

# TWO STANDARDS

By WILLIAM YEOMANS

FIRST of all, let me say that I am speaking in the context of the full thirty days Exercises, since it is only here that we can understand the full scope of each individual meditation. The eight days' Exercises are an adaptation and we must know first of all what we are adapting. Indeed I would suggest that perhaps too often, when we are faced with the need of giving the Exercises in eight days, we begin from the wrong end. We tend to look at the limits set by time and then say: 'What am I going to include?' Greater fidelity to Ignatius would be guaranteed were we to say: 'This and this constitutes the essential of the Exercises, how can I best present it?' The Exercises are not concerned merely with method, they have a content. It is that content which I want to examine today, limiting myself to the meditation called Two Standards.

The Exercises were born of Ignatius' own spiritual experience, understanding that to include the whole range of his own spiritual practice – the events of his life, his reading, prayer, pilgrimages, study, mystical graces. But the order in which he lived the Exercises is not the same as that in which he eventually wrote them down. Hence in studying the Exercises the best method is not that of beginning at the first page of the book and working one's way through to the end. We are on much surer ground when we try to reconstruct Ignatius' spiritual experience as he lived it, and use that as a basis for our interpretation of the Exercises as a whole. For we must never forget that Ignatius' experience is an integrated whole; the right and genuine interpretation of a particular exercise will be one that enables us to see the inner unity of the Exercises as a whole.

Now Ignatius has left us an account of the order in which he lived the Exercises in his autobiography, and also in his spiritual journal. The autobiography shows clearly that two basic experiences led him along the road which terminated in the formulation of the Exercises and the founding of the Society of Jesus.

Those two experiences were:

1. The appeal of an heroic life in the service of Christ.

2. The awareness that there were two forces, or spirits at work within him, each recognisable by its effects. ✓

That much he learnt on his sickbed. But at the time these experiences were crude and unrefined. He took them on their face value and was betrayed into the excesses of Manresa. But it was at Manresa, too, that these two experiences were formed into the meditations of the Call of Christ, (or the Kingdom as it has come to be known), and the Two Standards. Frs Nadal and Manareus (Mannaerts) both tell us that at Manresa Ignatius occupied himself chiefly with two exercises: the Kingdom and the Two Standards. Nadal goes on to say that it was from these two exercises that the idea of the Society was born.

Let us note further that Ignatius was not faced with the problem of deciding to become a saint, but with the problem of deciding where sanctity lay for him. The Exercises were born of this problem; we must see them not as a method for producing holy people, but as a method for enabling a person to make a right and perfect choice according to God. Ignatius thought when he went to Manresa that he had made a right choice; and so he had, to some extent. He had yet to learn what is included in the idea of choosing according to God.

It is therefore true to say that there can be no better starting point on the study of the Exercises, (presuming that the essential knowledge of the text has been acquired), than these two key meditations of the Kingdom and the Two Standards. We have already seen how a study of the Kingdom led to a re-appraisal of the whole of the First Week. Here I wish to present one or two ideas on the Two Standards for your consideration.

My work has been made easy by the studies already done on this subject. Fr Tournier has traced the theme of the opposition between Christ and Satan in the spiritual tradition of the Church in an article in *Études* as long ago as 1910.<sup>1</sup> This work has been continued by Fr Hugo Rahner and Fr Heinrich Bacht and published in 1956 in the symposium *Ignatius*. The biblical foundations of the meditation have been laid bare by Fr Stanislas Lyonnet in a brilliant article in *Christus*.<sup>2</sup> To this we may add Fr Guillet's chapter on the

<sup>1</sup> Tournier, Ferdinand, S.J., 'Les deux cités' dans la littérature chrétienne, *Études* 123 (1910), pp 644-665.

<sup>2</sup> Lyonnet, Stanislas, S.J., 'La méditation des deux Etendards et son fondement scripturaire', *Christus* 12 (1956), pp 435-456.

powers of evil in his *Thèmes Bibliques*.<sup>1</sup> The theology and the christology of the Two Standards have been studied by Fr Hugo Rahner in two long and excellent articles recently published in the edition of his collected articles on Ignatius.<sup>2</sup> These studies are the quarry from which I have hewed various fragments, and I make no claim to originality in the ideas I propose. (Indeed I have more reason to fear the accusation of plagiarism).

