he sought to restore God to the center of life, and by this theocentricism, he renewed in the Church the spirit of religion. Bérulle left several writings after him, notably Les Discours sur les Grandeurs de Jésus and La Vie de Jésus, the former having been the occasion of much controversy during the lifetime of the author. He died while celebrating Mass reciting the words: "Hanc igitur oblationem servitutis nostrae", an impressive closing to a life of slavery vowed to Jesus and Mary.

Montfort draws the substance of his doctrine, particularly his esteem for the Incarnation, from the French School, and it is Bérulle's teaching on this point which has given a basic direction to the thinking of his disciples. Bérulle, in turn, can be traced to the basic source,

that of Paul's epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians. There the Apostle tells of the eternal plan of the Father, realized in the Son, and fulfilled through the Holy Spirit. In this Trinitarian framework Bérulle likewise places his cult of the Incarnate Word; in fact only in reference to the mystery of the Trinity is his Christology seen in its true light. Though the Incarnate Word is the center of attraction for Bérulle, he thereby approaches the Trinity, adoring and revering through the Son for He alone is the perfect religious, the adorer par excellence, and the living prayer of all humanity. (8)

Not only does Bérulle consider the equality of the Three Divine Persons which is based in their essence, but also he dwells at length on the relations of the Divine Persons within the Trinitarian life. The Father is first of all and essentially the principle of Trinitarian life; Source of all activity, He is likewise its End to which all activity returns. The ensemble of Trinitarian life is like a circle which closes on itself, of which the Father is simultaneously the Alpha and Omega. The basic property of the Son is to be the substantial Image that the Father has of Himself; His role is that of reference, of return to the Father. His return supposes that the Son knows the Father. From this knowledge of Father and Son spirates Love, the Holy Spirit. The role of the Spirit is seen as the bond of the Divine Persons and in a sense the term of the Trinity since the internal power of production terminates in Him. The Third Person is sterile in God but fecund outside the Trinity because through Him divine life overflows throughout creation. (9) The Trinitarian exemplarism found in all creation, Bérulle sees strikingly manifested in the Incarnation. In his Discours sur les Grandeurs de Jésus, he becomes prolific, even somewhat repetitive and over-extended, devoting five "discours" specifically to the contemplation of the mysteries of the Trinity



and the Incarnation. Yet his abundant "O's" bear witness to his youthful enthusiasm for this admirable work of the Trinity. Typical of this Berullian referral of the Word to the Father is this passage from his fifth Discours:

In eternity, the Word is both by His person and by His state in an eternal and substantial relation of Himself and consequently of all that proceeds from Him toward the Eternal Father, and toward the Principle and Source of his Being and of all being... God of God, Light of Light, God producing and produced all at once, which is incomprehensible, and which we adore recognizing an infinite dignity and authority, divinely referring to the Eternal Father both Himself and generally all that is or that proceeds from Him as the Holy Spirit, or that proceeds and depends on Him as all creation. (10).

Montfort seems to have drawn from this master though he refrains in his writings from an extended treatment of the roles of the Divine Persons within the Trinity. He prefers to envisage Trinitarian action from the point of view of the Wisdom of God, Wisdom that is eternal, dwelling in the Father as the object of His complacency, and Wisdom that is in time, presiding at the creation of man, taking flesh among men, and finally triumphing gloriously in heaven (LEW #14). Like Bérulle, Montfort maintains a double look, one toward eternity and the other toward time, yet for Montfort this two-way look is more a turning toward redemption of the created world through the mystery of the Incarnation than the Berullian act of adoration of the Father by the Word.

Bérulle gives little attention to the consideration of how the Word is the Image of the Father and how, since the Word of God expresses the wealth of He Who Is, all beings are in Him. Montfort, striving to establish a rapport between mankind and the Divine Wisdom seeks the answer to this "how" in sacred scripture, drawing from Ecclesiasticus 24 a description of this Word or Idea of the Father as made known to man. (LEW #15-31). Montfort's tendency to turn toward the created universe in seek-

ing understanding of the Incarnate Word does not negate Bérulle's appreciation of the role of the Word in creation. Strongly inclined toward Plato and St. Augustine, Bérulle contemplates God as an artist producing by His Word or Idea a masterpiece by making it participate in the form which He conceived for it. What God thus formally creates by His Word, (11)  
He also formally maintains in existence by His Word. Montfort on the other hand humanizes these aspects of creation and conservation by drawing from the book of Wisdom the notion that Divine Wisdom creates and conserves all things like a mother who loves and sustains what she brings forth or like a youth who plays a game to divert his Father. (LEW #31-2) (12)

Thus the mystery of Trinitarian life, the inner Personal Divine Life supposed by all Christology, was given due emphasis by both Bérulle and Montfort; nevertheless, they consider the mystery from differing points of view. Cochois speaks of masculine and feminine saints, establishing these qualities not by sex but by objectivity and subjectivity, by exemplarism and by affection, by a mystique of essence and by a mystique of nuptials. These two spiritual attitudes are necessarily complementary and the greatest masters are those who have most successfully allied the two. Without rigorously categorizing Bérulle as exclusively masculine or feminine, Cochois indicates that Bérulle leans to mysticism by essence; a metaphysician by temperament, Bérulle treats of the Trinity speculatively and expresses union with God in terms of "going out of self, of fusion, and of annihilation." (13)  
Following through on Cochois' premise and yet not rigorously categorizing Montfort, one can see the latter as (14)  
leaning toward mysticism by nuptials. Choleric and melancholy by temperament, (15)  
he speaks of divine mysteries in terms deliberately chosen to draw men to love.

There seems no need to delay further on the source of Montfort's

Trinitarian thoughts, which though basic to all theology and recurring  
 (16)  
 at strategic points during his writings, are of less prominence than  
 the election of and consecration to Divine Wisdom. Nevertheless, this  
 first consideration of a source drawn upon by Montfort already reveals  
 how independent he is in picking and choosing, and how personal he is  
 in channeling his findings to suit his own purpose.

Like Bérulle, Montfort does not hedge himself into narrow  
 historicity when he ponders on the Wisdom of God. His view is sweeping,  
 enveloping heaven and earth, eternity and time. For him Christ is not  
 primarily the historical figure of the gospels; He is the Son of God,  
 the Wisdom of God whose personal story of divine generation pre-dates  
 time, and whose revelation outside the Trinity runs through all history,  
 past, present, and yet to come. This transcendental view of Wisdom  
 could well derive from Montfort's familiarity with the works of Bérulle.  
 Both writers are Christological, yet while Montfort starts with Christ  
 and thinks through a spirituality pivoting around the love of Eternal  
 and Incarnate Wisdom, Bérulle evolves one of adoration of the Incarnate  
 Word. The Cardinal teaches that by the hypostatic union, the soul of  
 Jesus from the first moment of conception, "in an altogether divine move-  
 ment...acts by the light, not of the world which it has not yet entered,  
 (17)  
 but of grace and of glory." The human nature of Christ not only real-  
 ized by state and by being this admiration full of love, but also consti-  
 tuted this adoration in an exemplary and supereminent way.

From all eternity, there was a God infinitely adorable, but  
 there was not yet an infinite Adorer; there was neither man  
 nor servant capable of rendering infinite service and infinite  
 love. Now you are this Adorer, O Jesus, this man, this ser-  
 vant... loving, adoring, and serving the supreme Majesty as He  
 deserves to be loved, served, and honored... O grandeur of the  
 mystery of the Incarnation, to establish such a state and such  
 a dignity within the created being. (18)

The exemplarism of the Trinitarian circle, of emanation from God and

return to the Unity of God by the spiration of the Holy Spirit, is per se imprinted on the adoration of the God-man. In the Incarnation the human nature of Christ enters into an admirable and unique relation which concerns not only the essential being of God but also His personal being. In the human nature of Christ a deifying ecstasy corresponds to the eternal and uncreated ecstasy of love. This hypostatic ecstasy which elevates the assumed humanity to the throne of the divinity, establishes it for eternity in a state of sonship, and by means of this assumed nature, the Son adores the Father. (19) The Incarnation is then the mystery of an ineffable mystical kiss of love between the divinity and the humanity of the Son of God.

In Berullian doctrine, the consequence of dependence follows upon the foregoing truths; Montfort seemingly utilizes these same truths as the groundwork for his point of great emphasis, namely, the election of Divine Wisdom, or the putting on the mind of Christ. With regard to Bérulle, since the Incarnation is the source and prototype of all union, it follows that "we should first consider the Son of God, and then consider creatures and ourselves in Him, but first of all we must consider Him." (20) Pondering on the hypostatic union, Bérulle perceives that the humanity of Christ has no human personality; the eternal Word as a Person substitutes for the rights of nature, takes over and exerts authority over the humanity. As Supposit of this nature, the Word is the proprietor of all its actions, supporting, ennobling and deifying them. The Cardinal even goes so far as to say that Christ's humanity is like a slave that has lost its liberty, ceding the right it has to enjoy self-existence to exist only in a divine Person and to be in His power, not merely morally and in passing, but personally, perpetually and as a natural state. (21)



With the humanists of the Renaissance, Bérulle sees man newly created by God as the soul and intellect of the universe who in turning himself toward God might direct toward Him all creation, too. This creative plan was upset by sin, but in Jesus, "the One who repairs our being", it is admirably restored. (22) Men redeemed by Christ are the fortunate captives of His triumph, yet while the kingdom is being built up, they are to ratify His victory by adoration and by submission to His empire, humbly following His triumphant chariot because they are His slaves and His captives. (23) Jesus is the plenitude of the divinity, empty of creatureliness to bring us to consider every created being as an emptiness which is to be filled with God. Master of souls, Bérulle discloses to the Oratorians and the Carmelites in particular, the full splendor of this calling in the Incarnate Son of God. These respond to his eagerness to give self completely in return to Christ; such a gift of self Bérulle calls the vow of voluntary slavery, a free response of love and adoration to the divine love that is given first. An instance of Bérulle's personal dispositions in this regard follows:

O holy and deified soul of Jesus, act in my soul and deign to take yourself the power over me that I cannot give you; to make me your slave in such a way that whereas I do not know, you do know; to make me belong to you and serve you not only by my actions but also by the state and condition of my being. (24).

