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Fr. Henri Caffarel
being present to God; Letters on Prayer
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Chapter Overview of Letters # 88-97

“...whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him” (1 Cor 6:17)

Our desire to find God, that led us to mental prayer, did not lie. The eagerly desired union becomes a reality close at hand, deep within us.

To find God! This is what we must expect of mental prayer, and this is what it holds out for us.

88 *I want to learn how to pray*—Mental prayer is indeed a holy place where God speaks to man’s heart, and embraces him with his powerful and tender love.

89 *Meditation before a portrait*—God does not wait until the end of a life of mental prayer, to manifest his active presence in praying soul. Sometimes he manifests himself very early. Mystical experience is not reserved for the saints alone. Those who discredit it are to be pitied, and even more those to whom it is offered, and who spurn it.

90 *Mysticism*—The person to whom mystical experience is offered, sees clearly that mental prayer consists less in “doing” than in “being.” This means being with God, attentive to him present in the soul.

91 *To be or to act*—Unquestionably, asceticism is needed to arrive at this experience. The converse is still truer: the mystical graces are powerful helps in the practice of the virtues. They enable our love for God to free itself gradually from our love of self.

92 *Said*—The mystical graces cause a mysterious knowledge of the Lord to burgeon within us, provided, of course, that our intellect humbles itself before “the lofty incomprehensibility of God.”

93 *You will see my back* (cf. Ex 33:23)—The mystical graces are active in uniting us to God. This union consists essentially in the fusion of our innermost will with the will of God.

94 *The mental prayer of a woman of the people*—The stages on this road toward this union with God are not the same for everyone, but progress always involves the development of a more ardent and selfless love.

95 *Beacons along the road*—In any event, the union will not be consummated until we have yielded all the room within us to God.

96 *It's you*—When that day comes, we shall be introduced into the communion of love between the Father and the Son, that eternal feast whose bard and witness, in heaven and on earth, is the Holy Spirit.

97 *“God's rest”* (Heb 4:10).