The remarkable thing is the agreement of all these different studies. They show the truth of Ignatius' own statement that he was taught by God, 'in the way a schoolmaster teaches a child'.<sup>3</sup> It is significant that his viewpoint coincides with those of scripture, the Fathers, and sound theology.

This paper will follow a simple plan.

First, I want to show the position of the Two Standards in the general plan of the Second Week. Secondly, I want to sketch out one or two of the basic ideas of the meditation. Thirdly, I want to give some indication of how the Two Standards throw light on the Exercises as a whole.

### 1. *The position of the Two Standards in the Second Week*

#### Plan of the Second Week

The Kingdom. *To be made twice in the day. This is Ignatius' repose day. The Kingdom is the second Foundation.*

Day 1. Incarnation and nativity.

*Two repetitions. Application of the senses.*

Day 2. Presentation in the Temple. Flight into Egypt.

*Two repetitions. Application of the senses.*

Day 3. Jesus obedient at Nazareth.

*Afterwards – The finding in the Temple.*

*Two repetitions. Application of the senses.*

Day 4. Two Standards.

*Four times: midnight, dawn, before Mass, Vespers.*

Three Classes.

*At the time of the application of the senses.*

Day 5. Our Lord's departure from Nazareth to the Jordan and his baptism.

*Two repetitions and application of the senses.*

<sup>1</sup> Guillet, Jacques, *Themes of the Bible*, (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1960).

<sup>2</sup> *Ignatius von Loyola als Mensch und Theologe* (Freiburg, 1964).

<sup>3</sup> *Autobiography* no. 27.

Day 6. *This is the Election day.* How Christ went from the Jordan into the desert. *The biblical counterpart of the Two Standards.*

Days 7-12. Mysteries of the life of Christ.

This is the general scheme within which Ignatius gives a certain liberty of choice about the meditations,<sup>1</sup> and of the length of time given to prayer.<sup>2</sup> What is not left to choice is the sequence of meditations or the general direction given to them. For they are all meant to be at the service of the Election, to prepare the retreatant for it. In his Directory Fr Polanco notes that in the Second Week – *Non tam dies quam meditationes quae in talibus diebus proponi dicuntur attendi debet.*<sup>3</sup> The important thing in this week is the meditations themselves and their content. A brief glance will reveal the importance which Ignatius attached to the Two Standards. It is to be made four times in the day, the only time in the Exercises when Ignatius prescribes this, though of course at other times he suggests it. Furthermore it is the preparation for the Election – the focal point of the Exercises.

In this view of the external structure of the Second Week we can now follow its interior movement, from the call of Christ to the Election, through the incarnation and the public life of our Lord.

The meditation of the Kingdom lays down the fundamental law of the service of Christ – ‘He who wants to accompany me has to suffer with me so that having been my companion in suffering he may follow me into glory’.<sup>4</sup> This law must be at least accepted, and ideally, translated into the offering of the Kingdom, before the retreatant is allowed to go further in the Exercises. We should note that this offering is only an offering, not a commitment of oneself. It is useful to compare it with the volunteering of the Two Standards and to note the reversal in the petition.

Ignatius has also delimited the present field of combat – my own sensuality,<sup>5</sup> my own love of myself and of the world.<sup>6</sup> The first conquest I have to make with Christ is the conquest of myself, which will assure the authenticity of any other conquests. I must remember that even though I have rejected sin in the first week and accepted Christ, that does not mean that the roots of sinfulness are dead within me.

<sup>1</sup> Exx 162.

<sup>2</sup> Exx 133.

<sup>3</sup> MI Exx p 815, 74.

<sup>4</sup> Exx 95.

<sup>5</sup> Cf Exx 87 for the meaning of this.

<sup>6</sup> Exx 97.

The comparatively lengthy developments given for the meditations of the first day are intended not merely to show the retreatant how to meditate, but how to meditate with 'greater completeness'. This they do by taking up the lead of the Kingdom in order to give the whole life of Christ a particular direction – that of the mystery of the cross in the history of salvation. This mystery has already been hinted at in the First Week, when I ask Christ crucified how it was that he the Creator came to make himself man and from eternal life came to temporal death and to die for my sins.<sup>1</sup> This is the mystery which the retreatant is to make his own in the Election by opting for what goes in the direction of the cross expressed in the third way of humility. This option will later be confirmed, in the ignatian sense of that word, by the Third and Fourth Weeks.

