

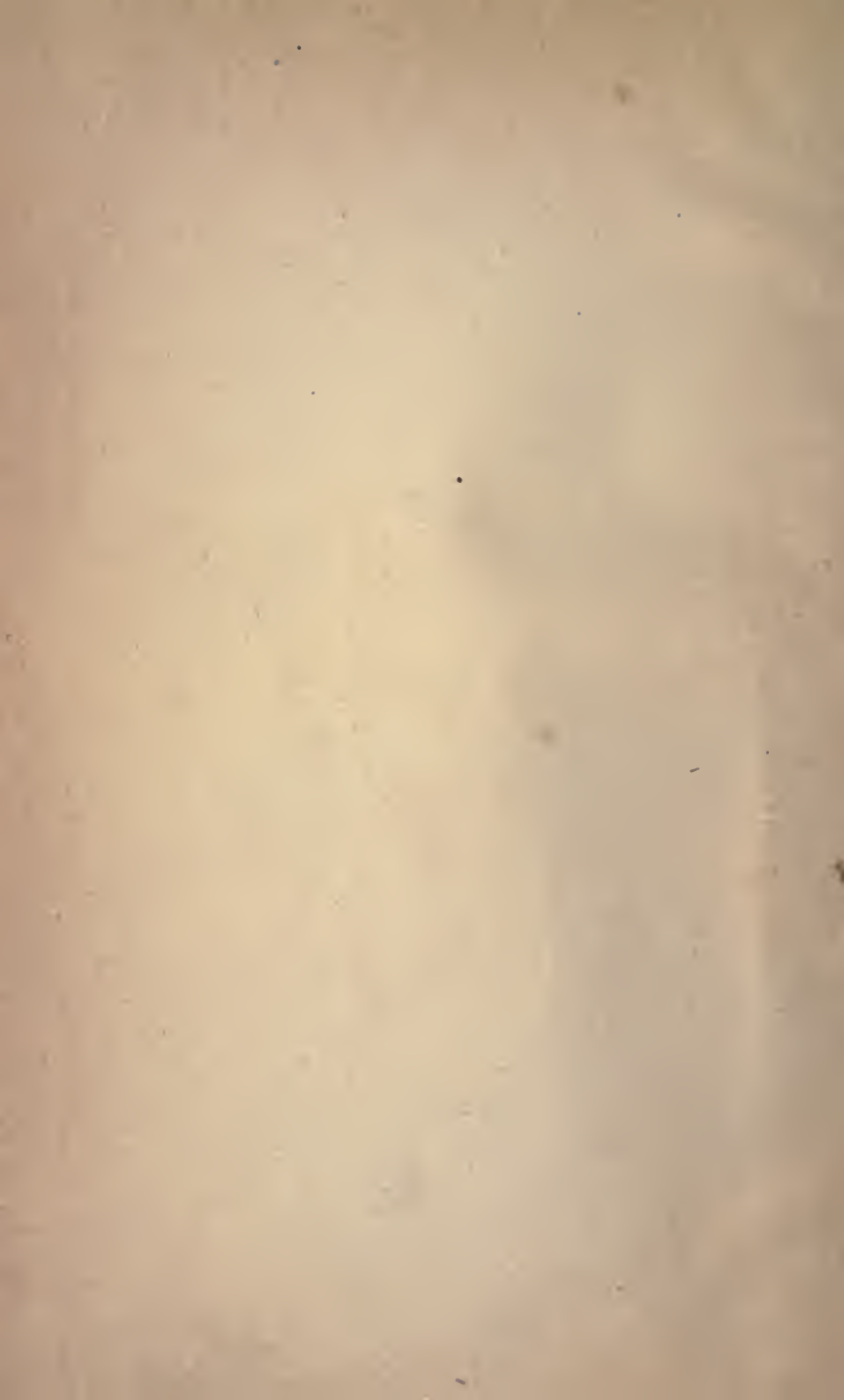


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LONDON

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THE
COMPLETE WORKS
OF
SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS,
OF THE
ORDER OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL SPANISH

BY

DAVID LEWIS, Esq. M.A.

EDITED BY THE OBLATE FATHERS OF SAINT CHARLES.

WITH A PREFACE

BY

HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL WISEMAN.

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A
SPIRITUAL CANTICLE
BETWEEN
THE SOUL AND CHRIST.

A
SPIRITUAL CANTICLE
BETWEEN
THE SOUL AND CHRIST.

PROLOGUE.

As this Canticle seems to have been written in a fervour of love for God, Whose love and wisdom are so infinite as, in the words of Scripture, to reach 'from end to end;'^{*} and as the soul, under its influence, manifests a somewhat similar force and amplitude in speaking of it, I do not intend to explain the grandeur and richness which a mind fruitful in love may find herein. It would be gross ignorance to think that the outpourings of love and of the mystical intelligence—the subject of these stanzas—could be described by any words of man; for, as saith the Apostle,† the Spirit of God, Who 'helpeth our infirmities,' dwelling in us, 'asketh for us with unspeakable groanings' what we can neither understand nor comprehend. Who then can describe that which He reveals to those loving souls in whom He dwells? Who can express in words their feelings and their desires? Assuredly no one, not even they themselves, who have such experiences. This is the reason why men hide their feelings beneath figures,

The love and wisdom of God surpasses expression.

Subject of the Spiritual Canticle.

Fitness of figurative language.

* Wisd. viii. 1.

† Rom. viii. 26.

PROLOGUE. comparisons, and similitudes, and in the abundance of the spirit utter mysteries and secrets rather than explain themselves in intelligible words. And if these similitudes be not received in the simplicity of a loving mind, and in the sense in which they are uttered, they will seem to be effusions of folly rather than of reason; as any one may see in the Divine Canticle of Solomon, and in others of the Sacred Books, wherein the Holy Ghost, because of the incapacity of ordinary language to convey His meaning, uttered His mysteries in strange terms and similitudes. It follows from this, that after all that the holy Doctors have said on the subject, and indeed after all they may say hereafter, no words can explain it; words can do little here; and so, in general, all that men may write falls far short of the matter of which they treat.

Dispositions
of the
student,—
Simplicity
and Love.

Example of
the Canticle
of Solomon.

The Author's
purpose.

The stanzas that follow having been written under the influence of that love which proceeds from the overflowing mystical intelligence, cannot for this reason be fully explained. Indeed I do not purpose any such thing, for my sole object is to throw some general light over them, which in my opinion is the better course. It is better to leave the outpourings of love in their own fulness, that every one may apply them according to the measure of his spirit and power, than to pare them down to one particular sense which is not suited to the taste of every one. And though I do put forth a particular explanation, still others are not to be bound by it. The Mystical Wisdom—that is, the love, of which these stanzas speak—does not require to be distinctly understood in order to produce the effect of love and tenderness in the soul, for it is in this respect like Faith, which enables us to love God without a clear comprehension of Him.

Finis
operis,—
Caritas.

I shall therefore be very concise, though now and then unable to avoid some prolixity where the subject requires it, and when the opportunity is offered of discussing certain points and effects of prayer: many of which being referred to

in these stanzas, I must not omit all of them. I shall, however, pass over the more ordinary ones, and treat briefly of the more extraordinary ones to which they are subject who, by the mercy of God, have advanced beyond the state of beginners. This I do for two reasons: the first is, that much is already written concerning beginners; and the second is, that I am addressing those who have received from our Lord the grace of being led on from the elementary state and carried inwards to the bosom of His Divine love. I therefore trust, though I may discuss some points of the Scholastic Theology relating to the interior commerce of the soul with God, that I am not using such language altogether in vain, and that it will be found profitable for pure spirituality. For though some may be altogether ignorant of Scholastic Theology by which the Divine verities are explained, yet they are not ignorant of Mystical Theology, the science of love, by which those verities are not only learned, but at the same time relished also.

PROLOGUE.

Two reasons for treating of the more unusual states of prayer.

Relation between scholastic and mystical Theology.

And in order that what I am going to say may be the better received, submitting myself to higher judgments, and unreservedly to that of our holy mother the Church, I intend to say nothing in reliance on my own personal experience, nor on what I have observed in other spiritual persons, nor on what I have heard them say—though I intend to profit by all this—unless I can confirm it with the sanction of the Divine Writings, at least on those points which are the most difficult of comprehension. The method I propose to follow in the matter is, first of all, to cite the express words of Scripture, and then to give that explanation of them which belongs to the subject before me. I shall now transcribe all the stanzas, and place them at the beginning of this treatise. In the next place I shall take each of them separately, and explain them line by line, each line in its proper place.

The Judge, sources and test of the Author's doctrines.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE SOUL AND CHRIST.

I

THE BRIDE.

DIALOGUE.

Prayer and
Mortifica-
tion.

Where hast Thou hidden Thyself?
Why hast Thou forsaken me in my groaning, O my
Beloved?
Thou didst fly like the hart, away,
When Thou hadst wounded me.
I ran after Thee, crying; but Thou wert gone.

II

Earnest
Longing.

O shepherds, you who go
Through the sheepcots up the hill,
If you shall see Him
Whom I love,
Tell Him I languish, agonize, and die.

III

Courage and
Resolution.

In search of my Love
I will traverse mountains and strands;
I will gather no flowers,
I will fear no wild beasts;
And I will overpass the mighty and the frontiers.

IV

Meditation.

Ye groves and thickets
Planted by the hand of the Beloved;
Ye verdant meads
Enamelled with flowers;
Tell me, has He passed by you?

V

ANSWER OF THE CREATURES.

A thousand graces diffusing
He passed through the groves in haste,
And beholding them only
As He passed,
He clothed them with His beauty.

VI

DIALOGUE.

THE BRIDE.

O who can heal me ?
 Give me perfectly Thyself,
 Send me no more
 A messenger
 Who cannot tell me what I seek.

Contem-
 plation.

VII

All they who serve
 Relate a thousand graces of Thee ;
 And all wound me more and more,
 And they leave me dying,
 While they babble I know not what.

VIII

But how thou perseverest, O life
 Not living where thou livest ;
 The arrows bring death
 Which thou receivest
 From thy conceptions of the Beloved.

IX

Why, after wounding
 This heart, hast Thou not healed it ?
 And why, after stealing it,
 Hast Thou thus abandoned it,
 And not carried away what Thou hast stolen ?

X

Quench Thou my troubles,
 For none else can do so ;
 And let mine eyes behold Thee
 Who art their light,
 And it is for Thee alone I would use them.

DIALOGUE.

The Spiritual
Betrothal.

XI

Reveal Thy presence,
And let the vision of Thy beauty kill me.
Behold, the disease
Of love is incurable
Except in Thy presence and in the light of Thy
countenance.

XII

O Fount of crystal !
O that on Thy silvered surface
Thou wouldest mirror forth at once
Those eyes desirable
Which I have in my heart delineated !

XIII

Turn them away, O my Beloved !
I fly away.

THE BRIDEGROOM.

Return, My Dove !
The wounded hart
Looms on the hill
In the air of thy flight and is refreshed.

XIV

THE BRIDE.

My Beloved is the mountains,
The solitary wooded valleys,
The strange islands,
The roaring torrents,
The whisper of the amorous gales ;

XV

The tranquil night
At the approaches of the dawn,
The silent music,
The murmuring solitude,
The supper which revives, and enkindles love.

XVI

DIALOGUE.

Catch us the foxes,
For our vineyard hath flourished ;
While of roses
We make a nosegay,
And let no one appear on the hill.

XVII

Cease, O thou killing north wind !
Come, O south wind, thou that awakenest love !
Blow through my garden,
And let its odours flow,
And my Beloved shall feed among the flowers.

XVIII

O nymphs of Judea !
While amid the flowers and the rose-trees
The amber sends forth its perfume,
Tarry in the suburbs,
And touch not my threshold.

XIX

Hide Thyself, O my Beloved !
Let Thy face shine on the mountains.
Do not tell it,
But regard the companions
Of her who traverses strange islands.

XX

THE BRIDEGROOM.

Light-winged birds,
Lions, fawns, bounding deer,
Mountains, valleys, strands,
Waters, winds, fires,
And the terrors that keep watch by night ;

DIALOGUE.

The Spiritual
Nuptials.

XXI

By the soft lyres
And the siren strains, I adjure you,
Let your fury cease,
And touch not the wall,
That the Bride may sleep in peace.

XXII

The Bride has entered
The pleasant and desirable garden,
And there reposes to her heart's content ;
Her neck reclining
On the sweet arms of her Beloved.

XXIII

Beneath the apple-tree
I espoused thee :
There I gave thee My hand,
And thou wert there redeemed
Where thy mother was corrupted.

XXIV

THE BRIDE.

Our bed is of flowers
By the dens of lions encompassed,
Hung with purple,
Made in peace,
And crowned with a thousand shields of gold.

XXV

In Thy footsteps
The young ones run Thy way ;
At the touch of the fire,
And by the spiced wine,
The Divine balsam flows.

XXVI

DIALOGUE.

In the inmost cellar
Of my Beloved have I drunk ; and when I went forth
Over all the plain
I knew nothing,
And lost the flock I followed before.

XXVII

There He gave me His breasts,
There He taught me the science full of sweetness.
And there I gave to Him
Myself without reserve ;
There I promised to be His Bride.

XXVIII

My soul is occupied,
And all my substance in His service ;
Now I guard no flock,
Nor have I any other employment :
My sole occupation is love.

XXIX

If, then, on the common
I am no longer seen or found,
Say that I am lost ;
That, being enamoured,
I lost myself ; and yet I gained.

XXX

Of emeralds, and of flowers
In the early morning culled,
We will make the garlands,
Flowering in Thy love,
And bound together with one hair of my head.

DIALOGUE.

XXXI

By that one hair
 Thou hast observed fluttering on my neck,
 And hast regarded on my neck,
 Thou wert captivated ;
 And wounded by one of my eyes.

XXXII

When Thou didst regard me,
 Thine eyes imprinted Thy grace in me :
 For this didst Thou love me again,
 And thereby mine eyes did merit
 To adore what in Thee they saw.

XXXIII

Despise me not,
 For if I was swarthy once
 Thou canst regard me now ;
 Since Thou hast regarded me,
 Grace and beauty hast Thou given me.

XXXIV

THE BRIDEGROOM.

The little white dove
 Has returned to the ark with the bough ;
 And now the turtle-dove
 Her desired mate
 On the green banks has found.

XXXV

In solitude she lived,
 And in solitude built her nest ;
 And in solitude, alone
 Hath the Beloved guided her,
 In solitude also wounded with her love.

XXXVI

THE BRIDE.

Let us rejoice, O my Beloved !
 Let us go forth to see ourselves in Thy beauty,
 To the mountain and the hill,
 Where the pure water flows ;
 Let us enter into the heart of the thicket.

The eternal
 Marriage
 Feast.

XXXVII

We shall go at once
 To the lofty caverns of the rocks
 Which are all secret,
 There we shall enter in
 And taste of the new wine of the pomegranate.

XXXVIII

There Thou wilt show me
 What my soul desired ;
 And there Thou wilt give at once,
 O Thou, my life !
 What Thou gavest me the other day,

XXXIX

The breathing of the air,
 The song of the sweet nightingale,
 The grove and its beauty
 In the serene night,
 With the fire that consumes, but without pain.

XL

None saw it ;
 Neither did Aminadab appear.
 The siege was intermitted,
 And the cavalry dismounted
 At the vision of the waters.

ARGUMENT.

The three ways :

1. Purgative.
2. Illuminative.
3. Unitive.

These stanzas describe the career of the soul from its first entrance on the service of God till it comes to the final state of perfection—the spiritual marriage. They refer to the three conditions of the spiritual life—the Purgative, Illuminative, and Unitive ways; some properties or effects of which they explain.

The first part relates to beginners—to the purgative way. The second to the advanced—to the state of spiritual espousal, that is, the illuminative way. The next part relates to the unitive way—that of the perfect, where the spiritual marriage is brought to pass. The unitive way, or that of the perfect, follows the illuminative, which is that of the advanced. The last stanzas treat of the beatific state, which only the already perfect soul aims at.

EXPLANATION OF THE STANZAS.

INTRODUCTION.

The soul, considering the obligations of its state, seeing that ‘the days of man are short;’* that the way of eternal life is strait;† that ‘the just man shall scarcely be saved;’‡ that the things of this world are empty and deceitful; that all die and perish like water poured on the ground;§ that time is uncertain, the last account strict, perdition most easy, and salvation most difficult: and recognising also, on the other hand, the great debt that is owing to God, Who has created it solely for Himself, for which the service of its whole life is due, Who has redeemed it for Himself alone, for

* Job xiv. 5.

† 1 S. Pet. iv. 18.

‡ S. Matth. vii. 14.

§ 2 Kings xiv. 14.

The soul awakened,
1. By motives
of duty and
fear;

which it owes Him all else, and the correspondence of its will to His love; and remembering other innumerable blessings for which it acknowledges itself indebted to God even before it was born: and also that a great part of its life has been wasted, and that it will have to render an account of it all from the beginning unto the end, to the repayment of 'the last farthing,'* when God shall 'search Jerusalem with lamps;' † that it is already late, and perhaps the end of the day: in order to remedy so great an evil, especially when it is conscious that God is grievously offended, and that He has hidden His face from it, because it would forget Him for the creature, the soul, now touched with sorrow and inward sinking of the heart at the sight of its imminent risks and ruin, renouncing everything and casting them aside without delaying for a day, or even an hour, with fear and groanings uttered from the heart, and wounded with the love of God, invokes the Beloved and says:

STANZA
I.

2. By motives
of gratitude
and sorrow.

STANZA I.

THE BRIDE.

*Where hast Thou hidden Thyself?
Why hast Thou forsaken me in my groaning, O my Beloved!
Thou didst fly like the hart, away,
When Thou hadst wounded me.
I ran after Thee, crying; but Thou wert gone.*

EXPLANATION.

Here the soul, enamoured of the Word, the Son of God, the Bridegroom, desiring to be united to Him in the clear and substantial vision, sets before Him the anxieties of its love, complaining of His absence. And this the more so because, now pierced and wounded with love, for which it had abandoned all things, even itself, it has still to endure His absence, unreleased from the burden of the flesh, unable to enjoy Him in the glory of eternity. Hence it cries out, 'Where hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

The soul
begins to
seek Christ.

* S. Matth. v. 26.

† Sophon. i. 12.

STANZA
I.

It is as if the soul said, Show me, O thou Word, my Bridegroom, the place where Thou art hidden. It asks for the revelation of the Divine Essence; for the place where the Son of God is hidden is, according to S. John, 'the bosom of the Father,'* the Divine Essence, transcending all mortal vision, and concealed from all human understanding, as the Prophet saith, 'Verily Thou art a hidden God.'† Remember, then, that the communications and sense of His presence, however great they may be, and the most sublime and profound conceptions of God which the soul may have in this life, are not God essentially, neither have they any affinity with Him, for in very truth He is still hidden from the soul; and it is therefore expedient for it, amid all these grandeurs, always to consider Him as hidden, and to seek Him in His hiding place, saying, 'Where hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

Neither sublime communications nor sensible devotion furnish any certain proof of His gracious presence; nor is the absence thereof, and aridity any proof of His absence from the soul. 'If He come to me, I shall not see Him; if He depart, I shall not understand.'‡ That is, if the soul have any great communication, or impression, or spiritual knowledge, it must not on that account persuade itself that what it then feels is to enjoy or see God clearly and in His Essence, or that it brings it nearer to Him, or Him to it, however deep such feelings may be. On the other hand, when all these sensible and spiritual communications fail it, when it is itself dried up, obscured, and abandoned, it must not on that account suppose that God is far from it; for in truth the presence of these things is no sign of its being in a state of grace, nor is the absence thereof a sign that it is not; for 'man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred.'§

* S. John i. 18.

† Job. ix. 11.

‡ Is. xlv. 15.

§ Eccles. ix. 1.

In this life
any clear
conception of
the Divine
Essence
impossible.

State of the
soul not to be
judged by
sensible
emotions.

STANZA
I.

Mystery of
the Father
and the Son
in the Blessed
Trinity.

The chief object of the soul here is not only to ask for that affective and sensible devotion, wherein there is no certainty or evidence of the possession of the Bridegroom in this life; but principally for that clear presence and vision of His Essence, of which it longs to be assured and satisfied in the next. This, too, was the object of the Bride who, desiring to be united to the Divinity of the Bridegroom Word, prayed to the Father, saying, 'Show me where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the midday.'* To ask to be shown the place where He fed was to ask to be shown the Essence of the Divine Word, the Son; for the Father feedeth nowhere else but in His only begotten Son, Who is the glory of the Father. In asking to be shown the place where He lay in the midday, she asked the same thing, for the Son is the sole delight of the Father, Who lieth in no other place, and is comprehended by no other thing, but in and by His beloved Son, in Whom He reposes wholly, communicating to Him His whole Essence. The 'midday' is eternity, where the Father is ever begetting and the Son ever begotten.

This pasture, then, is the Bridegroom Word, where the Father feedeth in infinite glory. He is also the bed of flowers whereon He profoundly reposes with infinite delight of love, and hidden from all mortal vision and every created thing. This is the meaning of the Bride-soul when she says, 'Where hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

That the thirstysoul may find the Bridegroom, and be united to Him in this life—so far as that is possible—and quench its thirst with that drink which it is possible to drink of at His hands in this life, it will be as well—since that is what the soul asks of Him—that we should answer for Him, and point out the special spot where He is hidden, that He may be found there in that perfection and sweetness, of which this life is capable, and that the soul may not loiter uselessly in

Where is the
hiding-place
of Christ?

* Cant. i. 6.

STANZA
I.God hidden
in the soul.

the footsteps of its companions. Remember, therefore, that the Word, the Son of God, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is hidden in essence and in presence, in the inmost being of the soul. That soul, therefore, that will find Him, must go out from all things in will and affection, and enter into the profoundest self-recollection, and all things must be to it as if they existed not. Hence, S. Augustine saith: 'I found Thee not without, O Lord, I sought Thee without in vain, for Thou art within.*' God is therefore hidden within the soul, and the true contemplative will seek Him there in love, saying, 'Where hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

' Multum
laboravi
quaerens Te
extra me . . .
et non inveni,
quia malè
quaerebam
foris, quod
erat intus.'

Joy of being
close to God.

O thou soul, most beautiful of creatures, who so earnestly longest to know the place where thy Beloved is, that thou mayest seek Him, and be united to Him! Thou art thyself that very tabernacle where He dwells, the secret chamber of His retreat where He is hidden. Rejoice, therefore, and exult, because all thy good and all thy hope is so near thee as to be within thee; yea, rather rejoice that thou canst not be without it, 'for lo, the kingdom of God is within you.' † So saith the Bridegroom Himself, and His servant, S. Paul, adds: 'You are the temple of the living God.' ‡ What joy for the soul to learn that God never abandons it even in mortal sin, how much less in a state of grace? § What more canst thou desire, what more canst thou seek without, seeing that within thou hast thy riches, thy delight, thy satisfaction, thy fulness and thy kingdom, that is, thy Beloved whom thou desirest and seekest. Rejoice then, and be glad with interior recollection, seeing that thou hast Him so near. Then love Him, then desire Him, then adore Him, and go not out of thyself, for that will be but distraction and weariness, and thou shalt not find Him; because there is no fruition of Him more certain, more ready, or more near,

* Soliloq. c. 31. Opp. Ed. Ben. tom. vi. app. p. 98.

† S. Luke xvii. 21. ‡ 2 Cor. vi. 16. § Mt. Carmel, Bk. 2, c. 5.

than that which is within. One difficulty alone remains: though He is within, yet He is hidden. But it is a great matter to know the place of His secret rest, that He may then be searched after the more certainly. The knowledge of this is what thou askest for, O soul, when with loving affection thou criest: 'Where hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

STANZA
I.

You will still urge and say, How comes it, then, that I find Him not, if He is within my soul? How comes it that I do not feel His presence? It is because He is hidden, and because thou also hidest not thyself that thou mayest find Him and feel Him; for he that will seek that which is hidden must enter secretly into the secret place where it is hidden, and when he finds it, he is himself hidden like the object of his search. Seeing, then, that the Bridegroom whom thou lovest is 'the treasure hidden in the field'* of thy soul, for which the wise merchant gave all that he had, so thou, if thou wilt find Him, must forget all that is thine, withdraw from all created things, and hide thyself in the secret retreat of the spirit, shutting the door upon thyself—that is, denying thy will in all things—and praying to thy Father in secret.† Then thou wilt be conscious of His presence, and love Him; then wilt thou enjoy Him in secret, and delight in Him in secret, in a way that no tongue or language can express. Courage, then, O soul most beautiful, thou knowest now that thy Beloved, whom thou desirest, dwelleth hidden within thy breast; strive, therefore, to be hidden with Him, and then thou shalt embrace Him, and be conscious of His presence with loving affection. Consider also that He invites thee Himself to His secret hiding-place, saying, 'Go, enter into thy chambers, shut thy doors upon thee;' that is, all thy faculties, so that no created thing shall enter: 'hide thyself a little for a moment,'‡ that is, for the

The soul
must hide
itself to find
the hidden
God.

* S. Matth. xiii. 44.

† Ib. vi. 6.

‡ Is. xxvi. 20.

STANZA
I.

time of this mortal life; for, if now during this brief interval, thou wilt 'with all watchfulness keep thy heart,'* God will most assuredly give thee, as He hath promised by His prophet, 'the hidden treasures and the concealed riches of secret places.'† The substance of these concealed riches is God Himself, for He is the substance of faith, and faith is the secret and the mystery. And when that which faith conceals shall be revealed, or, as the Apostle saith, 'When that which is perfect is come,'‡ then shall be revealed to the soul the substance and mysteries of these secrets.

How and
where God is
seen in this
life.

Though in this mortal life the soul will never reach to the interior secrets as it will in the next, however much it may hide itself, still, if it will hide itself with Moses, 'in the hole of the rock'—which is a real imitation of the perfect life of the Bridegroom, the Son of God—protected by the right hand of God, it will merit the vision of the 'back parts;'§ that is, it will reach to such perfection here, as to be united with, and transformed in, the Son of God, the Bridegroom, by love. So effectually will this be wrought that the soul will feel itself so united to Him, so learned and so instructed in His secrets, that, so far as the knowledge of Him in this life is concerned, it will be no longer necessary for it to say: 'Where hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

Faith and
love lead to
the secret
chamber of
God.

Thou knowest then, O soul, how thou art to demean thyself if thou wilt find the Bridegroom in his secret place. But if thou wilt hear it again, hear this one word full of substance and unapproachable truth: Seek Him in faith and love, without seeking to satisfy thyself in aught, or to understand more than is expedient for thee to know; faith and love are the two guides of the blind, they will lead thee by a way thou knowest not to the secret chamber of God. Faith, the secret

* Prov. iv. 23.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

‡ Is. xlvi. 3.

§ Exod. xxxiii. 22, 23.

of which I am speaking, is the foot that journeys onwards to God, and love is the guide pointing out the way. And while the soul meditates on the mysterious secrets of faith, it will merit the revelation, on the part of love, of that which faith involves, namely, the Bridegroom whom it longs for, in this life by spiritual grace and the Divine union, and in the next in essential glory, face to face, when He can be no longer hidden.

In the meanwhile, however, though the soul attains to union, the highest estate possible in this life, yet inasmuch as He is still hidden from the soul in the bosom of the Father, the soul longing for Him in the life to come, ever cries: 'Where hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

Thou doest well, then, O soul, in seeking Him always in His secret place; for thou greatly magnifiest God, and drawest near unto Him, esteeming Him as far beyond all thou canst reach. Rest not, therefore, neither wholly nor in part, on what thy faculties can embrace; never seek to satisfy thyself with what thou comprehendest in God, but rather with what thou comprehendest not; and do not rest on the love of that which thou canst understand and feel, but rather on that which is beyond thy understanding and feeling: this is to seek Him by faith. God is inaccessible and hidden, and though it may seem that thou hast found Him, felt Him, and comprehended Him, yet thou must ever regard Him as hidden, serve Him as hidden in secret. Be not thou like the unwise, who, with low views of God, think that when they cannot comprehend Him, or be conscious of His presence, that He is then farther away and more hidden—when the contrary is true, namely, that He is nearer to them when they are least aware of it; as it is written, 'He made darkness his covert.'* Thus, when thou art near unto Him, the very

Faith and
love surpass
understand-
ing and
feeling.

* Ps. xvii. 12.

STANZA
I.

infirmity of thy vision makes the obscurity palpable; thou doest well, therefore, at all times, in prosperity as well as in adversity, spiritual or temporal, to look upon God as hidden, and to say unto Him, 'Where hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

God must be appreciated and loved above all things.

'Why hast thou forsaken me in my groaning, O my Beloved?' The soul calls Him 'my Beloved,' the more to move Him to listen to its cry, for God most readily listens to the voice of him who loves Him. Thus He speaks Himself: 'If you abide in Me . . . you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done to you.'* The soul may then call Him Beloved, when it is wholly His, when the heart has no attachments but Him, and when all the thoughts are continually directed to Him. It was the absence of this that Dalila observed in Samson when she said, 'How dost thou say thou lovest me when thy mind is not with me?'† The mind comprises the thoughts and the feelings. Some there are who call the Bridegroom their Beloved, but He is not really beloved, because their heart is not wholly with Him. Their prayers are, therefore, not effectual before God, and they shall not obtain their petitions until, persevering in prayer, they fix their minds upon God and their hearts wholly in loving affection upon Him, for nothing can be obtained from God but by love.

Love obtains all things.