(25)

This vow of slavery with its double aspect of mystical oblation and aspiration, Bérulle recognizes as being the full ratification of the Christian consecration at Baptism. (26)

Bérulle's development of the dependence of Christ's human nature on His divine person even to the point of servitude is undoubtedly among the sources of Montfort's practice of holy slavery. This teaching will reach Montfort tempered by its use in the French School, particularly by the modifications brought thereto by Monsieur Olier of Saint Sulpice

and the Archdeacon of Evreux, Henri-Marie Boudon. Before the discussion of these two men and their influence on Montfort, the "states" of the Berullian doctrine need explanation.

Montfort's insistence on the choice of Wisdom (LEW Chapter 7), besides revealing the importance that he gives to this act of election, also shows the value that he assigns to the fixed state in which he urges the Christian to place himself. The assuming of a definite frame of reference concerning Christ is already an orientation that hopefully will foster a further putting on of the mind of Christ. This growth in the mentality of Christ, or the acquisition of Divine Wisdom, is the quintessence of Christian spirituality. This practice of assuming Christ-like dispositions is clearly detected in Berullian spirituality. The Christian, as a member of Christ, should seek to reproduce His mysteries for from the man-God emanates life, grace, glory and the splendors worthy of divinity. Though the mysteries of the life of Christ were accomplished only once exteriorly, e.g., the moment of His birth is past, the state of being born and living in this world for the glory of the Father remains. "By His chosen state, Christ is ours eternally." (27) The interior state of the external mystery, the efficacy and virtue that make the mystery vital and operative in Christians, the disposition of Christ—this is always actual, present and fruitful.

The originality of Berullian piety is the consideration of the interior of Jesus, in other words of His states of soul. (28) Actually, his "newness" is as old as John and Paul, as Christ Himself who urged His followers to learn of Him. Bérulle's teaching on the "states" of Christ is a mysticism rather than a science of morals, an adherence to the Incarnate Word and an assuming of His "states" rather than a series of laborious exercises. His spirituality is a religion; for him the spirit-

ual life consists not in thinking of self and one's salvation but of  
(29)  
God and His rights over us.

The notion of the "states" is completed by that of "adherence to  
(30)  
God." Bérulle often uses the words "to adhere, adherence to Jesus", which for him mean to be united, attached to Jesus to the extent of being one with Him. Alternate terms are "belonging to, application and servitude" but "adherence" is the most exact and expressive because one who adheres to God is of a single mind with Him. Adherence puts a person: (a) in a state of submission which subjects him to the power that Christ has over him and gives Christ the right to do in and with the Christian all that He pleases; (b) in a state of purity of heart which gives the person a fidelity and love to seek only the honor of God; (c) in a state disposed to imitate the life and virtues of Jesus which grace-life becomes in him an expression of Christ Himself. To achieve such a concept of adherence requires complete abnegation. The asceticism of Bérulle, based on his idea of the Incarnate Word, especially on his theory of the interior disposition of Jesus, is in fact more demanding than an asceticism based on externals.

The Berullian teaching on the "states" has a bearing on the practices that Montfort proposes for the acquisition of Wisdom. He also encourages his disciples to strive for the acquisition of the mentality of Christ: "Send forth Wisdom from your throne," he prays, "dispatch her that she may be with me and work with me, that I may know what is pleasing to Thee. For she knows and understands all things and will guide me discreetly in my affairs." (Wisdom 9:10, 11), (LEW #192). Similarly the fourth means is rooted in the notion of states, or adherence, or dependence. However, since Montfort's look on Christian dependence on God has the new note of dependence practiced through Mary, this teaching will

be treated more at length in the second part of the present chapter.

Thus far this chapter has dealt with the first aspect of Montfort's Wisdom theme as it relates to the mystery of the Trinity and to the love story of the Divine Wisdom in the OT and NT, and has considered parallel passages in Bérulle's treatment of the Trinity and the Incarnate Word. A second aspect of the Wisdom theme follows, namely a consideration of how the spirituality of Monsieur Olier tempered the teaching of Bérulle as it was passed along in time.

Jean Jacques Olier (1608-1657), educated at Lyons, Paris and Rome, was ordained in 1633. After five years of fruitful ministry and a two year period of spiritual trial, he became pastor of Saint Sulpice parish in Paris in 1641. There besides re-Christianizing his people, he inaugurated a seminary for the formation of zealous priests. Afflicted with paralysis in 1652, he suffered much during four years until his death at forty-nine years of age.

Directed during several years by Father de Condren, Olier though not an Oratorian, inherited the spirit which his director had inherited from Bérulle. Yet whereas Bérulle had made the virtue of religion the center of all, his disciple and successor, de Condren, centers all that pertains to the religion of Christ around the immolation of Golgotha; thus for him the Cross and the Mass, rather than the person of the God-man make up the essence of Christianity. Olier goes one step further and is more intent on showing how this religion and this sacrifice are ever present in the Eucharist that prolongs the sacrifice of the Mass and makes Christ the center of religion. He sees Christ-life primarily as a union with the Eucharistic Christ, as a sacramental and spiritual communion by which the religion and sacrifice of Christ pass into the Christian. (31)

Notwithstanding this enriching development of doctrine, a pessi-



mistic note springs up in the Berullian spirituality of Saint Sulpice. While de Condren and Olier agree that man's nature is capable of true sanctity and of efficacious co-operation with grace, they also say that human nature is so despicable and so wounded by sin that its activity must always remain suspect. Man's principal function in the work of perfection is to withdraw from himself. Olier insists on the self-abdication that follows upon Bérulle's adherence, e.g., according to Olier's method of prayer the first act is to renounce one's self and one's intentions. Only when the Christian is wholly emptied of self can God be all in him; only then can the breath of the Spirit elevate the soul that is no longer weighed down by anything earthly.

Though these conclusions may be magnificent, the premises leading to them, while not containing Jansenistic or Protestant contempt for human nature, betray a certain disdain and distrust of it. (32) The abasement of the Incarnation, the ignominy of Calvary, the glory of heaven, and the mystery of the tabernacle are all regarded as a kind of sacred annihilation, obscuring the vision of the appealing humanity and gentle goodness through which the Word has made Himself accessible to men. As with the Head, so with the members; the part played by human nature in the supernatural life is certainly not denied by the Sulpician School, but it is minimized.

However, this pessimism did not conquer the spirit that inspired the French School and Saint Sulpice. Though their slight esteem for human nature was not apt to induce them to assign a prominent place in their formal teaching of spirituality to a humble and devoted love for men, their practical counsels and their living example teach convincingly that they did not reject the foremost precept of the Master. In fact they succeeded more than others in effecting a synthesis between Christology and spirituality by proposing the truth of incorporation in Christ as a

code of perfection. To look to Olier in particular, manuscripts discovered after his death tell of his own great love for others:

The vow of servitude obliges us so to love all the members of Jesus Christ that we enter into their interests, and even prefer their interests to our own... We shall make it our study to please them in all things, and lastly, we shall treat them as a servant treats his master. (33)

Both fraternal charity and little esteem for human nature are imprinted in Montfort's life and writings. He identified himself with the poor, e.g., sharing their food and lodging; he spent his energy in their behalf, e.g., reorganizing the General Hospital at Poitiers. Four of his songs treat at length the subject of love of neighbor; only a few scattered verses reveal a disdain for human nature. <sup>(34)</sup> His True Devotion carries his strongest denunciations against human nature (TD #78-9). In <sup>(35)</sup> keeping with his Berullian-Sulpician formation, Montfort in these passages speaks of man's actions as ordinarily stained and corrupted by his nature; of man's nothingness and sin deserving the anger of God, yet the context of his words shows that he understands this "nothingness" to mean humanity unaided by grace. Though man sorely needs supernatural help, he does remain capable of corresponding to and of increasing in grace even to the degree of becoming a saint. Such is precisely the point that Montfort is trying to make: man's total redemption is in Christ; hence the necessity to put on Christ through the election and consecration that he (Montfort) proposes.

Before leaving this evaluation of pessimism, a comment concerning Jansenism seems in order. Without entering into a history of Jansenism in France or attempting an evaluation of its doctrine as taught by Baius, Jansen, Saint-Cyran, or Arnauld, the whole Jansenistic movement has a restraining effect. It brought to French Catholicism a cold respect for holy things, that is, a fear of God, austerity of conduct, cultic dignity

and the concern to conform one's life to the practice of the commandments. Though the French School insinuated something of this same spirit of rigidity, Jansenism exceeded the measure and chilled souls by placing them too far from God; it closed the way to familiarity with God and to the mystical life, preparing for an indifference and an exterior respect that would become the cold refuge of intellectualism. (36) Its mark can be seen on all the writers of the second half of the seventeenth century, even the poets; Jansenistically inspired spirituality spread beyond France and had a huge influence through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. (37)

Though a man is the product of his times, he need not be restrained by them. Despite a certain pessimism that is evident in his doctrine, Montfort makes a definite break through in the understanding of the Incarnation and the Christian humanism that flows from it. By his insights into the appealing humanity and gentle goodness of the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom, he shows men a Father in heaven who loves them so much that He sends His Son to dwell among them. An external influence that may have occasioned these insights is Montfort's relations in Paris and at Rennes with the Jesuits "of courageous optimism." (38) This Jesuit influence will constitute a third aspect of the Wisdom theme.

While living at the Rue du Pot-de-Fer, Saint Louis was in easy reach of his director at that time, Father Descartes, S.J., the spiritual director at the Jesuit Novitiate on the same street. Because he was well received by the Jesuits, he very likely had access to the library and to the current writings of the French Ignatian School. (39) This supposition is based on the fact that in Montfort's works and in his unpublished Cahier de Notes and Cahier de Sermons, there are references to borrowings from Jesuit spiritual writers, such as: Jean-Baptist Saint-Jure d. 1657,

James Nouet d. 1680, François Nepveu d. 1708, Amable Bonnefons fl. 1648, Franciscus Suarez d. 1617, Jean-Baptist Crasset d. 1680. The first four (40) mentioned are particularly influential in the Love of the Eternal Wisdom.

While writing the Love of the Eternal Wisdom, Montfort consulted the book of Saint-Jure, De la connaissance et de l'amour du Fils de Dieu, Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ. Yet despite the similarities that can be seen in the two works, Montfort's book is a re-thinking of the earlier work of Saint-Jure, the fruit of his meditations, written with firmness and with (41) hardly any crossing out. What did Montfort find in Saint-Jure?

In Saint-Jure's treatise, the motives for learning to know and love Our Lord and the effects wrought in the soul by that knowledge and love are set forth at length. Almost all the ascetical principles relating to that love are mentioned and its theology is deeply studied. Christ as the God-man, rather than as only God or as only man, must be followed and imitated. On a first level the following of Christ consists in imitating His speech and actions; on a second, His virtues; on a third, His life in its (42) wholeness. In other words, knowledge<sup>be</sup> gets love, and love urges total imitation.