So, in the meditation on the incarnation Ignatius puts before us the whole plan of salvation, showing how it is to be worked out through the obedience of the Son and the acceptance of Mary whom he deliberately portrays as 'humbling herself and giving thanks'.<sup>2</sup> This humility of Mary is the reflection of the humility of the Son, which in turn finds its source in what we can call the humility of the Trinity at the service of mankind.

In the meditation of the nativity this humility is seen as a direction towards the cross. Christ is born 'in the most extreme poverty, so that at the term of many sufferings of hunger and thirst, heat and cold, outrages and insults, he may die on the cross, and all this for me'.<sup>3</sup> The retreatant is present at this mystery as 'a poor, wretched, little scrap of a serving boy, serving the holy family in their needs'; learning from them his own basic attitudes of humility and service along the way of the cross. Already we can note how Ignatius binds together the ideas of humility, service, the cross. These together are the canalising force for that divine charity which must inspire the generosity of him who is seeking the will of God in the Exercises.

This structure is reinforced in the second two meditations where we contemplate Christ offered to his Father as first born, that first offering which foreshadows the offering of the cross; and then forced to fly into Egypt, as into exile, as Ignatius emphasises.<sup>4</sup> We can note, too, how in his points for the circumcision Ignatius brings to the attention of the retreatant the fact that Mary had compassion for the blood shed by her Son.<sup>5</sup> Her presence in the mystery of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf Exx 53.

<sup>2</sup> Exx 108.

<sup>3</sup> Exx 116.

<sup>4</sup> Exx 132.

<sup>5</sup> Exx 266.

cross is the reason for her presence in the Exercises whenever there is question of offering ourselves for the work of the cross.

The third pair of meditations concern the obedience of Christ to his parents at Nazareth and their finding him in the Temple. Ignatius stresses the order of these meditations: first the hidden life, then afterwards the finding in the Temple. The reason for this is that he sees in these two mysteries examples of two ways of life, the one according to the commandments, the other according to the counsels. This order is meant to lead the retreatant gently to what is more perfect, namely the 'pure service of the Father'.<sup>1</sup> Ignatius realised only too well that one of the easiest ways of provoking illusion is to act precipitately. It is easier to imagine oneself as generous than to be generous in cold fact.

It would be wrong to think that Ignatius despised the life according to the commandments, and only included it as a make-weight. The standard he set for it is very high. In his Directory he notes, 'He who enters into the Elections must do so with complete resignation of his will, so that, if possible, he attains to the third way of humility . . . whoever is not in a state of indifference of the second way is unfit to attempt the Elections, and it is better for him to be occupied with other exercises until he attains that indifference'.<sup>2</sup> The perfection of the life of the commandments is equivalent to the second way of humility, and the purpose of the Elections is to choose 'whatever state or life which God puts before me for my choice',<sup>3</sup> and this in no way excludes the perfection of the life according to the commandments. We are here on the level of perfection, as Fr Miro notes in his Directory when he observes that during the Second Week the retreatant must always try to incline his will towards what is most perfect.<sup>4</sup>

The Two Standards now comes as the prelude to the process of the Elections, to enable the retreatant to see 'the aims of Christ our Lord and on the opposite side those of the enemy of our human nature, and what attitudes he must adopt if he is to attain to perfection in whatever state or life that God our Lord gives him for his choice'.<sup>5</sup> Here there is no question of what is grossly wrong or obviously right, but of two spirits, two differings aims and purposes. We are trying to learn how Christ goes about things and how on the opposite side the devil handles a situation. We are to make our own the prayer with which Ignatius often ends his letters, 'May

<sup>1</sup> Exx 135.    <sup>2</sup> MI Exx p 781.    <sup>3</sup> Exx 135.    <sup>4</sup> MI Exx p 862.    <sup>5</sup> Exx 135.