'Why hast Thou forsaken me in my groaning?' implies that the absence of the Beloved is the cause of continual sadness in him who loves; for as such an one loves none else, so, in the absence of the object beloved, nothing can console or relieve him. This is, therefore, a test to discern the true lovers of God. Are they satisfied with anything less than God? Do I say content? Yea, if a man possess all things he cannot be content,—the greater his possessions the less will be his contentment, for the heart cannot be satisfied with

Test to discern the true lovers of God,—what.

* S. John xv. 7.

† Judg. xvi. 15.

possessions, but rather in detachment from all things and in poverty of spirit. And as the perfection of love wherewith we have the fruition of God consists in this poverty, the soul lives therein with a special grace in this life, when it has attained to it with a certain contentment, but not satiety; for David, notwithstanding all his perfection, hoped for that in Heaven, saying, ‘I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear.’*

Thus, then, the peace and tranquillity, and the satisfaction of the heart, to which the soul may attain in this life, are not sufficient to relieve it from its interior groaning—peaceful and painless though it be, while it hopes for that which is still wanting. Groaning belongs to hope, as the Apostle teaches us, saying, ‘Ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God.’† The soul groans whose heart is enamoured, for where love wounds there is heard the groaning of the wounded one, complaining feelingly of the absence of the Beloved, especially when, after tasting of the sweet converse of the Bridegroom, it finds itself alone, in sudden aridity.

This life cannot satisfy the soul.

In this state it cries out, ‘Thou hast fled like the hart, away,’ comparing Him to a roe or a young hart: ‘My Beloved is like a roe or a young hart.’‡ This comparison extends not only to His being like a stranger, solitary and shunning company, as the hart, but also to His rapid hiding and revealing of Himself in His visits to devout souls for the purpose of comfort and encouragement, and in His retiring from them for their trial, humiliation, and instruction. In consequence of this, His absence is most keenly felt, as it appears from the words which follow:

God tries his servants by dryness of spirit.

‘When Thou hadst wounded me.’ It is as if it said, It

* Ps. xvi. 15.

† Rom. viii. 23.

‡ Cant. ii. 9.

STANZA
I.

was not enough that I should feel the pain and grief which Thy absence causes, and from which I am continually suffering, but Thou must, after wounding me with the arrow of Thy love, and increasing my sufferings, run away from me with the swiftness of the hart, and not permit me to embrace Thee, even for a moment.

Transformation of the desires and affections in Divine Love.

For the clearer understanding of this expression we are to keep in mind that, beside the many kinds of God's visits to the soul, in which He wounds it with love, there are certain secret touches of love, which, like a fiery arrow, pierce and penetrate the soul, and kindle it with the fire of love. These are properly called the wounds of love, and it is of these the soul is here speaking. These wounds inflame the will, and the soul becomes so enveloped with fire as to appear consumed thereby. They make it go forth out of itself, and be renewed, transformed into another mode of existence, like the phœnix from the fire. David, speaking of this, saith, 'My heart hath been inflamed, and my reins have been changed; and I am brought to nothing, and I knew not.*' The desires and affections, called the reins by the Prophet, are all stirred and divinely changed in this burning of the heart, and the soul, through love, melts into nothing, knowing nothing but love. And now the changing of the reins is a great pain, and longing for the Vision of God, and it seems to the soul that God treats it with intolerable severity, not because He has wounded it—for that it considers to be its salvation—but because He leaves it in the pangs of love, because He has not wounded it to the quick so as to cause death, that it may be united to Him in the life of perfect love. The soul, therefore, magnifying its sorrows, or revealing them, says, 'When Thou hadst wounded me.'

The soul says in effect, Thou hast abandoned me after

* Ps. lxxii. 21, 22.

wounding me, and Thou hast left me dying of love; and then Thou hast hidden Thyself as a hart swiftly running away. This impression is most profound in the soul; for by the wound of love the affections of the will lead most rapidly to the possession of the Beloved, whose touch it felt, and in the same degree also, His absence. And now the soul cannot have the fruition of Him as it desired. Thereupon succeed the sighs because of His absence; for these visitations of God are not like those which recreate and satisfy the soul, but they are rather for wounding than for healing—more for afflicting than for satisfying it, seeing that they tend rather to quicken the knowledge, and increase the desire, and consequently pain, and the longing for the Vision of God. They are called the spiritual wounds of love, most sweet to the soul and desirable; and therefore when it is thus wounded the soul would willingly die a thousand deaths, because these wounds make it go forth out of itself, and enter into God, which is the meaning of the words that follow:

‘I ran after Thee, crying; but Thou wert gone.’ There is no remedy for the wounds of love but from Him who inflicted them. And so the soul, urged by the vehemence of that burning which the wounds of love occasion, ran after the Beloved, crying unto Him for relief. This spiritual running after God has a twofold meaning. The first is a going forth out of all created things, hating and despising them; the second, a going forth out of oneself, self-forgetting, for the love of God. For when the love of God touches the soul with that vividness of which we are speaking, it so elevates it, that it goes forth not only out of itself in self-forgetfulness, but is also drawn away from its own judgment, natural ways, and inclinations, crying after God. O my Spouse, it seems to say, by this touch of Thine and wound of love hast Thou drawn me away not only from all created things, but also from myself—for, in truth, soul and body seem now to part—

In the search
for God the
soul wounded
by love
forsakes,

1. Creatures,

2. Self.

STANZA
I.

and raised me up to Thyself, crying after Thee in detachment from all things that I might be attached to Thee.

Painful sense
of the absence
of God.

‘Thou wert gone.’ That is, when I sought to embrace Thee, I found Thee not; and I was detached from all things without being able to cling to Thee—borne painfully by the gales of love without help in Thee or in myself. This going forth of the soul in search of the Beloved is the rising of the Bride in the Canticle: ‘I will rise and go about the city; in the streets and the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth. I sought Him and I found Him not.’* The rising of the Bride-soul—speaking spiritually—is from that which is mean to that which is noble; and is the same with the going forth of the soul out of its own ways and inferior love to the ennobling love of God. The Bride says that she was wounded because she found Him not; † so the soul also says of itself that it is wounded with love and forsaken; that is, the loving soul is ever in pain during the absence of the Beloved, because it has given itself up wholly unto Him, hoping for the reward of its self-surrender, the possession of the Beloved; still the Beloved withholdeth Himself while the soul has lost all things, and even itself, for Him; it obtains no compensation for its loss, seeing that it is deprived of Him whom it loveth.

This painfulness, this sense of the absence of God, is wont to be so oppressive in those who are going onwards to the state of perfection, that they would die if God did not interpose when the Divine wounds are inflicted upon them. As they have the palate of the will wholesome, and the mind pure and disposed for God, and as they taste in some degree of the sweetness of Divine love, which they supremely desire, so they also suffer pain supremely; for having but a glimpse of an infinite good which they are not permitted to enjoy, that is to them an ineffable pain and torment.

* Cant. iii. 2.

† Ib. v. 6, 7.

STANZA II.

*O shepherds, you who go
Through the sheepcots up the hill,
If you shall see
Him whom I love,
Tell Him I languish, agonize, and die.*

EXPLANATION.

THE soul would now employ intercessors and mediators between itself and the Beloved, praying them to make its sufferings and afflictions known. One in love, when he cannot converse personally with the object of his love, will do so in the best way he can. Thus the soul employs its affections, desires, and groanings as messengers well able to manifest the secret of its heart to the Beloved. Accordingly, it calls upon them to do this, saying: 'O shepherds, you who go.'

The shepherds are the affections, and desires, and groanings of the soul, for they feed it with spiritual good things. A shepherd is one who feeds: and by means of such God communicates Himself to the soul and feeds it in the Divine pastures; for without these groans and desires He communicates but slightly with it. 'You who go,' you who go forth from pure love; for all desires and affections do not reach God, but only those which proceed from sincere love.

'Through the sheepcots up the hill.' The sheepcots are the heavenly hierarchies, the angelic choirs, by whose ministry, from choir to choir, our prayers and sighs ascend to God; that is, to the 'hill,' for He is the highest eminence, and because in Him, as on a hill, we observe and behold all things, the higher and the lower sheepcots. To him our prayers ascend, offered up by Angels, as the Angel said to Tobias: 'When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead . . . I offered thy prayer to the Lord.'*

STANZA
II.

Pure love on
earth feeds
the soul,
and in
Heaven
pleads for it.

* Tob. xii. 12.

STANZA
II.Pastoral
office of the
Angels.

The shepherds are also the Angels themselves, who not only carry our petitions to God, but also bring down the graces of God to our souls, feeding them like good shepherds with the sweet communications and inspirations of God, Who employs them in that ministry. They also protect us and defend us against the wolves, which are the evil spirits. And thus, whether we understand the affections or the Angels by the shepherds, the soul calls upon them both to be its messengers to the Beloved, and thus addresses them all: 'If you shall see Him.'

Prayer
answered in
due time.

'If you shall see Him:' if, to my great happiness, you shall come into His presence, so that He shall see you and hear your words. God, indeed, knoweth all things, even the very thoughts of the heart, as He said unto Moses,* but then it is that He beholds our necessities when He relieves them, and hears our prayers when He grants them. God does not see all necessities and hear all petitions until the time appointed shall come; then we say that He hears and sees them, as in the case of the children of Israel, who after four hundred years of misery were heard: 'I have seen,' saith He, 'the affliction of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their cry, and . . . I am come down to deliver them.†' And yet He had seen it always. So also the Angel Gabriel bade Zacharias not to fear, because God had heard his prayer, and granted him a son, for which he had prayed many years; ‡ yet God had always heard him. Remember, therefore, that God, though He does not at once grant our petitions, will still succour us in His own time, for He is 'a helper in due time in tribulation,' § if we do not become fainthearted and cease to pray. This is what the soul means by saying, 'If you shall see Him,' if the time is come when it shall be His good pleasure to grant my petitions.

* Deut. xxxi. 21.

† S. Luke i. 13.

† Exod. iii. 7, 8.

§ Ps. ix. 10.

Two
examples.

‘Whom I love:’ that is, whom I love more than all creatures. This is true of the soul when nothing is able to frighten it away from His service. And when the soul can truly say what follows; that is a sign that it loves Him above all things :

STANZA
II.

‘Tell Him I languish, agonize, and die.’ These are three necessities of the soul: namely, languor, agony, and death, for the soul that truly loves God with a love in some degree perfect, suffers threefold in His absence in the three powers—the intellect, the will, and the memory. In the intellect it languishes because it does not see God, Who is the salvation of it, as the Psalmist saith: ‘I am thy salvation.’* In the will it agonizes, because it possesses not God, Who is its comfort and delight, as it is written: ‘Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure.’† In the memory it dies, because it remembers its privation of all the goods of the intellect, which are the Vision of God, and of the delights of the will, which are the fruition of Him, and that it is very possible also that it may lose Him for ever, because of the dangers and chances of this life. In the memory, therefore, the soul labours under a sensation like that of death, because it sees itself without the certain and perfect fruition of God, Who is the life of the soul, as it is written, ‘He is thy life.’‡

Threefold
pain of the
soul :
1. In the
intellect,—
languor,—
2. In the
will,—agony.
3. In the
memory,—
death.

Jeremias also speaks of these three necessities, praying unto God, and saying: ‘Remember my poverty . . . the wormwood and the gall.’§ Poverty relates to the intellect, to which appertain the riches of the knowledge of the Son of God, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.¶ The wormwood, which is a most bitter herb, relates to the will, to which appertains the sweetness of the fruition of God, deprived of which it abides in bitterness. We learn in the Apocalypse that bitterness appertains spiri-

Illustrated by
the poverty,
wormwood,
and gall of
Jeremias.

* Ps. xxxiv. 3.

† Ib. xxxv. 9.

‡ Deut. xxx. 20.

§ Lam. iii. 19.

¶ Coloss. ii. 3.

STANZA
II.

tually to the will, for the Angel said to S. John: 'Take the book and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter.'* Here the belly signifies the will. The gall relates not only to the memory, but also to all the powers and faculties of the soul, for it signifies the death thereof, as we learn from Moses speaking of the damned: 'Their wine is the gall of dragons, and the venom of asps, which is incurable.'† This signifies the loss of God, which is the death of the soul.

These three necessities of the soul are grounded on the three theological virtues, faith, charity, and hope, which relate, in the order here assigned them, to the three faculties of the soul—intellect, will, and memory. Observe here that the soul does no more than represent its necessities to the Beloved: for he who loves wisely is not anxious to ask for that which he wants and desires, being satisfied with hinting at his necessities, so that the Beloved may do what shall to Him seem good. Thus the Blessed Virgin at the marriage feast of Cana asked not directly for wine, but only said to her Beloved Son, 'They have no wine.'‡ The sisters of Lazarus sent to Him, not to ask Him to heal their brother, but only to say that he whom He loved was sick: 'Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.'§ There are three reasons for this. Our Lord knows what is expedient for us better than we do ourselves. Secondly, the Beloved is more compassionate towards us when He sees our necessities and our resignation. Thirdly, we are more secured against self-love and self-seeking when we simply represent our necessity, than when we ask for that which we think we need. It is in this way that the soul represents its three necessities; as if it said: Tell my Beloved, that as I languish, and as He is my sole salvation, to help me; that as I am agonizing, and as He is my sole joy, to give me joy; that as I am dying, and as He is my sole life, to give me life.

We pray best when we simply state our case.

Two examples.

Three reasons.

Christ the sole Salvation, Joy, and Life.

* Apoc. x. 9. † Deut. xxxii. 33. ‡ S. John ii. 3. § Ib. xi. 3.

STANZA III.

*In search of my Love,
I will traverse mountains and strands ;
I will gather no flowers,
I will fear no wild beasts ;
And I will overpass the mighty and the frontiers.*

EXPLANATION.

THE soul, observing that its sighs and prayers are not enough for finding the Beloved, and that it has not been assisted either by the messengers it invoked in the first and second stanzas, will not, because its searching is real and its love great, leave undone anything itself can do. The soul that really loves God is not dilatory in its efforts to find the Son of God, its Beloved ; and, even when it has done all it could, it is still not satisfied, thinking it has done nothing. Accordingly, the soul is now actively seeking the Beloved, and the present stanza describes the nature of its search. It has to practise all virtue and the spiritual exercises of the active and contemplative life ; for this end it rejects all delights and all comforts ; and all the power and wiles of its three enemies — the world, the devil, and the flesh — are unable to delay it or impede its present course.

‘In search of my Love.’ Here we are distinctly taught, that if we would find God it is not enough to pray with the heart and the tongue, or, to have recourse to the help of others ; we must work ourselves, according to our power. God values our own efforts more than those of others in our behalf ; and the soul here recollects the saying of the Beloved, ‘Seek and you shall find.’* It is resolved on going forth to seek Him, because it cannot rest without finding Him, as many do who will not that God should cost

STANZA
III.

Prayer to be accompanied by works of love and self-denial.

Personal effort necessary.

* S. Luke xi. 9.

STANZA
III.God not
found in
self-will.

them anything but words, and even those carelessly uttered. Some, too, will not leave for His sake a place which is to their taste, expecting to receive all the sweetness of God fully in their heart without moving a step, without mortifying themselves by the abandonment of a single pleasure or useless delight. But until they go forth out of themselves to seek Him, however loudly they may cry, they will not find Him; for the Bride once sought Him in this way, but she found Him not—‘In my bed by night I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and found Him not. I will rise and will go about the city: in the streets and broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth.’* She afterwards adds, that when she had endured certain trials she ‘found Him.’†

Night and
day in the
search for
God,—what.

He that seeks God, consulting his own ease and comfort, seeks Him by night, and therefore finds Him not. But he who seeks Him in the practice of virtue and of good works, casting aside the comforts of his own bed, seeks Him by day; such an one shall find Him, for that which is not seen by night is visible by day. The Bridegroom Himself teaches us this, saying, ‘Wisdom is glorious and never fadeth away, and is easily seen by them that love her, and is found by them that seek her. She preventeth them that covet her, so that she first sheweth herself unto them. He that awaketh early to seek her shall not labour; for he shall find her sitting at his door.’‡ The soul that will go out of the house of its own will, and abandon the bed of its own satisfaction, will find the Divine Wisdom, the Son of God, the Bridegroom, sitting at the door without.

The soul says in search of its Beloved, ‘I will traverse mountains and strands.’ Mountains are lofty, and they signify virtues, partly on account of their height, and partly on account of the toil and labour of ascending them, which is

* Cant. iii. 1.

† Ib. iii. 4.

‡ Wisd. vi. 13.

the practice of the contemplative life. The strands are low, and signify mortifications, penances, and the spiritual exercises of the active life, together with those of the contemplative; for both are necessary in seeking after God and in acquiring virtue. The soul then says, in effect, In searching after my Beloved I will practise heroic virtue, and abase myself by lowly mortifications and acts of humility; for the way to seek God is to do good works in Him, and to mortify the evil in ourselves.

‘I will gather no flowers.’ He that will seek after God must have his heart detached, resolute, and free from all evils, and from all goods which are not simply God; that is the meaning of these words. The words that follow describe the liberty and courage which the soul must possess in searching after God. Here the soul declares that it will gather no flowers by the way—the flowers are all the delights, satisfactions, and pleasures which this life offers, and which, if the soul sought or accepted, would ruin its spiritual journey.

These flowers are of three kinds—temporal, sensual, and spiritual. All of them occupy the heart, and stand in the way of spiritual detachment required in the way of Christ, if we regard them or rest in them. The soul, therefore, says that it will not stop to gather any of them, that it may seek after God. It seems to say, I will not set my heart upon riches or the goods of this world; I will not indulge in the satisfactions and ease of the flesh, neither will I consult the taste and comforts of my mind, which will detain me in my search after my Love on the toilsome mountains of Virtue. This means that it accepts the counsel of the prophet David to those who travel on this road: ‘If riches abound, set not your heart upon them.’* This is applicable to sensual

STANZA
III.

Way to God
in good
works and
self-mortifi-
cation.

Necessity of
detachment
from created
goods;

1. Temporal.
2. Sensual.
3. Spiritual.

* Ps. lxi. 11.

STANZA
III.

satisfactions as well as to temporal goods and spiritual comforts. Remember, it is not only temporal goods and bodily pleasures that hinder us on the road to God, but spiritual delight and consolations also, if we attach ourselves to them or seek them; for these things are obstacles in the way of the Cross of Christ, the Bridegroom. He, therefore, that will go onwards must not only not stop to gather flowers, but he must also have the courage and resolution to say as follows:—‘I will fear no wild beasts; and I will overpass the mighty and the frontiers.’ Here we have the three enemies of the soul which make war against it, and make its way full of difficulties. The wild beasts are the world; the mighty, the devil; and the frontiers are the flesh.

The three
enemies;

1. The world.

The world is the wild beasts, because in the beginning of the heavenly journey the imagination pictures to us the world like wild beasts, threatening and fierce, principally in three ways. The first is, we must forfeit the world’s favour, lose friends, credit, reputation, and property; the second is not less cruel: we must suffer the perpetual deprivation of all the comforts and pleasures of the world; and the third is still worse: evil tongues will rise against us, mock us, and speak of us with contempt. This strikes some persons so vividly, that it becomes most difficult for them, I do not say to persevere, but even to enter on this road at all. But there are generous souls who have to encounter wild beasts of a more interior and spiritual nature—difficulties, temptations, tribulations, and afflictions of divers kinds, through which they must pass. This is what God sends to those whom He is raising upwards to high perfection, proving them and trying them as gold in the fire; as it is written: ‘Many are the afflictions of the just; but out of them all will the Lord deliver them.’* But the truly enamoured soul, preferring

Three lions
in the way;
1. Loss of
favour.
2. Loss of
pleasure.
3. Contempt
from others.

the Beloved to all things, relying on His love and favour, finds no difficulty in saying: 'I will fear no wild beasts.'

STANZA
III.

'And I will overpass the mighty and the frontiers.' Evil spirits, the second enemy of the soul, are called the mighty, because they strive with all their might to seize on the passes of the spiritual road; and because the temptations they suggest are harder to overcome, and the craft they employ more difficult to detect, than all the seductions of the world and the flesh; and because also they strengthen their own position by the help of the world and the flesh in their mighty warfare against the soul. Hence the Psalmist calls them mighty, saying: 'The mighty have sought after my soul.'^{*} The Prophet Job also speaks of their might: 'There is no power upon earth that can be compared with him who was made to fear no one.'[†] There is no human power that can be compared with the power of the devil, and therefore the Divine power alone can overcome him, and the Divine light alone can penetrate his devices. No soul therefore can overcome his might without prayer, or perceive his illusions without humility and mortification. Hence the exhortation of the Apostle: 'Put you on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil: for our wrestling is not against flesh and blood.'[‡] Blood here is the world, and the armour of God is prayer and the Cross of Christ, wherein consist the humility and mortification of which I have spoken.

2. The devil,—why called 'the mighty.'

To be overcome by Prayer and the Cross, i.e. humility and mortification.

The soul says also that it will cross the frontiers: these are the natural resistance and rebellion of the flesh against the spirit, for the 'flesh lusteth against the spirit,'[§] and sets itself as a frontier, resisting its spiritual progress. This frontier the soul must cross, surmounting difficulties, and trampling under foot all sensual appetites and all natural affections with great courage and resolution of spirit: for while

3. The flesh.

^{*} Ps. liii. 5. [†] Job xli. 24. [‡] Eph. vi. 11. [§] Galat. v. 17.

STANZA
III.

The way to
seek the
Beloved,—
what.

they influence the soul, the mind will be impeded by them from advancing to the true life and spiritual delight. This is set clearly before us by S. Paul, saying: 'If by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.'* This, then, is the way to seek the Beloved: a firm resolution to gather no flowers by the way; courage so as not to fear the wild beasts, and strength to overpass the mighty and the frontiers; having set before us only the road over the mountains and the strands, in the way just explained.

STANZA IV.

*Ye groves and thickets,
Planted by the hand of the Beloved;
Ye verdant meads
Enamelled with flowers,
Tell me, has He passed by you?*

EXPLANATION.

THE disposition requisite for entering on the spiritual journey, abstinence from joys and pleasure, being now described; and the courage also with which we have to overcome temptations and trials, wherein consists the practice of self-knowledge, which is the first step to the knowledge of God, the soul now begins to advance through the knowledge of creatures to the knowledge of the Beloved their Creator. For the consideration of the creature, after the practice of self-knowledge, is the first in order on the spiritual road to the knowledge of God, Whose grandeur and magnificence they foreshadow, as it is written: 'For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.' † The invisible things of God are made known by created things, visible and invisible.

Self-know-
ledge should
precede the
knowledge of
creatures.

God seen in
His works.

* Rom. viii. 13.

† Rom. i. 20.

Here the soul addresses itself to created things, demanding of them its Beloved. And here we observe with S. Augustine that the inquiry addressed to created things is the thought of the Creator which they suggest. Now the soul considers the elements and other creatures below them, the heavens and other material objects which God has created in them, and finally the heavenly host, saying :

‘Ye groves and thickets.’ The groves are the elements, earth, water, air, and fire. As the most pleasant groves are studded with plants and shrubs, so the elements are thick with creatures. The elements are called thickets because of the number and variety of creatures in each. The earth contains innumerable varieties of animals and plants, the water of fish, the air of birds, and fire concurs with all in animating and sustaining them. Each kind of animal lives in its proper element, planted there, as a tree in a grove, where it is born and nourished.

And, in truth, God so ordered it at the creation of them ; He commanded the earth to bring forth herbs and animals ; the waters and the sea, fish ; and the air He gave as an habitation to birds. The soul, considering that this is the effect of His commandment, cries out, ‘Planted by the hand of the Beloved.’

These words imply that the hand of the Beloved only could have created and nurtured all these varieties and wonderful things. The soul says deliberately ‘by the hand of the Beloved,’ because God doeth many things by the hands of others, as of Angels and men ; but the work of creation has never been, and never is, the work of any other hand than His own. Thus the soul considering the creation, is profoundly stirred up to love God the Beloved, for it beholds all things to be the work of His hands.

‘Ye verdant meads.’ These are the heavens ; for the things which He hath created in the heavens are of incorruptible

STANZA
IV.

‘Interrogatio
creaturarum,
profunda
consideratio
ipsarum.’—
loc. cit.

The variety,
beauty, and
order,
1. Of the
terrestrial
creation.

Creation the
work of God
directly.

2. Of the
celestial.

STANZA
IV.

freshness, which neither perish nor wither with time, where the just are refreshed as in the green pastures. The present consideration includes all the varieties of the stars in their beauty, and the other celestial creations.

‘Constitnat
te Christus . .
intra Paradisi
sui semper
amœna
virentia.’

The Church also applies the term ‘verdure’ to heavenly things; for while praying to God for the departing soul, it addresses it as follows: ‘May Christ, the Son of the living God, give thee a place in the ever pleasant verdure of His Paradise.’*

Angels and
Saints the
flowers of
Paradise.

The soul adds that this verdant mead is ‘enamelled with flowers.’ The flowers are the Angels and the holy souls adorning and beautifying that place as curious enamel on a vase of pure gold.

‘Tell me, has He passed by you?’ This inquiry is the consideration of the creature just spoken of, and is in effect: Tell me, what perfections has He created in you?

STANZA V.

ANSWER OF THE CREATURES.

*A thousand graces diffusing
He passed through the groves in haste,
And beholding them only
As He passed,
He clothed them with His beauty.*

EXPLANATION.

‘Responsio
creaturarum,
attestatio
ipsarum de
Deo.’—*loc.cit.*

THIS is the answer of the creatures, which, according to S. Augustine, is the testimony which they furnish to the grandeur and perfections of God. This is the result of the soul’s meditation on created things. The meaning of this stanza is, in substance, as follows: God created all things with great ease and rapidity, and left upon them traces of His presence, not only by creating them out of nothing, but

* Ordo commendationis animæ.

also by endowing them with innumerable graces and qualities, making them beautiful in admirable order and unceasing mutual dependence. All this He wrought in wisdom, by which He created them, which is the Word, His only begotten Son.

STANZA
V.

God created
all things by
His Son.

‘A thousand graces diffusing.’ These graces are the multitude of His creatures. The term ‘thousand’ denotes not their number, but the impossibility of numbering them. They are called graces, because of the qualities with which He has endowed them. He is said to diffuse them because He fills the whole world with them.

‘He passed through the groves in haste.’ To pass through the groves is to create the elements; through which He is said to pass diffusing a thousand graces, because He adorned them with creatures which are all beautiful. Moreover, He diffused among them a thousand graces, giving the power of generation and self-conservation. He is said to pass through, because the creatures are, as it were, traces of the passage of God, revealing His greatness, power, and wisdom, and His other Divine attributes. He passed in haste, because the creatures are the least of the works of God: He made them, as it were, in passing. His greatest works, wherein He is most visible and at rest, are the Incarnation of the Word and the mysteries of the Christian Faith, in comparison with which all His other works were works wrought in passing and in haste.

Res create
Vestigia Del.

God's
greatest
work,—the
Incarnation
and the
mysteries of
Faith.

‘And beholding them only as He passed, He clothed them with His beauty.’ The Son of God is the ‘brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance.’* God saw all things in the face of His Son. This was to give them their natural being, bestowing upon them many graces and natural qualities, and making them perfect, as it is

Son of God
the model of
the creation.

* Heb. i. 3.

STANZA
V.

written, 'God saw all the things that He had made: and they were very good.'* To see all things very good was to make them very good in the Word His Son. He not only gave them their being and their natural graces when He beheld them, but He also clothed them with beauty in the face of His Son, communicating to them a supernatural being when He was made man, and exalted him to the beauty of God, and, by consequence, all creatures in him, because He united Himself to the nature of them all in man. For this cause the Son of God Himself said, 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself.'† And thus in this exaltation of the Incarnation of His Son, and the glory of His Resurrection according to the flesh, the Father not only made all things beautiful in part, but also, we may well say, clothed them with beauty and dignity.

The Incarnation gives supernatural beauty to the universe.

INTRODUCTION.

MOREOVER, speaking according to the sense and feeling of contemplation, the soul beholds, in the vivid contemplation and knowledge of created things, such a multiplicity of graces, powers, and beauty in them, that they seem to it to be clothed with admirable beauty, and supernatural virtue derived from the infinite supernatural beauty of the face of God, Whose beholding of them clothed the heavens and the earth with beauty and joy; as it is written: 'Thou openest Thy hand and fillest with blessing every living creature.'‡ Hence the soul, wounded with love of that beauty of the Beloved which it traces in created things, and anxious to behold that beauty which is the source of this visible beauty, sings forth as in the following stanza:—

The beauty of nature a reflection of the uncreated Beauty of God.

* Genes. i. 31.

† S. John xii. 32.

‡ Ps. cxliv. 16.

STANZA VI.

THE BRIDE.

*O who can heal me?
Give me perfectly Thyself,
Send me no more
A messenger
Who cannot tell me what I seek.*

EXPLANATION.

While created things furnish to the soul traces of the Beloved, and exhibit the impress of His beauty and magnificence, the love of the soul increases, and consequently the pain of His absence: for the greater the soul's knowledge of God, the greater its desire to see Him, and its pain when it cannot: and while there is no remedy for this pain except in the presence and vision of the Beloved, the soul, distrustful of every other remedy, prays for the fruition of His presence. It says, in effect: Entertain me no more with any knowledge of Thee, or with Thy communications, or impressions of Thy grandeur, for these do but increase my longing, and the pain of Thy absence, for Thy presence alone can satisfy my will and desire. The will cannot be satisfied with anything less than the Vision of God, and therefore the soul prays that He may be pleased to give Himself to it perfectly in truth, in the consummation of love.

'O who can heal me?' That is, there is nothing in all the delights of the world, nothing in the satisfaction of the senses, nothing in the sweetness of the spirit that can heal or content me, and therefore it adds:—

'Give me perfectly Thyself.' No soul that really loves can be satisfied or content short of the fruition of God. For everything else not only does not satisfy the soul, but rather increases the hunger and thirst of seeing Him as He is. Thus every glimpse of the Beloved, every knowledge and impression,

STANZA
VI.