In this summary of the work of Saint-Jure can be discerned the leading thoughts in Montfort's work. The first six chapters of Love of the Eternal Wisdom aim at imparting knowledge of Wisdom, while chapter eight describes its wonderful effects in a soul in possession of Wisdom. Detailed study of the two works discloses that certain passages are practically lifted textually from the work of Saint-Jure, e.g., Chapter Thirteen on the sorrows of Incarnate Wisdom; to the contrary, other passages seem to have inspired Montfort but are transformed by his personal contribution, (43) e.g., the dedicatory prayer of Love of the Eternal Wisdom.

The influence of Saint-Jure is also noticeable in other Montfortian



works, e.g., in his hymns on modesty and on humility, in his chapter on modesty in the primitive rule of the Montfort Sisters. The strong similarity between this chapter on modesty and Tronson's particular ex-  
 (44)  
 ams on modesty suggests that Montfort used Saint-Jure in a Tronson version rather than directly. Tronson himself draws from Saint-Jure whose works he may well have learned through his close friend Father LeValois, S.J., the director of retreats at the Jesuit Novitiate. Because Montfort greatly admired Tronson, a line of progression running thus: Saint-Jure -- Tronson -- Montfort seems possible and would serve to underscore the channeling of the French Ignatian School through Be-  
 rullian figures to Montfort. Even if filtered in this way, Ignatian Spirituality would serve as a counter-balance to pessimism in the Mont-  
 fortian synthesis.

Another Jesuit source from which Montfort seemingly draws is the  
 (45)  
Homme d'Oraison of James Nouet. Montfort's unpublished Cahier de Ser-  
 mons carries the plan of the last sermon that he preached on the love and the gentleness of Jesus; Jesus is meek (a) in His origins, (b) in the way He comes to men, (c) in His behavior during His life and Passion, after His Resurrection and now He is more merciful than ever. In his book, Nouet has points for meditations on the admirable meekness of Jesus Christ for the twelfth and thirteenth weeks after Pentecost. Those of the twelfth week provide the subdivisions for the broad plan that Mont-  
 fort has sketched. In other words, Montfort drew ideas from Nouet but adapted them according to his own vision of Wisdom. The same before-in-  
 and-after-the-Incarnation plant that provided the outline of Love of the  
 Eternal Wisdom is evident in the plan that he used for his last sermon.

One more significant likeness to a Jesuit source remains to be mentioned. Chapter Twelve of Love of the Eternal Wisdom, Oracles of the

Incarnate Wisdom, bears a marked resemblance to two works of Amable Bonnefons: Petit Livre de Vie (published in 1648) and Les Vies des Saints et leur doctrine en maximes (published in 1650). Both of these works are a collection of gospel texts which constitute "general rules for a good life, drawn from the sacred words of Our Lord Jesus Christ." <sup>(46)</sup> Documentation Montfortaine #36 carries a reproduction from a 1699 edition of the first part of the Petit Livre de Vie which shows that the selection and order of texts which constitute this first part of the Petit Livre and Chapter Twelve of Love of the Eternal Wisdom are identical in the two works. This limited evidence does not permit a conclusion as to Montfort's borrowing from Bonnefons or as to both Montfort and Bonnefons having used a common third source; however, this answer would be of minor or significance presently. The question of Bonnefons as a possible source has been raised to add one more piece of evidence to the case of Montfort's sources. The likelihood of his having drawn from Jesuit sources as well as from Berullian sources adds weight to the argument that though Montfort is the product of his time, he nevertheless reacts to its influence individually. He handles his sources in an original and personal manner; in particular he plays one tendency against another, e.g., pessimism versus optimism, and strives for harmony. These conclusions will be treated further in Chapter Three of this thesis.

## II - Consecration through Mary theme

In the thought of Montfort, the act of consecration of self to the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom is the sequence to the election of Divine Wisdom. Montfort understands devotion to Mary as the most perfect way of living this consecration and so he proposes a manner of life that has been described in Chapter One of this thesis. Though this manner of liv-

ing in dependence on Mary rests on firm theological bases which could be traced to their sources in the Fathers and/or the French School, such a development would be too broad for one thesis. The topic on hand has been purposely delimited to a study of the possible sources of the formula of consecration, both as to meaning and text, because the use of the word slavery and similar terms is of questionable value in contemporary theology and culture.

Bérulle's development of the dependence of Christ's human nature on His Divine Person even to the extent of servitude is undoubtedly among the sources of Montfort's practice of holy slavery. For the Founder of the Oratory, the state of servitude of Christ's humanity is the starting point of Christological spirituality; the Incarnation is the epitome and summary of all other mysteries. In God's plan Mary fulfilled a unique role in the Incarnation because by her divine maternity she belongs to both the substance and the economy of the mystery. Metaphysician though Bérulle is, he writes glowing pages when there is question of the intimacy between the Virgin and God. For example:

Sanctified from the first moment of her existence...Mary comes into the world quietly, without stirring the world, without even arousing a thought in Israel though she is the flower of Israel and the most eminent person in the world. But if earth does not take notice of her..., the first and foremost glance of God toward earth rests on this humble Virgin that the world ignores; this glance is the loftiest thought of the Almighty in all creation. (48)

He understands Mary to be "a pure capacity for Jesus, filled with Jesus; she exists only in relation to him and remains forever His masterpiece," (49) and from this understanding of her involvement in the Incarnation, he derives his insight of servitude to her.

In her role as mother, Mary loves and possesses Jesus as her son; she has a kind of right over and ownership of Him which is unique to her

and which follows from the right and ownership that the Eternal Father has over His Son, because the Son of Mary is also the Son of the Eternal Father. Bérulle sees the divine maternity more from the point of view of the paternity of the Father than from the sonship of the Word. Because it draws from the "divine fountainhead", Mary's maternity includes the right and special power to give Jesus to souls, and this maternal sovereignty extends to all creatures because she is mother of the Creator. (50)

Thus the sovereignty of Mary, entirely derived from that of Jesus, is as profound as the servitude of being and of grace that men owe to Jesus Himself. The vow of slavery to Mary rests on this basis. It is not a supererogatory devotion but a vow consequent on the place that the Mother of the Incarnate Word holds in the plan of God. For Bérulle, only the term of "servitude" expresses this filial dependence that Christians owe to her, the full submission prompted by love, that is actually a ratification of the vows of Baptism.

Only occasionally and briefly does Bérulle write of the "reference" of the Incarnate Word and of Mary toward men, as for example when he mentions Mary's role as "to establish souls in the life of grace, to engender spiritually," or as "a mother of souls." His emphasis is not to develop what Mary does in the Christian's life but to contemplate and venerate in complete disinterestedness what Mary is for God and what the Christian should try to appropriate of her dispositions toward God in order to praise God with her. Mary's motherhood is a "state" worked in her and not by her when she pronounced her willingness to enter into God's plans. (51)

In this state she is indissolubly united to the very being of the Word because she is the most advanced of creatures in adopting the "states" of Jesus. For a Christian to vow servitude to her places him with her in a "state" of imitation of Jesus. (52)



For the French School, the cult of the Incarnate Word flows into the cult of Mary; devotion to Mary makes only one with devotion to the Incarnate Word. Bérulle does not deviate from this direct thrust to the Incarnate Word when he asks Christians to consecrate themselves to Mary so that she might offer them to Jesus. "The first to have made Profession of the vow of slavery to Jesus, the humble servant of the Lord is, by God's ordinance, the Mistress of Novices of all members of the Church."<sup>(53)</sup>

Montfort follows the substance of Bérulle's teaching about the vows of servitude to Jesus and to Mary, but Olier brings to bear an influence that it seems better to look into before resuming the study of Montfort. The director of Saint Sulpice adopts the Incarnational principles of Bérulle, but his reflections about the mystery allows more attention to the aspect of man and his salvation. Capitalizing on the Berulian title for Mary, the Spouse of the Father, he extends its consequences beyond the Incarnate Word to all creatures and members of the Church. God the Father in making Mary His spouse gave her the authority of a sovereign over all creatures and the authority of a mother over His own Son and all those who are born into the Church. The divine maternity of Mary is thus continued in a spiritual maternity. This extended sovereignty prompts Olier to recompose a prayer whose elements are from Bérulle, whose first draught is from Condren, but whose final form has become the hallmark of Sulpician spirituality:

O Jesus, living in Mary, come and live in us, in the spirit of Thy holiness, in the fulness of Thy gifts, in the perfection of Thy ways, in the truth of Thy virtues, in the communion of Thy divine mysteries; subdue in us all hostile powers, the devil, the world and the flesh, by the strength of Thy Spirit and for the glory of Thy Father. Amen. (54)

For Olier, to live the life of Christ is to live it "according to the meas-

ure and the mode of the Incarnation." The Berullian dependence of servitude toward Mary is extended by analogy to the concept of Christian life considered in the more human relationship of gestation in Mary's womb, (55) the mold of God.

Though following Bérulle and Olier, Montfort differs from them. While the former bases the Christian practice of servitude on the servitude of the Incarnate Word to His human nature, Montfort without negating him, establishes his manner of consecration on the dependence of the Incarnate Word on Mary in the work of Redemption. "Since to carry out the Redemption, Mary is necessary to God by a necessity called hypothetical in consequence of His will, she is necessary to men to attain their salvation" (TD #39). Another difference between the French School and Montfort lies in the fact that Bérulle bases his servitude to Mary on the divine maternity and on the universal dominance that flows from it. Montfort utilizes Olier's notion of spiritual maternity, making Mary's maternity of grace the basis of the relationship between Mary and the Christian just as her divine maternity is the basis of her relationship with Christ, the gratia capitis. The Montfortain practice is built on her spiritual maternity and on her dominance over all members of the Mystical Body inasmuch as these are vivified by grace. In the vocabulary of the seventeenth century, this relationship or dominance is called servitude, but when Montfort uses the term he means to express this dependence of grace.

Another important source of the consecration theme is found in the work of Henri-Marie Boudon (1624-1702). Born at La Fère (Aisne, France), he studied philosophy and earned a doctorate in theology at Paris where he was influenced by the doctrine of Bérulle. In 1655 he was ordained and named Archdeacon of Evreux. Because of his severe censure of books of doubtful orthodoxy, Jansenistic factions made trouble for him. During

eight years he was deprived of his office and suffered the loss of his reputation. Reinstated, he enjoyed an active ministry until his death at seventy-nine years of age. His works include: Dieu Seul (1650) and Le Saint Esclavage de l'admirable Mère de Dieu (1674).