Christ our Lord give us his grace so that we may be always sensitive to his will and fulfil it entirely'.<sup>1</sup> Wholeheartedness in the service of God demands a constant effort of discernment, a growing sensitivity to the will of God. Without this, generosity can lead only to 'the expense of spirit in a waste of shame'. This sensitivity to the will of God expressing itself in daily life is the key to understanding the ignatian examen, which has so often been interpreted in an over-introspective way. But that is another subject.

## 2. *The examination of the Two Standards*

After seeing the broad outlines of the Second Week and the lead up to the Two Standards, we are now in a better position to examine the meditation in itself. There is so much in it that a choice must be made. I shall confine myself to three points:

1. The universal character of the meditation.
2. The absolute nature of the opposition between Christ and Lucifer.
3. Discernment.

### *The universal character of the meditation*

It would be a complete falsification of Ignatius' perspective to reduce this meditation to a sort of examination of conscience; or to attempt to modernize it by locating Jerusalem and Babylon in the modern world. The force of the meditation lies in its universality. Its dimensions are those of the whole world and of the whole course of human history. Ignatius puts us before Christ and Lucifer each of whom wants *all* men under his banner. Lucifer sends out his demons to ensnare *all* men, throughout the *whole* world, not excepting any province, region, state of life, or any particular person. Christ chooses his friends and sends them out to help *all* men in every walk of life throughout the whole world. Here Ignatius lifts us out of any personal preoccupation and sets us on the level of the universal history of salvation. It is not I who am involved primarily; it is the whole world in Christ or in Lucifer. Not that Ignatius would subscribe to the phantasy of a 'mystical body' of evil. Such an idea makes nonsense of the very notion of sin as a principle of division. At all events Ignatius characterises Lucifer as a tyrant who drives and compels his subjects, he uses a vocabulary of compulsion and trickery, whereas when describing Christ his vocabulary is one of friendship, persuasion, gentleness. What I have

<sup>1</sup> *Siempre sintamos y enteramente la cumplamos*, cf eg Letter of 30 March 1556, from Rome.

to see is that my personal option must be made in the light of this universal vision. My choice must integrate me into the great movement of salvation already accomplished in Christ and now being worked out on earth. My choice will be a reproduction in me of the option of Christ who chose the cross, despising its shame.

We may note that this idea finds its first development with Origen but is already contained in germ in the phrase of Ignatius of Antioch – ‘Let me be an imitator of the passion of my God’.<sup>1</sup>

The issue at stake at this stage of the Exercises is not the fact of salvation or of Christ’s victory over Lucifer. That has never been in doubt and the whole theology of the First Week presupposes it. The question is how this victory is to be made a reality for mankind here and now, through my choice. There is no doubt in Ignatius’ mind that the banner of Christ is the *Vexilla Regis*, the banner of the cross, and the Election is going to be a setting out on the way of the cross.

Spiritually, this universal outlook is indispensable for any healthy formation of man in Christ, and for any true choice made in Christ. Ignatius’ troubles at Manresa came not from the fact that he had made an heroic choice, but because he had made that choice only in terms of what he thought he ought to do, without reference either to his own history or to the history of salvation. The result was that he cut himself off from history and became an eccentric recluse. When he finally attained to a spiritual maturity he ceased his eccentricities and began to live a normal life. When he founded the Society he translated this experience into a style of life which exteriorly was to be that of the ordinary good priest.

*The absolute nature of the opposition between Christ and Lucifer.*

Christ	– Lucifer
Captain and leader	– Mortal enemy
Truth and life	– Deceit, lies, death
Liberty	– Slavery
Seeks to help	– Tries to ensnare and trap
Poverty	– Riches
Humiliations	– Esteem, reputation
Humility	– Pride

This opposition is marked throughout the meditation, even in the details of the physical appearance and geographical situation of Christ and Lucifer. Nothing could be clearer or more unmistakable.

<sup>1</sup> Epistle to the Romans, PG 5, 693.

able. Neither could possibly be mistaken for the other. Christ revealed is truth and life. Lucifer unmasked is lies and death. The opposition of the Two Standards is absolute.