The soul only
satisfied by
the intuitive
Vision of
God.

Knowledge
enflames
love.

STANZA
VI.

or communication from Him—these are the messengers suggestive of Him—increase and quicken the soul's desire after Him, as crumbs of food stimulate the appetite. The soul therefore mourning over the misery of being entertained by matters of so little moment, cries out: 'Give me perfectly Thyself.'

Our know-
ledge of God
in this life
partial and
incomplete.

Now all our knowledge of God in this life, how great soever it may be, is not a perfectly true knowledge of Him, because it is partial and incomplete; but to know Him essentially is true knowledge, and that it is which the soul prays for here, not satisfied with any other kind. Hence it says:—

'Send me no more a messenger.' That is, grant that I may no longer know Thee in this limited way by the messengers of knowledge and impressions, which are so distant from that which my soul desires; for these messengers, as Thou well knowest, O my Spouse, do but increase the pain of Thy absence. They renew the wound which Thou hast inflicted by the knowledge of Thee which they convey, and they seem to delay Thy coming. Henceforth do Thou send me no more of these inadequate communications, for if I have been hitherto satisfied with them, it was owing to the slightness of my knowledge and my love: now that my love has become great, I cannot satisfy myself with them; do Thou, therefore, give me perfectly Thyself. It is as if it said: O Lord, my Spouse, Who didst give me Thyself partially before, give me Thyself wholly now: Thou who didst show glimpses of Thyself before, show Thyself clearly now: Thou who didst communicate Thyself hitherto by the instrumentality of messengers—it was as if Thou didst mock me—give Thyself by Thyself now. Sometimes when Thou didst visit me Thou gavest me the pearl of Thy possession, and when I began to examine it, lo, it was gone, for Thou hadst hidden it Thyself: it was like a mockery. Give me then Thyself in truth, Thy whole self,

that I may have Thee wholly to myself wholly, and send me Thy messengers no more.

STANZA
VI.

‘Who cannot tell me what I seek.’ I seek Thee wholly, and Thy messengers neither know Thee wholly, nor can they speak of Thee wholly, for there is nothing in earth or heaven that can furnish that knowledge to the soul which it longs for. They cannot tell me what I seek. Instead of these messengers, therefore, be Thou the messenger and the message Thyself.

In the
Beatific
Vision God is
both object
and medium.

STANZA VII.

*All they who serve
Relate a thousand graces of Thee ;
And all wound me more and more,
And they leave me dying,
While they babble I know not what.*

EXPLANATION.

THE soul is described in the foregoing stanza as wounded or sick with love of the Bridegroom, because of the knowledge of Him which the irrational creation supplies, and in the present, as wounded with love because of the higher knowledge which it derives from the rational creation, nobler than the other, that is, from Angels and from men. This is not all, for the soul now says that it is dying of love, because of that marvellous immensity not wholly but partially revealed to it through the rational creation. This it calls ‘I know not what,’ because it cannot be described, and because it is such that the soul dies of it.

God more
clearly seen
in His
rational
creatures.

It seems from this that there are three kinds of pain in the soul’s love of the Beloved corresponding to the three kinds of knowledge that it has of Him. The first is called a wound ; not deep, quickly passing away like a wound which heals.

Three
wounds of
love inflicted
on the soul ;

STANZA
VII.

1. By the
works of
Nature.

This is the act of that knowledge of God which the creatures supply, which are His inferior work. This wounding of the soul, called also sickness, is thus spoken of by the Bride: 'I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that you tell Him that I languish with love.'* The daughters of Jerusalem are the creatures.

2. By the
Incarnation
and the
Church.

The second is called a sore which enters deeper than a wound into the soul, and, therefore, of longer continuance, because it is a wound festering, on account of which the soul feels that it is dying of love. This sore is the act of the knowledge of the operations of the Incarnation of the Word, and the mysteries of the Faith. These being the greatest works of God, and involving a greater love than those of creation, produce a greater effect of love in the soul. If the first kind of pain be as a wound, this must be like a festering continuous sore. Of this speaks the Bridegroom, addressing Himself to the Bride, saying: 'Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart with one of thy eyes, and with one hair of thy neck.'† The eye signifies faith in the Incarnation, and the one hair is the love of the same.

3. By an
infused
supernatural
knowledge
of God.

The third kind of pain is like dying; it is as if the whole soul were festering because of its wound. It is dying a living death until love, having slain it, shall make it live the life of love, transforming it in love. This dying of love is effected by a single touch of the knowledge of the Divinity. This is the 'I know not what,' of which the creatures can but babble. This touch is not continuous nor protracted, but quick in its course, for otherwise soul and body would part. Hence the soul is dying of love, and dying the more when it sees that it cannot die of love. This is called impatient love, of which we have an illustration in Rachel, who, because of her love of children, said to Jacob, 'Give me children, otherwise I

* Cant. v. 8.

† Cant. iv. 9.

shall die;*' and in Job, saying: 'Who will grant . . . that He that hath begun may destroy me?'†

STANZA
VII.

These two kinds of pain, the festering sore and dying, are here said to proceed from the rational creation; the sore, because the soul says that the rational creation relates innumerable graces of the Beloved in the mysteries of the Faith and the knowledge of God which they teach; the pain of dying, because it says of the rational creation that it babbles, that is, gives forth an impression and notion of the Divinity which is sometimes revealed to the soul in what it hears said of God.

'All they who serve.' That is, the rational creation, Angels and men; for these alone are they who serve God, understanding by that word intelligent service. That is to say, all they who serve God: some by contemplation and fruition in Heaven, as the Angels; others by loving and longing for Him on earth, as men. And because the soul learns to know God more distinctly through the rational creation, whether by considering its superiority over the rest of creation, or by what it teaches us of God—the Angels interiorly by secret inspirations, and men exteriorly by the truths of Scripture—it says: They 'relate a thousand graces.' That is, they speak of the wonderful things of Thy grace and mercy in the Incarnation, and in the truths of Faith which they declare and ever relate of Thee; for the more they say, the more do they reveal Thy graces.

How Angels
and men
serve and
reveal God.

'And all wound me more and more.' The more the Angels inspire me, the more men teach me, the more do I love Thee; and thus all wound me more and more with love.

Greater
light, deeper
love.

'And they leave me dying, while they babble I know not what.' That is, the rational creation wounds me by relating Thy thousand graces; but that is not all, there is something

* Genes. xxx. 1.

† Job vi. 8, 9.

STANZA
VII.

Unspoken
mysteries of
the know-
ledge of God.

still more, I know not what, that remains unspoken, something still to be uttered, a certain profound impression of God still to be traced, a certain deep knowledge of God inef-
fable, the 'I know not what.' If what I can comprehend inflicts the wound and festering sore of love, what I cannot comprehend but feel profoundly, kills me. This happens occasionally to souls already advanced, whom God favours in what they hear, or see, or understand—and sometimes without these means—with a certain profound knowledge, in which they feel or apprehend the greatness and grandeur of God. In this state they judge so highly of God as to see clearly that they know Him not, and in their perception of His Immensity they recognise that not to comprehend Him is the highest comprehension. And thus, one of the greatest favours of God, bestowed transiently on the soul in this life, is to enable it to see so distinctly, and to feel so profoundly, that it clearly understands it cannot comprehend Him at all. These souls are herein, in some degree, like the Blessed in Heaven; there they who know Him most perfectly perceive most clearly that He is infinitely incomprehensible. To know God best is to know He is incomprehensible; for those who have the less clear vision, do not perceive so distinctly as the others, how greatly He transcends their vision. This is clear to none who have not had experience of it. But the experienced soul, comprehending that there is something further of which it is profoundly sensible, calls it, 'I know not what.' As that cannot be understood, so neither can it be described, though it be felt, as I have said. Hence the soul says that the creature 'babbles,' because it cannot perfectly utter what it attempts in babbling; as infants babble, who cannot explain distinctly or speak intelligibly that which they would convey to others.

To know
God best is to
know He is
incompre-
hensible.

INTRODUCTION.

THE soul derives light also from the other portions of creation, though not always so clear, when God is pleased to reveal to it the knowledge and significance of the meaning that is in them. They seem to set forth the greatness of God, but not perfectly; it is as if they revealed something which still they have not, and so they babble I know not what. The soul proceeds with its complaint, and, addressing its own life, speaks as in the stanza before us:—

STANZA
VIII.

STANZA VIII.

*But how thou perseverest, O life!
Not living where thou livest;
The arrows bring death
Which thou receivest
From thy conceptions of the Beloved.*

EXPLANATION.

The soul perceiving itself to be dying of love, and yet not dying so as to have the free enjoyment of its love, complains of the continuance of its bodily life, by which the spiritual life is delayed. Here the soul addresses itself to the life it is living upon earth, magnifying the sorrows of it. The meaning of the stanza therefore is as follows:—O my life, how canst thou persevere in this life of the flesh; seeing that it is thy death and the privation of the true spiritual life of God, in Whom thou livest in substance, love, and desire, more truly than in the body? And if this were not reason enough to depart, and free thyself from the body of this death, so as to live and enjoy the life of thy God, how canst thou still persevere in a body so frail; when, in addition, those wounds, which the love of the grandeurs communicated by the Beloved inflicted upon thee, are sufficient to destroy life? And thus all thy perceptions of Him, all the impressions He

To the loving soul life in the flesh is a kind of death,—why.

STANZA
VIII.

makes upon thee, are so many touches and wounds of love that kill.

He lives the longest who loves God the most.

‘ But how thou perseverest, O life ! not living where thou livest.’ We must keep in mind, for the better understanding of this, that the soul lives there where it loves, rather than in the body which it animates. The soul does not live by the body, but, on the contrary, gives it life, and lives by love in that which it loves. For beside the life of love which it lives in God Whom it loves, the soul has its radical and essential life in God, like all created things, according to the saying of S. Paul : ‘ In Him we live and move and are ;’* that is, our life, motion, and being is in God. S. John also says that all that was made was life in God : ‘ that which was made, in Him was life.’† When the soul sees that its essential life is in God through the being He has given it, and its spiritual life also because of the love it bears Him, it breaks forth into lamentations, complaining that so frail a life in a mortal body should have such power as to hinder it from the fruition of the true, real, and beatific life, which it lives in God by being and by love. Earnestly, therefore, does the soul insist upon this : it tells us that it suffers between two contradictions—its natural life in the body, and its spiritual life in God ; contrary the one to the other, because of their mutual repugnance. The soul living this double life is of necessity in great pain ; for the painful life impedes the beatific, so that the natural life is as death, seeing that it deprives the soul of its spiritual life, wherein is its whole being and life by essence, and all its operations and feelings by love. The soul, therefore, to depict more vividly the cruel nature of this fragile life, adds :—

* Acts xvii. 28.

† The Saint adopts a punctuation different from the usual one. He reads thus : *Omnia per Ipsum facta sunt, et sine Ipso factum est nihil : Quod factum est, in Ipso vita erat.* All things were made by Him, and without Him nothing was made : What was made in Him was life.

God is to the soul its twofold life ;
1. Of being,
2. Of love.

The enjoyment of this twofold life impeded by its natural life in the body.

‘The arrows bring death which thou receivest.’ That is, it seems to say, How canst thou continue in the body, seeing that the touches of love—these are the arrows—with which the Beloved pierces thy heart are alone sufficient to deprive thee of life? These touches of love make the soul and the heart so fruitful of the knowledge and love of God, that they may well be called conceptions of God.

‘From thy conceptions of the Beloved.’ That is, of His greatness, beauty, wisdom, grace, and power.

STANZA
VIII.

INTRODUCTION.

As the hart wounded with an arrow cannot rest, but seeks relief on all sides, plunging into the waters here and again there, whilst the arrow, notwithstanding all its attempts at relief, sinks deeper in, till it reaches the heart, and occasions death; so the soul, pierced by the arrow of love, never ceases from seeking to alleviate its pains. Not only does it not succeed, but its pains increase, let it think, and say, and do what it may; and knowing this, and that there is no other remedy but to resign itself into the hands of Him Who wounded it, that He may relieve its sufferings, and effectually slay it through the violence of its love, it turns towards the Bridegroom Who is the cause of all, and says:—

Only He who wounds the soul can heal it.

STANZA IX.

*Why, after wounding
This heart, hast Thou not healed it?
And why, after stealing it,
Hast Thou thus abandoned it,
And not carried away what Thou hast stolen?*

EXPLANATION.

Here the soul returns to the Beloved, still complaining of its pain; for that impatient love which the soul now exhibits

STANZA
IX.

admits of no rest or cessation from pain ; so it sets forth its griefs in all manner of ways until it finds relief. The soul seeing itself wounded and lonely, and having no other physician or cure but the Beloved Who has wounded it, asks why He, having wounded its heart with the knowledge of His love, does not kill it in the vision of His presence ; and why He abandons the heart which He has stolen through the love with which it is inflamed, after having deprived the soul of all power over it. The soul has now no power over the heart—for he who loves has none—because it is surrendered to the Beloved, and yet He has not taken it to Himself in the pure and perfect transformation of love in glory.

Deeper the wound
greater the joy,
and desire to depart to
the Vision of the Beloved.

‘Why, after wounding this heart, hast Thou not healed it?’ The enamoured soul complains not of the wound itself, for the deeper the wound the greater is its joy, but that the heart, being wounded, is not healed by being wounded unto death. The wounds of love are so deliciously sweet, that, if they do not kill, they cannot satisfy the soul. They are so sweet that it desires to die of them, and hence it is that it says : ‘Why, after having wounded this heart, hast Thou not healed it?’ That is, why hast Thou struck it so sharply as to wound it so deeply, and yet not healed it by killing it utterly with love ? As Thou art the cause of its pain in the affliction of love, be Thou also the cause of its health by a death from love ; so the heart, wounded by the pain of Thy absence, shall be healed in the delight and glory of Thy sweet presence.

‘And why, after stealing it, hast Thou thus abandoned it ?’ Stealing is nothing else but the act of a robber in dispossessing the owner of his goods, and possessing them himself. Here the soul complains to the Beloved that He has robbed it of its heart lovingly, and taken it out of its own power and possession, and then abandoned it, without taking it into His own power and possession as the thief does with the

goods he steals, carrying them away with him. He who is in love is said to have lost his heart, or to have it stolen by the object of his love; because it is no longer in his own possession, but in the power of the object of his love, and so his heart is not his own, but the property of the person he loves.

STANZA
IX.

This consideration will enable us to determine whether we love God simply or not. If we love Him, our heart will not consider itself, nor look to its own pleasure or profit, but to the honour, glory, and pleasure of God; for the more the heart is occupied with self, the less is it occupied with God. Whether God has really stolen our heart may be ascertained by either of these two signs:—Is it anxiously seeking after God? and has it no pleasure in anything but in Him, as the soul here says? The reason of this is that the heart cannot rest in peace without the possession of something; and when its affections are once placed, it has neither the possession of itself nor of anything else; neither does it perfectly possess what it loves. In this state its weariness is proportional to its loss, until it shall enter into possession and be satisfied; for until then, the soul is as an empty vessel waiting to be filled, as a hungry man eager for food, as a sick man sighing for health, and as a man suspended in the air without support to his feet. Such is the state of the loving heart, and the soul through experience of it cries out: ‘Why hast thou thus abandoned it?’—that is, empty, hungry, lonely, wounded, in the pangs of love, suspended in air. ‘And hast not carried away what Thou hast stolen?’ Why dost Thou not carry away the heart which Thy love has stolen, to fill it, to heal it, and to satiate it by giving it perfect rest in Thyself?

Two signs of
true love for
God.

Creatures
cannot give
rest to the
soul.

The loving soul, for the sake of greater conformity with the Beloved, cannot cease to desire the recompense and reward of its love for the sake of which it serves the Beloved, otherwise it could not be true love, for the recompense of love is nothing else, and the soul seeks nothing else, but greater

STANZA
IX.

love until it reaches the perfection of love; for the sole reward of love is love, as we learn from the prophet Job, who, speaking of his own distress, which is that of the soul now referred to, says: 'As a servant longeth for the shade, as the hireling looketh for the end of his work; so I also have had empty months, and have numbered to myself wearisome nights. If I lie down to sleep, I shall say, When shall I arise? and again, I shall look for the evening, and shall be filled with sorrows even till darkness.'*

The soul asks not for rest from labour but for the final end of its work; i.e. the perfection of love.

Thus, then, the soul on fire with the love of God longs for the perfection and consummation of its love, that it may be completely refreshed. As the servant wearied by the heat of the day longs for the cooling shade, and as the hireling looks for the end of his work, so the soul for the end of its own. Observe, Job does not say that the hireling looks for the end of his labour, but only for the end of his work. He teaches us that the soul which loves looks not for the end of its labour, but only of its work; because its work is to love, and it is the end of this that it longs for, namely, the perfection of the love of God. Until it attains to this, the words of Job will be always true of it—its months will be empty, and its nights wearisome and tedious. It is clear, then, that the soul which loves God seeks and looks for no other reward of its service than to love God perfectly.

INTRODUCTION.

THE soul, having reached this degree of love, resembles a sick man exceedingly wearied, whose appetite is gone, and to whom his food is loathsome; to whom all things are an annoyance, and who, amidst all things around him that present themselves to his thoughts, or feelings, or sight, longs

* Job vii. 2-4.

for nothing but health; and to whom everything that does not contribute thereto is wearisome and oppressive. The soul in pain because of its love of God has three peculiarities:—

STANZA
X.

Three marks
of the loving
soul.

1. Under all circumstances, and in all affairs, the thought of its health—that is the Beloved—is ever present to it; and though it is obliged to attend to them because it can resist no longer, still He is ever present in its heart. 2. The second peculiarity, namely, a loss of pleasure in everything, arises from the first. 3. The third also is a consequence of the second, all things become wearisome, and all affairs full of vexation and annoyance.

The reason is, that the palate of the will having touched and tasted of the food of the love of God, the will instantly, under all circumstances, regardless of every other consideration, seeks the fruition of the Beloved. It is with the soul now as it was with Mary Magdalen, when in her burning love she looked for Him in the garden. She, thinking Him to be the gardener, spoke to Him without further reflection, saying: ‘If thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.’* The soul is under the influence of a like anxiety to find Him in all things, and not finding Him immediately, as it desires—but rather the reverse—not only has no pleasure in them, but is even tormented by them, and sometimes exceedingly so: for such souls suffer greatly in their intercourse with men and in the transactions of the world, because these things hinder rather than help them in their search.

How the
world be-
comes taste-
less.

The Bride in the Canticle shows us that she had these three peculiarities when she was seeking the Bridegroom. ‘I sought Him and found Him not: the keepers that go about the city found me, they struck me and wounded me: the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.’† The keepers

* S. John xx. 15.

† Cant. v. 6, 7.

STANZA
X.

that go about the city are the conversation of this world, which, when it 'finds' a soul seeking after God, inflicts upon it many wounds of pain, and grief, and loathing; for the soul not only does not find in it what it seeks, but rather an impediment to its seeking. They who keep the wall of contemplation, so that the soul may not enter—that is, evil spirits and worldly affairs—take away the veil of peace and the quiet of loving contemplation. All this inflicts infinite vexation on the soul enamoured of God; and while it remains on earth without the Vision of God, there is no relief, great or small, from these afflictions, and the soul therefore continues to complain to the Beloved, saying:—

STANZA X.

*Quench Thou my troubles,
For none else can do so;
And let my eyes behold Thee
Who art their light,
And it is for Thee alone I would use them.*

Here the soul continues to beseech the Beloved to put an end to its anxieties and distress—none other than He can do so—and that in such a way that its eyes may behold Him; for He alone is the light which they regard, and there is none other but He whom they desire to behold.

'Quench Thou my troubles.' The desire of love has this peculiarity, that everything said or done which does not harmonise with its object, wearies and annoys the will; which is rendered peevish when it sees itself disappointed in its desires. This state of things is here called 'troubles;' that is, the soul's longing after the Vision of God. These troubles nothing can remove except the fruition of the Beloved; hence the soul prays Him to quench them with His presence, to cool their feverishness, as the cooling water him who is wearied by the heat. The soul makes use of the expression 'quench,' to denote its sufferings from the fire of love.

‘For none else can do so.’ The soul, in order to move and persuade the Beloved to grant its petition, says: As none other but Thou can satisfy my needs, do Thou quench my troubles. Remember here that God is then close at hand, to comfort the soul and to satisfy its wants, when it has and seeks no other satisfaction or comfort out of Him. The soul that finds no pleasure out of God cannot be long unvisited by the Beloved.

STANZA
X.

God visits
those who are
detached
from
creatures.

‘And let my eyes behold Thee.’ Let me see Thee face to face with the eyes of the soul.

‘Who art their light.’ God is the supernatural light of the soul; without which it abides in darkness. And now, in the excess of its affection, it calls Him the light of its eyes, after the manner of earthly lovers when they would exhibit the affection they bear to the object of their love. The soul says in effect: Since my eyes have no other light, either of nature or of love, but Thee, let them behold Thee, Who in every way art their light. David was regretting this light when he said in his trouble: ‘The light of my eyes itself is not with me;’* and Tobias when he said: ‘What manner of joy shall be to me who sit in darkness, and see not the light of heaven?’† He was longing for the clear Vision of God; for the light of Heaven is the Son of God; as it is written: ‘And the city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof.’‡

God is the
light of the
soul.

‘And it is for Thee alone I would use them.’ The soul seeks to constrain the Bridegroom to permit it to see the light of its eyes, not only on the ground that it would be in darkness without it, but also on the ground that it will not look upon anything else but on Him. For as the soul is justly deprived of this Divine light if it fixes the eyes of the

* Ps. xxxvii. 11.

† Tob. v. 12.

‡ Apoc. xxi. 23.

STANZA
X.

will on any other light, proceeding from anything that is not God, for then its vision is confined to that object; so also the soul by a certain fitness deserves the Divine light, if it shuts its eyes against all objects whatever, and opens them only for the Vision of God.

INTRODUCTION.

Presence of
God as an
answer to
prayer.

BUT the loving Spouse of souls cannot bear to see them suffer long in their isolation, for 'he that toucheth you,' saith He, 'toucheth the apple of My eye;'^{*} especially when their sufferings proceed from their love for Him. 'It shall come to pass that before they call, I will hear; as they are yet speaking, I will hear.'[†] And the wise man saith that the soul that seeketh Him as treasure shall find Him.[‡] God grants a certain spiritual presence of Himself to the fervent prayers of the loving soul which seeks Him more earnestly than treasure, seeing that it has abandoned all things, and even itself, for His sake. In that presence of Himself, He shows certain profound glimpses of His Divinity and Beauty, whereby He still increases the soul's anxious desire to behold Him. For as men throw water on the coals of the forge to cause intenser heat, so our Lord in His dealings with certain souls, in the intervals of their love, shows them some of His own grandeur to quicken their fervour, and to prepare them for those graces which He intends for them afterwards. Thus the soul, in that obscure presence of God, beholding and feeling the supreme good and beauty hidden there, dies of its desire for the Vision, saying:—

^{*} Zach. ii. 8.

[†] Is. lxxv. 24.

[‡] Prov. ii. 4, 5.

STANZA XI.

*Reveal Thy presence,
And let the vision of Thy beauty kill me.
Behold, the disease
Of love is incurable
Except in Thy presence and in the light of Thy countenance.*

The soul, anxious to be possessed by the great God, Whose love has wounded and stolen its heart, and unable to suffer more, beseeches Him directly to reveal Himself, and to show His Beauty—that is, the Divine Essence—and to slay it in that vision, separating it from the body, which hinders the desired vision and fruition of Him. And further, setting forth the pain and sorrow of its heart, which continues to afflict it because of its love, and unable to discover any other remedy than the glorious vision of the Divine Essence, cries out: ‘Reveal Thy presence.’

There are three ways in which God is present in the soul. The first is His presence in essence, not in holy souls only, but in wretched and sinful souls as well, and also in all created things; for it is this presence that gives life and being, and if it were once withdrawn all things would return to nothing. This presence never fails in the soul. The second is His presence by grace, when He dwells in the soul, pleased and satisfied with it. This presence is not in all souls; for those that fall into mortal sin lose it, and no soul can know in a natural way whether it has this presence or not. The third is His presence of spiritual affection. God is wont to show His presence in many devout souls in divers ways of refreshment, joy, and gladness; yet this, like the others, is secret, for He does not show Himself as He is, because the condition of our mortal life does not admit of it. Thus this prayer of the soul may be understood of any one of these ways of His presence.

STANZA
XI.

God present
to the soul
in three
ways;
1. By his
Essence to
all.

2. By Grace
to those out
of mortal
sin.

3. By spiri-
tual affection
to devout
souls.

STANZA
XI.

The soul
prays for
the third
Presence.

‘Reveal Thy presence.’ Inasmuch as it is certain that God is ever present in the soul, at least in the first way, the soul does not say: Be Thou present; but, Reveal and manifest Thy hidden presence, whether natural, spiritual, or affective, in such a way that I may behold Thee in Thy Divine Essence and Beauty. The soul prays Him that as He by His essential presence gives it its being, and perfects it by His presence of grace, so also He would glorify it by the manifestation of His glory. But as the soul is now loving God with fervent affections, the presence, for the revelation of which it prays, is chiefly the affective presence of the Beloved. Such is the nature of this presence that the soul felt in it a hidden infinite *something*, whereby God communicated to it certain obscure visions of His own Divine beauty. Such was the effect of these visions that the soul longed and fainted away with the desire of that which is hidden beneath that presence. This is in harmony with the experience of David, when he said: ‘My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.’* The soul now faints away with desire of being absorbed in the Supreme Good which it feels to be present and hidden; for though it be hidden, the soul is profoundly conscious of the good and delight which are there. The soul is attracted to this good with more violence than matter to its centre, and is unable to contain itself, by reason of the force of this attraction, from saying: Reveal Thy presence.

Moses on Mount Sinai in the presence of God saw such glimpses of the grandeur and beauty of His hidden Divinity that, unable to endure it, he prayed twice for the vision of His glory, saying: ‘Whereas Thou hast said: I know thee by name, and thou hast found favour in my sight. If, therefore, I have found favour in Thy sight, shew me Thy face, that I may know Thee and find grace before Thy eyes;’† that is

* Ps. lxxxiii. 1.

† Exod. xxxiii. 12, 13.

the grace which he longed for,—to attain to the perfect love of the glory of God. The answer of the Lord was: ‘Thou canst not see My face, for man shall not see Me and live.’* It is as if God had said: Moses, thy prayer is difficult to grant; the beauty of My face is so great, and the joy of the vision of it so intense, that if I grant it, thy soul cannot endure it in thy life which is so frail. The soul, conscious of this truth, whether through the words addressed to Moses, or through what it feels hidden in this presence, namely, that in this life it cannot gaze upon His beauty—since the mere glimpse of Him makes it faint away—anticipates the answer that may be given to it, as it was to Moses, and says: ‘Let the vision of Thy beauty kill me.’ That is, since the vision of Thee and Thy beauty is so full of delight that I must die in the act of beholding, let the vision of Thy beauty kill me.

Two visions are fatal to man, because he cannot bear them and live. One, that of the basilisk, at the sight of which men are said to die at once. The other is the vision of God; but there is a great difference between them. The former kills by poison, the other with infinite bliss and glory. It is, therefore, nothing strange for the soul to desire to die by beholding the beauty of God in order to enjoy Him for ever. If the soul had but one single glimpse of the grandeur and beauty of God, it would not only desire to die once in order to behold Him, but would endure joyfully a thousand most bitter deaths to behold Him even for a moment, and having seen Him would suffer as many deaths again to see Him for another moment.

Two fatal
visions.

It is necessary to observe, that the soul is speaking conditionally, when it prays that the vision of God’s beauty may slay it; it assumes that the vision must be preceded by death, for if it were possible before death, the soul would not pray

* Exod. xxxiii. 20.

STANZA
XI.

Directly to
desire death
a natural
imper-
fection.

for death, because the desire of death is a natural imperfection. The soul, therefore, takes it for granted, that this corruptible life cannot coexist with the incorruptible life of God, and says: 'Let the vision of Thy beauty kill me.'

S. Paul teaches the same doctrine when he says: 'We would not be unclothed, but clothed upon, that that which is mortal may be swallowed up by life.'* That is, we desire not to be divested of the flesh, but to be invested with glory. But reflecting that he could not live in glory and in a mortal body at the same time, he says in another place: 'having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.'†

To see God
dreaded
under the
Old Law,—
why?

Here arises this question, Why did the people of Israel dread the vision of God under the old Law, and avoid it, that they might not die, as it appears they did from the words of Manue to his wife, 'We shall certainly die, because we have seen God,'‡ when the perfect soul desires to die through that vision? To this question two answers may be given.

1. Christ had
not died.

1. In those days men could not see God, though dying in the state of grace, because Christ had not come. It was therefore more profitable for them to live in the flesh, increasing in merit, and enjoying their natural life, than to be in Limbus, incapable of meriting, suffering in the darkness and in the spiritual absence of God. They therefore considered it a great blessing to live long upon earth.

2. Love was
not perfect.

2. The second answer is founded on considerations drawn from the love of God. They, in those days, were not so confirmed in love, neither did they draw so near to God in love as to be without fear of the vision of God; but now, under the law of grace, when, on the death of the body, the soul may behold God, it is more profitable to live but a short time, and then to die in order to see Him. And even if the vision were withheld, the soul that really loves God will not be afraid

* 2 Cor. v. 4.

† Phil. i. 23.

