

THE STIGMATA: A HISTORY OF VARIOUS CASES

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The Stigmata: a history of various cases by Johann Joseph von Gorress

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JOHANN JOSEPH VON GORRESS

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A

HISTORY OF VARIOUS CASES.

TRANSLATED FROM

“THE MYSTIK” OF GÖRRES.

Edited, with a Preface, by

THE REV. H. AUSTIN.

“For I bear the marks of the Lord
Jesus in my body.”—Gal. vi. 17.

London:

THOMAS RICHARDSON AND SON,
23, KING EDWARD STREET, CITY;
AND DERBY.

1883.

PREFACE.

THE wonderful grace of the Stigmata was a thing unknown in the Church before the time of S. Francis of Assisi. It is possible there may have been unnoticed cases of partial stigmatization, but there are none on record. When S. Paul says that he bears in his body the marks (stigmata) of the Lord Jesus, he is not supposed to mean that he had impressed on his body the Five Sacred Wounds: but he alludes rather to the chains, stripes, etc., which he had borne for Christ, the marks of which were on his body. The Stigmata, properly so-called, were reserved in God's treasure-house, in a secret casket, till the day S. Francis should come to be adorned with them.

Since the day of S. Francis the Stigmata have become a not unusual grace. For, besides the most remarkable authentic cases, a multitude of others have existed, and still exist, though not publicly known, or not known to a wide circle. But this grace has its principal field of action in the family of S. Francis. The features of the father pass on in every age to his children. The gift is found to spread outside his family, but not abundantly. Its rich profusion still remains as the heritage of the children of that Saint who first received the grace.

< The Stigmata are received first in the soul by an intense sympathy with our Lord in His Passion. > But as the soul and body form one man, > these Stigmata always aim at passing from the soul to the body, so that the body shall participate, after her manner, in that which so deeply affects the soul. >

The Stigmata do not always pass from

the soul to the body. The bodies of some persons are less plastic than those of others. They less readily, and only sluggishly, conform themselves to the sentiments and affections of the soul. Thus it may well be that a person not stigmatized feels sympathy with our Lord in His Passion more intensely than another who wears the Stigmata in the body. In the latter case the body is more plastic, and is so impressionable as to reflect on the outer envelope of the body the inner workings of the soul. Again, many cases are recorded where the Stigmata without were withdrawn by our Lord, though the soul within suffered no detriment of devotion to, or of sympathy with, our Lord's Passion.

Still the wearing of our Lord's Stigmata in the body is a great grace. We shall admire in heaven those who circle round our Lord, bearing their living resemblance to Him in their bodies, being living pictures of Him in their

five wounds. So on earth, when we see, or hear, or read of these wonderful effects of the love of our Lord, and of that close union of His chosen ones with Him, our hearts are naturally quickened to a deeper and more intense love of His Passion. May the reading of this little book contribute its part to make Jesus Christ crucified more loved and more adored.

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