Furthermore this opposition is constant. There is no reconciliation in this world. That will only come in the day when 'the lawless one will be revealed and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearance and coming'.<sup>1</sup> Those who are trying to serve Christ seriously will always meet opposition. Like their master they will always experience persecution. This meditation does not bear uniquely on the moment of my choice but leads to an attitude which has to become dominant and constant in my life with Christ.

But if in this war there is no no-mans-land; if the opposition between the Two Standards is so radical, why do we need to pray for light and knowledge of the true life which our leader and captain teaches? This brings us to our third point.

### *Discernment*

Ignatius' answer to the question we have just asked is shown in his choice of a title for the enemy of human nature – Lucifer. It is the only time in the Exercises that he uses this name, and it sends us to the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits for the Second Week. There he describes how the angel of darkness can masquerade as an angel of light and fall in at first with the faithful soul in order to lead him ultimately in his own direction. He proposes good and holy thoughts adapted to the just soul, and afterwards, little by little, he tries to get his own way by drawing the soul into his hidden snares and perverse aims.<sup>2</sup> The devil of the Two Standards is not the devil of gross temptation to open sin, but the devil of the *vida iluminativa*.<sup>2</sup> He is the counterfeiter, the fraud, the impostor. In his first beginnings he is as indistinguishable from the good spirit as the cockle is from the wheat when it first begins to appear above the ground. He is a devil who is cunning and patient, who can bide his time, and is content to work insidiously, little by little.

At this point in the Exercises, which he did under the direction of Favre, the englishman John Helyar notes – 'Christ promises nothing pleasant or joyful here on earth, but continual warfare and everything harsh and bitter, excepting of course the interior joy of

<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess 2, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Cf Exx 332: note the use of the word *intencion* here as in Exx 135.

the heart; but in the future he promises all that is most pleasant, joy, peace and eternal happiness and what the ear has not heard etc. On the contrary Satan, the mortal enemy of human nature, who here promises joyful and pleasant things, soon leads to an eternal exile. The wages of sin is death'.<sup>1</sup> There is, in truth, that in man which gives the devil a foothold. It is that inbuilt selfishness which Ignatius characterises by the desire to possess for oneself (riches), the desire to be worth something for oneself (esteem), the desire to be self-made (pride). These are in man as a result of his state of disunion with God, a disunion which is postulated by the very notion of having to seek the will of God. Man (even redeemed man) and God are not one; and the devil gains entrance precisely at the point of their disunion. Hence what is going to be the point of entrance of grace, namely that precise point of disunion of which I am aware and am attempting to eliminate by the Election, will also be capable of providing access to the deceiver; he will masquerade as the angel of the light that I am seeking.

As we have said, the two angels can be apparently indistinguishable in their beginnings. But it is precisely here that harm or good is done. Hence, in the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits for the Second Week, Ignatius elaborates the criteria of judgement which allow the retreatant to discern the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of Lucifer in their beginnings.

But these Rules will not be understood except through an actual experience of this opposition by the retreatant. Ignatius not merely expected this experience of opposition which would put a man to the exercise of discernment; he regarded it as indispensable. Annotation 6 makes the point strongly that where there is no such experience of the diversity of spirits, the Director of the retreat has to enquire carefully how the exercises are being made. What should cause him anxiety is not the presence of an upheaval but its absence. All is not well at this stage of the Exercises when the retreatant says that everything is going along very smoothly thank you. *Facilis descensus Averno*. Ignatius made the same point in a letter to Isabel Roser<sup>2</sup> – everyone who begins to serve Christ seriously experiences opposition and the diversity of spirits. Peter Favre makes a note in his *Memoriale*<sup>3</sup> during the retreat he gave to Canisius, that where a

<sup>1</sup> Regina MI Exx p 636.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters to Women* (Edinburgh, 1960) p 267.

<sup>3</sup> *Mémorial. Traduit et commenté par Michel de Certeau, S.J. Collection Christus 4*, (Paris, 1960).

person does not experience this difference of spirits, the remedy is to put before him as high an ideal as possible, and that as soon as he envisages this seriously he will inevitably have this experience of the diversity of spirits.<sup>1</sup> We can begin to see now why Ignatius insists that this meditation be made four times in the day. Here above all, there must be no risk of superficiality. The retreatant must allow this opposition between Christ and Satan to sink into his soul. We can see, too, the reason for Ignatius' phrase, 'the highest spiritual poverty',<sup>2</sup> and the extreme danger of adapting this meditation by watering it down in a false attempt to be realistic. Discernment is as necessary for the director as it is for the retreatant.