‡ Judg. xiii. 22.

to die at the sight of Him; for true love accepts with perfect resignation and in the same spirit, and even with joy, whatever comes to it from the hands of the Beloved, whether prosperity or adversity—yea, and even chastisements such as He shall be pleased to send, for, as the Apostle saith, ‘perfect charity casteth out fear.’*

Thus, then, there is no bitterness in death to the soul that loves, when it brings with it all the sweetness and delights of love, there is no sadness in the remembrance of it when it opens the door to all joy; the thought of it is not painful and oppressive, when it is the end of all unhappiness and sorrow, and the beginning of all good. Yea, the soul looks upon it as a friend and its bride, and exults in the recollection of it as the day of espousals; it yearns for the day and hour of death more than the kings of the earth for principalities and kingdoms. It was of this kind of death that the wise man said: ‘O death, thy sentence is welcome to the man in need.’† If the sentence of death is welcome to the man in need, though it does not supply his wants, but rather deprives him even of what he hath, how much more welcome will that sentence be to the soul in need of love and crying for more, when it will not only not rob it of the love it hath already, but will be the occasion of that fulness of love which it yearns for, and the supply of all its necessities.

It is not without cause, then, that the soul is bold to say: ‘Let the vision of Thy beauty kill me;’ for it knows well that in the instant of that vision it will be itself absorbed and transformed into that beauty, and be made beautiful like it, enriched, and abounding in beauty as that beauty itself. ‘Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints,’‡ saith the Psalmist; but that could not be so if they did not become partakers of His greatness, for there is nothing precious

Death loved
by the good.

* 1 S. John iv. 18.

† Eccles. xli. 3.

‡ Ps. cxv. 15.

STANZA
XI.

Death feared
by the
wicked.

in the eyes of God except that which He is Himself, and therefore the soul, when it loves, fears not death, but rather desires it. But the sinner is always afraid to die, because he suspects that death will deprive him of all good, and inflict upon him all evil; for 'the death of the wicked is very evil,'* and therefore, as the wise man saith, the very thought of it is bitter: 'O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions!'† The wicked love this life greatly, and the next but little, and are therefore afraid of death; but the soul that loves God lives more in the next life than in this, because it lives rather where it loves than where it dwells, and therefore, esteeming but lightly its present bodily life, cries out: 'Let the vision of Thy beauty kill me.'

'Behold, the disease of love is incurable, except in Thy presence and in the light of Thy countenance.' The reason why the sickness of love admits of no other remedy than the presence and countenance of the Beloved is, that the sickness of love differs from every other sickness, and therefore requires a different remedy. In other diseases, according to sound philosophy, contraries are cured by contraries; but love is not cured but by what is in harmony with itself. The reason is, that the health of the soul consists in the love of God, and so when that love is not perfect, its health is not perfect, and the soul is therefore sick, for sickness is nothing else but a failure of health. Thus, that soul which loves not at all is dead; but when it loves a little, how little soever that may be, it is then alive, though exceedingly weak and sick because it loves God so little. But the more its love increases, the greater will be its health, and when its love is perfect, then, too, its health also is perfect. Love is not perfect until the lovers become so on an equality as to be mutually transformed into one another; then love is wholly perfect.

Love for
God the
health of the
soul.

No love,
no life:
perfect love,
perfect life.

* Ps. xxxiii. 22.

† Ecclus. xli. 1.

And because the soul is now conscious of a certain adumbration of love, the sickness of which it speaks, and yearns to be made like to Him of whom it is a shadow, that is the Bridegroom, the Word of God, the 'splendour of His glory, and the figure of His substance;' * and because it is into this figure it desires to be transformed, it cries out: 'Behold, the disease of love is incurable except in Thy presence, and in the light of Thy countenance.' The love that is imperfect is rightly called a disease, because as a sick man is enfeebled and cannot work, so the soul that is weak in love is also enfeebled and cannot practise heroic virtue.

Another explanation of these words is this: he who feels this disease of love, that is, a failure of it, has an evidence in himself that he has some love, because he ascertains what is deficient in him by that which he possesses. But he who is not conscious of this disease has evidence therein that he has no love at all, or that he has already attained to perfect love.

INTRODUCTION.

THE soul now conscious of a vehement longing after God, like a stone rushing to its centre, and like wax which has begun to receive the impression of the seal, which it cannot perfectly represent, and knowing, moreover, that it is like a picture lightly sketched, crying for the artist to finish his work, and having its faith so clear as to trace most distinctly certain Divine glimpses of the grandeurs of God, knows not what to do but to turn inward to that Faith—as involving and veiling the face and beauty of the Beloved—from which it hath received those impressions and pledges of love, and which it thus addresses:—

* Heb. i. 3.

STANZA XII.

*O Fount of crystal!
 O that on thy silvered surface
 Thou wouldest mirror forth at once
 Those eyes desirable
 Which I have in my heart delineated.*

STANZA
XII.

Faith,—the
 only medium
 of true union
 with God in
 this life;

The soul vehemently desiring to be united to the Bridegroom, and seeing that there is no help or succour in created things, turns towards Faith, as to that which gives it the most vivid vision of the Beloved, and adopts it as the means to that end. And, indeed, there is no other way of attaining to true union, to the spiritual espousals of God, according to the words of the prophet: 'I will espouse thee to Me in faith.'* In this fervent desire it cries out in the words of this stanza, which are in effect this: O Faith of Christ, my Spouse! O that thou wouldest manifest clearly those truths of the Beloved, secretly and obscurely infused—for faith is, as theologians say, an obscure habit—so that thy informal and obscure communications may be in a moment clear; O that thou wouldest separate thyself formally from these truths—for faith is a veil over the truths of God—and reveal them perfectly in glory.

Resembles
 a clear
 fountain of
 pure water.

'O Fount of crystal!' Faith is called crystal for two reasons: 1. Because it is of Christ the Bridegroom. 2. Because it has the property of crystal, pure in truth, a limpid fountain clear of error and of natural forms. It is a fountain because the waters of all spiritual goodness flow from it into the soul. Christ our Lord, speaking to the woman of Samaria, calls faith a fountain, saying: 'the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting.'† This water is the Spirit, which they who

* Os. ii. 20.

† S. John iv. 14.

believe in Him shall receive by faith. 'Now this He said of the Spirit which they should receive who believed in Him.'*

STANZA
XII.

'O that on thy silvered surface.' The articles and definitions of the Faith are called silvered surfaces. Faith is compared to silver as to the propositions which it teaches, as to the truth and substance it involves, to gold. This very substance which we now believe, concealed by the silver veil of faith, we shall behold and enjoy hereafter when it shall be revealed, and the gold of faith made manifest. Thus the Psalmist, speaking of it, saith: 'When ye sleep in the midst of your borders, ye shall be as a dove, whose wings are covered with silver, and her pinions with flaming gold.'† That is, if we shut the eyes of the intellect against all things above us and beneath us—this is to sleep in the midst of our borders—we shall rest in faith, which is the dove, whose wings—that is, the truth of it—are covered with silver: for in this life faith sets its truths before us obscurely beneath a veil. This is the reason why the soul calls them silvered surfaces. The golden pinions of faith means the time when faith shall have been consummated in the clear Vision of God; then the substance of faith, the silver veil having been removed, will shine as gold. Faith reveals to us God Himself, but concealed beneath the silver of faith, but it reveals God none the less. So if a man gives us a vessel covered with silver, which is made of gold, he gives us in reality a vessel of gold, though the gold be covered over. Thus, when the Bride in the Canticle was longing for the fruition of God, He promised it to her so far as the state of this life admitted of it, saying: 'We will make thee chains of gold inlaid with silver.'‡ He promised Himself to her under the veil of faith. Hence the soul addresses Faith, saying: 'O that on thy silvered surface'—the definitions of faith which hide the gold of the Divine splendours,

God, the
object of
Faith on
earth, of
vision in
Heaven.

* S. John vii. 39.

† Ps. lxxvii. 14

‡ Cant. i. 10.

STANZA
XII.

which are the desirable eyes—‘thou wouldest mirror forth at once those eyes desirable!’

The eyes are the splendours and truths of God, which are set before us hidden and informal in the definitions of the faith. Thus the words say in substance: O that Thou wouldest formally and explicitly reveal to me those hidden truths which Thou teachest implicitly and obscurely in the definitions of the Faith; according to my earnest desire. Those truths are called eyes, because of the special presence of the Beloved of which the soul is conscious, believing Him to be perpetually looking through them.

Divine Truth
in the in-
tellect and
will.

‘Which I have in my heart delineated.’ The soul here says that these truths are delineated in the heart, that is, in the intellect and the will. It is through the intellect that these truths are infused into the soul by faith. They are said to be delineated because the knowledge of them is not perfect. As a sketch is not a perfect picture, so the knowledge of faith is not a perfect understanding. The truths, therefore, infused into the soul by faith, are as it were sketches, and when the clear vision shall be granted, then they will be as a perfect and finished picture, according to the words of the Apostle: ‘When that which is perfect shall come, that which is in part shall be done away.’* ‘That which is perfect’ is the clear vision, and ‘that which is in part’ is the knowledge of faith.

What we
love that we
become.

Beside the delineation of faith, there is another delineation of love in the soul that loves, that is, in the will, in which the face of the Beloved is so deeply and vividly pictured, when the union of love occurs, that it may be truly said, the Beloved lives in the loving soul, and the loving soul in the Beloved. Love produces such a resemblance by the transformation of those who mutually love that one may be

* 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

said to be the other, and both but one. The reason is, that in the union and transformation of love, one gives himself up to the other as his possession, and each resigns, abandons, and exchanges himself for the other, and both become but one in the transformation wrought by love.

This is the meaning of S. Paul when he said: 'I live, now, not I, but Christ liveth in me.'* In that he saith: 'I live, now, not I,' his meaning is, that though he lived, yet the life he lived was not his own, because he was transformed in Christ: that his life was Divine rather than human; and accordingly, he saith: it was not he that lived, but Christ Who lived in him. We may therefore say, according to this likeness of transformation, that his life and the life of Christ were one by the union of love. This will be perfect in Heaven in the Divine life of all those who shall merit the Beatific Vision; for, transformed in God, they will live the life of God and not their own, since the life of God will be theirs. Then they will say in truth: We live, but not we ourselves, for God liveth in us.

Now this may take place in this life, as in the case of S. Paul, but not perfectly and completely, though the soul should attain to such a transformation of love as shall be spiritual marriage, which is the highest estate it can reach in this life; because all this is but the shadowing forth of love, if compared with the perfect image of transformation in glory. Yet, when this shadow of transformation is attained in this life, it is a great blessing, because the Beloved is so greatly pleased therewith. He desires that the Bride should have Him thus delineated in her heart; for He saith unto her: 'Put Me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm.'† The heart here signifies the soul, wherein God in this life dwells as an impression

STANZA
XII.

Union with
Christ
described by
S. Paul.

The shadow
of the trans-
formation
in glory.

* Galat. ii. 20.

† Cant. viii. 6.

STANZA
XII.

of the seal of faith, and the arm is the resolute will, where He is as the impressed signet of love.

Such is the state of the soul at this time. I speak but little of it, not willing to leave it altogether untouched, though no language can describe it.

Thirst for
the water of
Bethlehem,—
i.e. Christ.

The very substance of soul and body seems to be dried up by thirst after this living fountain of God, for the thirst resembles that of David when he cried out, ‘As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?’* So oppressive is this thirst to the soul, that it counts it as nothing to break through the camp of the Philistines, like the valiant men of David, to draw ‘water out of the cistern of Bethlehem,’† which is Christ. The trials of this world, the rage of the devil, and the pains of hell, are nothing to pass through, in order to plunge into this fathomless fountain of love. To this we may apply those words in the Canticle: ‘Love is strong as death, jealousy is hard as hell.’‡ It is incredible how vehement are the longings and sufferings of the soul when it sees itself on the point of tasting this good, and at the same time sees it withheld; for the nearer the object desired, the greater the pangs of its denial: ‘Before I eat,’ saith Job, ‘I sigh, and as overflowing waters so is my roaring’§ for my food. God is meant here by food; for in proportion to the soul’s longing for food, and its knowledge of God, is the pain it suffers.

Love thinks
nothing of
obstacles.

INTRODUCTION.

THE source of the grievous sufferings of the soul at this time, is the consciousness of its own emptiness of God—while it is drawing nearer and nearer to Him—and also the thick darkness with the spiritual fire, which dry and purify it, so that,

* Ps. xli. 1, 2.

† 1 Paral. xi. 18.

‡ Cant. viii. 6.

§ Job iii. 24.

its purification ended, it may be united with God. For until God sends forth a special ray of Divine light into the soul, He is to it intolerable darkness when He is even near to it in spirit, for the supernatural light by its very brightness obscures the mere natural light. David referred to this when he said: 'Clouds and darkness are round about Him . . . a fire shall go before Him.'* And again: 'He made darkness His covert; His pavilion round about Him, dark waters in the clouds of the air. At the brightness that was before Him the clouds passed, hail and coals of fire.'† The soul that approaches God feels Him to be all this more and more the further it advances, until He shall cause it to enter within the Divine brightness through the transformation of love. But the comfort and consolations of God are, by His infinite goodness, proportional to the darkness and emptiness of the soul, as it is written, 'The darkness thereof, and the light thereof, are alike to Thee.'‡ And because He humbles souls and wearies them, while He is exalting them and making them glorious, He sends into the soul, in the midst of its weariness, certain Divine rays from Himself, in such gloriousness and strength of love as to stir it up from its very depths, and to change its whole natural condition. Thus the soul, in great fear and natural awe, addresses the Beloved in the first words of the following stanza, the remainder of which is His reply:

STANZA
XIII.Cause of
spiritual
suffering,—
what.As dark the
night of
faith, so
bright the
Day of
Vision.

STANZA XIII.

*Turn them away, O my Beloved!
I fly away.*

THE BRIDEGROOM.

*Return, My Dove!
The wounded hart
Looms on the hill
In the air of thy flight and is refreshed.*

Amid those fervent affections of love, such as the soul has shown in the preceding stanzas, the Beloved is wont to visit

* Ps. xevi. 2.

† Ps. xvii. 12, 13.

‡ Ps. cxxxviii. 12.

STANZA
XIII.

His bride, tenderly, lovingly, and with great strength of love; for ordinarily the graces and visits of God are great in proportion to the greatness of those fervours and longings of love which have gone before. And, as the soul has so anxiously prayed for the Divine eyes—as in the foregoing stanza—the Beloved reveals to it some glimpses of His grandeur and Godhead, according to its desires. These Divine rays strike the soul so profoundly and so vividly, that it is rapt into an ecstasy which in the beginning is attended with great physical suffering and natural fear. Hence the soul, unable to endure its ecstasies in a body so frail, cries out, Turn away thine eyes from me.

Flight of the soul, or Ecstasy,—its cause, and effects.

‘Turn them away, O my Beloved!’ that is, Thy Divine eyes, for they make me fly away out of myself to the heights of contemplation, and my natural force cannot endure them. This the soul says because it thinks it has escaped from the burden of the flesh, which was the object of its desires; it therefore prays the Beloved to turn away His eyes; that is, not to show them in the body, where it cannot endure or enjoy them as it would, but to reveal them to it in its flight from the body. The Bridegroom denies the request and impedes the flight, saying: ‘Return, My Dove!’ for the communications I make to thee now are not those of the state of glory; but return to me, for I am He whom thou, wounded with love, art seeking, and I, too, as the hart, wounded with thy love, begin to show Myself to thee in the heights of contemplation, and am refreshed and delighted by My love for thy regard.

‘Turn them away, O my Beloved!’ The soul, because of its intense longing after the Divine eyes, that is, the Godhead, receives interiorly from the Beloved such communications and knowledge of God as compel it to cry out, ‘Turn them away, O my Beloved!’ Such is the wretchedness of our mortal nature, that we cannot endure—even when it is offered to us—but at the cost of our life, that which is the very life of

the soul, and the object of its earnest desires, namely, the knowledge of the Beloved. Thus the soul is compelled to say, with regard to the eyes so earnestly, so anxiously sought for, and in so many ways—when they become visible—‘Turn them away.’

STANZA
XIII.

So great, at times, is the suffering of the soul during these ecstatic visitations—and there is no other pain which so wrenches the very bones, and which so oppresses our natural forces—that, were it not for the special interference of God, death would ensue. And, in truth, such it is to the soul, the object of these visitations, for it seems as if it were released from the body and a stranger to the flesh. Such graces cannot be perfectly received in the body, because the spirit of man is lifted up to the communion of the Spirit of God, Who visits the soul, and it is therefore of necessity, in some measure, a stranger to the body. Hence it is that the flesh suffers, and consequently the soul in it, by reason of their union in one person. The great agony of the soul, therefore, in these visitations, and the great fear that overwhelms it when God deals with it in the supernatural way, forces it to cry out, ‘Turn them away, O my Beloved!’

Physical pain
of ecstasies
enough to
cause death.

But it is not to be supposed, however, that the soul really wishes Him to turn away His eyes; for this is nothing else but the expression of mere natural awe. Yea, rather, cost they what they may, the soul would not willingly miss these visitations and favours of the Beloved; for though the natural man may suffer, the spiritual man flies to this supernatural recollection, in order to enjoy the spirit of the Beloved, the object of its prayers and desires. Still, the soul will not admit of these visitations in the body—when it cannot have the perfect fruition of them, except in a slight degree and in pain—but in the flight of the disembodied spirit when it can enjoy them freely. Hence it says, Turn away from me; that is, do not visit me in the flesh.

What is pain
to the flesh is
joy to the
spirit.

STANZA
XIII.

The soul
absorbed in
God, bodily
functions
cease.

Highest per-
fection free
from
ecstasies.

This subject
treated by
SAINT
TERESA.

‘I fly away;’ that is, out of the flesh, that Thou mayest show them to me out of the body—for they force me to fly away out of the body. We must remember, in order to have a clearer conception of this flight of the soul, that the spirit of man, in this visitation of the Spirit of God, is rapt upwards in Divine communion; the body is abandoned, all its acts and feelings are suspended, because the soul is absorbed in God. Thus the Apostle, speaking of his own ecstasy, saith: ‘Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell.’* But we are not to suppose that the soul really abandons the body, and that the natural life is destroyed, but only that its actions have then ceased. This is the reason why the body remains insensible in raptures and ecstasies, and unconscious of the most painful inflictions. These are not like the swoons and faintings of the natural life, which cease on the application of pain. They who have not yet arrived at perfection are liable to these visitations, for they happen to those who are walking in the way of proficients. They who are already perfect receive these Divine visitations in peace and in the sweetness of love: their ecstasies cease, for they were only graces to prepare them for this more perfect condition.

This is an appropriate opportunity for discussing the difference between raptures, ecstasies, other elevations and subtile flights of the spirit, to which spiritual persons are liable; but, as my object is to do nothing more than explain this canticle, as I undertook in the prologue, I leave the subject for those who are better qualified than I am. I do this the more readily, because our mother, the blessed Teresa of Jesus, has written admirably on this matter, whose writings I hope to see soon published. The flight of the soul in this place, then, is to be understood of ecstasy, and of its being rapt up to God.

* 2 Cor. xii. 3.

The Beloved replies, 'Return, My Dove.' The soul was joyfully quitting the body in its spiritual flight, thinking that its natural life was over, and that it was about to enter into the everlasting fruition of the Bridegroom, and remain with Him without a veil between them. He, however, restrains it in its flight, saying, 'Return, My Dove.'

It is as if He said, O My Dove, return from thy lofty and rapid flight of contemplation, in the love wherewith thou art inflamed, in the simplicity wherein thou goest—these are three characteristics of the dove—from that eminence where thou aimest at the true fruition of Myself—the time is not yet come for knowledge so high—return, and submit thyself to that lower degree of it which I communicate in thy raptures.

'The wounded hart.' The hart is the Bridegroom, to which He compares himself here. The hart climbs up naturally to high places, and hastens, when wounded, to the cooling waters. If he hears his consort moan, and sees that she is wounded, he runs to her at once, comforts, and caresses her. So the Bridegroom now caresses the Bride; for, seeing her wounded with His love, He too, hearing her moaning, is wounded Himself with her love; for among lovers the wound of one is the wound of the other, and they have the same feelings in common. The Bridegroom, therefore, saith in effect: Return, my Bride, to me; for as thou art wounded with the love of me, I too, like the hart, am wounded by love for Thee. I am like the hart, looming on the top of the hill.

'Looms on the hill;' that is, on the heights of contemplation, to which the soul attains in its flight. Contemplation is that lofty eminence where God, in this life, begins to communicate Himself to the soul, and to show Himself, but not distinctly. Hence it is said, 'Looms on the hill,' because he does not appear clearly. However profound the knowledge of Himself which God may grant to the soul in this life, it is, after all, but an indistinct vision. We now come to the third

STANZA
XIII.

Three marks
of a dove-like
spirit.

Christ
compared to
the hart for
three
reasons.

Contempla-
tion like the
sight of an
object loom-
ing in the
mist.

STANZA
XIII.

characteristic of the hart, which is referred to in the following line :—

Charity in
the soul, as
the Holy
Ghost in the
B. Trinity,
completes its
being and
knowledge.

‘In the air of thy flight, and is refreshed.’ The flight of the soul is ecstatic contemplation, and the air is that spirit of love which it produces, and which is here appropriately called ‘air;’ for the Holy Ghost, who is Love, in Holy Scripture, is compared to air, because He is the Breath of the Father and the Son. As then the Holy Ghost is the Air of flight, that is as He proceeds and is breathed forth by the way of love from the Contemplation and Wisdom of the Father and the Son; so here the Bridegroom calls the love of the soul ‘air,’ because it proceeds from the contemplation and knowledge of God which it has at this time.

Imago
recreationis.

Observe, that the Bridegroom does not say He comes at the flight, but at the air of the flight of the soul; because, properly speaking, God does not communicate Himself because of that flight, that is, the knowledge it has of God, but because of the love which is the fruit of that knowledge. For as love is the union of the Father and the Son, so is it also of God and the soul.

Union with
God by
knowing and
by loving
Him.

Notwithstanding the highest knowledge of God, and contemplation itself, together with the knowledge of all mysteries, the soul without love is nothing worth, and can do nothing, as the Apostle saith, towards its union with God.* In another place he saith: ‘Have charity, which is the bond of perfection.’† This charity and love of the soul makes the Bridegroom run to the fountain of the Bride’s love, as the cooling waters attract the thirsty and the wounded hart, to refresh himself therein.

‘And is refreshed.’ As the air cools and refreshes him who is wearied with the heat, so the air of love refreshes and comforts him who burns with the fire of love. The fire of

* 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

† Coloss. iii. 14.

love hath this peculiarity, that the air which cools and refreshes it is an increase of the fire itself. To him who loves, love is a flame that burns with the desire of burning more and more, like the flame of material fire. The consummation of this desire of burning more and more, with the love of the Bride, which is the air of her flight, is here called refreshment. The Bridegroom says in substance: I burn more and more because of the ardour of Thy love, for love kindles love.

STANZA
XIII.

God does not establish His grace and love in the soul but in proportion to the good will of that soul's love. He, therefore, that will love God must strive to love Him more and more, that his love fail not; for so, if we may thus speak, will he move God to show him more love, and to take greater comfort in his soul. In order to attain to such a degree of love, he must practise those things of which the Apostle speaks, saying: 'Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.'*

Grace and
love to men
of good will.

Marks of true
charity.

INTRODUCTION.

'WHEN the dove—that is, the soul—was flying on the gales of love over the waters of the deluge—that is the weariness and longing of its love—and 'not finding where her foot might rest,' † the compassionate Noe, in this last flight, put forth the hand of his mercy, and caught her, and brought her into the ark of his love. Thus God does when He says to the soul, 'Return, My dove.' When He thus takes it into His

* 1 Cor. xiii. 4—7.

† Genes. viii. 9.

STANZAS
XIV., XV.Joy at the
possession of
the Beloved.

hands, the soul finds all it desired, and more than it can ever express, and so it begins to sing the praises of the Beloved, celebrating the magnificence which it feels and enjoys in that union, saying :

STANZAS XIV., XV.

THE BRIDE.

*My Beloved is the mountains,
The solitary wooded valleys,
The strange islands,
The roaring torrents,
The whisper of the amorous gales ;*

*The tranquil night
At the approaches of the dawn,
The silent music,
The murmuring solitude,
The supper which revives, and enkindles love.*

The day of
the soul's
espousals.

Before I begin to explain these stanzas, I must observe, in order that they and those which follow may be better understood, that this spiritual flight signifies a certain high estate and union of love, whereunto, after many spiritual exercises, God is wont to elevate the soul: it is called the Spiritual Espousals of the Word, the Son of God. In the very beginning of this, the first time that God so elevates the soul, He reveals to it great things of Himself, makes it beautiful in majesty and grandeur, adorns it with graces and gifts, and endows it with honour, and with the knowledge of Himself, as a bride is adorned on the day of her espousals. On this happy day the soul not only ceases from its anxieties and loving complaints, but is, moreover, adorned with all grace, entering into a state of peace and delight, and of the sweetness of love, as it appears from these stanzas, in praise of the magnificence of the Beloved, which the soul recognises in Him, and enjoys in the union of the espousals.

In the stanzas that follow, the soul speaks no more of its anxieties and sufferings, as before, but of the sweet and

peaceful intercourse of love with the Beloved; for now all its troubles are over. These two stanzas, which I am about to explain, contain all that God is wont at this time to bestow upon the soul; but we are not to suppose that all souls, thus far advanced, receive all that is here described, either in the same way or in the same degree of knowledge and of consciousness. Some souls receive more, others less; some in one way, some in another; and yet all may be in the state of the spiritual espousals. All that is given is here described, so that these stanzas may comprehend the whole.

STANZAS
XIV., XV.

As in the ark of Noe there were many chambers for the different kinds of animals, and 'all food that may be eaten,'* so the soul, in its flight to the Divine ark of the bosom of God, beholds there not only the many mansions of its Father's house, but also all the food, that is, all the grandeurs in which the soul may rejoice, and which are here referred to by the common terms of these stanzas. These are substantially as follows:

The Divine
ark of the
Bosom of
God contains
all grandeur
and beauty.

In this Divine union the soul has a vision and foretaste of abundant and inestimable riches, and finds there all the repose and refreshment it desired; it attains to the secrets of God, and to a strange knowledge of Him, which is the food of those who know Him most; it is conscious of the awful power of God beyond all other power and might, tastes of the wonderful sweetness and delight of the spirit, finds its true rest and the Divine light which shines forth in the harmony of the creatures and works of God; it feels itself filled with all good, emptied and delivered from all evil, and, above all, rejoices in the inestimable banquet of love which confirms it in love. This is the substance of these two stanzas.

Treasures of
life, light
and love.

The Bride here says that her Beloved in Himself and to

* Genes. vi. 21.

STANZAS
XIV., XV.

'Il mio Dio,
ed in Esso ho
tutte le cose.'

God is all, as
1. Cause and
support—
causaliter.

2. Measure
or per-
fection—
eminenter.

3. End—
finaliter.

The loving
soul sees and
enjoys God in
every thing.

God is to the
soul a high
mountain,
and a sweet
valley.

her is all the objects she enumerates; for in the ecstatic communications of God, the soul feels and understands the truth of the saying of S. Francis: 'My God and my all.' And because God is all, and the soul, and the good of all, the communication involved in this ecstasy is made known by the similitude of the goodness of all things, as I shall show when I explain the words of these stanzas. All that is here set forth is in God eminently in an infinite way, or rather, every one of these grandeurs is God, and all of them together are God. Inasmuch as the soul is united to God, it feels all things to be God according to the words of S. John, 'What was made, in Him was life.'* But we are not to understand this consciousness of the soul as if it saw the creatures in God as we see material objects in the light, but that it feels all things to be God in this fruition of them; neither are we to imagine that the soul sees God essentially and clearly because it perceives Him so profoundly; for this is only a strong and abundant communication from Him, a glimmering light of what He is in Himself, by which the soul discerns this goodness of all things, as I proceed to explain.

'My Beloved is the mountains.' Mountains are high, fertile, extensive, beautiful, lovely, flowery, and odorous. These mountains my Beloved is to me.

'The solitary wooded valleys.' Solitary valleys are tranquil, pleasant, cooling, shady, abounding in sweet waters, and by the variety of trees growing in them, and by the melody of the birds that frequent them, enliven and delight the senses; their solitude and silence procure us a refreshing rest. These valleys my Beloved is to me.

'The strange islands.' Strange islands are girt by the sea; they are also distant and unknown to the commerce of men. They produce things very different from those with which we

* S. John i. 3, 4. See Stanza viii. p. 46.

are conversant, in strange ways, and with qualities hitherto unknown, so as to surprise those who behold them, and to fill them with wonder. Thus, then, by reason of the great and marvellous wonders, and the strange knowledge, far beyond the common notions of men, which the soul beholds in God, it calls Him the strange islands. We say of a man that he is strange for one of two reasons: either because he withdraws himself from the society of his fellows, or because he is singular or distinguished. For these two reasons together God is called strange by the soul. He is not only all that is strange in undiscovered islands, but His ways, judgments, and works are also strange, new, and marvellous to men.

STANZAS
XIV., XV.

Two reasons
why God is
strange to
the soul.

It is nothing wonderful that God should be strange to men who have never seen Him, seeing that He is also strange to the Angels and the holy souls who behold Him; for they neither can nor shall ever behold Him perfectly. Yea, even to the day of the last Judgment they will see in Him so much that is new in His deep judgments, in His works of mercy and justice, as to excite their wonder more and more. Thus God is the strange islands not to men only but to the Angels also; only to Himself is He neither strange nor new.

God never
compre-
hended by
Angels or
men.