Montfort knew Boudon through the latter's writings which, according to his early biographer Elain, he knew thoroughly. His borrowings from Boudon concerning the practice of slavery fall into two categories: those that are considered certainly borrowed and those that are considered influential or inspirational. Both types of borrowings can be seen in True Devotion. (56)

It can be said with certainty that Montfort borrowed from Boudon that part of True Devotion which deals with the history of the practice of slavery (TD #159-164). He refers explicitly to his source: "Father Boudon who died a short time ago in the odor of sanctity, says in a book which he composed on this devotion..." (TD #159), and again, "We may also see in Father Boudon's book..." (TD #163). As is his custom, Montfort edits Boudon's work, taking some historic facts in extenso, e.g., the story of St. Odilon, Abbot of Cluny, in which however he makes precise a date that Boudon suggests vaguely; omitting or condensing others according to his needs, e.g., Montfort omits a historic note proper to France. Where Boudon has a long account of the life and work of Bérulle, Montfort has just one paragraph (TD #162) and no quotations, but in this instance as in the reference to a Mère Agnès de Jésus (TD #170), Montfort affirms that he learned these facts from his own reading, not from Boudon.

Concerning other resemblances between Montfort and Boudon, where the former may have been influenced by the latter, there are four noteworthy areas of similarity: (57)

(a) the purpose of the practice of slavery - "God Alone is the basis of

slavery to the Blessed Virgin," writes Boudon; since she surpasses all saints because of her relations with the Trinity, whoever gives himself to her is certainly and necessarily united to God Alone who is the unique goal of life. Montfort also builds his treatise on God Alone, but he has worked out a proposition on this truth which he presents in TD #61-7 under the title: Jesus Christ is the final end of devotion to Mary. "He is the beginning and the end of all things; in Him alone dwells the fulness of the divinity (*gratia unionis*) together with all other fulness of grace, virtue and perfection (*gratia personalis*); in Him alone we have been blessed with all spiritual goods (*gratia capitis*)". (TD #61). For further development of this truth that Christ is the end of devotion to Mary, cf. pages 3 and 26 of this thesis.

(b) the distinction between a slave and a servant - Boudon indicates

three points of difference: the servant does not give his master all that he owns; he demands a salary; he may quit his job. Montfort uses these three points and adds two others: civil law gives the right of life and death over a slave but not over a servant; and the slave is in the service of his master forever, the servant for only a time. While Boudon goes on to detail how a slave of Mary should use all his faculties in her service, Montfort gives the dogmatic bases of this manner of life. (TD #71-2).

(c) the extent of the consecration - Both writers specify a total dedication of self and one's possessions, (TD #122, 123, 136).

(d) the formula of consecration - Boudon requires a general confession and suggests pronouncing the formula in the presence of one's guardian angel, St. Gabriel, St. Joseph, St. John, and one's patron saint in memory of a Roman practice that called for the presence of five witnesses at the sale of a slave. Montfort retains only the basic thought: "...in



the presence of the heavenly court." (LEW #225). Boudon also directs that the formula be renewed annually. His eight-page text is like a profession of faith calculated to arouse a determination to start life anew. Montfort also specifies an annual renewal; his formula, however, constitutes the gift of a person to a person. (58)

The sum total of what Montfort borrowed from Boudon both certainly and probably amounts to a small proportion of the entire True Devotion. Furthermore, Boudon's book is primarily one of devotion based on the strength of tradition; Montfort's on the contrary is one of doctrine.

Though Boudon's work does not bear directly on the text of the consecration, it has informed the nature of the act mainly by its history of the origins and practice of slavery. The formula proper seems to have been suggested to Montfort by a work of François Nepveu, S.J., Rector of the college at Rennes during Montfort's lifetime. He wrote a work: De l'amour de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ and another: Exercices intérieurs pour honorer les mystères de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ, a series of meditations on the life of Christ. In an advent meditation to honor the mystery of Christ in Mary, Nepveu proposes a four-fold act of (a) adoration of the Incarnate Word in this state of abasement, (b) offering of self as a slave to honor the Incarnate Wisdom, (c) renouncement to honor His state of mortification and renouncement, and (d) offering of self as a slave of the Blessed Mother to honor her divine maternity. All aspects of this four-fold act are readily seen taken up in Montfort's writings, yet the first and fourth have been incorporated quite directly into the Montfortian text. Traces of the initial act of adoration of the Incarnate Word as found in Nepveu's meditation can be discerned in the opening paragraph of Montfort's act of consecration while his final prayer to Mary resembles

(59)  
closely the fourth phase of the meditation of Nepveu.

Another sentence of the Montfortian text can be traced almost to the point of identity to an antiphon from the office in honor of Mary proper to the Society of Saint Sulpice.  
(6)

Montfort's Cahier de Notes and his Cahier de Sermons contain other leads as to further borrowings,  
(61) but the major influences bearing on his spirituality have been treated in the present Chapter Two. In summary, the French School of Spirituality through Bérulle and Olier exerted a great impact on Montfort's spirituality of election of and consecration to the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom through Mary. Minor though considerable influences were brought to bear by way of the French Ignatian School and isolated figures like Boudon and Tronson. The conclusions drawn from this research follow in Chapter Three.

## FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. Victor Devy, "St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort", dernier des grands bérulliens," Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa, July-September 1948, p. 297.
2. Jean Calvet, Histoire de la littérature française, Vol. V (Gigord, Paris, 1948) p. 258.
3. Louis LeCrom, op. cit., p. 73.
4. Bérulle was succeeded in the office of Superior of the Oratory by his disciple, Charles de Condren. During ten years this latter was the spiritual director of M. Olier who founded the seminary of Saint Sulpice on the advice of de Condren.
5. Henri Bremond, Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France, Vol. III (Bloud et Gay, Paris, 1929) p. 272.
6. Paul Cochois, Bérulle et l'Ecole française (Ed. du Seuil, Paris, 1963) p. 164; Pierre Pourrat, S.S., Christian Spirituality, Vol. IV, trans. by Donald Attwater (Newman, Westminster, Maryland, 1955) p. 319.
7. Bremond, op. cit., p. 4.
8. Pierre de Bérulle, Oeuvres Complètes (Migne, Petit-Montrouge, 1856) "Discours sur les Grandeurs de Jésus" (hereafter designated by Grandeurs) col. 147 and 360.  
All references to the works of Bérulle are to the Migne edition of 1856. The English translation of Bérulle's writings found in this thesis are my own.
9. Bérulle, op. cit., "Oeuvres de Piété" (hereafter designated as Piété) col. 1071.
10. Bérulle, op. cit., Grandeurs col. 235-7. C'est son propre [propre du Verbe] et son état dans l'éternité d'être un rapport éternel et substantiel de soi-même et par conséquent de tout ce qui procède de lui vers le Père Éternel, comme vers le Principe et la Source de son être et de tout être original... Dieu de Dieu, lumière de lumière, Dieu produisant et produit tout ensemble, ce qui est incompréhensible, et auquel nous adorons aussi une autorité et dignité infinie, divinement référant au Père éternel et soi-même et généralement tout ce qui est ou procédant de lui comme son Saint-Esprit ou procédant et dépendant de lui comme tout ce qui est créé.
11. *Ibi.*, Piété, col. 1150.
12. To evaluate Montfort's exegesis of Wisdom literature would go beyond the scope of this thesis, yet to classify him briefly, a statement of his own seems significant. "My life...follows the pattern of the Apostles; is not such the simple Gospel teaching? I leave to others to dis-

tinguish between precepts and counsels, between the letter and the spirit." (Cf. LeCrom, op. cit., p. 328; Hupperts, Vie et Doctrine: St. Louis Marie de Montfort (Beyaert, Brussels, 1961) p. 17 ff.) In other words, Montfort, "un homme d'Evangile", reads Scripture literally and strives to follow it integrally. His writings reveal a deep knowledge of and a keen perception of the inter-relatedness of the Wisdom Literature, the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles. His purpose in using Sacred Scripture is to present to Christians an appealing picture of a personal and loving God.

13. Cochois, op. cit., pp. 80-3. "Dépassement, de fusion et d'anéantissement."
14. LEW #54: "It is certain that the Eternal Wisdom loves our souls so much as to espouse them, and He goes so far as to contract with them a spiritual but true marriage which the world knows not, but of which history supplies us with examples."; LEW # 59 quoting Wis 8:9: "I proposed to take her to live with me; knowing that she will communicate to me of her good things and will be a comfort in my cares and griefs."; LEW # 65: The longings of this eternal and supremely lovable Beauty for the friendship of men are so intense that He has purposely composed a Book disclosing therein His excellencies and His desires to capture that friendship. This Book reads like the love-letters of a suitor to win the affections of his beloved."
15. Besides a natural quality of leadership, Montfort also possessed a gift of grace which enabled him to speak fluently and persuasively. Whole villages turned out to hear him speak; the people followed him in crowds. At times his audience was so moved and cried so audibly that he had to ask the people to restrain their tears. Many parish priests and co-missioners were equally brought to tears of contrition. (Cf. LeCrom pp. 429-31).  
Though admittedly Montfort had received a grace to touch souls, he did not rest on his oars in consequence. He applied himself to the preparation of his sermons, meditated them at length, faster and frequently took the discipline before going forth to preach. He resorted to various devices to move men to contrition: eloquence, silence, role-playing, meditation aloud; he talked wherever he found a need to do so: in the market place, on a ferry boat, from a tree. He invaded cabarets, public parks and places of sin. He was completely and energetically dedicated to his sacerdotal ministry. (Ibid. pp. 423-3).
16. In LEW only Chapter 2 refers directly to the Trinity. Montfort there speaks of the origin and excellence of the Eternal Wisdom. In TD Montfort three times elaborates on Mary's relationships with the Divine Persons as daughter of the Father, mother of the Son, and spouse of the Spirit (TD #16-25, 29-36, 140). None of his "Cantiques" tells directly of the mystery of the Trinity though five of them proclaim His glory in Himself and in His creation (Cantiques pp. 15-23). The passing references to the Holy Trinity in his works present this mystery as a backdrop rather than an element of prominence in his teaching.
17. Bérulle, op. cit., Piété, col. 1485. "...en un exercice tout divin... agit par la lumière non du monde, où elle n'est pas encore eûrée, mais de la grâce et de la gloire."