Against the bias of self-interest, self-love and self-will, Ignatius sets the trio which define the spirit of Christ – poverty, humiliations, humility. Just as with the diabolical triad, these are three moments in one movement. Each step of true spiritual poverty will necessarily bring its occasion for humility which will be a humiliation. For it is possible to live, like Diogenes, in a barrel and be proud of it, just as it is possible to be honoured and esteemed like a Charles Borromeo and remain poor and humble. Such matters can only be judged against the broad general plan of salvation in Christ, by allowing ourselves to be permeated with the sense of the rightness of the way which historically Christ took. The knowledge we are seeking is, in the words of Bartolomeo Torres in his defence of the Exercises, a *saber para obrar*,<sup>3</sup> a knowledge which is a well-spring of action: knowledge which is not a mere notional assent, but a living, affective, interior assent to the rightness of the way of Christ. It is a knowledge wrested from experience guided by the grace of Christ.

Unless this experience of the diversity of spirits has been undergone, and unless some knowledge of the true way of Christ has been obtained, the meditation of the Three Classes becomes empty of content, since it presumes the awareness of the presence in me of an attachment which, though not sinful, is not purely from the love of God.<sup>4</sup> Nothing could be more harmful than to have someone make a meditation in which they can take only an academic interest.

Much remains to be said about discernment, but time does not permit more than this brief sketch of one or two points. But let us note finally that this discernment is to remain as a constant factor

<sup>1</sup> Cf *op. cit.* nos 300–303.

<sup>2</sup> Exx 146.

<sup>3</sup> MI Exx p 667.

<sup>4</sup> Exx 150.

in the spiritual life. Ignatius was well aware of this when he wrote towards the end of his life, 'There is no one in this life who in everything can decide or judge how much for his part he is impeding or how much he is cooperating with what God our Lord is seeking to work in his soul'.<sup>1</sup> The men formed by him understood this only too well. When Francis Xavier was embarking at Lisbon as papal legate a nobleman tried to persuade him to take a manservant along with him to do his washing. He answered, 'My Lord, it is just those sort of attempts to ensure consideration and authority which have reduced the Church of God to the state she is in today. In order to obtain consideration and authority it is better to wash one's own linen and do one's own cooking than to have a manservant'.<sup>2</sup> So spoke a man who understood what the Two Standards was about.

### 3. *The Two Standards and the inner unity of the Exercises*<sup>3</sup>

As we saw at the beginning of this paper, the Exercises were composed in the light of certain basic spiritual experiences of which the Two Standards is one of the most important. Hence in view of the analyses we have just made we can now look at the rest of the Exercises. Once again we shall confine ourselves to one or two points.

Ignatius says that the angels did not want to use their liberty in order to reverence and obey their Creator and Lord.<sup>4</sup> Exactly what that refusal was can be seen in the confrontation of Christ and Lucifer in the Two Standards. First of all let us note that in the vocabulary of Ignatius the term 'Creator and Lord' refers to Christ.<sup>5</sup> The sin of the angels has a direct reference to Christ, before whose crucified majesty the whole of this First Week finds its meaning. For Ignatius, Satan is 'the enemy of human nature' and, as Fr Lyonnet points out,<sup>6</sup> there could be no truer biblical designation of Satan than that phrase. In the bible Satan is the enemy of man. He attacks man, not God. He is the father of lies and a homicide from the beginning, the great deceiver who seeks to destroy man. We must give all its force to the johannine expression 'from the beginning'. The sin of the angels, which is the beginning of Satan, is rooted in this same evil of homicide.

In the Two Standards Christ stands as the sign of contradiction

<sup>1</sup> MI I, 1, p 340.

<sup>2</sup> Mon Xav II, p 836.

<sup>3</sup> For this part I am entirely indebted to Fr Hugo Rahner's studies in *Ignatius als Mensch und Theologe* (Wurzburg, 1956).

<sup>4</sup> Exx 50.