‘The roaring torrents.’ Torrents have three characteristics. 1. They overflow all that is in their course. 2. They fill all hollows. 3. They overpower all sounds by their own. And hence the soul, feeling most sweetly that these three characteristics belong to God, says: ‘My Beloved is the roaring torrents.’

God is to
the soul as a
torrent;

As to the first characteristic, the soul feels itself to be so overwhelmed with the torrent of the Spirit of God, and so violently overpowered by it, that all the waters in the world seem to it to have surrounded it, and to have drowned all its previous actions and passions. Though this be violent, yet there is nothing painful in it, for these rivers are rivers of peace, as it is written: ‘I will bring upon her, as it were, a river of

1. He over-
flows all
obstacles
in it.

STANZAS
XIV., XV.

peace, and as an overflowing torrent the glory of the Gentiles.* That is, I will bring upon the soul, as it were, a river of peace, and a torrent overflowing with glory. Thus this Divine overflowing of the soul fills it, like the roaring torrents, with peace and glory. As to the second characteristic, the soul feels that this Divine water is now filling the vessels of its humility and the emptiness of its desires, as it is written: 'He hath exalted the humble, and filled the hungry with good.'† The third characteristic which the soul is now conscious of is a spiritual sound and voice above all other sounds and voices in the world. The explanation of this will take a little time.

2. He fills its capacity.

3. His voice penetrates it.

This voice, or this murmuring sound of the waters, is an overflowing so abundant that it fills the soul with good, and a power so mighty seizing upon it as to seem not only the sound of many waters, but a most loud roaring of thunder. This voice is a spiritual voice, unattended by material sounds or the pain and torment of them, but rather coming with grandeur, power, might, delight, and glory; it is, as it were, a voice, an infinite interior sound, which endows the soul with power and might. The Apostles heard in spirit this voice when the Holy Ghost descended upon them in the sound 'as of a mighty wind.'‡ In order to mark this spiritual voice, interiorly spoken, the sound was heard exteriorly, as of a rushing wind, by all those who were in Jerusalem. This exterior manifestation reveals what the apostles interiorly received, namely, fulness of power and might.

Examples from Holy Scripture;

1. The Apostles.

2. Our Lord Jesus.

So also our Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father because of His distress and the rage of His enemies, heard an interior voice from Heaven, comforting Him in His Sacred Humanity. The sound, solemn and grave, was heard exteriorly by the Jews, some of whom 'said that it thundered,

* Is. lxvi. 12.

† S. Luke i. 52.

‡ Acts ii. 2.

others said an Angel hath spoken to Him.* The voice outwardly heard was the outward sign and expression of that strength and power which Christ then inwardly received in His human nature. We are not to suppose that the soul does not hear in spirit the spiritual voice because it is also outwardly heard. The spiritual voice is the effect on the soul of the audible voice, as material sounds strike the ear, and impress the meaning of it on the intellect. This is the meaning of David when he said, ‘He will give to His voice the voice of power;’† this power is the interior voice. He will give to His voice, that is, the outward voice, audibly heard, the voice of power which is felt within. God is an infinite voice, and communicating Himself thus to the soul produces the effect of an infinite voice.

STANZAS
XIV., XV.

3. David.

This voice was heard by S. John, saying: ‘I heard a voice from Heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder.’ And, lest it should be supposed that a voice so strong was painful and harsh, he adds immediately, ‘The voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers harping on their harps.’‡ Ezechiel says that the sound of many waters was ‘as it were the voice of the Most High God,’ § profoundly and sweetly communicated in it. This voice is infinite, because, as I have said, it is God who communicates Himself; speaking in the soul, He adapts Himself to each soul, giving them the voice of power according to their capacity, and filling them with grandeur and delight. And so the Bride sings in the Canticle: ‘Let Thy voice sound in my ears, for Thy voice is sweet.’||

4. S. John.

5. Ezechiel.

‘The whisper of the amorous gales.’ Two things are to be considered here—gales and the whisper. The amorous gales are the virtues and graces of the Beloved, which, because of its union with the Bridegroom, play around the soul, and

* S. John xii. 28, 29.

† Ps. lxxvii. 34.

‡ Apoc. xiv. 2.

§ Ezech. i. 24.

|| Cant. ii. 14.

STANZAS
XIV., XV.

most lovingly sent forth, touch it in its inmost substance. The whisper of the gales is a most sublime, and sweet understanding of God and of His attributes, which overflows into the intellect from the contact of the attributes of God with the substance of the soul. This is the most supreme delight of which the soul is capable in this life.

Spiritual
touch and
hearing of
the soul
beatified by
the whisper
of God.

That we may understand this the better, we must keep in mind, that as in a gale two things are observable—the touch of it, and the whisper or sound—so there are two things observable also in the communications of the Bridegroom—the impression of delight, and the understanding of it. As the touch of the air is felt in the sense of touch, and the whisper of it heard in the ear, so also the contact of the virtues of the Beloved is felt and enjoyed in the touch of the soul, that is, in the substance thereof, through the instrumentality of the will, and the understanding of the attributes of God felt in the hearing of the soul, that is, in the intellect. The gale is said to blow amorously when it strikes deliciously, satisfying his desire who is longing for the refreshing which it ministers; for it then revives and soothes the sense of touch, and while the sense of touch is thus soothed, that of hearing also rejoices and delights in the whisper of the gale more than that of the touch, because the sense of hearing is more spiritual, or, to speak with greater correctness, is more nearly connected with the spiritual than that of touch, and the delight thereof is more spiritual than is that of the touch. So also, inasmuch as this touch of God greatly satisfies and comforts the substance of the soul, sweetly fulfilling its desire, that is, admitting it to union; this union, or touch, is called amorous gales, because, as I said before, the virtues of the Beloved are by it communicated to the soul lovingly and sweetly, and through it the whisper of intelligence to the intellect. It is called whisper, because, as the whisper of the air penetrates subtly into the organ of hearing, so this most

subtile and delicate intelligence enters with marvellous sweetness and delight into the inmost substance of the soul, which is the highest of all delights.

The reason of this is that substantial truth is now communicated intelligibly and denuded of all accidents and images, and is communicated to that intellect which philosophers call passive or passible, because it is inactive and without any natural efforts of its own during this communication. This is the highest delight of the soul, because it is in the intellect, which is the seat of fruition, as theologians teach, and fruition is the vision of God. Some theologians think, inasmuch as this whisper signifies the substantial intelligence, that our father Elias had a vision of God in the delicate whisper of the air, which he heard at the mouth of the cave. The Holy Scripture calls it 'the whistling of a gentle air,'* because knowledge is begotten in the intellect by the subtile and delicate communication of the Spirit. The soul calls it here the whisper of the amorous gales, because it flows into the intellect from the loving communication of the virtues of the Beloved. This is why it is called the whisper of the amorous gales.

This Divine whisper which enters in by the ear of the soul is not only substantial intelligence, but a manifestation also of the truths of the Divinity, and a revelation of secret mysteries thereof. For in general, in the Holy Scriptures, every communication of God said to enter in by the ear is a manifestation of pure truths to the intellect, or a revelation of the secrets of God. These are revelations or purely spiritual visions, and are communicated directly to the soul without the intervention of the senses, and thus, what God communicates through the spiritual ear is most profound and most certain. When S. Paul would express the greatness of the revelations

STANZAS
XIV., XV.

Communication of pure truth to the passive intellect.

Intellect the seat of fruition, i. e., the Beatific Vision.

Example of Elias.

Intellect the ear which hears the Divine whisper.

* 3 Kings xix. 12.

STANZAS
XIV., XV.

Example of S.
Paul and
Job.

made to him he did not say, I saw or I perceived secret words: but, 'I heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter.'* It is thought from these words that S. Paul saw God, as our father Elias, in the whisper of a gentle air. For as 'faith cometh by hearing,'—so the Apostle teaches—that is by the hearing of the material ear, so also that which faith involves, the intelligible truth, cometh by spiritual hearing. The prophet Job, speaking to God, when He revealed Himself unto him, teaches this truth distinctly, saying: 'With the hearing of the ear I have heard Thee, but now my eye seeth Thee.' † It is then clear that to hear with the ear of the soul, is to see with the eye of the passive intellect. It is not said with the hearing of the ears, but with the hearing of the ear; nor, with the seeing of the eyes, but with the eye of the intellect; the hearing of the ear is, therefore, the vision of the intellect.

Perfect
vision of God
only in
Heaven.

Still we are not to think that what the soul perceives, though pure truth, can be the perfect and clear fruition of Heaven. For though it be free from accidents, it is not clear, but rather obscure, because it is contemplation, and that, as S. Dionysius saith, 'is a ray of darkness,' and thus we may say that it is a ray and an image of fruition, because it occurs in the intellect, the seat of fruition. This substantial truth, called here a whisper, is the desirable eyes which the Beloved showed to the Bride, who unable to bear the vision therefore cried, 'Turn away Thine eyes from me.' ‡

There is a passage in the book of Job very much to the purpose, and strongly corroborative of what I have said of rapture and espousals. I shall cite the whole passage first, then briefly explain those parts of it which refer to the subject before me, and that done, I shall then explain the other stanza. 'Now there was a word spoken to me in

* 2 Cor. xii. 4.

† Job xlii. 5.

‡ Cant. vi. 4.

private,' saith Eliphaz the Themanite, 'and my ears by stealth as it were, received the veins of its whisper. In the horror of a vision by night, when deep sleep is wont to hold men, fear seized upon me and trembling, and all my bones were affrighted: and when a spirit passed before me the hair of my flesh stood up. There stood one whose countenance I knew not, an image before my eyes, and I heard a voice as it were of a gentle wind.'* This passage contains almost all I said about raptures in the thirteenth stanza, which begins: 'Turn them away, O my Beloved.' The 'word spoken in private' to Eliphaz is that secret communication which the soul was not able to endure, and, therefore, cried out: 'Turn them away, O my Beloved.' Eliphaz says that his 'ear by stealth as it were, received the veins of its whisper.' By that is meant the pure substance of truth which the intellect receives, for the 'veins' here denote the interior essence. The whisper is that communication and touch of the virtues whereby the said substance of truth is communicated to the intellect. It is called a whisper because of its great gentleness. And the soul calls it the amorous gales because it is so lovingly communicated. It is said to be received as it were by stealth, for that which is stolen is alienated, so this secret is alien to man, speaking in the order of nature, because that which he received does not appertain to him naturally, and thus it was beyond the power of nature to receive it; neither was it granted to S. Paul to repeat what he heard. For this reason the Prophet saith twice: 'My secret to myself, my secret to myself.' †

When Eliphaz speaks of the horror of the vision by night, and of the fear and trembling that seized upon him, he refers to the awe and dread that encompass the soul when it falls into an ecstasy, which in its natural strength it is unable to

STANZAS
XIV., XV.

Example of
Eliphaz the
Themanite.

* Job iv. 12—16.

† Is. xxiv. 16.

STANZAS
XIV., XV.

Terror inspired by
supernatural
visitations.

endure. The Prophet gives us to understand that, as when sleep is about to fall upon men, a certain vision which they call a nightmare is wont to oppress and terrify them in the interval between sleeping and waking which is the moment of the approach of sleep, so in the spiritual passage from the sleep of natural ignorance to the waking of the supernatural understanding, which is the beginning of an ecstasy, the spiritual vision then revealed, makes the soul fear and tremble. 'All my bones were affrighted,' that is, were shaken and disturbed; by this he meant a certain dislocation of the bones which takes place when the soul falls into an ecstasy. This is clearly expressed by Daniel when he saw the Angel, saying: 'O my lord, at the sight of thee my joints are loosed.'* 'When a spirit passed before me,' that is, when I was forced to transcend the ways and limitations of nature in ecstasies and raptures. 'The hair of my flesh stood up,' that is, my body was elevated from the ground, and the flesh contracted like that of a dead man.

The soul neither knows
nor beholds
the Essence
of God.

'There stood One,' that is God, Who reveals Himself after this manner. 'Whose countenance I knew not;' in these communications or visions, however high they may be, the soul neither knows nor beholds the face and Essence of God. 'An image before my eyes;' that is, the knowledge of the secret words was most deep, as it were the image and face of God; but still this is not the vision of His essence. 'I heard the voice as it were of a gentle wind,' this is the whisper of the amorous gales—that is, of the Beloved of the soul.

But it is not to be supposed that these visits of God are always attended by such terrors and shocks of nature, as in the case of those who are entering in to the state of illumination and perfection, and as in this kind of communications, namely of ecstasies and raptures; for in others they take place with great sweetness.

* Dan. x. 16.

STANZA XV.

‘THE tranquil night.’ In this spiritual sleep in the bosom of the Beloved the soul enters into the possession and fruition of all the calmness, repose, and quiet of a peaceful night, and receives at the same time in God a certain unfathomable obscure Divine intelligence. This is the reason why the soul calls the Beloved the tranquil night.

‘At the approaches of the dawn.’ This tranquil night is not like a night of obscurity, but rather like the night when the sunrise is drawing nigh. This tranquillity and repose in God is not all darkness to the soul, as the Obscure Night, but rather tranquillity and repose in the Divine light and in the new knowledge of God, whereby the mind, most sweetly tranquil, is elevated upwards to Divine light. This Divine light is here very appropriately called the approaches of the dawn, that is, the twilight; for as the twilight of the morn disperses the obscurity of the night and reveals the light of day, so the mind, tranquil and reposing in God, is raised up from the darkness of natural knowledge to the morning light of the supernatural knowledge of God, not clear, indeed, as I have said, but obscure, like the night at the approaches of the dawn. For as it is then neither wholly night nor wholly day, but twilight, so this solitude and Divine repose is neither perfectly illuminated by the Divine light, not yet perfectly alien from it.

In this tranquillity the intellect is elevated in a strange way above its natural comprehension to the Divine light: it is like a man who after a profound sleep opens his eyes to unexpected light. This knowledge is referred to by David when he says: ‘I have watched, and am become as a sparrow, all alone on the housetop:’* that is, I opened the eyes of

STANZAS
XIV., XV.

Aurora of obscure intelligence before the day of perfect knowledge.

* Ps. ci. 8.

STANZAS
XIV., XV.

Soul in con-
templation
like a
sparrow,—
Five reasons.

my intellect, and was raised up above all natural comprehension, and I am become solitary, deprived thereof, on the housetop, lifted up above all earthly considerations. He says that he was 'become as a sparrow,' all alone, because in this kind of contemplation the spirit of man is invested with certain characteristics of the sparrow. These are five in number :—

1. It frequents high places, and the spirit of man in this state rises to the highest contemplation.

2. It is ever turning its face in the direction of the wind, and the spirit of man turns its affections towards the breath of love, which is God.

3. It is in general solitary, abstaining from the companionship of others, and flying away when they approach it: so the spirit in contemplation is far away from all worldly thoughts, lonely in its avoidance of them; neither does it consent to anything except to this solitude in God.

4. It sings most sweetly, and so also does the spirit at this time sing unto God; for the praises which it offers up proceed from the sweetest love, in themselves most pleasing and most precious in the sight of God.

5. It is of no definite colour; so also is the perfect spirit, which in this ecstasy is not only without any tinge of sensual affection or self-love, but also without any particular consideration of the things of heaven or earth; neither can it give any account whatever of them, because it has entered into the abyss of the knowledge of God.

Every crea-
ture a witness
for God.

'The silent music.' In this silence and tranquillity of the night, and in this knowledge of the Divine light, the soul discerns a marvellous arrangement and disposition of God's wisdom in the diversities of His creatures and operations. All these, and each one of them, have a certain correspondence with God, whereby each, by a voice peculiar to itself, proclaims what there is in itself of God, so as to form a

concert of the sublimest melody, transcending all the harmonies of the world. This is the silent music, because it is intelligence tranquil and in repose, without audible voice; and thus the sweetness of music and the repose of silence are enjoyed in it. The soul says that the Beloved is the silent music, because this harmony of spiritual music is in Him understood and felt.

STANZAS
XIV., XV.

God in His
creatures like
harmony in
a concert of
music.

‘The murmuring solitude.’ This is almost the same as the silent music. For though the music is inaudible to the senses and the natural faculties, it is a solitude most full of sound to the spiritual powers. These powers being in solitude, emptied of all forms and natural apprehensions, may well receive in spirit, like a resounding voice, the spiritual impression of the majesty of God in Himself and in His creatures; as it happened to S. John, who heard in spirit as it were ‘the voice of harpers harping on their harps.’* S. John heard this in spirit: it was not material harps that he heard, but a certain knowledge that he had of the praises of the Blessed, which every one of them, each in his own degree of glory, is continually singing before God—which is as it were music. For as every one of the Saints had the gifts of God in a different way, so every one of them sings His praises in a different way, and yet all harmonize in one concert of love, as in music.

Harps and
songs of the
Blessed.

In the same way, in this tranquil contemplation, the soul beholds all creatures, not only the highest, but the lowest also, each one according to the gift of God to it, sending forth the voice of its witness to what God is. It beholds each one magnifying Him in its own way, and possessing Him according to its particular capacity; and thus all these voices together unite in one strain in praise of God’s greatness, wisdom, and marvellous knowledge. This is

Benedicite
omnia opera
Domini
Domino.

* Apoc. xiv. 2.

STANZAS
XIV., XV.

The Universe
melodious
with the
voice of God.

the meaning of those words of the Holy Ghost: 'The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world, and that which containeth all things hath knowledge of the voice.'* 'The voice' is the murmuring solitude, which the soul is said to know, namely the witness which all things bear to God. Inasmuch as the soul hears this music only in solitude and in estrangement from all outward things, it calls it silent music and murmuring solitude. These are the Beloved.

'Supper' sig-
nifies the Di-
vine Vision ;
in which
God gives
Himself to
the soul.

'The supper which revives, and enkindles love.' Lovers find recreation, satisfaction, and love in feasts. And because the Beloved in this sweet communication produces these three effects in the soul, He is here said to be the supper that revives, and enkindles love. In Holy Scripture supper signifies the Divine vision, for as supper is the conclusion of the day's labours, and the beginning of the night's repose, so the soul in this tranquil knowledge is made to feel that its trials are over, the possession of good begun, and its love of God increased. Hence, then, the Beloved is to the soul the supper that revives, in being the end of its trials, and that enkindles love, in being the beginning of the fruition of all good.

For a clearer perception how the Bridegroom is the supper of the soul, we must refer to those words of the Beloved in the Apocalypse: 'Behold, I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.'† It is evident from these words, that He brings the supper with Him, which is nothing else but His own sweetness and delights, wherein He rejoiceth Himself, and which He, uniting Himself to the soul, communicates to it, making it a partaker of His joy; for this is the meaning of 'I will sup with him, and he with Me.' These words describe the effect of the Divine union of the soul with God, wherein

* Wisd. i. 7.

† Apoc. iii. 20.

it shares the very goods of God Himself, Who communicates them graciously and abundantly to it. Thus the Beloved is Himself the supper which revives, and enkindles love, refreshing the soul with His abundance, and enkindling its love in His graciousness.

But before I proceed to explain the stanzas which follow, I must observe, that in the state of betrothal, wherein the soul enjoys this tranquillity, and wherein it receives all that it can receive in this life, we are not to suppose its tranquillity to be perfect, but reaching only to the higher part of it; because the sensitive part, except in the state of the spiritual matrimony, never loses all its imperfect habits, and its powers are never wholly subdued, as I shall show hereafter. What the soul receives now, is all that it can receive in the state of betrothal, for in that of matrimony the blessings are greater. Though the bride-soul has great joy in these visits of the Beloved in the state of betrothal, still it has to suffer from His absence, to endure trouble and afflictions in the lower part, and at the hands of the devil. But all this ceases in the state of spiritual marriage.

STANZAS
XIV., XV.

Difference
between
spiritual
Betrothal
and Mar-
riage.

INTRODUCTION.

Now that the Bride has the virtues of her soul in their perfection, wherein she rejoices in the peaceful visits of her Beloved, she enjoys at times, in a most sublime way, the sweetness and fragrance of those virtues, because the Beloved touches them; just as we perceive the fragrance and beauty of flowers when we touch them in their full bloom. In many of these visits of the Beloved, the soul is in spirit conscious of those virtues with which God has endowed it, by His giving it light for that end. And then the soul with marvellous joy and sweet love unites them all together, and offers them to the Beloved as a nosegay of beautiful flowers. The Beloved, in

Sweet odour
of virtues
from the
touch of God.

STANZA
XVI.

accepting the offering—for He accepts it then—accepts a great service of the soul. All this occurs within the soul, who then feels the Beloved within as on His own couch, for the soul offers itself, together with all its virtues, which is the greatest oblation it can make, and this is the highest delight it receives in the interior converse with God from this gift of the Beloved.

Malice of the
devil.

The devil, beholding this prosperity of the soul, and in his great malice envying all the good he sees in it, employs all his power, and has recourse to all his devices, in order to thwart it, if possible, even in the slightest degree. He thinks it of more consequence to keep back the soul, even for an instant, from the glorious riches of this delight, than to precipitate others into many mortal sins. Other souls have little or nothing to lose, while such a soul has much, having gained great treasures; for the loss of one grain of refined gold is greater than the loss of many of the baser metals.

The devil here has recourse to the sensitive appetites, though they can help him now in general but little or nothing, because they are mortified, and because he cannot turn them to any great account in distracting the imagination. Sometimes he stirs up many movements in the sensitive part of the soul, and causes other vexations, spiritual as well as sensitive, from which the soul is unable to deliver itself until our Lord shall send His Angel, as it is written, ‘The Angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them that fear Him, and shall deliver them;’* and so establish peace, both in the spiritual and sensitive parts of the soul. With a view to show forth this truth, and to ask this favour, the soul, apprehensive by experience of the craft which the devil makes use of to thwart this good, addressing itself to the Angels, whose function it is to succour it, and to put the evil spirits to flight, speaks in the words of the following stanza:—

* Ps. xxxiii. 8.

STANZA XVI.

*Catch us the foxes,
For our vineyard hath flourished ;
While of roses
We make a nosegay,
And let no one appear on the hill.*

STANZA
XVI.

Prayer to the
Angels for
help.

The soul anxious that this interior delight of love, which is the vineyard, should not be interrupted, either by envious and malicious devils, or the raging desires of sensuality, or the various comings and goings of the imagination, or any other consciousness or presence of created things, calls upon the Angels to seize and hinder all these from interrupting its practice of interior love, in the joy and delight of which the soul and the Son of God mutually communicate and enjoy their virtues and graces.

‘Catch us the foxes, for our vineyard hath flourished.’ The vineyard is the plantation in this holy soul of all the virtues which minister to it the wine of sweet smell. The vineyard of the soul is then flourishing when it is united in will to the Bridegroom, and delighteth in Him in all the virtues. Sometimes, as I have said, the memory and the fancy are assailed by various forms and imaginings, and divers motions and desires trouble the sensitive part. The great vanity and diversity of these made David say, when he felt the inconvenience and the trouble of them as he was drinking of the sweet wine of the spirit, thirsting greatly after God: ‘For Thee my soul hath thirsted, for Thee my flesh, O how many ways.’*

Here the soul calls the whole troop of desires and sensitive emotions, foxes, because of the great resemblance between them at this time. As foxes pretend to be asleep

* Ps. lxii. 2.

STANZA
XVI.

that they may pounce upon their prey when it comes in their way, so all the desires and sensitive energies of the soul are asleep until the flowers of virtue grow, flourish, and bloom. Then the desires and sensitive energies awake to resist the Spirit and to try to rule over the soul. 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit,'* and as the inclination of it is towards the sensitive desires, it is disgusted as soon as it tastes of the Spirit, and herein the desires prove extremely troublesome to spiritual sweetness.

The flesh returns to combat with the spirit.

Two plans of attack by evil spirits;

1. To excite desire and imagination.

2. To inflict bodily or spiritual pain.

'Catch us the foxes.' The evil spirits now molest the soul in two ways. They vehemently excite the desires, and then employ them with other imaginations to assail the peaceful and flourishing kingdom of the soul. In the second place, and this is much worse, when they do not succeed in stirring up the desires, they assail the soul with bodily pains and noises in order to distract it. And, what is still more serious, they fight with spiritual horror and dread, and sometimes with fearful torments, which, at this time, if God permits them, they can now effectually bring about, for inasmuch as the soul is now spiritually detached so as to perform its spiritual exercises, the devil being himself a spirit presents himself before it with great ease.

At other times the evil spirit assails the soul with other horrors, before it begins to have the fruition of the sweet flowers, when God is beginning to draw it forth out of the house of sense that it may enter on the interior exercises in the garden of the Bridegroom, for he knows well that once entered into this state of recollection it is there so protected that, notwithstanding all he can do, he cannot hurt it. Very often, too, when the devil goes forth to meet the soul, the soul becomes quickly recollected in the secret depths of its interior, where it finds great sweetness and protection; then those

* Gal. v. 17.

terrors of Satan seem so distant that they not only produce no fear, but are even the occasion of peace and joy. The Bride, in the canticle, speaks of these terrors saying: 'My soul troubled me for the chariots of Aminadab.'* Aminadab is the evil spirit, and his chariots are his assaults upon the soul, which he makes with great violence, noise, and confusion.

The Bride also says what the soul says here, namely: 'Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines; for our vineyard hath flourished.'† She does not say, Catch me, but, Catch us, because she is speaking of herself and the Beloved; because they are one, and enjoy the flourishing of the vineyard together.

The reason why the vineyard is said to be flourishing and not bearing fruit is this: the soul in this life has the fruition of virtues, however perfect they may be, only in their flower, because the fruit of them is reserved for the life to come.

Flowers in
this life :
fruit in the
next.

'While of roses we make a nosegay.' Now, at this time, while the soul is rejoicing in the flourishing of the vineyard, and delighting itself in the bosom of the Beloved, all its virtues are perfect, exhibiting themselves to the soul, and sending forth great sweetness and delight. The soul feels them to be in itself and in God so as to seem to be a most flourishing and pleasing vineyard belonging to both, wherein they feed and delight. Then the soul unites all its virtues in one, makes acts of love in each of them separately, and in all together, and then offers them all to the Beloved, with great tenderness of love and sweetness, and in this the Beloved helps it, for without His help and favour, it cannot make this union and oblation to the Beloved. Hence it says: 'we make a nosegay,' that is the Beloved and myself.

The soul
makes a
return of the
gifts it has
received.

This union of the virtues is called a nosegay; for as a

* Cant. vi. 11.

† Cant. ii. 15.

STANZA
XVI.

nosegay is cone-like in form, and a cone is strong, containing and embracing many pieces firmly joined together, so this cone-like nosegay of the virtues which the soul makes for the Beloved, is the uniform perfection of the soul which firmly and solidly contains and embraces many perfections, great virtues, and rich endowments; for all the perfections and virtues of the soul unite together to form but one. And while this perfection is being accomplished, and when accomplished, offered to the Beloved on the part of the soul, it becomes necessary to catch the foxes that they may not impede this mutual interior communication. The soul prays not only that this nosegay may be carefully made, but also adds: 'And let no one appear on the hill.'

Necessity of detachment from goods of sense and of spirit.

This Divine interior exercise requires solitude and detachment from all things, whether in the lower part of the soul, which is the sensitive nature of man, or in the higher, which is the rational. These two divisions comprise all the faculties and senses of man, and are here called the hill; because all our natural notions and desires are in them, as quarry on a hill, and also because the devil lays in wait among these notions and desires, in order that he may injure the soul.

The devil as a huntsman. His quarry,—what.

'And let no one appear on the hill;' that is, let no representation or image of any object whatever, appertaining to any of these faculties or senses, appear in the presence of the soul and the Bridegroom: in other words, let the spiritual faculties of the soul, memory, intellect, and will, be divested of all notions, particular inclinations or considerations; and let all the senses and faculties of the body, interior as well as exterior, such as the imagination, the fancy, the sight and hearing, and the rest, be divested of all occasions of distractions, of all forms, images, and representations, and of all natural operations whatsoever.

The soul speaks in this way because it is necessary for the perfect fruition of this communication of God, that all the senses and faculties, both interior and exterior, should be

disencumbered and emptied of their proper objects and operations; for if they now be suffered to be active, so much the greater will be the hindrance which they will occasion. The soul, having attained to the interior union of love, the spiritual faculties of it are no longer active, and still less those of the body; for now that the union of love is actually brought about, the faculties of the soul cease from their exertions, because now that the goal is reached, all employment of means is at an end. What the soul at this time has to do is to wait lovingly upon God, and this waiting is love in a continuation of unitive love. Let no one, therefore, appear on the hill, but the will only waiting in the offering up of self and of the virtues in the way described.

STANZA
XVI.

In perfect union the spiritual faculties are at rest.

The will only is active in love.

INTRODUCTION.

For the clearer understanding of the following stanza, we must keep in mind that the absence of the Beloved, from which the soul suffers in the state of spiritual espousals, is an exceedingly great affliction, and at times greater than all other trials whatever. The reason is this: the love of the soul for God is now so vehement and deep, that the pain of His absence is vehement and deep also. This pain is increased also by the annoyance which arises from intercourse with creatures, which is very great; for the soul, under the pressure of its quickened desire of union with God, finds all other conversation most painful and difficult to endure. It is like a stone in its flight to the place whither it is rapidly tending; every obstacle it meets with occasions a violent shock. And as the soul has tasted of the sweetness of the Beloved's visits, which are more desirable than gold and all that is beautiful, it therefore dreads even a momentary absence, and addresses itself as follows to aridities, and to the Spirit of the Bridegroom:—

How love causes suffering.

STANZA XVII.

*Cease, O thou killing north wind !
Come, O south wind, thou that awakenest love !
Blow through my garden,
And let its odours flow,
And my Belov'd shall feed among the flowers.*

STANZA.
XVII.