18. Ibid., *Grandeurs*, col. 183. "De toute éternité il y avait bien un Dieu infiniment adorable, mais il n'y avait pas encore un Adorateur infini; il n'y avait aucun homme ni serviteur infini, propre à rendre un service et un amour infinis. Vous êtes maintenant, ô Jésus, cet adorateur, cet homme ce serviteur infini..., aimant, adorant, et servant la Majesté suprême comme elle est digne d'être aimée, servie et honorée... O grandeur du mystère de l'Incarnation, d'établir un état et une dignité dedans l'être créé!.
19. Cochois, op. cit., p. 89.
20. Bérulle, unedited notes, carton M 233, cited by Cochois, op. cit., p. 87. "...nous devons premièrement regarder le Fils de Dieu, et après, nous regarderons les créatures et nous en lui, mais il faut le regarder le premier."
21. Bérulle, op. cit., *Grandeurs*, col. 308, 63-4.
22. Ibid., *Piété*, col. 1137. "réparateur de notre être."
23. Ibid., op. cit. *Grandeurs* col. 380.
24. Ibid. *Élévation sur le mystère de l'Incarnation*, col. 521. "O âme sainte et déifiée de Jésus, agissez en mon âme et daignez prendre par vous-même la puissance sur moi que je ne vous puis donner et me rendre votre esclave en la manière que je ne connais point et que vous connaissez, et me faites être à vous et vous servir non seulement par mes actions, mais encore par l'état et condition de mon être."
25. This vow of servitude he expresses by two different formulae: one addressed to God is entitled: *Voeu à Dieu sur le mystère de l'Incarnation pour s'offrir à Jésus en l'état de servitude qui lui est due, en suite de l'union ineffable de la divinité avec l'humanité. (Oeuvres Complètes col. 625-630)*; the second is addressed to Mary: *Voeu à Marie pour s'offrir à la très Sainte Vierge en l'état de dépendance et servitude que nous lui devons en qualité de Mère de Dieu et comme ayant une puissance spéciale sur nous en suite de cette qualité adorable, (Oeuvres complètes) col. 629-632.*
26. Bérulle, op. cit., *Narré de ce qui s'est passé sur les Elévations à Jésus et à la Très Sainte Vierge*, col. 615.
27. Bérulle, op. cit., *Grandeurs*, col. 53, 488. "Le Christ est nôtre par état éternel."
28. Jean Dagens, *Bérulle et les origines de la restauration catholique*, (Desclée, 1952) p. 360.
29. A Molien, "L'Oratoire", *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (hereafter DTC), Vol. 11, ed. by de Vacant, Magenot, Amann (Letouzy et Fils, Paris, 1931) col. 1108.
30. Cochois, op. cit., p. 76; Molien, op. cit., col. 1116.

31. Emile Mersch, The Whole Christ, (Bruce, Milwaukee, 1938) pp. 545, 548.
32. E. Levesque, "Olier", DTC, Vol. 11, col. 976-7.
33. Jean J. Olier, Mémoires manuscrits, V 11, col. 1102; cited by Mersch, op. cit., p. 555.
34. Montfort's songs will be discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis.
35. Louis Tronson (1622-1700), author of Examen Particulier, second successor and loyal disciple of Olier, was director of the Society of Saint Sulpice during Montfort's seminary days.
36. Calvet, op. cit., p. 164-5.
37. Pourrat, op. cit., p. 29.
38. Calvet, op. cit., p. 146.
39. The seventeenth century French Ignatian School was characterized by a highly developed devotion to the Incarnate Word, which at least at the beginning of the century was Ignatian rather than Berullian. It included theorists of pure asceticism and mystics who were not always in agreement. Signs of Augustinian pessimism are to be found from the very beginning emphasized by LeGaudier, Saint-Jure and the followers of Lallement. Pourrat, op. cit., p. 39ff.
40. As will be developed further in the following pages, Montfort seemingly used Saint-Jure for a basic development of knowing and loving Christ: motives, effects and ascetical principles; he used Nepveu for the preface and conclusion of the formula of consecration; Nouet for the presentation of the meekness of Jesus; and Bonnefons for Chapter 12 of LEW, the selection of the texts spoken by the Incarnate Wisdom.
41. LeGrom, op. cit., p. 453.
42. Pourrat, op. cit., p. 43-6.
43. A Guéry, S.M.M., "Montfort -- Saint-Jure", Documentation Montfortaine #32 (Centre International Marial Montfortain, Rome, 1963) p. 18. The following arrangement of the opening paragraphs of the two works in question illustrates the second type of use of sources:

Père de Saint-Jure

Au Verbe Incarné, Fils Unique de Dieu Jésus-Christ, mon Souverain Seigneur

C'est à moi une très grande et extrême hardiesse, ô Roi de gloire, étant ce que je suis, de vous adresser ce petit ouvrage qui sort de mes mains. Mais malgré la suréminence de votre divine grandeur, et l'abîme de mon infinie bassesse, à qui puis-je

Montfort

Prière à la Sagesse Eternelle

O Divine Sagesse, souveraine du ciel et de la terre, humblement prosterné devant vous, je vous demande pardon de ce que je suis assez hardi pour parler de vos grandeurs, étant aussi ignorant et criminel que je suis. Ne regar-

raisonnablement dédier les paroles et les vérités qu'il contient, qu'à celui qui est le Verbe du Père et la Vérité première?

dez pas, je vous prie, les ténèbres de mon esprit et les souillures de ma bouche, ou si vous les regardez, que ce ne soit que pour les détruire d'une ocellade de vos yeux et d'un souffle de votre bouche.

44. M. Quémeneur, S.M.M., "Les Règles des Filles de la Sagesse et le problème de leurs sources; le chapitre sur la modestie", Documentation Montfortaine #36, pp. 107-117; Guéry, Ibid., "La Modestie; P. de Saint Jure et Montfort", pp. 120-6.
45. A Guéry, S.M.M., "Montfort - Nepveu", Documentation Montfortaine #29, p. 55 ff.
46. Adrian Balmforth, S.M.M., "Oracles de la Sagesse Incarnée: Montfort - Bonnefons", Documentation Montfortaine #36 pp. 129-135. "General Rules for a good life: Règles Générales pour bien vivre, prises des sacrées paroles de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ."
47. Cochois, op. cit., p. 105.
48. Bérulle, op. cit., Vie de Jésus, col. 430.
49. Ibid.
50. Bérulle, Correspondance de Bérulle, II, 344; cited by Cochois, op.cit., p. 107; Élévations, Oeuvres Complètes, col. 528.
51. Bérulle, op. cit., Piété, col. 1321, 1184, 1315.
52. Bremond, op. cit., p. 96 ff.
53. Cochois, op. cit., p. 104. "Première professe du voeu de servitude à Jésus, l'humble servante du Seigneur est, de par Dieu, maîtresse des novices de tous les membres de l'Eglise."
54. TD Supplement page 226.
55. Quémeneur, "La Maternité de grâce chez les spirituels français du XVIIème siècle", Documentation Montfortaine #30, pp. 9-13.
56. This analysis of Montfort and Boudon is based on a study made by J. H. Hermans, S.M.M., "La méthode de Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort", Documentation Montfortaine #28, pp. 6-15.
57. Ibid. pp. 10-11.
58. Charles Sauvé, S.S., Lourdes Intime: élévations dogmatiques (Gigord, Paris, 1919); cited by Poupon, S.J., La Vierge Toute belle, (Lethielloux, Paris) p. 350.
59. A Guéry, "Montfort - Nepveu", Documentation Montfortaine #29, pp. 21-7:

Nepveu

## Acte d'adoration

O mon adorable ASauveur, qui étant Dieu tout-puissant, éternel, égal en toutes choses à votre Père, et incapable dans cet état de vous humilier, avez voulu, pour être capable de vous avaisser, prendre la nature humaine...

Je vous adore dans cet état d'anéantissement avec le plus profond respect...

Montfort

Consécration de soi-même à Jésus-Christ, la Sagesse Incarnée, par les mains de Marie

O Sagesse éternelle et incarnée, ô très aimable et adorable Jésus, vrai Dieu et vrai homme, Fils unique du Père éternel et de Marie toujours vierge.

Je vous adore profondément dans le sein et les splendeurs de votre Père...

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## Prière finale à Marie

C'est par vous que je veux avoir accès à votre fils, c'est par vous que je lui veux présenter mes prières, mes besoins, et le peu de bonnes oeuvres que je ferai avec sa sainte grâce;

C'est enfin par vous, comme par la toute-puissante médiatrice auprès de Jésus que j'espère obtenir toutes les grâces, mais surtout la plus grande de toutes qui est son saint amour...

O Mère admirable, présentez moi à votre cher Fils en qualité d'esclave éternel afin que m'ayant racheté par vous, il me reçoive par vous.

O Mère de Miséricorde, faites-moi la grâce d'obtenir la vraie sagesse de Dieu...

60. Guéry, Ibid. p. 27.

Antiphon from Office

O Tabernacle vivant de la divinité! où Jésus Christ veut être adoré des Anges et des hommes.

Montfort's formula

Je vous salue donc, O Marie Immaculée, tabernacle vivant de la divinité où la Sagesse éternelle cachée veut être adorée des anges et des hommes.

61. Cahier de notes pp. 2-47, unpublished. Notes taken from Le Triple Couronne de la Mère de Dieu written by François Poiré, S.J. in 1630, seem to be the source of a subdivision of the second section of the formula of consecration where Mary is hailed as crowned with grandeur, power and goodness. LEN p. 305.



## CHAPTER THREE

## ORIGINAL INSIGHTS OF MONTFORT

Though he announces no absolutely new ideas, Montfort is, nonetheless, the master of a school of spirituality. Neither a straight copyist nor a simple eclectic, he is a student of the spiritualities that preceded his time seeking in them a suitable expression for his personal insights into Christ. Temperamentally little inclined to accept ideas already made, he reflected deeply on earlier works, especially those of the French School, and in re-thinking them, he made them his own.

Each member of the French School had his particular point of view: Bérulle, the Incarnate Word; Condren, the Cross and the Mass; Olier, the Eucharist. Montfort, the last of the great Berullians, proclaims the love of the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom for men. He gives a prime importance to the election of and consecration to the Divine Wisdom in the advance of a soul toward God. The goal of his ministry is to tell his fellowmen of this redeeming love of Christ-Wisdom so that knowing Him they may love Him and choose to live by His grace which is mediated through Mary. The insights of Montfort modify the Berullian teaching in two general areas: first, they complete the Berullian teaching concerning the Incarnate Word from a Wisdom point of view; second, they complete the Berullian teaching on Mary from a doctrinal point of view. The former modification relates to the election of Wisdom theme, and the latter to the consecration theme that have been developed in this thesis.