<sup>5</sup> Cf Hugo Rahner *op. cit.* pp 258-259 and note 18.

<sup>6</sup> *Art. cit.*

revealing the inner thoughts of many hearts. He is the criterion revealing what is truth and what is falsehood, what is ultimate destruction of man and what is ultimate salvation. The spirits are good or bad in so far as they further or hinder the purpose of Christ at work in the lives of men. In his biblical counterpart of the Two Standards, the temptations of Christ, Ignatius makes this contrast. Lucifer demands that Christ bow down and adore him, the good angels come and serve him.<sup>1</sup> The goodness or evil of the angels is defined by their attitude to God made man. They either serve him and in that service give through him glory to God, or they refuse to serve and rebel against him. It is not for nothing that Ignatius terminates this meditation on the history of sin before the figure of Christ crucified, and has us ask how it was that he, the Creator, has become man, and come from eternal life to temporal death.<sup>2</sup> In Christ the suffering servant the sin of the angels is revealed as the refusal to serve God made man.

We have noted the universality of the Two Standards. It reveals a world of the spirit which permeates human history, and in which the issues are eternal. Nothing could be more harmful than to reduce sin to its purely material dimensions, to restrict its meaning to terms of time and space. In his meditation on the sin of the angels Ignatius introduces us to this world of spiritual values where evil finds its true dimensions. But this world is not a world outside which has no relation to man. It is a world centred on God made man, and therefore a world in which man is involved as he is involved in Christ.

Fr de Guibert has called Ignatius' theology a mystique of service. Looking at the origin of sin, Ignatius sees it, in its inception, as a refusal to serve, which is the real disobedience. This could be put even more strongly, and we could say that for Ignatius it is a refusal to serve the divine purpose of human history. The Christ Ignatius opposes to Lucifer is Christ the servant of mankind who sends out his apostles to help all.<sup>3</sup> The service rendered by Christ is the service of the cross in obedience unto death. In the Two Standards, Ignatius leads the retreatant to go diametrically against the deceits of Lucifer, by asking to be received into the service of the banner of the cross in the complete dedication of his life to the service of God in the service of the Church, in complete obedience to the holy See. This is the ideal of the Society of Jesus. In the

<sup>1</sup> Exx 274.

<sup>2</sup> Exx 53.

<sup>3</sup> *A todos quieran ayudar*, Exx 146.

Constitutions the phrase *ayudar a las animas* is a dominant theme, as it was in Ignatius' own life after he had left Manresa. And he saw that this service could best be given by men who were crucified to the world and to whom the world was crucified. So in the Two Standards Ignatius develops the idea that begins in the First Week, where, in recognition that Christ's death is his service of me, I ask what have I done for Christ, what am I doing for Christ, what ought I to do for Christ.<sup>1</sup> My service of him must follow the way of his service of mankind – the mystery of the cross. It is significant that Ignatius presents the risen Christ as one who fulfils the service of consoler. Finally, in the last contemplation of the Exercises, Ignatius reveals the source of this ideal of service in the God who works and labours for man out of love.<sup>2</sup>

Christ crucified in the service of mankind is the ultimate principle of discernment, revealing the open horror of sin in the First Week and the hidden deceit of sin in the Second Week. The only way to avoid crucifying Christ is to be crucified with him in the way of spiritual poverty (and actual poverty when spiritual poverty demands this), humiliations and humility. For Ignatius, the inimitable hallmark of christian action is loving humility. Hence Ignatius' insistence that novices and tertians be put into situations which demanded the exercise of charity and humility. Hence, too, the Third and Fourth Weeks of the Exercises, which are to confirm the Election as the logical and theological conclusion of a decision to cooperate with that saving grace of Christ which is poured out upon the world from the cross. It was his own vision of La Storta, where he saw the apostolate of the Society in the gesture of the Father putting him with the Son who was carrying the cross.

The colloquy which ends the Two Standards is a real volunteering, not a request made on the crest of a wave of enthusiasm. Who can be realistically enthusiastic about being humiliated? It is a request based entirely on an attitude of faith which sees in the way of God in Christ a wisdom which confounds the wise.

<sup>1</sup> Exx 53.

<sup>2</sup> Cf Exx 236.