What I have spoken of in the foregoing stanza is not all that can impede the interior sweetness of the soul.

Spiritual dryness has the same effect ; and the soul afraid of this has recourse to two expedients in order to prevent dryness of spirit. First, it shuts the door against it by continual prayer and devotion. Secondly, it invokes the Holy Ghost, Who drives away aridity from the soul, Who supports it, and increases its love of the Bridegroom, and Who also guides it into the interior practice of virtue, in order that the Son of God, the Bridegroom, may rejoice and delight the more in the soul, whose efforts are all directed to please the Beloved.

‘Cease, O thou killing north wind.’ The north wind is exceedingly cold ; it dries up and parches flowers and plants, and at the least, when it blows, causes them to draw in and shut up. So, because dryness of spirit and the sensible absence of the Beloved produce the same effect on the soul, exhausting the sweetness and fragrance of virtue, it is here called the killing north wind ; for all the virtues and affective devotions of the soul are as dead. Hence the soul addresses itself to it saying : Cease, O Thou killing north wind. These words mean that the soul applies itself to spiritual exercises, in order to escape aridity. But as the communications of God are now so interior that no exertion of the soul’s faculties can possibly attain to them if the Spirit of the Bridegroom do not cause these movements of love, the soul addresses Him, saying : ‘Come, O south wind, thou that awakenest

Spiritual
aridity,—
two remedies.

In dryness
of spirit
virtues and
devotion
seem dead.

love.' The south wind is another wind commonly called the south-west wind. It is gentle, and brings rain; it makes the grass and plants grow, flowers to blossom and scatter their perfume abroad; and, in short, it is the very opposite in its effects of the north wind. By it is meant here the Holy Ghost, Who awakeneth love; for when this Divine Breath breathes in the soul, it so inflames and refreshes it, it so quickens the will, and stirs up the desires, which were before low and asleep as to the love of God, that it may be said of it that it quickens the love between Him and the soul. The prayer of the soul to the Holy Spirit is, 'Blow through my garden.'

STANZA
XVII.

Fertilising
breath of the
Spirit of
God.

This garden is the soul itself. For as the soul said of itself before that it was a flourishing vineyard, because the flowers of virtue which are in it give forth the wine of sweetness, so here it says of itself that it is a garden, because the flowers of perfection and the virtues are planted in it, and there flourish, and grow.

Observe, too, that the expression is 'blow through my garden,' not blow in it. There is a great difference between God's breathing into the soul, and through it. To breathe into the soul is to infuse into it graces, gifts, and virtues; to breathe through it is, on the part of God, to touch and move its virtues and perfections, renewing them and stirring them in such a way that they send forth their marvellous fragrance and sweetness. Thus aromatic spices, when shaken or touched, give forth the odours which are not otherwise perceived. The soul is not always in the conscious fruition of its acquired and infused virtues, because, in this life, they are like flowers in seed, or in bud, or like aromatic spices covered over, the perfume of which is not perceived till they are exposed and shaken.

Difference
between
breathing
'through'
and 'in'
the
soul.

But God sometimes is so merciful to the Bride-soul, as—the Holy Ghost breathing meanwhile through the flourishing garden—to open these buds of virtue and expose the aromatic

STANZA
XVII.

The soul
made con-
scious of its
beauty.

herbs of the soul's gifts, perfections, and riches, to manifest to it its interior treasures and to reveal to it all its beauty. It is marvellous to behold, and sweet to feel, the abundance of the gifts now revealed in the soul, and the beauty of the flowers of virtue now flourishing in it. No language can describe the fragrance which every one of them diffuses, each according to its kind. This state of the soul is referred to in the words, 'let its odours flow.'

Virtues of
the soul
shine before
men.

So profuse are these odours at times, that the soul seems enveloped in delight and bathed in inestimable glory. Not only is it conscious itself of them, but they even overflow it, so that those who know how to discern these things can perceive them. The soul in this state seems to them as a delectable garden, full of the pleasures and riches of God. This is observable in holy souls, not only when the flowers open, but almost always; for they have a certain air of grandeur and dignity which inspires the beholders with awe and reverence, because of the supernatural effects of their close and familiar converse with God. We have an illustration of this in the life of Moses, the sight of whose face the people could not bear, by reason of the glory that rested upon it—the effect of his speaking to God face to face.*

Grandeur
and dignity
of the
servants of
God.

Example of
Moses.

While the Holy Ghost is breathing through the garden—this is His visitation of the soul—the Bridegroom Son of God communicates Himself to it in a profound way, enamoured of it. It is for this that He sends the Holy Spirit before Him—as He sent the Apostles†—to make ready the chamber of the soul His bride, comforting it with delight, setting its garden in order, opening its flowers, revealing its gifts, and adorning it with the tapestry of graces. The Bride-soul longs for this with all its might, and therefore charges the north wind not to blow, and invokes the south wind to blow

The Holy
Spirit pre-
pares the
soul for
Christ.

* Exod. xxxiv. 30.

† S. Luke xxii. 8.

through the garden, because it gains many things here at once. The Bride now gains the fruition of all her virtues in their sweetest exercise. She gains the fruition of her Beloved in them, because it is through the instrumentality of her virtues that He converses with her in most intimate love, and grants her favours greater than any of the past. She gains, too, that her Beloved delights more in her because of the actual exercise of virtue, which is what pleases her most, namely, that her Beloved should be pleased with her. She gains also the permanent continuance of the sweet fragrance which remains in the soul while the Bridegroom is present, and the Bride entertains Him with the sweetness of virtue, as it is written: 'While the King was at His repose,' that is, in the soul, 'my spikenard sent forth the odour thereof.'* The spikenard is the soul, which from the flowers of its virtues sends forth sweet odours to the Beloved, Who dwells within it in the union of love. It is therefore very much to be desired that every soul should pray the Holy Ghost to blow through its garden, that the Divine odours of God may flow. And as this is so necessary, so glorious and profitable to the soul, the Bride desires it, and prays for it, saying: 'Arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind; blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow.'† The soul prays for this, not because of the delight and glory consequent upon it, but because of the delight it ministers to the Beloved, and because it prepares the way and announces the presence of the Son of God, Who cometh to rejoice in it. Hence the soul adds:—

'And my Beloved shall feed among the flowers.' The delight which the Son of God finds now in the soul is described as pasture. This word expresses most forcibly the truth, because pasture not only rejoiceth, but also sustaineth.

STANZA
XVII.

Virtues of
the soul the
means of its
converse
with God.

How it
profits by
them.

Why it
desires them.

* Cant. i. 11.

Cant. iv. 16.

STANZA
XVII.

The soul
made pleas-
ing to Christ
by its graces
and virtues.

Thus the Son of God delights Himself in the soul, in the delights thereof, and is nourished by it, that is, He abides within it as in a place which pleases Him exceedingly, because the place itself really delights in Him. This, I believe, is the meaning of those words recorded in the Proverbs of Solomon: 'My delights were to be with the children of men;'^{*} that is, when they delight to be with Me, Who am the Son of God. Observe, also, that it is not said that the Beloved shall feed on the flowers, but that He shall feed among the flowers. For, as the communications of the Beloved are in the soul itself, through the adornment of the virtues, it follows that what He feeds on is the soul which He transformed into Himself, now that it is prepared and adorned with these flowers of virtues, graces, and perfections, which are the things whereby, and among which, He feeds. These, too, by the power of the Holy Ghost, send forth in the soul the odours of sweetness to the Son of God, that He may feed there the more in the love thereof; for this is the love of the Bridegroom, to be united to the soul amid the fragrance of its flowers.

The Bride in the Canticle has observed this, for she had experience of it: 'My Beloved is gone down into His garden, to the bed of aromatical spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I to my Beloved, and my Beloved to me, Who feedeth among the lilies,' that is, Who feedeth and delighteth in my soul, which is His garden, among the lilies of my virtues, perfections, and graces.

 INTRODUCTION.

IN the state of spiritual espousals, the soul contemplating its own riches and grandeur but unable to enter into the

^{*} Prov. viii. 31.

possession and fruition of them as it desires, because it is still in the flesh, suffers exceedingly, and then more particularly when its knowledge of them becomes more profound. It then sees itself in the body, like a prince thrown into prison, subject to all misery, whose authority is disregarded, whose territories and wealth are confiscated, and who, of his former substance receives but a miserable dole; whose household is no longer obedient, and whose slaves and servants, forgetting all respect, plunder him of the scanty provisions of his table. Thus is it with the soul in the body, for when God mercifully admits it to a foretaste of the good things which He has prepared for it, the wicked servants of desire in the sensitive part, now the slave of disorderly motions, now of other rebellious movements, rise up against it in order to rob it of its good.

The soul feels itself as if it were in the land of enemies, tyrannised over by the stranger, like the dead among the dead. Its feelings are those which the prophet Baruch gave vent to when he described the misery of Jacob's captivity: 'How happeneth it, O Israel, that thou art in thy enemies' land? Thou art grown old in a strange country, thou art defiled with the dead: thou art counted with them that go down into hell.'* This misery of the soul, in the captivity of the body is thus spoken of by Jeremias, saying: 'Is Israel a bondman or a home-born slave? Why then is he become a prey? The lions have roared upon him, and have made a noise.'† The lions are the desires and the rebellious motions of the tyrant king of sensuality. In order to express the trouble which this tyrant occasions, and the desire of the soul to see this kingdom of sensuality with all its hosts destroyed, or wholly subject to the spirit, the soul lifting up its eyes to the Bridegroom, as to one who can effect it, speaks against those rebellious motions in the words of the next stanza.

Exile of the
soul described by
Baruch and
Jeremias.

* Baruch iii. 10, 11.

† Jerem. ii. 14, 15.

STANZA XVIII.

*O nymphs of Judea!
While amid the flowers and the rose-trees
The amber sends forth its perfume,
Tarry in the suburbs,
And touch not my threshold.*

STANZA
XVIII.

Old foes
though de-
feated renew
their attack.

It is the Bride that speaks, who seeing herself, as to the higher part of the soul, adorned with the rich endowments of her Beloved, and seeing Him delighting in her, desires to preserve herself in security, and in the continued fruition of the blessings which He has given her. Seeing also that hindrances will arise, as, in fact, they do, from the sensitive part of the soul, which will disturb so great a good, she commands the operations and motions of the soul's lower nature to cease, in the senses and faculties of it, and sensuality not to overstep its boundaries to trouble and disquiet the higher and spiritual portion of the soul: not to hinder even for a moment the sweetness she enjoys. The motions of our lower nature, and their energies, if they show themselves during the enjoyment of the spirit, are so much more troublesome, the more active they are.

'O nymphs of Judea.' The lower, that is the sensitive part of the soul, is called Judea. It is called Judea because it is weak, and carnal, and blind, like the Jewish people. All the imaginations, fancies, motions, and inclinations of the lower part of the soul are called nymphs; for as nymphs with their beauty and attractions enticed men to love them, so the operations and motions of sensuality softly and earnestly strive to entice the natural will, to withdraw it from that which is interior, and to fix it on what is exterior, to which they are disposed themselves. They also strive to influence the intellect to join with them in their low views, and to bring down reason to the level of sense by the attractions

of the latter. The soul, therefore, says in effect : O sensual operations and motions.

‘While amid the flowers and the rose-trees.’ The flowers, as I have said, are the virtues of the soul, and the rose-trees are its faculties, memory, intellect, and will, which produce and nurture the flowers of Divine conceptions, acts of love and the virtues, while the amber sends forth its perfume in the virtues and the faculties of the soul.

‘The amber sends forth its perfume.’ The amber is the Divine Spirit of the Bridegroom Who dwells in the soul. To send forth the perfume among the flowers and the rose-trees, is to diffuse and communicate Himself most sweetly in the powers and virtues of the soul, scattering abroad the perfume of the Divine sweetness. While the Divine Spirit sends forth the spiritual sweetness in the soul, the soul cries out :—

‘Tarry in the suburbs’ of Judea, which is the inferior part or sensitive nature of the soul. The suburbs are the interior senses, namely, memory, fancy, and imagination, where forms and images of things collect, by the help of which the sensitive nature of man stirs up concupiscence and desires. These forms are the nymphs, and while they are quiet and tranquil the desires are also asleep. They enter into the suburbs of the interior senses by the gates of the exterior senses, of sight, hearing, smell, &c. We give the name of suburbs to all the powers and interior or exterior senses of the sensitive part of the soul, because they are outside the walls of the city. That part of the soul which may be called the city is that which is most interior, the rational part, which is capable of converse with God, the operations of which are superior to those of sense. But there is a natural intercourse between those who dwell in the suburbs of the sensitive part—that is the nymphs—and those who dwell in the higher part, which is the city itself; and therefore, what takes place in the lower part is ordinarily felt in the higher, and conse-

The senses,
interior and
exterior, the
suburbs of
the soul.

STANZA
XVIII.

quently disturbs the spiritual operation which is conversant with God. Hence the soul bids the nymphs tarry in the suburbs, that is, to remain at rest in the exterior and interior senses of the sensitive part.

Involuntary
movements
assault the
reason.

‘And touch not my threshold.’ Let not your first movements touch the higher part, for the first movements of the soul are the threshold of it. When the first movements have passed into the reason, they have crossed the threshold, but when they remain as first movements only they are then said merely to touch the threshold, or to cry at the gate, which is the case when reason and sense contend over an unreasonable act. The soul here not only bids these not to touch it, but also charges all considerations whatever which do not minister to its repose and the good it enjoys to keep far away.

‘Lead us not
into tempta-
tion.’

INTRODUCTION.

THE soul is now so hostile to the lower part, and to the operations thereof, that it would have God communicate nothing to it when He communicates with the higher. If He will communicate with the lower, it must be in a slight degree, or the soul will be unable to endure it without fainting away, because of its natural weakness, and consequently the spirit cannot rejoice in peace, because it is then troubled. ‘For,’ as the wise man says, ‘the corruptible body is a load upon the soul.’* And as the soul longs for the highest and noblest converse with God, which is impossible in the presence of the sensitive part, it begs of God to deal with it without the intervention of the senses. That sublime vision of S. Paul in the third heaven, wherein, he says, he saw God, but yet knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body, must have been, be it what it may, inde-

* Wisd. ix. 15.

pendent of the body ; for if the body had any share in it, he must then have known it, and the vision could not have been what it was, seeing that he ‘heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter.’* The soul also, knowing well that graces so great cannot be received in a vessel so mean, and longing to receive them out of the body, or at least without it, addresses the Bridegroom in the words that follow:—

STANZA
XIX.

STANZA XIX.

*Hide Thyself, O my Beloved!
Let Thy face shine on the mountains.
Do not tell it,
But regard the companions
Of her who traverses strange islands.*

Here the Bride presents four petitions to the Bridegroom :—1. She prays that He would be pleased to converse with her most interiorly in the secret chamber of the soul. 2. That He would invest and inform her faculties with the glory and grandeur of His Divinity. 3. That He would converse with her so profoundly as to surpass all knowledge and expression, and in such a way that her lower and sensitive nature may not perceive it. 4. That He would love the many virtues and graces with which He has crowned her, adorned with which she is ascending upwards to God in the deepest knowledge of the Divinity, and in transports of love most strange and singular, surpassing those of ordinary experience.

Four petitions of the soul ;

‘Hide Thyself, O my Beloved!’ O my Spouse, most beloved, hide Thyself in the secret of my soul, communicating Thyself to it in secret, and manifesting Thy hidden wonders which no mortal eyes may see.

1. For secret converse with God.

‘Let Thy face shine on the mountains.’ The face of God is His Divinity. The mountains are the powers of the soul, memory, intellect, and will. Thus the meaning of

* 2 Cor. xii. 2-4.

STANZA
XIX.

2. For transformation of its powers in God.

these words is : Enlighten my intellect with Thy Divinity, and give it the Divine intelligence, fill my will with Divine love, and my memory with the Divine possession of glory. The Bride here prays for all that may be prayed for ; for she is not content with that knowledge of God once granted to Moses *—the knowledge of Him by His works—for she prays to see the face of God, which is the essential communication of His Divinity to the soul, without any intervening medium, by a certain knowledge thereof in the Divinity. This is something beyond sense, and divested of accidents, inasmuch as it is the contact of pure substances, that is, of the soul and the Divinity.

3. For purely spiritual communications.

‘Do not tell it,’ as before, when Thy converse with me was known to the outward senses, for it was once such as to be comprehended by them ; it was not so profound but they could fathom it. Now let Thy converse with me be so deep and so substantial, and so interior, as to be beyond the capacity of the senses ; for the substance of spiritual truth is incommunicable to sense, and the communication made through the senses, especially in this life, cannot be purely spiritual, because the senses are not capable of such. The soul therefore, longing for that substantial and essential communication of God, of which sense cannot be cognizant, prays the Bridegroom not to tell it : that is, that the depth of the secret of the spiritual union may be such as to escape the notice of the senses, like the secret which S. Paul heard, and which is not granted to man to utter. †

4. For the loving regard of God.

‘But regard the companions.’ The regard of God is love and grace. The companions here are the many virtues of the soul, its gifts, perfections, and other spiritual graces with which He has crowned it, as with the ornaments of espousals. Thus the meaning of the words seems to be this : Turn Thou Thy face to the interior of my soul, O my Beloved, enamoured

* Exod. xxxiii. 23.

† 2 Cor. xii. 4.

of the treasures which Thou hast laid up there, so that, enamoured of them, Thou mayest hide Thyself among them and there dwell; for though in truth they are all Thine, yet they are mine also, because Thou hast given them.

‘Of her who traverses strange islands.’ That is, of my soul tending towards Thee through strange knowledge of Thee, by strange ways—strange to sense and to the ordinary perceptions of nature. It is as if the Bride said, by way of constraining Him to yield: Seeing that my soul is tending towards Thee through knowledge which is spiritual, strange, unknown to sense, do Thou therefore communicate Thyself to it so interiorly and so profoundly that the senses may not observe it.

STANZA
XIX.

Virtues are
God's be-
cause from
Him, and the
soul's be-
cause given
to it.

INTRODUCTION.

IN order to the attainment of a state of perfection so high as this of the spiritual marriage, the soul that aims at it must not only be purified and cleansed from all the imperfections, rebellions, and imperfect habits of its inferior nature, which is now—the old man being put away—subject and obedient to the higher, but it must also have great courage and most exalted love for so vigorous and close an embrace of God. For in this state the soul not only attains to exceeding pureness and beauty, but also acquires a terrible strength by reason of that strict and close bond which in this union binds it to God. The soul, therefore, in order to come near unto God, must have attained to the height of purity, strength, and adequate love. The Holy Ghost, Who is the author of this spiritual union, anxious that the soul should attain thus far in order to merit it, addresses Himself to the Father and the Son, saying: ‘Our sister is little, and hath no breasts. What shall we do to our sister in the day when she is to be spoken to? If she be a wall, let us build upon it bulwarks of silver;

STANZAS
XX., XXI.

if she be a door, let us join it together with boards of cedar.*

Heroic
virtues of the
final state of
Perfection.

The 'bulwarks of silver' are heroic virtues comprised in faith, which is signified by silver, and these heroic virtues are those of the spiritual matrimony, which are built upon the soul, signified by the wall, relying on the strength of which, the peaceful Bridegroom reposes undisturbed by any infirmities. The 'boards of cedar' are the affections and characteristics of this deep love which is signified by the cedar-tree, and this is the love of the spiritual matrimony. In order 'to join it together,' that is, to adorn the Bride, it is necessary she should be as the door for the Bridegroom to enter through, keeping the door of the will open in a perfect and true consent of love, which is the consent of the betrothal given previous to the spiritual marriage. The breasts of the bride are also this perfect love which she must have in order to appear without defect in the presence of Christ her Bridegroom.

It is written in the Canticle that the Bride immediately replied, saying: 'I am a wall: and my breasts are as a tower.' That is, my soul is strong and my love most deep; that He may not fail her on that ground. The Bride, too, had expressed as much in the preceding stanzas, out of the fulness of her longing for the perfect union and transformation, and particularly in the last, wherein she set before the Bridegroom all the virtues, graces, and good dispositions with which she was adorned by Him, and that with the object of making Him the prisoner of her love.

Now the Bridegroom, to bring this matter to a close, replies in the two stanzas that follow, which describe Him as perfectly purifying the soul, strengthening and disposing it, both as to its sensitive and spiritual nature, for this estate.

* Cant. viii. 8.

He charges all resistance and rebellion, both of the flesh and of the devil, not to approach the soul, saying : —

STANZAS
XX., XXI.

STANZAS XX., XXI.

THE BRIDEGROOM.

*Light-winged birds,
Lions, fawns, bounding deer,
Mountains, valleys, strands,
Waters, winds, fires,
And the terrors that keep watch by night ;*

*By the soft lyres
And siren strains, I adjure you,
Let your fury cease,
And touch not the wall,
That the Bride may sleep in peace.*

Here the Son of God, the Bridegroom, leads the Bride into the enjoyment of peace and tranquillity in the conformity of her lower to her higher nature, purging away all her imperfections, subjecting the natural powers of the soul to reason, and mortifying all her desires, as it is expressed in these two stanzas, the meaning of which is as follows. In the first place the Bridegroom adjures and commands all vain distractions of the fancy and imagination from henceforth to cease, and controls the irascible and concupiscible faculties which were hitherto the sources of so much affliction. He brings, so far as it is possible in this life, the three powers of memory, intellect, and will, to the perfection of their several objects. And then he adjures and commands the four passions of the soul, joy, hope, grief, and fear, to be still, and bids them from henceforth be moderate and calm.

Christ
restores the
soul to
Justice.

All these passions and faculties are comprehended under the expressions employed in the first stanza, the acts of which, full of trouble, the Bridegroom subdues by that great sweetness and courage which the Bride enjoys in the spiritual surrender of Himself to her which God makes at this

STANZAS
XX., XXI.

time ; under the influence of which, because God transforms the soul effectually in Himself, all the faculties, desires and movements of the soul lose their natural imperfection and become Divine.

The soul
defended ;
1. From
distractions
of the
imagination.

‘ Light-winged birds.’ These are the distractions of the imagination, light and rapid in their flight, from one subject to another. When the will is tranquilly enjoying the sweet converse of the Beloved, these desultory distractions produce weariness, and quench the soul’s spiritual delight. The Bridegroom adjures them by the soft lyres. That is, seeing that the sweetness of the soul is so abundant and so continuous that they cannot interfere with it, as they did before when it was not so great, He adjures them, and bids them cease from their disquieting violence. The same explanation is to be given of the rest of the stanza.

2. From
anger, desire,
timidity, and
rashness.

‘ Lions, fawns, bounding deer.’ By the lions I mean the raging violence of the irascible faculty, which in its acts is bold and daring as a lion. The ‘ fawns and bounding deer ’ are the concupiscible faculty, that is, the power of desire, the qualities of which are two—timidity and rashness. Timidity betrays itself when things do not turn out according to our wishes, for then the mind retires within itself discouraged, and in this respect the soul resembles the fawns. For as fawns have the concupiscible faculty stronger than other animals, so are they more retiring and more timid. Rashness betrays itself when we have our own way, for the mind is then neither retiring nor timid, but desires boldly, and gratifies all its inclinations. This quality of rashness is compared to the deer, who so eagerly seek what they desire that they not only run but even leap after it ; hence they are described as bounding deer.

Thus the Bridegroom, in adjuring the lions, restrains the violence and controls the fury of rage ; in adjuring the fawns, He strengthens the concupiscible faculty against timidity and

irresolution; and in adjuring the deer, He satisfies and subdues the desires which were restless before, leaping, like deer, from one object to another, to satisfy that concupiscence which is now satisfied by the soft lyres, the sweetness of which it enjoys, and by the siren strains, in the delight of which it revels.

But the Bridegroom does not adjure anger and concupiscence themselves—because these passions never cease from the soul—but their vexatious and disorderly acts, signified by the ‘lions, fawns, and bounding deer,’ for it is necessary that these disorderly acts should cease in this state.

‘Mountains, valleys, strands.’ These are the vicious and disorderly actions of the three faculties of the soul—memory, intellect, and will. These actions are disorderly and vicious when they are in extremes, or, if not in extreme, tending to one extreme or other. Thus the mountains signify those actions which are vicious in excess, mountains being high; the valleys, being low, signify those which are vicious in the extreme of defect. Strands, which are neither high nor low, but, inasmuch as they are not perfectly level, tend to one extreme or other, signify those acts of the three powers of the soul which depart slightly in either direction from the true mean and equality of justice. These actions, though not disorderly in the extreme, as they would be if they amounted to mortal sin, are nevertheless disorderly in part, tending towards venial sin or imperfection, however slight that tendency may be, in the intellect, memory, and will. He adjures also all these actions which depart from the true mean, and bids them cease before the soft lyres and the siren strains, which so effectually charm the powers of the soul as to occupy them completely in their true and proper functions, so that they shall not only avoid all extremes, but also the slightest tendency to them.

‘Waters, winds, fires, and the terrors that keep watch by night.’ These are the affections of the four passions,

3. From excess or defect in the use of its faculties.

STANZAS
XX., XXI.

4. From the natural passions of grief, hope, joy, and fear.

Causes of fear in spiritual persons.

grief, hope, joy, and fear.' The waters are the affections of grief which afflict the soul, for they rush into it like water. 'Save me, O God,' saith the Psalmist, 'for the waters are come in even unto my soul.'* The winds are the affections of hope, for they rush forth like wind, desiring that which is not present but hoped for, as the Psalmist saith: 'I opened my mouth and panted: because I longed for Thy commandments.'† That is, I opened the mouth of my hope, and drew in the wind of desire, because I hoped and longed for Thy commandments. The fires are the affections of joy which, like fire, inflame the heart, as it is written: 'My heart grew hot within me; and in my meditation a fire shall flame out;‡ that is, while I meditate I shall have joy. The 'terrors that keep watch by night' are the affections of fear, which, in spiritual persons who have not attained to the state of spiritual matrimony are usually exceedingly strong. These come from God at those times when He is about to bestow some great favours upon men whose nature is not perfect and strong, and habituated to such favours. Then indeed fear and dread fall upon them, and flesh and sense are shaken. They come also from the evil spirit, who, when he sees a soul sweetly recollected in God, out of envy and malignity, labours to disturb its tranquillity by exciting horror and dread, in order to destroy so great a blessing; sometimes even he utters his threats, as it were, in the interior of the soul. But when he finds that he cannot penetrate within the soul, because it is so recollected, and so united with God, he strives at least in the province of sense, to produce exterior distractions and inconstancy, sensible pains and horrors, if perchance he may in this way disturb the soul in the bridal chamber.

These are called terrors of the night, because they are the work of evil spirits, and because Satan labours, by the help

* Ps. lxxviii. 1.

† Ps. cxviii. 131.

‡ Ps. xxxviii. 4.

thereof, to involve the soul in darkness, and to obscure the Divine light wherein it rejoiceth. They are said to keep their watch by night, because they waken the soul and rouse it from its sweet interior slumber, and also because Satan, their author, is ever on the watch to produce them. These terrors strike the soul of persons who are already spiritual, passively, and come either from God or the evil spirit. I do not refer to temporal or natural terrors, because spiritual men are not subject to these, as they are to those of which I am speaking.

STANZAS
XX., XXI.

Spiritual men free from natural fear.

The Beloved adjures the affections of these four passions, compels them to cease and to be at rest, because He supplies the Bride now with force, and courage, and satisfaction, by the soft lyres of His sweetness and the siren strains of His delight, so that not only they shall not domineer over the soul, but not occasion it any distaste. Such is the grandeur and stability of the soul, that, although formerly the waters of grief overwhelmed it, because of its own or other men's sins—which is what spiritual persons most feel—the consideration of them now excites neither pain nor annoyance; even the sensible feeling of compassion exists not now, though the effects of it continue in perfection. The weaknesses of virtues are no longer in the soul, for they are now constant, energetic, and perfect. As the Angels perfectly appreciate all sorrowful things without the sense of pain, and perform acts of compassion without the sentiment of pity, so the soul in this transformation of love. God, however, dispenses sometimes, on certain occasions, with the soul in this matter, allowing it to feel and suffer; but this is that it may become more fervent in love, and grow in merit, or for some other reasons, as He dispensed with His Virgin Mother, S. Paul, and others. This, however, is not the ordinary condition of this state.

The passions at rest.

1. Sensible sorrow no longer felt, except as a motive for action.

*Analogy of the Angels.

Exceptions in certain cases.

2. Hope satisfied in God.

Neither do the desires of hope afflict the soul now, because, satisfied in its union with God, so far as it is possible in this life, it has nothing worldly to hope for, and nothing spiritual

STANZAS
XX., XXI.

Charity may
always grow.

to desire, seeing that it feels itself to be full of the riches of God—though it may grow in charity—and thus, whether living or dying, it is conformed to the will of God, saying, with the sense and spirit, ‘Thy will be done,’ free from the violence of inclination and desires; and therefore even its longing for the Beatific Vision is without pain.

3. Joy of the
soul like the
sea.

The affections of joy, also, which are wont to move the soul with more or less vehemence, are not sensibly diminished; neither does their abundance occasion anything new. The joy of the soul is now so abundant, that it is like the sea, which is not diminished by the rivers that flow out of it, nor increased by those that empty themselves into it; for the soul now contains that fountain of which our Lord said, that it is ‘springing up into life everlasting.’*

The fountain
of bliss
within.