I - Election of Wisdom theme

Montfort completes the Berullian teaching on the Incarnate Word by

resetting it in the context of the Wisdom theme. A grasp of the scriptural concept of Wisdom which is progressively built up and transformed during the Old Testament and becomes the "mystery which is Christ in you" (Col 1:27) in the New Testament, this grasp was a particular gift of grace of the Breton missionary. He loved this Wisdom which before all time is possessed by God Alone; which is not only the model but also the artisan of creation; which in the Scriptures becomes disengaged as a personal presence, the companion and counsellor of the sovereign God, His personal presence; and which finally is identified with the Word who becomes flesh and redeems mankind. Thus, in his recurring phrase, Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom, Montfort includes the whole of revelation.

The personalistic aspect of Wisdom that Montfort sees in Sacred Scripture, he transmits in his teachings. Whereas Bérulle is intent on contemplating in complete disinterestedness the adoration of the Incarnate Word, Montfort is intent on portraying the loving concern of God the Father toward men. Where Bérulle speaks of "les grandeurs de Jésus", Montfort speaks of "la douceur de Jésus." Bérulle venerates Mary for what Mary is for God; Montfort beholds her in her maternal role vis à vis of the God-man and of redeemed men. The driving force of Montfort is to communicate to his fellowmen the love of a personal God, and this force impels both his preaching and the writings that have been discussed in this thesis. His Cantiques, an untapped source thus far, are another clear instance of his apostolic resourcefulness. In verses that he set to popular tunes, Montfort explains the notions of God that will convey this message and appeal to men's hearts, e.g., God in His perfections, in His goodness to men prior to the Incarnation; as the Infant-God; on the Cross; in the Eucharist; as the Sacred Heart. (1) In trying to convince his contemporaries that God loves them and that they should respond to His love

in return, Montfort sings plainly in praise of God and in thanksgiving for His goodness, e.g. God is good by His very nature, mild without rigor, beautiful without ugliness, and great beyond measure; He is a good Father caring for men, living in and among them; providing for their bodily and spiritual needs. (2) He discloses the charms of the Infant-God who to save men, becomes a man tiny, helpless and poor, and whose winning childish graces draw men irresistably. (3) The Incarnate Word loved men so much as to take up the cross and make it the instrument of redemption. (4) His great love continues in the Eucharist where He still says Amen to all His Father wants of Him, and in the manifestation of His Sacred Heart which like a sun radiates light and warmth, and like a refuge affords peace and safety for men. (5)

The loving and personal rapport between Christ-Wisdom and the Christian that Montfort is trying to establish is different from the rapport of Bérulle, the metaphysician, who treats of union with God in terms of "transcendence, fusion and annihilation." Though the latter succeeds well in bringing out the divine and ineffable aspect of the grace-life given through the Incarnate Word, and the elevation of the soul that is demanded in consequence, (6) he is nonetheless prolific and abstract. Reacting against the sentimentalism of his day, Bérulle seems to neglect the psychological aspect of Christian life. Montfort, a born missionary, supplements what is lacking in the French School from the point of view of human appeal.

Besides humanizing the teachings of the French School, Montfort also simplifies them. The Berullian vocabulary, e.g., "inhérence, adhérence, référence, appropriation", which would not be understood by the common people was dropped though the doctrine these words suggested was retained. Numerous vocal prayers, recommended particularly by Olier for the offering

of the common actions of the day, were also let fall; again the idea of offering the actions was kept, Montfort counselling to do so simply, in an instant, by a glance of the mind, a little movement of the will, or verbally (TD #259). He put people at ease by recognizing different gifts of grace and by pointing out that all would not understand his teaching equally; some would stop at the exterior; others would grasp and live according to its interior practices; finally the spirit of Christ would Himself reveal this secret to some few (TD #119). Finally, he exposed systematically and explicitly, though plainly and simply, just what he meant by the election of Wisdom (LEN C. 7), and how this election would be carried out by an act of consecration (LEN #219). This consecration would entail a manner of living dependent on grace mediated through Mary (7) (TD Ch. 2). Illustrative incidents, historic facts, and analogies are utilized to put his message on the level of the peasant of the field as well as of the monk in his cell.

Montfort is practical. His first work, the Love of the Eternal Wisdom, by its very title declares the purpose of his teaching, to elicit from men a response to God's great love for them. The method of procedure in this work is pedagogical; first, an exposition of the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom of God and His relations with men, leading to the election of Wisdom; second, the practical means to implement this election. The True Devotion follows this same method, first an exposition of devotion to Mary; second, particular practices of this true devotion. His longer Cantiques, especially those on the virtues, proceed in the same fashion; first, he defines and describes the excellence and qualities of the virtue; then he considers its practice. (8)

The foremost evidence of practicality in Montfort's manner of thinking follows upon his major theme: the election of and consecration to the Divine Wisdom. To live this dedication to Christ-Wisdom, Montfort



proposes four means, as has already been explained. His Cantiques disclose a genuine concern to put in a simple and understandable form the meaning of these four counsels: (a) desire - Jesus, Uncreated and Incarnate Wisdom is invited repeatedly and endearingly to come into the soul of man, "Come to me, come to me"; (b) prayer - the plea for Wisdom is expressed with the insistence of a child asking for a favor, "Hear me, hear me"; (c) self-denial - no difficulty is too much in view of obtaining this grace, "I am ready to do anything"; (d) devotion to Mary - the Virgin most faithful is the surest means of putting on the mind of Christ, (9) "Worthy Mother of God, share your faith with me".

Though Montfort has humanized and simplified the basic tenets of the French School and deduced practical applications therefrom, to leave the reader with a possible "terre-à-terre" impression of the Breton missionary would be untrue to him. Besides being a practical man, Montfort was also a mystic. Ecstasy, illumination, visions and predictions of the future are all recorded in his biography. (10) These singular graces usually remain unnoticed in his hasty writings, yet their traces can be seen because his written works reflect his soul more than his literary talents.

In Love of the Eternal Wisdom, the earliest of his works, several passages indicate that Montfort speaks from personal experience of mystic prayer. "...I lack words to express even the very small idea which I have conceived of this beauty and sovereign delight - and my conception falls far short of the reality." (LEW #19); "A thousand times happy is the man into whose soul Wisdom has come to dwell!" (LEW #51); the effects of the possession of Eternal Wisdom (LEW Ch. 8). One of his songs also tells of these effects.

Love, what wealth in your warmth!  
 What delightful pleasure!  
 What marvelous mystery  
     that can be grasped

Only by those who are fortunate enough  
to have a loving heart.

When someone loves God purely  
He suffers all joyously  
Though he receives the cross<sup>in</sup>  
exchange  
as a prize and token of victory  
The cross is a guarantee  
of grace and final glory. (11)

In the True Devotion, there are further traces of mystical experiences, particularly of special relationship with the Holy Spirit, the faithful Spouse of Mary. The highest degree of understanding of how to be truly devoted to Mary is the work of the Holy Spirit who will lead the favored person "to advance from virtue to virtue, from grace to grace, from light to light, until he arrives at the transformation of himself into Jesus Christ, and to the plenitude of His age on earth and of His glory in heaven." (TD #119). "When a soul breathes Mary as the body breathes the air, wonderful things will happen...; the Holy Spirit, finding Mary as it were reproduced in souls, will come in with abundance and fill them with His gifts, particularly the gift of Wisdom to work marvels of grace." (TD #217). Montfort asserts, "I do not think anyone can acquire an intimate union with Our Lord and a perfect fidelity to the Holy Spirit without a very great union with Mary and dependence on her assistance." (TD #43). Montfort seems to have enjoyed the grace of a special presence of Mary, not a presence in person within him but a presence of Mary by action or power. (12) A remark in one of his songs discloses this fact:

Who could believe this fact?  
I feel Mary's presence within me  
Etched with glory  
Though in the darkness of faith! (13)

Thus in three ways Montfort completes the Berullian teaching concerning the Incarnation from a Wisdom point of view; by making the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom appealing to men, by simplifying the presentation of

the doctrine, and by explaining how to put it into daily living.

## II - Consecration through Mary theme

Montfort completes the Berullian teaching on Mary from a doctrinal point of view. Bérulle bases his Marian devotion on the relationship between Mary and the Father, calling her the Spouse of the Father. Because Mary has the same Son as the Eternal Father, she is given domination and sovereignty. Montfort starts his treatise on devotion to Mary by affirming that Mary, being a mere creature, is "in comparison with His majesty less than an atom; she is nothing at all." Nevertheless in the present order, God having willed to begin and complete His great works by her, will not change His conduct in the eternal ages. As the Divine Persons acted in the first coming of Christ, they continue to act in an invisible manner throughout the Church, and will continue to do even to the last coming of Christ. (TD #14, 15, 22).

Since His greatest work is the Incarnation, and since Mary exists only to play her role in this mystery, she is thus associated for all time with God: Father, Son and Spirit, in the continuing redemptive incarnation. A necessary link exists between her and the Incarnate Wisdom; she is the inseparable companion of His life, death, glory and power in heaven and on earth. He gives her by grace all the same rights and privileges that He possesses by nature. She continues the role of forming the members of His body by the overshadowing of the Spirit. (TD #74, 25). Thus Montfort establishes doctrinally the spiritual maternity of Mary upon which he builds her right to queenship or dominion and her mediation of intercession.

The consecration theme of Montfort is the implementation of Mary's spiritual maternity with its consequent sovereignty and mediation. To be committed to the Divine Wisdom through Mary means to have entered upon

a way of life that is characterized by dependence on Mary. "It is a path trodden by Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom our sole Head. One of His members cannot make a mistake in passing by the same road." (TD 168) This dependence is one of grace, that is, one of sharing in the Christ-life of sonship. Mary loves her children of grace. She does for them as she did for her first-born; she provides for, guides, and protects them (TD #201-212). The reciprocal attitude on the part of the Christian thus committed to Wisdom through Mary is a loving dependence on her. Though this willing submission is a direct and secure way of becoming like to Christ (TD #155-160), it does not suppose an easy life. The analogy of the mold presupposes that the matter poured into the mold be malleable. In the Christian's pliability or "disponibilité" to the graces given by Mary lies the crux of asceticism in the Montfortian spirituality.