I have said that the soul receives nothing new in this state of transformation; it seems to lose all accidental joy, which is not withheld even from the glorified. That is, accidental joys and sweetness are indeed no strangers to this soul; yea, rather, those which it ordinarily has cannot be numbered; yet, for all this, as to the substantial communication of the Spirit, there is no increase of joy, for that which may occur anew the soul possesses already, and thus what the soul has within itself is greater than anything that comes anew. Hence, then, whenever any subject of joy or rejoicing, whether exterior or spiritually interior, presents itself to the soul, the soul betakes itself forthwith to rejoicing in the riches it possesses already within itself, and its joy in them is far greater than any which these new accessions minister, because, in a certain sense, God is become its possession, Who, though He delights in all things, yet in nothing so much as in Himself, seeing that He has all good eminently in Himself. Thus all accessions of joy remind the soul that its real rejoicing is in its interior

God the
possession of
the soul.

* S. John iv. 14.

possessions, rather than in these accidental causes, because, as I have said, the former are greater than the latter.

It is very natural for the soul, even when a particular matter gives it pleasure, that, possessing another of greater worth and gladness, it should turn to it at once and prefer it to the former. The accidental character of these spiritual accessions, and the new impressions they make on the soul, may be said to be as nothing in comparison with that substantial source which it has within itself; for the soul which has attained to the perfect transformation, fullgrown, grows no more by means of these spiritual accessions, as those souls do who have not yet advanced so far. It is a marvellous thing that the soul, while it receives no accessions of delight, should still seem to do so and also to retain them. The reason is that it is always tasting them anew, because its blessings are ever renewed; and thus it seems to be continually the recipient of new accessions, while it has no need of them whatever.

But if we speak of that light of glory which in this, the soul's embrace, God sometimes produces within it, and which is a certain spiritual communion wherein He causes it to behold and enjoy at the same time the abyss of delight and riches which He has laid up within it, there is no language to express any degree of it. As the sun when it shines upon the sea illuminates its great depths, and discovers the pearls, and gold, and precious stones therein, so the Divine Sun, the Bridegroom, turning towards the Bride, discovers in a way the riches of her soul, so that even the Angels behold her with amazement, and say: 'Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array.'^{*} This illumination adds nothing to the grandeur of the soul, notwithstanding its greatness, but only reveals what was already there.

STANZAS
XX., XXI.

Accidental
joys remind
the soul of
its essential
Joy.

God in the
soul, like the
sun shining
on the ocean,

reveals the
hidden
treasures laid
up therein.

* Cant. vi. 9.

STANZAS
XX., XXI.4. Fear cast
out by per-
fect love.

Finally, the terrors that keep watch by night do not come nigh unto her, because of her pureness, courage, and confident trust in God; the evil spirits cannot shroud her in darkness, nor alarm her with terrors, nor waken her with their violent assaults. Thus nothing can approach her, nothing can molest her, for she has escaped from all created things and entered in to God, to the fruition of perfect peace, sweetness, and delight, so far as that is possible in this life. It is to this state that the words of Solomon are applicable: 'A secure mind is like a continual feast.'^{*} As in a feast we have the savour of all meat, and the sweetness of all music, so in this feast, which the Bride keeps in the bosom of her Beloved, the soul rejoices in all delight, and has the taste of all sweetness. All that I have said, and all that may be said, on this subject, will always fall short of that which passeth in the soul which has attained to this blessed state. For when it shall have attained to the peace of God, 'which,' in the words of the Apostle, 'surpasseth all understanding,'[†] no sense or language can express its state.

Peace of God
surpasses
knowledge
and lan-
guage.

'By the soft lyres and the siren strains I adjure you.' The soft lyres are the sweetness which the Bridegroom communicates to the soul in this state, and by which He makes all its troubles to cease. As the music of lyres fills the mind with sweetness and delight, carries it rapturously out of itself, so that it forgets all its weariness and grief, in like manner this sweetness so absorbs the soul that nothing painful can reach it. The Bridegroom says, in substance: By that sweetness which I give thee, let all thy bitterness cease. The siren strains are the ordinary joys of the soul, which it always possesses. These are called siren strains because, as it is said, the music of the sirens is so sweet, that he who hears it is rapt and carried out of himself, forgetting all around him.

* Prov. xv. 15.

† Philipp iv. 7.

In the same way the delight of this union so absorbs the soul and refreshes it, that it becomes, as it were, charmed against all the vexations and troubles that may assail it; it is to these the next words of the stanza refer :

‘Let your fury cease.’ This is the troubles and anxieties which flow from unruly acts and affections. As anger is a certain violence which disturbs tranquillity, overleaping its bounds, so also all the affections and emotions that transgress the bounds of peace, and the tranquillity of the soul disturb it whenever they touch it. Hence the Bridegroom says : ‘And touch not the wall.’ The wall is the territory of peace and the fortress of virtue and perfections, which are the defences and protection of the soul. The soul is the garden wherein the Beloved feeds among the flowers, defended and guarded for Him alone. Hence it is called in the Canticle ‘a garden inclosed.’* The Bridegroom bids all disorderly emotions not to touch the territory and wall of His garden.

The soul
restored to
order and
harmony.

‘That the Bride may sleep in peace.’ That she may enjoy the full fruition of the peace and sweetness of her Beloved. It seems, then, that there is no perfect tranquillity for the soul unless it is able to enjoy, when and how it will, this sweet sleep of love, as the Bridegroom says Himself : ‘I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and the harts of the fields, that you stir not up nor awake my beloved till she please.’†

INTRODUCTION.

SUCH was the desire of the Bridegroom to rescue His Bride from the power of the flesh and the devil, that, having done so, He now rejoices over her like the Good Shepherd, who having found the sheep that was lost, laid it upon his

* Cant. iv. 12.

† Cant. iii. 5.

STANZA
XXII.

The Good
Shepherd
rejoices over
His recovered
sheep.

shoulders rejoicing; like the woman who, having found the money she had lost, after lighting a candle and sweeping the house, called 'together her friends and neighbours, saying: Rejoice with me.'* The loving Shepherd and Spouse of souls feels a marvellous joy and satisfaction when He beholds a soul gained to perfection lying on His shoulders, and clinging to Him in the longed-for embraces of Divine union. He is not alone in His joy, for He makes the Angels and the souls of the blessed partakers of His glory, saying: 'Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the joy of his heart.'† He calls the soul His crown, His bride, and the joy of His heart; He carries it in His arms, and leads it into His bridal chamber, as we shall see in the following stanza:—

A perfect
soul the
crown, joy
and bride of
Christ.

STANZA XXII.

*The Bride has entered
The pleasant and desirable garden,
And there reposes to her heart's content;
Her neck reclining
On the sweet arms of her Beloved.*

The Bride having prayed that the foxes may be caught, that the north wind may cease, that the nymphs, obstacles to the desired union of the spiritual marriage, may forego their troublesome importunities, and having also invoked and obtained the favourable wind of the Holy Ghost, which is the right disposition and means for the perfection of this estate, it remains for me now to speak of the state of spiritual marriage. It is the Bridegroom Himself Who speaks in the stanza before us, in which He calls the soul His bride, and speaks of two things:—1. He says that the soul has gone forth victoriously, and has entered the delectable state of spiritual marriage, which they had both so earnestly desired. 2. He

* S. Luke xv. 5, 8, 9.

† Cant. iii. 11.

enumerates the properties of that state, into the fruition of which the soul has entered, namely, perfect repose, and the resting of the neck on the arms of the Beloved.

‘The Bride has entered.’ For the better understanding of the arrangement of these stanzas, and of the way in which the soul advances till it reaches the state of spiritual marriage, which is the very highest, and of which, by the grace of God, I am now about to treat, we must keep in mind that the soul, before it enters it, must have been tried in tribulations, in sharp mortifications, and in meditation on spiritual things. This is the subject of the Canticle till we come to the fifth stanza, beginning with the words: ‘A thousand graces diffusing.’ Then the soul enters on the contemplative life, passing through those ways and straits of love which are described in the course of the Canticle, till we come to the thirteenth, beginning with ‘Turn them away, O my Beloved!’ This is the moment of the spiritual betrothal; and then the soul advances by the unitive way, receiving many and very great communications from the Bridegroom, visions of Him, jewels and gifts. The soul is now like a virgin betrothed, and beholds itself growing into perfect love, as it appears from the stanzas which follow that beginning with ‘Turn them away, O my Beloved!’ the moment of espousals, to the present one, beginning with the words:

‘The Bride has entered.’ The spiritual marriage of the soul and the Son of God now remains to be accomplished. This is, beyond all comparison, a far higher state than that of espousals, because it is a complete transformation into the Beloved; and because each of them surrenders to the other the entire possession of themselves in the perfect union of love, wherein the soul becomes Divine, and, by participation, God, so far as it is possible in this life. I believe that no soul ever attains to this state without being confirmed in grace in it, for the faith of both is confirmed; that of God being

STANZA
XXII.

The stanzas describe four states of spiritual progress;

1. Purgation and Meditation.

2. Contemplation.

3. Spiritual Betrothal.

4. Spiritual Marriage,—two wills, Divine and human, blended into one.

Participation in the Divine Nature.

STANZA
XXII.

The soul by
spiritual
marriage
confirmed in
grace.

confirmed in the soul. Hence it follows, that this is the very highest state possible in this life. As by natural marriage there are 'two in one flesh,'* so also in the spiritual marriage between God and the soul there are two natures in one spirit and love, as we learn from S. Paul, who made use of the same metaphor, saying: 'He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.'† So, when the light of a star, or of a burning candle, is united to that of the sun, the light is not that of the star, nor of the candle, but of the sun itself, which absorbs all other light in its own.

Entrance
into the joy
of the Lord.

It is of this state that the Bridegroom is now speaking, saying: 'The Bride has entered;' that is, out of all temporal and natural things, out of all spiritual affections, ways, and methods, having left on one side, and forgotten, all temptations, trials, sorrows, anxieties, and cares, and being transformed in this deep embrace of God.

Two natures,
without any
essential
change,
united in one
love.

'The pleasant and desirable garden.' That is, the soul is transformed in God, Who is here called the pleasant garden because of the delicious and sweet repose which the soul finds in Him. But the soul does not enter the garden of perfect transformation, the glory and the joy of the spiritual nuptials, without passing first through the spiritual espousals, the mutual faithful love of the betrothed. When the soul has lived for some time as the affianced bride of the Son, in perfect and sweet love, God calls it and leads it into His flourishing garden for the celebration of the spiritual marriage. Then the two natures are so united, what is Divine is so communicated to what is human, that, without undergoing any essential change, each seems to be God—yet not perfectly so in this life, though still in a manner which can neither be described nor conceived.

We learn this truth also from the words of the Bridegroom in the Canticle, where He invites the soul, now His bride, to

* Genes. ii. 24.

† 1 Cor. vi. 17.

enter this high estate, saying: 'I am come into my garden, O my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my aromatical spices.* He calls the soul His sister, His spouse, for it is such in love by that surrender which it has made of itself before He had called it to the state of spiritual marriage, when, as He says, He gathered His myrrh with His aromatical spices; that is, the fruits of flowers now ripe and made ready for the soul, which are the delights and grandeurs communicated to it by Himself in this estate, that is Himself, for which He is to her the pleasant and desirable garden. The whole aim and desire of the soul and of God, in all this, is the accomplishment and perfection of this state, and the soul is therefore never weary till it reaches it; because it finds there a much greater abundance and fulness in God, a more secure and lasting peace, and sweetness incomparably more perfect than in the spiritual espousals, seeing that it reposes between the arms of such a Bridegroom, whose spiritual embraces are so real that it now, through them, lives the life of God. Now is fulfilled what S. Paul referred to, when he said: 'I live; now not I, but Christ liveth in me.† And now that the soul lives a life so happy and so glorious as this life of God, consider what a life it must be—a life where God sees nothing displeasing, and where the soul finds nothing irksome, but rather the glory and delight of God in the very substance of itself, now transformed in Him.

'And there reposes to her heart's content; her neck reclining on the sweet arms of her Beloved.' The neck is the strength of the soul, by means of which its union with the Beloved is wrought; for the soul could not endure so close an embrace if it had not been very strong. And as the soul has laboured in this strength, practised virtue, overcome vice, it is fitting that it rest there from its labours, 'her neck reclining on the sweet arms of the Beloved.'

STANZA
XXII.

Highest state
of perfection
possible in
this life.

Strength of
soul required
for perfec-
tion.

* Cant. v. 1.

† Galat. ii. 20.

STANZA
XXII.

God the
soul's
strength and
sweetness.

This reclining of the neck on the arms of God is the union of the soul's strength, or, rather, of the soul's weakness, with the strength of God, in Whom our weakness, resting and transformed, puts on the strength of God Himself. The estate of spiritual matrimony is therefore most fitly designated by the reclining of the neck on the sweet arms of the Beloved; seeing that God is the strength and sweetness of the soul, Who guards and defends it from all evil, and gives it to taste of all good. Hence the Bride in the Canticle, longing for this estate, saith to the Bridegroom: 'Who shall give Thee to me for my brother, sucking the breast of my mother, that I may find Thee without, and kiss Thee, and now no man may despise me.'* By addressing Him as her Brother she shows the equality between them in the espousals of love, before she entered the state of spiritual marriage. 'Sucking the breast of my mother' signifies the drying up of the passions and desires, which are the breasts and milk of our mother Eve in our flesh, impediments to this estate. The 'finding Him without' is to find Him when the desires are quenched, and when the Bride is in solitude, spiritually detached from all things. 'And kiss Thee,' that is, be united with the Bridegroom. This is the union of the nature of the soul, in solitude, cleansed from all impurity, natural, temporal, and spiritual, with the Bridegroom alone, with His nature, through the sole medium of love—of that love which is the love of the spiritual marriage, wherein the soul, as it were, kisses God when none despises it nor makes it afraid. For in this state the soul is no longer molested, either by the devil, or the flesh, or the world, or the desires, seeing that here is fulfilled what is written in the Canticle: 'Winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land.'†

Love the
medium of
union and
likeness.

The return
of spring.

* Cant. viii. 1.

† Cant. ii. 11, 12.

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN the soul has been raised up to the state of spiritual matrimony, the Bridegroom reveals to it, as His faithful consort, His own marvellous secrets most readily and most frequently, for he who truly loves conceals nothing from the object of his affections. The principal points of His communications are the sweet mysteries of His Incarnation, the ways and means of Redemption, which is one of the highest works of God, and to the soul one of the sweetest. Though He communicates many other mysteries, He mentions here His Incarnation only, as being the chief; and thus addresses the soul:—

STANZA
XXIII.

Incarnation
the highest
work of God,
and sweetest
to the soul.

STANZA XXIII.

*Beneath the apple-tree
I espoused thee:
There I gave thee My hand,
And thou wert there redeemed
Where thy mother was corrupted.*

The Bridegroom tells the soul of the wondrous way of its redemption and espousal to Himself, by referring to the way in which the human race was lost. As it was by the forbidden tree of Paradise that our nature was corrupted in Adam and lost, so it was by the tree of the Cross that it was redeemed and restored. The Bridegroom there stretched forth the hand of His grace and mercy, in His death and passion, 'making void the law of commandments'* which original sin had placed between us and God.

Mankind lost
by the for-
bidden tree,
saved by the
Cross.

'Beneath the apple-tree.' At the foot of the Cross, where the Son of God was conqueror, and where He betrothed our human nature to Himself, and, by consequence, every soul of

* Ephes. ii. 15.

STANZA
XXIII.

Every soul of
man espoused
to Christ by
the Cross.

man. There, on the Cross, He gave us grace and pledges of His love.

‘I espoused thee, there I gave thee My hand;’ help and grace, lifting thee up out of thy base and miserable condition to be My companion and My bride.

‘And thou wert there redeemed where thy mother was corrupted.’ Thy mother, human nature, was corrupted in thy first parents beneath the forbidden tree, and thou wert redeemed by the tree of the Cross. If thy mother at that tree sentenced thee to die, I from the Cross have given thee life. It is thus that God reveals the order and dispositions of His wisdom; eliciting good from evil, and turning that which has its origin in evil to be an instrument of greater good. This stanza is nearly word for word what the Bridegroom in the Canticle saith to the Bride: ‘Under the apple-tree I raised thee up; there thy mother was corrupted; there she was deflowered that bare thee.’*

The Cross
our second
Mother.

Wisdom of
God in bring-
ing good
from evil.

First espou-
sals,—Bap-
tism.

Second es-
pousals,—
Perfection.

Difference
between
them.

It is not the espousals of the Cross that I am speaking of now—that takes place, once for all, when God gives the first grace to the soul in baptism. But I am speaking of the espousals in the way of perfection, which is a progressive work. And though both are but one, yet there is a difference between them. The latter is effected in the way of the soul, and therefore slowly; the former in the way of God, and therefore once for all. The espousals of which I am speaking are those of which God speaks Himself by the mouth of the Prophet, saying: ‘Thou wast cast out upon the face of the earth in the abjection of thy soul, in the day that thou wast born. And passing by thee, I saw that thou wast trodden under foot in thy own blood; and I said to thee when thou wast in thy blood: Live: I have said to thee, Live in thy blood. I caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field:

* Cant. viii. 5.

and thou didst increase and grow great, and advancedst, and camest to woman's ornament; thy breasts were fashioned and thy hair grew; and thou wast naked and full of confusion. And I passed by thee and saw thee, and behold thy time was the time of lovers; and I spread My garment over thee, and covered thy ignominy. And I swore to thee; and I entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God; and thou becamest Mine. And I washed thee with water, and cleansed away thy blood from thee: and I anointed thee with oil. And I clothed thee with embroidery, and shod thee with violet-coloured shoes, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and clothed thee with fine garments. I decked thee also with ornaments, and put bracelets on thy hands, and a chain about thy neck. And I put a jewel upon thy forehead and ear-rings in thy ears, and a beautiful crown upon thy head. And thou wast adorned with gold and silver, and wast clothed with fine linen, and embroidered work, and many colours: thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil, and wast made exceeding beautiful, and wast advanced to be a queen. And thy renown went forth among the nations for thy beauty.* These are the words of the Lord to the prophet Ezechiel, and such is that soul of which I am now speaking.

INTRODUCTION.

AFTER the mutual surrender to each other of the Bride and the Beloved, comes the bed which receives them both. Thereon the Bride enters into the joy of Christ. Thus the present stanza refers to the bed, which is pure and chaste, and divine, and in which the Bride is pure, divine, and chaste. The bed is nothing less than the Bridegroom Himself, the

* Ezech. xvi. 5-14.

STANZA
XXIV.

Christ the
Divine flower
of fragrance
and beauty.

Word, the Son of God, in Whom, through the union of love, the Bride reposes. This bed is said here to be of flowers, for the Bridegroom is not only that, but, as He says Himself, the very 'flower of the field and the lily of the valleys.'* The soul reposes not only on the bed of flowers, but on that very flower which is the Son of God, and which contains in itself the Divine odours, fragrance, grace, and beauty, as it is written: 'With Me is the beauty of the field.'† Thus, the soul, in the stanza that follows celebrates the properties and beauties of its bed.

STANZA XXIV.

THE BRIDE.

*Our bed is of flowers
By the dens of lions encompassed,
Hung with purple,
Made in peace,
And crowned with a thousand shields of gold.*

Bliss of the
state of per-
fect union
with God.

In two of the foregoing stanzas—the fourteenth and the fifteenth—the Bride-soul celebrated the grace and magnificence of the Beloved, the Son of God. In the present stanza she not only pursues the same subject, but also sings of her high and blessed state, and her own security in it. She then proceeds to the virtues and rich gifts with which she is endowed and adorned in the chamber of the Bridegroom; for she says that she is in union with Him, and is strong in virtue. Next she says that she has attained to the perfection of love, and then that she enjoys perfect spiritual peace, endowed and adorned with gifts and graces, so far as it is possible to enjoy them in this life. The first subject of the stanza is the joy which the Bride feels in her union with the Beloved, saying:—

'Our bed is of flowers.' I have already said that this bed of the soul is the bosom and love of the Son of God,

* Cant. ii. 1.

† Ps. xlix. 11.

which is full of flowers to the soul, who being united now to God and reposing in Him, as His bride, shares the bosom and love of the Beloved. That is, the soul is admitted to the knowledge of the wisdom, secrets and graces, and gifts and powers of God, which render it so beautiful, so rich, so abounding in delights, that it seems to be lying on a bed of many-coloured Divine flowers, the touch of which makes it thrill with joy, and the odours of which refresh it.

Hence it follows that this union of love with God is most appropriately called a bed of flowers, and is so called by the Bride in the Canticle, saying to the Beloved: 'Our bed is of flowers.'* She speaks of it as ours, because the virtues and the love, one and the same, of the Beloved are common to both together, and the delight of both is one and the same; as it is written: 'My delights were to be with the children of men.'† The bed is said to be of flowers, because in this estate the virtues of the soul are perfect and heroic, which they could not be until the bed had flowered in perfect union with God.

'By the dens of lions encompassed.' The dens of lions signify the virtues with which the soul is endowed in the state of union. The dens of lions are safe retreats, protected from all other animals, who, afraid of the boldness and strength of the lion within, are afraid not only to enter, but even to appear in sight. So each virtue of the soul in the state of perfection is like a den of lions where Christ dwells united to the soul in that virtue; and in every one of them as a strong lion. The soul also, united to Him in those very virtues, is as a strong lion, because it then assumes the characteristics of God. Thus, then, the perfect soul is so defended, so strong in virtue, and in all

STANZA
XXIV.

1. The soul adorned with graces.

2. The soul in virtue, strong as a lion.

* Cant. i. 15.

† Prov. viii. 31.

STANZA
XXIV.

virtues together, reposing on the bed of flowers of its union with God, that the evil spirits are not only afraid to assault it, but even dare not appear before it. Such is their dread of it, when they behold it strong, courageous, and mature in virtues, on the bed of the Beloved. The evil spirits fear a soul transformed in the union of love as much as they fear the Beloved Himself, and they dare not look upon it, for Satan is in great fear of that soul which has attained to perfection.

Satan in
dread of the
perfect soul.

The soul's bed is encompassed by virtues: for when the soul has advanced to perfection, the virtues which adorn it are so joined together and bound up one with another, each supporting the other, that no part of it is weak or exposed; not only is Satan unable to penetrate within it, but even worldly things, whether great or little, fail to disturb or annoy it. The soul, now free from the molestation of natural affections, and a stranger to the worry of human anxieties, enjoys in security and peace the participation of God.

The soul like
God when
perfectly
conformed
to His Will.

This is the object of the Bride's desires when she says: 'Who shall give Thee to me for my brother, sucking the breast of my mother, that I may find Thee without, and kiss Thee, and now no man may despise me?''* The 'kiss' here is the union of which I am speaking, whereby the soul becomes in a sense like God in love. This is the object it desires when it says: 'Who shall give Thee to me for my brother?' That is, Who shall make me resemble Thee? 'Sucking the breast of my mother;' that is, destroying all the imperfections and desires of nature which the soul inherits from its mother Eve. 'That I may find Thee without;' that is, be united to Thee alone, away from all things, in detachment of the will and desires. 'And now no man may despise me;' that is, the world, the Devil, and the flesh will not venture

* Cant. viii. 1.

to assail it, for being now free and purified, and also united to God, none of these can molest it. Thus, then, the soul is in the enjoyment now of habitual sweetness and tranquillity that never fail it.

But beside this habitual tranquillity, the flowers of virtues open in the soul and diffuse their odours over it, so that it seems to be, and is, full of the delights of God. I say that the flowers open; because the soul, though filled with virtues in perfection, is not always in the actual fruition of them, notwithstanding its habitual perception of the peace and tranquillity which they produce. We may say of these virtues that they are like the budding flowers of a garden; they offer a most beautiful sight—opening under the inspirations of the Holy Ghost—and diffuse most marvellous perfumes in great variety. Sometimes the soul will detect in itself the mountain flowers—the fulness, grandeur, and beauty of God—intermingled with the lilies of the valley—rest, refreshment, and defence; and again, the fragrant roses of the unknown islands—the strange knowledge of God; and further, the perfume of the water lilies of the roaring torrents—the greatness of God filling the whole soul. And amid all this, it enjoys the exquisite fragrance of the jasmine, and the whisper of the amorous gales, the fruition of which is granted to the soul in the estate of union. Finally, it detects all the other virtues and graces, the calm knowledge, silent music, murmuring solitude, and the sweet supper of love; and the joy of this feeling in the soul is such as to make it say in truth, ‘Our bed is of flowers, by the dens of lions encompassed.’ Blessed is that soul which in this life deserves at times to enjoy the perfume of these Divine flowers.

The soul does not always enjoy the virtues it possesses.

They are made fragrant by the breath of the Holy Spirit.

‘Hung with purple.’ Purple in Holy Scripture means charity, and is employed for royal vestments. The bed is hung with purple, because all the virtues, riches, and blessings of it are sustained, flourish, and exult in charity and in love

3. Perfected by charity.

STANZA
XXIV.

for the King of Heaven; since without that love the soul can never delight in the bed nor in the flowers thereof.

Virtues preserved by charity.

All these virtues are, in the soul, as it were hung or displayed in love for God, as in that which preserves them, and they are, as it were, bathed in love; for all and each of them inspire the soul with love for God, and on all occasions, and in all actions, they advance in love to a greater love for God. This is what is meant by saying that the bed is hung with purple.

This is well expressed in the Canticle as follows: 'King Solomon hath made himself a litter of the wood of Libanus: the pillars thereof he made of silver, the seat of gold, the going up of purple; the midst he covered with charity.'* The virtues and graces which God lays in the bed of the soul are signified by the wood of Libanus: the pillars of silver and the seat of gold are love; for, as I have said, the virtues are supported by love, and by the love of God and of the soul are harmonized together and practised.

4. Casts out fear.

'Made in peace.' This is the fourth excellence of the bed, and depends on the third, of which I have just spoken, that is, perfect charity, the property of which is, as the Apostle saith, to cast out fear;† hence the perfect peace of the soul, which is the fourth excellence of this bed. For the clearer understanding of this truth we must keep in mind that each virtue is in itself peaceful, gentle, and strong, and consequently, in the soul which possesses them, produces peace, gentleness, and fortitude. Now, as the bed is of flowers, formed of the flowers of virtues, all of which are peaceful, gentle, and strong, it follows that the bed is wrought in peace, and that the soul is peaceful, gentle, and strong, which are three qualities unassailable by the world, Satan, and the flesh. The virtues preserve the soul so peaceful

The soul made peaceful, gentle, and strong.

* Cant. iii. 9, 10.

† 1 S. John iv. 18.

and so secure as to make it appear to be wholly built up in peace. The fifth characteristic of this bed of flowers is explained in the following words.

‘Crowned with a thousand shields of gold.’ The shields are the virtues and graces of the soul, which, though they are also the flowers, serve for its crown, and the reward of the toil by which they are acquired. They serve also, like strong shields, as a protection against vice, which is overcome by the practice of them; and the bridal bed of flowers therefore, that is the virtues, the crown and defence, is adorned with them by way of reward, and protected by them as with a shield. The shields are of gold, to show the great worth of the virtues. The bride in the Canticle sets forth the same truth, saying: ‘Three score valiant ones of the most valiant of Israel surround the bed of Solomon, all holding swords; . . . every man’s sword upon his thigh, because of fears in the night.’*

Thus in this stanza the Bride speaks of a thousand shields, to express the variety of the virtues, gifts, and graces wherewith God has endowed the soul in the state of union. The Bridegroom in the Canticle also has employed the same expression, in order to show forth the innumerable virtues of the soul: ‘Thy neck is as the tower of David, which is built with bulwarks; a thousand bucklers hang upon it, all the armour of valiant men.’ †

STANZA
XXIV.

5. Crowned
and defended
by virtues.

INTRODUCTION.

THE bride of Christ, having attained to perfection, is not satisfied with magnifying and extolling the excellences of her Beloved, the Son of God, nor with recounting and giving

* Cant. iii. 7, 8.

† Cant. iv. 4.

STANZA
XXV.

The soul
gives thanks
for graces
bestowed on
others.

thanks for, the graces she has received at His hands and the joy into which she has entered, but she recounts also the graces He has conferred on other souls. In this blessed union of love the soul is able to contemplate both its own and others' graces; thus praising Him and giving Him thanks for the many graces bestowed upon others, the soul sings as in the following stanza.

STANZA XXV.

*In Thy footsteps,
The young ones run Thy way;
At the touch of the fire,
And by the spiced wine,
The Divine balsam flows.*

Three graces
given to
devout souls;

Here the Bride gives praise to her Beloved for three graces which devout souls receive from Him, by which they encourage and excite themselves to love God more and more. She speaks of them here, because she has had experience of them herself in this state of union. The first is sweetness, which He gives them, and which is so efficacious that it makes them run swiftly on the road of perfection. The second is the visit of love, by which they are suddenly set on fire with love. The third is overflowing charity infused into them, with which He so inebriates them, that they are as much excited by it as by the visit of love, to utter the praises of God, and to love Him with all sweetness.

1. Spiritual
sweetness,

2. Visits of
love.

3. Infused
charity.

'In Thy footsteps.' These are the marks on the ground by which we trace the course of one we seek. The sweetness and knowledge of Himself which God communicates to the soul that seeks Him, are the footsteps by which it traces and recognises Him. Thus the soul says to the Word, the Bridegroom, 'In Thy footsteps;' in the traces of Thy sweetness which Thou diffusest, and the odours which Thou scatterest.

Footsteps of
God,—what.