Montfort teaches this attitude of dependence through his songs:

To be dependent on Mary	I should imitate her
God becomes man.	Who is the faithful Virgin;
Can I resist	As all grace comes through her,
From following His example?	I should pray to her.
- - - - -	
I am entirely dependent on her	I do all in her and through her;
The better to depend on my Savior	This is a secret of sanctity
Committing all to her care	To be always faithful to God
My body, soul, and future.	And ever to do His will. (14)

The Marian portion of this thesis has been purposely limited to the aspect of consecration both because this formula of consecration is a synthesis of Montfortian spirituality and because the use of the word slavery and similar terms is of questionable value in the light of current theology and culture. That the formula constitutes a synthesis has been discussed throughout Chapter One and the early part of the present chapter, and has been spelled out explicitly at several points. That the terminology of slavery constitutes a language of love has also been



(16)  
explained. Yet the suitability of such terminology in another age and in a later period of theological development is doubtful. Would its continued use be of service to Montfort and foster the spirituality that he gave to the Church?

Statements readily found in contemporary reading such as: "Christ in actual fact bestows upon us the Spirit which makes us the children of the Father," and "The marks of servitude are effaced and a likeness to the Father takes shape; ...from being a servant [the believer] be-  
(17)  
comes a child of God." and terms in current use such as: new creation, resurrection, sonship, personal dignity, freedom, commitment - all seem to contradict, or at least make obsolete, the vocabulary of servitude. The use of the slavery terminology can be defended on the grounds that they were acceptable in the context of Montfort's spirituality and that since basic principles of a spirituality do not change, the  
(18)  
terms in question still convey what Montfort meant by them. Today, however, the word slavery denotes injustice, force, and fear; its use even in a religious context requires a mental transfer from its accepted meaning to its outdated meaning in an epoch still marked by medieval social customs and pious legend. In this light, the value of the terms seems dubious. Their retention in the Montfortian texts seems to be a negation of simple hermeneutics which requires that an author be understood not according to the letter but according to the spirit of his words; their retention seems to reject what Montfort himself wanted, i.e., a simple, popular, while doctrinally accurate, presentation of the work of the Redemptive Incarnation.  
(19)

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to ascertain the influence of the French School of Spirituality on the writings of Saint Louis Marie de Montfort. Allowing that borrowed elements are found in his works, can he, notwithstanding, be considered a founder of a school of spiritual thought?

The study of the influence of the French School has been limited to Montfort's two dominant themes: the election of the Divine Wisdom and the consecration to the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom through Mary. Bérulle's characteristic devotion to the Incarnate Word seems to be the basis of the Montfortian concept of the Divine Wisdom, but whereas Bérulle turns his Christology to the virtue of religion, Montfort turns his insights to the economy of Redemption. The practice of religion according to the founder of the French School centers in the adoration offered by the Incarnate Word to the Father. It reaches its high point for the Christian in the ratification of the vows of Baptism, which ratification is best expressed by a vow of slavery to Jesus and Mary. By imitating the adoration of the Word toward the Father, and by striving to enter into his "states" of mind, the Christian attains a sanctity similar in pattern to that of the Incarnate Word, that is, theocentric. Montfort also sees the renewal of the vows of Baptism as a pivotal point in Christianity. To make this renewal significant, he seeks to arouse a response of love on the part of the Christian to the eternal love of God toward him. This response of love takes the form of a conversion, or the election of Christ-Wisdom as the goal of life. On the basis of such an election, Montfort proposes a formula of con-

secration to the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom through the hands of Mary. This dedication of self as a slave of love of Jesus through Mary is redundant of the Berullian practice of slavery for Montfort, too, sees this state of dependence as the ideal way of putting on the mind of Christ. This dependence on Mary as well as the other means of acquiring Wisdom proposed by Montfort: desire, prayer, and mortification, reflect the teaching of the Seminary at Saint Sulpice.

Concerning devotion to Mary, Bérulle sees her as a sovereign because she is the mother of the Son of God. The vow of slavery to Mary rests on the basis of her divine maternity and the universal dominance that she has in consequence over Jesus and over all men. Montfort, building on Olier's insights into the spiritual maternity of Mary, establishes his manner of devotion to Mary on her role in the work of Redemption. Her maternity of grace is the basis of her relationship with the Christian just as her divine maternity is the basis of her relationship with Christ. Thus her dominance extends to all those who are vivified by the Christ-life. In the language of the eighteenth century, this state of grace-dependence on Mary is called servitude. Montfort drew several details of this practice of slavery from the historical study of Archdeacon Boudon.

Other influences bearing on the teaching of Saint Louis flow from the French Ignatian School of Spirituality. Seemingly Montfort used Saint-Jure's book on the knowledge and love of Christ as a guide line for his Love of the Eternal Wisdom. Duplications of Nouet's teaching on the meekness of Jesus, of Nepveu's formula of consecration, and of Bonnefons' collection of scripture texts can be detected in Montfort's writings.

Notwithstanding these borrowed elements, Saint Louis Marie de Montfort deserves to be called the founder of a school of spirituality. Though the French School of Spirituality exerted a marked influence on his writings, this influence promoted rather than retarded his original thinking. Situated in time and place at the junction of deep streams of spirituality, Montfort drew abundantly from them. His work presents a synthesis of the efforts at spiritual renovation of the seventeenth century, especially in what concerns the mystery of the Incarnation and the spiritual maternity of Mary. In Marian doctrine he is considered a master, the providential counter-balance of the Monita Salutaria of (20) 1673. His originality consists not so much, however, in the clear statements of Marian doctrine as in his Wisdom spirituality which is summarized in the choice of Divine Wisdom as the goal of one's life and the achievement of this goal by a total dedication to Christ-Wisdom through Mary. He advances Berullian teaching concerning the Incarnate Word by making the Wisdom of God appealing to men, by simplifying the presentation of the doctrine of Redemption, and by explaining how to put it into everyday life.

If for Christ the Incarnation was a "kenosis", the Christian puts on the mind of Christ by a similar "kenosis". For Montfort this obedience is a total grace-dependence on Mary. In this mold of God which formed the New Adam, the Christian becomes the faithful portrait of Christ until he will arrive at the transformation of himself into Jesus Christ in the plenitude of His age on earth and of His glory in heaven. (TD #220, 119).



## FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER THREE AND CONCLUSION

1. Montfort, Les Oeuvres de Montfort; ses cantiques, op. cit. (hereafter indicated as Cant)  
Hymns on the perfections of God and His goodness to men pp. 13-24; Infant-God pp. 25-50; Cross pp. 51-72; Eucharist pp. 74-102; Sacred Heart pp. 103-132; he also writes on Mary pp. 133-184; the Saints pp. 185-194; desire for Wisdom pp. 195-210; contempt for the world pp. 211-308; the virtues pp. 310-530; renewal of soul during a mission pp. 531-588; states of life pp. 599-652.  
The foregoing songs are recognized as authentically of Montfort; other songs on similar topics that are likely but not certainly his fill another 150 pages of the Cant.

2. Cant, Sur les perfections de Dieu, stanza #1, 2, p. 15; Les louanges de Dieu pour ses bienfaits, #2, 5, 6, 8 p.18.

#1 Adorons à jamais	#2 Adorons à jamais
Le Seigneur dans ses bienfaits.	Le Seigneur dans ses bienfaits
Bénissons sa clémence,	Il est doux sans rigueur,
Publions sa douceur,	Il est beau sans laideur,
Adorons sa grandeur,	Il est grand sans mesure,
Exaltons sa puissance.	Il est bon par nature.
Adorons à jamais	Adorons à jamais
Le Seigneur dans ce qu'il fait.	Le Seigneur dans ce qu'il fait.

-----

#2 Oh! que c'est un bon Père!	#5 Il a guéri mon âme
Qu'il a grand soin de nous!	Comme un bon médecin;
Il nous supporte tous	Comme un maître bénin
Malgré notre misère.	Il m'a rendu le calme.

#6 Il a pris pour son temple	#8 Il est mon très cher Père,
Et mon corps et mon coeur,	Il prend grand soin de moi,
C'est là que sa grandeur	Il me tient près de soi,
Nuit et jour se contemple.	Il m'aide dans ma misère.

3. Ibid. Noël des âmes spirituelles, #1, 2, 4 p. 42; La grand leçon des enfants, #3, 4, p. 48.

#1 Un Dieu pour sauver les hommes,  
Trouve un merveilleux secret;  
Il devient ce que nous sommes,  
En nous faisant devenir ce qu'il est.

#2 Ce Seigneur très haut s'abaisse  
Pour nous élever aux cieux,  
Il vient dans notre bassesse  
Pour nous donner son être glorieux.

#4 Pour nous combler de richesses,  
Sa majesté s'appauvrit;

Pour nous faire des caresses,  
Ce grand Seigneur se rend pauvre et petit.

- - - - -

4. Ibid. Les trésors de la Croix, #2, 3, 4, p. 66.

#2 Apprenez, chère âme fidèle,  
Que, tout grand et Dieu que je suis,  
J'ai si fort aimé le mépris,  
Et la croix m'a paru si belle,  
Qu'afin de m'en pouvoir orner,  
J'ai descendu du ciel pour m'incarner.

#3 Je trouve selon ma Sagesse  
Des trésors dans la pauvreté  
De l'éclat dans l'humilité  
Et les grandeurs dans la bassesse!  
Je ne vois qu'avec grand dédain  
Les biens, l'éclat et tout l'honneur mondain.

#4 J'ai vécu dans l'obéissance,  
Je me suis réduit à servir,  
J'ai choisi de naître et mourir,  
Dans la disette et la souffrance.  
Voulez-vous régner avec moi?  
Mon exemple doit vous servir de loi.

5. Ibid. Cantique pour le dimanche, #6, p. 76; Paroles de Jésus-Christ  
#17-20, p. 119.

#6 Puisque Jésus s'abaisse  
Par un excès d'amour  
Sa charité nous presse  
D'user d'un grand retour.  
Visitons-le souvent dedans ce grand mystère;  
Amen à tout ce qu'il y dit,  
A ce qu'il y fait jour et nuit,  
Pour honorer son Père.

- - - - -

#17 Viens à mon Cœur, âme fidèle,  
Veux-tu m'abandonner aussi?  
Viens boire à la source éternelle  
Que rejette un cœur endurci.

#18 Ame, as-tu besoin de lumière?  
Mon Cœur est un soleil divin  
Où toute âme la plus grossière  
Verra clair comme un chérubin.

#19 C'est mon Cœur seul qui fortifie  
Il est puissant en ses attraits,  
C'est mon Cœur seul qui pacifie,  
Il est le centre de la paix.

#20 Vite à mon Cœur, loin des tumultes  
Il est la maison des parfaits;

Là, point de péchés, point d'insultes,  
Le monde ignore ces secrets.

6. Mersch, The Whole Christ, (Bruce, Milwaukee, 1938) p. 642.

7. Illustrative incidents: LEW 101-2--Incident of Bl. Henry Suso, eager to undergo trials to acquire wisdom but lacking courage; LEW 130-1--St. Denis the Areopagite recounts how Carpus called vengeance from heaven on a relapsed convert and how Christ offered to take the punishment for the relapsed convert; TD 170 -- Mother Agnès de Jésus is relieved from spiritual anguish by consecrating herself to Jesus and Mary.

Historic facts: LEW #48--History of the patriarchs as recorded in Wisdom Chap 10; LEW #93--Jacob receives the science of the saints; Solomon is given knowledge of nature. TD #159-163--History of slavery according to Boudon.

Analogies: LEW #208--Mary is a royal throne, tabernacle of the divinity, joy of the Trinity, city of God, altar of God, temple of God; world of God, paradise of God; TD #75--Mary is the faithful virgin, an anchor; TD #178--the singular vessel of devotion, house of gold, tower of David, tower of ivory; TD #219--mold of God.

8. Cant, La foi p. 320; l'espérance p. 327; charité p. 332, 338; zèle p. 348; humilité p. 360; la douceur p. 369.

9. Cant (a) Les désirs de la Divine Sagesse Incarnée, stanzas #4, 23, p. 202-3; (b) Les splendeurs de l'oraison #1, p. 421; (c) Prière à la Sagesse et ses amours #3, p. 206; (d) Les désirs de la Sagesse #7, p. 205.

(a) desire

#4	Jésus, Sagesse incréée	#23	O ma vie et ma lumière
	Venez chez moi;		Venez chez moi
	Jésus, Sagesse incarnée,		O mon Epouse et ma Mère
	Venez chez moi.		Venez chez moi.
	Avec vous, quoi de plus doux?		Avec vous, j'aurai la paix
	Mais quel enfer d'être sans vous!		La grâce et la gloire à jamais.

(b) prayer

#1 O Père tout-puissant, ô Dieu plein de bonté  
Envoyez-nous des cieux la divine Sagesse,  
Donnez-la nous, donnez, donnez, la charité nous presse.  
Exaucez, exaucez les soupirs de notre pauvreté.

(c) self-denial

#3 Quelle est votre demeure,  
Sagesse, dites-moi?  
J'y volerai sur l'heure  
L'amour me fait la loi!  
Faut-il passer les mers,

Faut-il courir la terre,  
Faut-il fendre les airs?  
C'est bien peu, je suis prêt à tout faire.

(d) devotion to Mary

#7 Digne Mère de Dieu, Vierge pure et fidèle,  
Communiquez-moi votre foi;  
J'aurai la Sagesse par elle  
Et tous les biens viendront en moi.

10. LeCrom, op. cit. p. 381 -- During prayer, Montfort is insensible to the efforts of a visitor to rouse him; p. 254-- Montfort is in ecstasy for half an hour during Mass celebrated at the Jesuit Seminary at Luçon; p. 301-- Montfort's face became illuminated during a sermon for the Feast of the Purification at the Dominican parish church in La Rochelle; p. 211-- A woman penitent sees Montfort walking in the garden in converse with a "Dame Blanche"; p. 231-- Jeanne Guigan prepares an extra place at her table upon seeing the missionary approach her house in converse with a "Dame Blanche"; p. 282--295 general references to visits of "la Dame Blanche" to Montfort at a Providence house in Taugon and at the "hermitage de St Eloi"; p. 133-- Montfort predicted a span of ten years before the Daughters of Wisdom (the Montfort Sisters) would expand; p. 146-- He predicted that a place of sin would become a place of prayer and be administered by religious women; p. 270-- He predicted a miserable end of life for a stingy couple for whom not even bells would be rung at their funeral.

11. Cant L'Amour divin, #10, 12, p. 712.

#10 Amour, que de biens en vos feux!  
Que de plaisirs délicieux!  
Que de mystères merveilleux,  
Qu'on ne donne à comprendre  
Qu'à ceux qui sont assez heureux  
Pour avoir un coeur tendre.

#12 Quand on aime Dieu purement  
On souffre tout joyeusement,  
On reçoit la croix pour paiement  
Pour prix et pour victoire  
Et pour joyeux avènement  
A la grâce et la gloire.

12. Antoine Lhoumeau, S.M.M., La Vie Spirituelle à l'école de St.L.M. de Montfort, (Beyaert, Brussels, 1954) p. 359.

13. Cant Que mon âme chante et publie, #15, p. 167.

#15 Voici ce qu'on ne pourra croire;  
Je la porte au milieu de moi, [Marie]  
Gravée avec des traits de gloire,  
Quoique dans l'obscur de la foi.

14. Ibid. La véritable dévot à Marie, #2, p. 159; Que mon âme chante et publie, #8, 19, p. 166.



#2 Mon Dieu, pour en dépendre  
Se fait homme ici-bas;  
Je ne puis me défendre  
De marcher sur ses pas.

C'est la Vierge fidèle  
Je dois donc l'imiter.  
Tout bien me vient par elle;  
Je dois donc la prier.

#8 Je suis tout dans sa dépendance  
Pour mieux dépendre du Sauveur,  
Laissant tout à sa Providence,  
Mon corps, mon âme, et mon bonheur.

#19 Je fais tout en elle et par elle,  
C'est un secret de sainteté  
Pour être à Dieu toujours fidèle,  
Pour faire en tout sa volonté.

15. Cf. above pp. 13, 26, 30, 59 and Appendix I.

16. Cf. above pp. 26 - 33.

17. Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God, (Sheed and Ward, N.Y., 1963) p. 46; F. X. Durrwell, The Resurrection, (Sheed and Ward, N.Y. 1960) p. 231.

18. "St. L.M. de Montfort et sa spiritualité mariale", Marie (Centre Marial Canadien, Nicolet, P.Q. Vol. 6, #3, 1952; numéro spéciale).

19. The 1963-4 German edition of Le Livre D'Or, Montfort's collected works other than his Cantiques and private letters, is an entirely new version of the Saint's teaching. His message is intact but freed from the vocabulary and mentality of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century culture in France. In this new edition, "slavery" for instance is rendered as "total donation". Cf. R. Graber, S.M.M., "La Donation totale à Jésus par Marie", Documentation Montfortaine #32, pp. 6-16.

20. Bremond, Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France, Vol. III, (Bloud et Gay, Paris, 1929) p. 272 gives Montfort this title; the same author calls the Monita Salutaria of Adam Weddenfeld "la grande explosion de 1673!" p. 254.  
The Monita Salutaria was a book of counsels, supposedly spoken by Mary herself, against indiscreet devotees. As far as his biographies reveal, Montfort did not intend to counter-balance Weddenfeld.

## APPENDIX I

## AN ACT OF CONSECRATION TO JESUS CHRIST, THE INCARNATE WISDOM,

BY THE HANDS OF MARY

Marginal  
notesFour  
preparatory  
acts:  
a) adoration

O Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom! O lovable and adorable Jesus! True God and True Man, only Son of the Eternal Father, and of Mary always virgin!

I adore Thee profoundly in the bosom and splendors of Thy Father during eternity, and in the virginal womb of Mary Thy most worthy Mother, in the time of Thy Incarnation.

b) thanks-  
giving

I give Thee thanks that Thou hast emptied Thyself in taking the form of a slave in order to save me from the cruel slavery of the devil. I praise and glorify Thee that Thou hast been pleased to submit Thyself to Mary, Thy holy Mother, in all things, in order to make me Thy faithful slave through her.

c) satis-  
faction

But, ungrateful and unfaithful as I have been, I have not kept the promises which I made so solemnly to Thee in my Baptism. I have not fulfilled my obligations; I do not deserve to be called Thy child nor yet Thy slave; and as there is nothing in me which does not merit Thine anger and repulse, I dare no longer come by myself before Thy most holy and august majesty.

d) petition

This is why I have recourse to the intercession of Thy most holy Mother whom Thou hast given me to mediate with Thee. It is through her that I hope to obtain of Thee contrition and the pardon of my sins, the acquisition and the preservation of Wisdom.

Prayer  
to Mary: her  
a) grandeur  
b) power  
c) goodness

Hail then, Immaculate Mary, living tabernacle of the Divinity in which the Eternal Wisdom willed to be hidden and to be adored by angels and by men!

Hail, Queen of heaven and earth to whose empire is subject everything that is under God!

Hail sure refuge of sinners, whose mercy fails no one. Grant the desire which I have to obtain the Divine Wisdom, and for this purpose deign to accept the offering and promises which my lowliness presents to Thee.

Consecration  
proper

I (N....), an unfaithful sinner, renew and ratify today in thy hands the promises of my Baptism: I renounce

a) renewal  
of Baptism

forever Satan, his pomps and his works, and I give myself entirely to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom, to carry my cross after Him all the days of my life and to be more faithful to Him than I have been till now.

b) total  
donation

I choose thee this day, O Mary, in the presence of

all the heavenly court, for my Mother and Mistress. I deliver and consecrate to thee, as thy slave, my body and soul, my goods both interior and exterior, and even the value of my good actions, past, present and future. I leave to thee the entire and full right to dispose of me and all that belongs to me, without exception, as thou please, to the greater glory of God in time and in eternity.

#### Final prayer

Receive, gracious Virgin, this offering of my slavery in honor of and in union with that subjection which the Eternal Wisdom deigned to have to thy maternity, in homage to the power which both of you have over this miserable sinner, and in thanksgiving for the privileges with which the Holy Trinity has favored thee.

- a) promise                    I protest that henceforth I wish as thy true slave of fidelity to seek thy honor and to obey thee in all things.
- b) three pleas              O admirable Mother, present me to thy dear Son as
  - 1) to be re-            His eternal slave so that as He has redeemed me by thee, ceived by by thee He may receive me.
  - Jesus                    O Mother of Mercy, grant that I may obtain the true
  - 2) to obtain            Wisdom of God and for this end receive me among those
  - Wisdom                    whom thou lovest and teachest, whom thou leadest, nourishest and protectest as thy children and thy slaves.
  - 3) to be a                O faithful Virgin, make me in all things so perfect
  - perfect                    a disciple, imitator and slave of the Incarnate Wis-
  - slave of                    dom, Jesus Christ thy Son, that I may attain by thine
  - Jesus                    intercession and example to the fullness of His age on earth and of His glory in heaven. Amen.

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