'The young ones run Thy way.' Devout souls run with youthful vigour in the sweetness which Thy footsteps com-

municate. They run in many ways and in various directions—each according to the spirit which God bestows, and the vocation He has given—in the diversified forms of spiritual service on the road of everlasting life, which is evangelical perfection, where they meet the Beloved in the union of love, in detachment from all things. This sweetness and impression of Himself which God leaves in the soul, renders it light and active, so as to run after Him; for the soul then does little or nothing in its own strength towards running along this road, being rather attracted by the Divine footsteps, so that it not only advances, but even runs by many methods. The Bride in the Canticle, therefore, prays for the Divine attraction, saying: ‘Draw me, we will run after Thee to the odour of Thy ointments;’* and David saith: ‘I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart.’†

‘At the touch of the fire, and by the spiced wine, the Divine balsam flows.’ I said, while explaining the previous lines, that souls run in His footsteps in the way of exterior works and practices. But the three lines I have just quoted refer to the interior acts of the will, when souls are under the influence of the other two graces and interior visits of the Beloved. These are the touch of fire, and spiced wine; and the interior act of the will, which is the result of these visits, is the flowing of the Divine balsam. The contact of the fire is that most delicate touch of the Beloved which the soul feels at times, even when least expecting it, and which is so penetrating that the heart is set on fire with love. It seems to be but a spark of fire leaping up and burning. Then the will, in an instant, like one roused from sleep, burns with the fire of love, longs for God, praises Him and gives Him thanks, worships and esteems Him, and prays to Him in the sweetness of its love. This is the flowing of

STANZA
XXV.

Many gifts :
but one
Spirit.

Attractions
of Divine
Love.

Interior acts
of the will
correspond-
ing to grace.

* Cant. i. 3.

† Ps. cxviii. 32.

STANZA
XXV.

the Divine balsam, which obeys the touch of the fire that issues forth from the consuming love for God which that fire kindled—the Divine balsam which comforts the soul and heals it with its odour and its substance.

The Bride in the Canticle speaks of this Divine touch, saying: ‘My Beloved put His hand through the key-hole, and my bowels were moved at His touch.’* The touch of the Beloved is the touch of love, and His hand is the grace He bestows upon the soul, and the hole by which His hand penetrated is the vocation and the perfection, at least the degree of perfection, of the soul; for according thereto will His touch be heavier or lighter, in proportion to its spiritual state. The bowels that were moved are the will, in which the touch is effected, and the moving of them is the stirring up of the desires and affections to love and praise God, which is the flowing of the balsam that runs forth at this contact.

God deals
with souls
according to
their
spiritual
state.

The strong
wine of love
for God.

‘The spiced wine’ is that exceeding great grace which God sometimes bestows upon advanced souls, when the Holy Spirit inebriates them with the sweet, luscious, and strong wine of love. Hence it is here called spiced wine, for as such wine is prepared by fermentation with many and divers aromatic and strong herbs; so this love, the gift of God to the perfect, is in the soul prepared and seasoned with virtues which it has already acquired. This love, seasoned with the precious spices, communicates to the soul such a strong abundant inebriation when God visits it, that it sends forth with great efficacy those acts of praise, love, and worship, which I referred to before, and that with a marvellous longing to do, and to suffer for Him.

This sweet inebriation and grace, however, do not pass quickly away, like the contact of the fire, for they are of longer continuance. The fire touches and passes, but the

* Cant. v. 4.

effects abide for a time. But the spiced wine at times remains long, and its effects also; this is the sweet love of the soul, and continues occasionally a day or two, sometimes even many days together, though not always in the same degree of intensity, because it is not in the power of the soul to control it. Sometimes the soul, without any effort of its own, is conscious of a most sweet interior inebriation, and of the Divine love burning within, as David saith: 'My heart grew hot within me, and in my meditation a fire shall flame out.'*

The outpourings of this inebriation last sometimes as long as the inebriation itself. At other times of this inebriation there are no outpourings; and they are more or less intense when they occur, in proportion to the greater or less intensity of the inebriation itself. But the outpourings, or effects of the fire, generally last longer than the fire which caused them; yea, rather the fire leaves them behind in the soul, and they are more vehement than those which proceed from the inebriation, for sometimes this Divine fire burns up and consumes the soul in love.

As I have mentioned fermented wine, it will be as well to touch upon the difference between it—we call it old wine—and new wine. For since the difference between old love and new love is the same, the comparison will furnish some hints of doctrine for spiritually-minded men. New wine has not settled on the lees, and therefore ferments over; we cannot ascertain its quality or value before it has settled, and the fermentation ceased, for until then there is great risk of its corruption. The taste of it is rough and sharp, and an immoderate draught of it intoxicates. Old wine has settled on the lees, and ferments no more like new wine; the quality of it is easily ascertained, and is now safe from corruption, for all fermentation which might have proved pernicious has

STANZA
XXV.

Touches of
God vary in
duration and
intensity.

Old wine
better than
new;

1. Fermentation over.
2. Quality ascertained.
3. Preservation secured.

4. It is
mellow and
wholesome.

STANZA
XXV.

entirely ceased. Well fermented wine is very rarely spoiled, the taste of it is pleasant, and its strength is in its own substance, not in the palate of him who drinks it, and the use thereof produces health and a sound constitution.

New lovers are compared to new wine—these are beginners in the service of God—because the fervour of their love manifests itself exteriorly in the senses; because they have not settled on the lees of their frail and imperfect sensitive nature; and because they measure the strength of love by the sweetness of it. Sensible sweetness gives them ordinarily their strength for good works, and it is by this they are influenced; we must, therefore, place no confidence in this love till the fermentation has subsided, and the sensible emotions have passed away. For as these fervours and this sensible warmth may incline men to good and to perfect love, and serve as an excellent means thereto, if men will but settle well on the lees of their imperfections; so also is it very easy at first, when sensible sweetness is fresh, for the wine of love to fail, for fervour to cool down, and sweetness to vanish. New lovers are always anxious, sensibly tormented by their love; it is requisite therefore for them to moderate this state. If they undertake much in the strength of this wine, their natural powers will be ruined with these anxieties and fatigues of the new wine, which is rough and sharp, and not made sweet in the perfect fermentation, which then takes place when the anxieties of love are over, as I shall show immediately.

The Wise Man employs the same illustration; saying, ‘A new friend is as new wine; it shall grow old, and thou shalt drink it with pleasure.’* Old lovers, therefore, those who have been tried and proved in the service of the Bridegroom, are like old wine settled on the lees; they have no sensible emotions, nor overflowing bursts of exterior zeal, but they

Beginners
compared to
new wine;

1. In their
sensible
emotions.

2. In their
defective
humility.

3. In their
want of
purity of
intention.

4. In their
lack of con-
stancy.

5. In their
indiscreet
zeal.

The Perfect
compared to
old wine;

* Ecclus. ix. 15.

taste the sweetness of the wine of love, now thoroughly fermented, free from the sensible sweetness of the love of beginners, but rather settled within the soul in the substance and sweetness of the spirit, and the reality of its acts. Such souls as these do not seek after sensible sweetness and fervours, neither do they accept them, lest they should suffer from loathing and weariness; for he who gives the reins to his desires in matters of the sensitive appetite, must of necessity suffer pain and loathing, both in mind and body.

Old lovers therefore, free from that spiritual sweetness which has its roots in the senses, suffer neither in sense nor spirit from the anxieties of love, and therefore scarcely ever prove faithless to God, because they have risen above that which might prove an occasion of falling, namely, the flesh. These now drink of the wine of love, which is not only fermented and settled on the lees, but spiced also with the aromatic herbs of perfect virtues, which will not allow it to corrupt, as may happen to new wine.

For this cause an old friend is of great price in the eyes of God, 'Forsake not an old friend, for the new will not be like to him.'* It is through this wine of love, tried and spiced, that the Divine Beloved produces in the soul that Divine inebriation, under the influence of which it sends forth to God the sweet and delicious outpourings. The meaning of these three lines, therefore, is as follows: 'At the touch of the fire' by which Thou stirrest up the soul, and by the spiced wine with which Thou dost so lovingly inebriate it, the soul pours forth the acts and movements of love which Thou producest in it.

STANZA
XXV.

1. In interior
purity.

2. In con-
stancy of
love.

3. In rich-
ness of tried
virtue.

* Ecclus. ix. 14.

INTRODUCTION.

STANZA
XXVI.
Happy state
of the soul
in Divine
Love.

SUCH, then, is the state of the blessed soul in the bed of flowers, where all these blessings, and more, are granted it. The seat of that bed is the Son of God, and the hangings of it are the charity and love of the Bridegroom Himself. The soul now may say, with the Bride: 'His left hand is under my head,'* and we may therefore say, in truth, that such a soul is clothed in God, and bathed in the Divinity, and that, not as it were on the surface, but in the interior spirit, and filled with the Divine delights in the abundance of the spiritual waters of life; it experiences that which David says of those who have drawn near unto God, 'They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house, and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure, for with Thee is the fountain of life.† This fulness will be in the very being of the soul, seeing that its drink is nothing else than the torrent of delights, which is the Holy Spirit, as it is written: 'And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb.‡ The waters of this river, which is the very love of God, pour into the soul, and make it drink of the torrent of love, which is the Spirit of the Bridegroom infused into the soul in union. Thence the soul in the overflowing of love sings the following stanza:

STANZA XXVI.

*In the inmost cellar
Of my Beloved have I drunk; and when I went forth
Over all the plain
I knew nothing,
And lost the flock I followed before.*

Here the soul speaks of that supreme grace of God in taking it to Himself into the house of His love, which is the union of it with Himself, or its transformation in love.

* Cant. ii. 6.

† Ps. xxxv. 9.

‡ Apoc. xxii. 1.

It describes two effects proceeding therefrom : its forgetfulness of, and detachment from, all the things of this world, and the mortification of its tastes and desires.

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XXVI.

‘In the inmost cellar.’ In order to explain in any degree the meaning of this, I have need of the special help of the Holy Ghost, to direct my hand and guide my pen. The cellar is the highest degree of love to which the soul may attain in this life, and is therefore said to be the inmost. It follows from this that there are other cellars not so interior; other degrees of love by which souls ascend upwards to this, the highest. These cellars are seven in number, and the soul has entered into them all when it has in perfection the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, so far as it is possible in this life. When the soul has the spirit of fear in perfection, it has in perfection also the spirit of love, inasmuch as this fear, the last of the seven gifts, is filial fear, and the perfect fear of a son proceeds from his perfect love for his father. Thus when the Holy Scriptures would describe one as having perfect charity, it says of him that he fears God. So the Prophet Isaias, announcing the perfections of Christ, saith of Him : ‘He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.’* Holy Simeon also is described by the Evangelist as a ‘just man full of fear,’† and the same applies to many others.

Seven degrees of perfection corresponding to the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Many souls reach and enter the first cellar, each according to the perfection of its love, but the last and inmost cellar is entered by few in this world, because those who do so must be in perfect union with God, the union of the spiritual marriage, of which I am here speaking. What God communicates to the soul in this intimate union is utterly ineffable, beyond the reach of all possible words—just as it is impossible to speak of God Himself, so as to convey any idea of what He is—because it is God Himself who com-

* Is. xi. 3.

† S. Luke ii. 25. Justus et timoratus.

STANZA
XXVI.

Illustrations
of union with
God by love.

municates Himself to the soul now in the marvellous glory of its transformation. In this high estate God and the soul are united, as the window is with the light, coal with the fire, and the light of the stars with that of the sun, yet, however, not so essentially and completely as it will be in the life to come. The soul, therefore, to show what it received from the hands of God in the cellar of wine, says nothing else, and I do not believe that anything else could be said but the words which follow:

‘Of my Beloved have I drunk.’ As a draught diffuses itself through all the members and veins of the body, so this communication of God diffuses itself substantially in the whole soul, or rather, the soul is transformed in God. In this transformation the soul drinks of God in its very substance and its spiritual powers. In the intellect it drinks wisdom and knowledge, in the will the sweetest love, in the memory refreshment and delight in the thought and sense of glory. That the soul receives and drinks delight in its very substance, appears from the words of the Bride in the Canticle: ‘My soul melted when He spoke;’* that is, when the Bridegroom communicated Himself to the soul.

That the intellect drinks wisdom is also evident from the words of the Bride longing and praying for the kiss of union: ‘There Thou shalt teach me, and I will give thee a cup of spiced wine.’† Thou shalt teach me wisdom and knowledge in love, and I will give Thee a cup of spiced wine, that is, my love mingled with Thine. The Bride further teaches us that the will drinks of love, saying, ‘He brought me into the cellar of wine, and set in order charity in me,’‡ that is, He gave me, accepted in love, to drink of love; or, to speak more clearly, he set in order charity in me, tempering His charity and suiting it to me. This is to give the soul to

* Cant. v. 6.

† Cant. viii. 2.

‡ Cant. ii. 4.

The soul
enjoys God in
its intellect,
will, and
memory.

drink of the very love of its Beloved, which the Beloved infuses into it.

There is a common notion that the will cannot love that of which the intellect has no cognisance. This, however, is to be understood in the order of nature, because it is impossible, in a natural way, to love anything unless we first know what it is. But in the supernatural order the axiom is not true; for God can infuse love without infusing knowledge, and increase it without increasing distinct knowledge, as is evident from the texts already quoted. Yea, many spiritual persons have experience of this, whose love for God burns more and more, while their knowledge grows not. Men may know little and love much, and on the other hand, know much and love but little. In general, spiritual men whose understanding in the things of God is not increasing, are yet advancing in the will. Faith infused by the way of the intellect suffices for them; because by means of it God infuses and increases charity in them and the acts thereof, and they love Him more and more though their knowledge is not increased. Thus the will may drink of love without the intellect's drinking in new knowledge. In the present instance, however, all the powers of the soul together, because of the union in the inmost cellar, drink of the Beloved.

In the order of grace the will may be more advanced in love, than the intellect in knowledge.

As to the memory, it is clear that the soul drinks of the Beloved in it, because it is enlightened with the light of the intellect in remembering the blessings it possesses and enjoys in union with the Beloved.

‘And when I went forth.’ This Divine draught deifies the soul, elevates and inebriates it in God, even in the time of its going forth, that is, when this grace has passed. Though the soul be always in the high estate of marriage ever since God has placed it there, yet actual union in all its powers is not continuous, though the substantial union abides. But in this substantial union the powers of the soul are most

STANZA
XXVI.

Not actual,
but habitual
union with
God, con-
tinuous.

First effect
of Divine
love,—Wise
ignorance.

Its formal
cause,—
what.

frequently in union, and drink of His cellar, the intellect by understanding, the will by loving, &c. We are not, therefore, to suppose that the soul, though saying that it went out, has ceased from its substantial or essential union with God, but only from the union of its faculties, which is not, and cannot be, permanent in this life; from this union then it went forth when it wandered over all the plain, that is, through the whole breadth of the world.

‘I knew nothing.’ This draught of God’s most deep wisdom makes the soul forget all the things of this world. The soul considers all its previous knowledge, and the knowledge of the whole world besides, but pure ignorance in comparison with His knowledge. Observe, here, that the formal cause of the soul’s ignoring the things of the world, when it has ascended to this high estate, is, that it is informed by supernatural knowledge, in the presence of which all natural and political science is ignorance rather than knowledge. Thus the soul, when raised up to this most sublime knowledge, understandeth thereby that all knowledge whatever other than this, is not knowledge, but ignorance, and that there is nothing else but this to be known. The very same truth is set before us by the Apostle, when he said that ‘the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.’* The soul therefore says of itself, that it knows nothing since it has drunk of the wisdom of God. This truth cannot be acknowledged—for according to the wisdom of men and of the world, it is simple ignorance, and unworthy of regard—except in the truth of God in the soul, communicating this wisdom to it, and strengthening it with the draught of love that it may see clearly. This is the meaning of Solomon when he said: ‘The vision which the man spoke, with whom God is, and who being strengthened by God abiding with him, said: I am the most foolish of men, and the wisdom of men is not with me.’†

* 1 Cor. iii. 19.

† Prov. xxx. 1, 2.

When the soul is elevated to this high wisdom of God, the wisdom of man is in its eyes the lowest ignorance: all natural science and the works of God if accompanied by ignorance of Him, are as ignorance; for where He is not known, there nothing is known. 'The deep things of God are foolishness to men.'* Thus the divinely wise and the worldly wise are fools in the estimation of each other; for the latter cannot understand the wisdom and science of God, nor the former those of the world. The wisdom of the world, therefore, is ignorance in comparison with the wisdom of God; and the wisdom of God is ignorance with respect to that of the world.

STANZA
XXVI.

No true
science with-
out God.

Moreover, this deification and elevation of the soul in God whereby it is, as it were, rapt and absorbed in love, and wholly united to God, suffer it not to dwell upon any worldly matter. The soul is now detached, not only from all exterior things, but even from itself: it is as it were annihilated, assumed by, and dissolved in, love; that is, it passes out of itself into the Beloved. Thus the Bride, in the Canticle, after speaking of her transformation by love into the Beloved, expresses her state of ignorance by the words 'I knew not.'† The soul is now in a certain sense, like Adam in paradise, who knew no evil. It is so innocent that it sees no evil; neither does it consider anything amiss. It will hear much that is evil, and will see it with its eyes, and yet it shall not be able to understand it, because it has no evil habits whereby to judge of it. God has rooted out of it those imperfect habits and that ignorance resulting from the evil of sin, by the perfect habit of true wisdom. Thus, also, the soul knows nothing on this subject.

The soul
forgets sin,
the world,
and self.

Such a soul will scarcely intermeddle with the affairs of others, because it forgets even its own; for the Spirit of God

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

† Cant. vi. 11.

STANZA
XXVI.

dwelling in it inclines it to ignore all things, especially such as do not minister to edification. The Spirit of God abides within the soul to withdraw it from outward things rather than to lead it among them; and thus the soul is in a state of ignorance. We are not, however, to suppose that it loses the habits of knowledge previously acquired, for such knowledge is improved by the more perfect habit of supernatural knowledge infused, though these habits be not so powerful as to necessitate knowledge through them, and yet there is no reason why they should not do so occasionally. In this union of the Divine Wisdom these habits are united with the higher wisdom of the other knowledge, as a little light with another which is great; it is the great light that shines overwhelming the less, yet the latter is not therefore lost, but rather perfected, though it be not the light which shines pre-eminently. This, I imagine, will be the state of things in Heaven; the acquired habits of knowledge in the Just will not be destroyed, though they will be of no great importance there, seeing that the Just will know more in the Divine Wisdom than by the habits acquired on earth.

But the particular notions and forms of things, acts of the imagination and every other apprehension having form and figure, are all lost and ignored in this absorbing love, and this for two reasons. First, the soul cannot actually attend to any thing of the kind, because it is actually absorbed by this draught of love. Secondly, and this is the principal reason, its transformation in God so conforms it to His purity and simplicity—for there is no form or imaginary figure in Him—as to render it pure, cleansed and empty of all the forms and figures it entertained before, being now purified and enlightened in simple contemplation. All spots and stains in the glass become invisible when the sun shines upon it, but they appear again as soon as the light of the sun is withheld. So is it with the soul; while the effects

Acquired
knowledge
perfected by
infused
knowledge.

State of the
Blessed in
Heaven.

Simplicity of
the know-
ledge of the
perfect soul;

1. It is
absorbed in
God.

2. It is con-
formed to
God.

of this act of love continue, this ignorance continues also, so that it cannot observe anything in particular until these effects have ceased. Love has set the soul on fire and transmuted it into love, has annihilated it and destroyed it as to all that is not love, according to the words of the Psalmist: 'My heart hath been inflamed, and my reins have been changed; and I am brought to nothing, and I knew not.'* The changing of the reins, because the heart is inflamed, is the changing of the soul, in all its desires and actions, in God, into a new manner of life, the utter undoing and annihilation of the old man. This is what the royal Prophet meant when he said that he was brought to nothing and knew not.

These are the two effects of drinking the wine of the cellar of God; not only is all previous knowledge brought to nothing, and made to vanish away, but the old life also with its imperfections is destroyed, and into the new man renewed; this is the second of the two effects mentioned here.

'And lost the flock I followed before.' Until the soul reaches the state of perfection, however spiritual it may be, there is always a troop of desires, likings and imperfections, sometimes natural, sometimes spiritual, after which it runs, and which it strives to feed while following and satisfying them. With regard to the intellect, there are certain imperfections of the desire of knowledge. With regard to the will, certain likings and peculiar desires, whether in temporal things, as the wish to possess certain trifles, and attachment to some things more than to others, certain prejudices, considerations, and punctilios, with other vanities of the like nature, still savouring of the world: or in natural things, such as in eating and drinking, the preference of one kind of food over another, and the choice of what is best: or

Second effect
of Divine
love,—Self-
denial in
sense and
spirit.

* Ps. lxxii. 21, 22.

STANZA
XXVI.

in spiritual things, such as seeking for sweetness, and other follies of spiritual persons not yet perfect, too numerous to recount here. As to the memory, there are there many inconsistencies, anxieties, unseemly reminiscences, which drag the soul captive after them.

The four passions of the soul also involve it in many useless hopes, joys, griefs and fears, after which it runs. As to this flock, as I have called it, some men are more influenced by it than others; they run after and follow it, until they enter the inmost cellar, where they lose it altogether, being then transformed in love. In that cellar the flock of imperfections is quickly lost, as rust and mould on metal is lost in fire. Then the soul feels itself free from the pettiness of self-likings and the vanities after which it ran before, and sings, I have lost the flock which I followed after.

INTRODUCTION.

Infinite love
and tender-
ness of God.

GOD communicates Himself to the soul in this interior union with so much reality of love that a mother's love towards her child, the love of a brother, or the affection of a friend, are not to be compared with it. Such is the tenderness and love with which the Infinite Father comforts and exalts the humble and loving soul. O wonders worthy of all awe and reverence! He humbles Himself in reality before that soul that he may exalt it, as if He were the servant, and the soul His lord. He is as anxious to comfort it, as if He were a slave, and the soul God. Such is the depth of the humility and tenderness of God. In this communion of love He renders those services to the soul which He says in the Gospel, He will perform for the elect in Heaven. 'Amen, I

say to you, that He will gird Himself and make them sit down to meat, and will come and serve them.*

This very service He renders now to the soul, comforting and cherishing it, as a mother her child whom she nurtures in her bosom. And the soul recognises herein the truth of what the Prophet said, 'You shall be carried at the breasts, and upon the knees they shall caress you.†' What must the feelings of the soul be amid these supreme mercies? How it will melt away in love, beholding the bosom of God opened for it with such overflowing love. When the soul perceives itself in the midst of these delights, it surrenders itself wholly to God, gives to Him the breasts of its own will and love, and under the influence thereof addresses the Beloved in the words of the Bride saying, 'I to my Beloved, and his turning is towards me. Come my Beloved, let us go forth into the field, let us abide in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vineyard flourish, if the flowers be ready to bring forth fruits, if the pomegranates flourish; there will I give Thee my breasts,' that is, I will employ all the joy and power of my will in the service of Thy love. This mutual surrender in this union of the soul and God is the subject of the stanza which follows:—

STANZA XXVII.

*There He gave me His breasts,
There He taught me the science full of sweetness.
And there I gave to Him
Myself without reserve;
There I promised to be His bride.*

Here the soul speaks of the two contracting parties in this spiritual betrothal, itself and God. In the inmost cellar of

* S. Luke xii. 37.

† Is. lxvi. 12.

love they both met together, God giving to the soul the breasts of His love freely, whereby He instructs it in His mysteries and knowledge, and the soul also actually surrendering itself, making no reservation whatever either in its own favour or in that of others, promising to be His for ever.

‘There He gave me His breasts.’ To give the breast to another is to love and cherish him and communicate one’s secrets to him as a friend. The soul says here that God gave it His breasts, that is, He gave it His love and communicated His secrets to it. It is thus that God deals with the soul in this state as it appears also from the words that follow :—

‘There He taught me the science full of sweetness.’ This science is Mystical Theology, which is the secret science of God and which spiritual men call contemplation. It is most full of sweetness because it is knowledge by love, love is the master of it, and it is love that renders it so sweet. Inasmuch as this science and knowledge are communicated to the soul in that love with which God communicates Himself, it is therefore sweet to the intellect, because the object of intellect is science, and sweet to the will, because it comes by love which is the object of the will.

‘There I gave to Him myself without reserve.’ The soul, in this sweet draught of God, surrenders itself to Him most willingly and with great sweetness; it desires to be wholly His, and to retain nothing in itself which is unbecoming His Majesty. God is the author of this union, and of the purity and perfection requisite for it; and as the transformation of the soul in Himself makes it His, He empties it of all that is alien to Himself. Thus it comes to pass that, not in will only but in act as well, the whole soul is entirely given to God without any reserve whatever, as God has given Himself freely unto it. The will of God and of the soul are both satisfied, each given up to the other, in mutual delight, so

that neither fails the other in the faith and constancy of the betrothal.

STANZA
XXVII.

‘There I promised to be His bride.’ As a bride does not give her love to another, and as all her thoughts and actions are directed to her bridegroom only, so the soul now has no affections of the will, no acts of the intellect, neither object nor occupation of any kind which it does not wholly refer unto God, together with all its desires. The soul is as it were absorbed in God, and even its first movements have nothing in them—so far as it can comprehend them—which is at variance with the will of God. The first movements of an imperfect soul in general are, at least, inclined to evil, in the intellect, the memory, the will, in its desires and imperfections; but those of the soul, which has attained to the spiritual state of which I am speaking, are ordinarily directed to God, because of the great help and courage it derives from Him, and its perfect conversion to goodness. This is set forth with great clearness by David, when he saith: ‘Shall not my soul be subject to God? For from Him is my salvation. For He is my God and my Saviour; He is my protector, I shall be moved no more.’* ‘He is my protector’ means, that the soul being now received under the protection of God and united to Him, could be no longer liable to any movements contrary to God.

First movements of a perfect soul directed to God.

It is quite clear from all this that the soul, which has attained to the spiritual betrothal, knows nothing else but the love of the Bridegroom and the delights thereof, because it has arrived at perfection, the form and substance of which is love, according to S. Paul.† The more a soul loves, the more perfect it is in its love, and hence it follows, that the soul, which is already perfect, is, if we may say so, all love, all its actions are love, all its energies and strength are love. It gives up all it has, like the wise merchant in the Gospel;‡

Love the form and substance of perfection.

* Ps. lxi. 2, 3.

† Coloss. iii. 14.

‡ S. Matth. xiii. 44.

STANZA
XXVII.

for this treasure of love hidden in God, and which is so precious in His sight, that the Beloved cares for nothing else but love; the soul, therefore, seeing this, and anxious to serve Him perfectly, occupies itself wholly with pure love for God, not only because love does so occupy it, but also because the love, wherein it is united, influences it towards love for God in and through all things. As the bee draws honey from all plants, and makes use of them only for that end, so the soul most easily draws the sweetness of love from all that happens to it; it makes all things subserve it towards loving God, whether they be sweet or bitter. The soul now animated and protected by love, has no sense, feeling, or knowledge, because, as I have said, it knows nothing but love, and all its occupations and pleasures are the joys of love for God. This forms the subject of the following stanza.

The soul compared to a bee,—why.

INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE said that God is pleased with nothing but love; but before I explain this, it will be as well to set forth the grounds on which the assertion rests. All our works, and all our labours, how grand soever they may be, are nothing in the sight of God, for we can give Him nothing, neither can we by them fulfil His desire, which is the growth of our soul; as to Himself he desires nothing of this, for he has need of nothing, and so, if He is pleased with anything it is with the growth of the soul; and as there is no way in which the soul grows more than in becoming in a manner equal to Him, for this reason only is He pleased with our love. It is the property of love to place him who loves on an equality with the object of his love. Hence the soul, because of its perfect love, is called the bride of the Son of God, which signifies

God pleased with nothing but love.

Because love accomplishes the soul's growth, which He desires.

equality with Him. In this equality and friendship all things are common, as the Bridegroom Himself said to His disciples: 'I have called you friends, because all things, whatsoever I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you.'*

STANZA
XXVIII.

STANZA XXVIII.

*My soul is occupied,
And all my substance in His service;
Now I guard no flock,
Nor have I any other employment:
My sole occupation is love.*

The soul, or rather the bride, having given herself wholly to the Bridegroom without any reserve whatever, now recounts to the Beloved how she fulfils her task. My soul and body she says, all my abilities and all my capacities, are occupied, not with other matters, but with those pertaining to the service of my Beloved. She therefore seeketh not her own proper satisfaction, nor the gratification of her own inclinations, neither does she occupy herself in anything whatever which is alien to God; yea, even her communion with God Himself is nothing else but love, inasmuch as she has changed her former mode of conversing with Him into love.

The soul
centred on
love.

'My soul is occupied.' This refers to the soul's surrender of itself to the Beloved in this union of love, wherein it consecrates itself, with all its faculties, intellect, will, and memory, to His service. The intellect is occupied in understanding what tends to His service, in order that it might be accomplished; the will, in loving all that is pleasing to God, and in desiring Him in all things; the memory, in recalling what ministers to Him, and what may be more pleasing unto Him.

Intellect,
will, and
memory
unite in
serving God.

'And all my substance in His service.' By substance here is meant all that relates to the sensitive part of the soul, which

* S. John xv. 15.

STANZA
XXVIII.

Body and
soul wholly
devoted to
God.

includes the body, with all its powers, interior and exterior, together with all its natural capacities, that is, the four passions, the natural desires, and the whole substance of the soul, all of which is employed in the service of the Beloved, as well as the rational and 'spiritual part, as I explained in the previous section. As to the body, that is now ordered according to God in all its interior and exterior senses, all the acts of which are directed to God; the four passions of the soul are also under control in Him; for the soul's rejoicing, hope, fear, and grief are conversant with God only; all its appetites, and all its anxieties also, have regard only unto Him.

The whole substance of the soul is now so occupied with God, so intent upon Him, that its very first movements, even inadvertently, have God for their object and their end. The intellect, memory, and will tend directly to God; the affections, senses, desires, and longings, hope and joy, the whole substance of the soul, rise instantly towards God, though the soul is not making any conscious efforts in that direction. Such a soul as this doeth continually the work of God, is intent upon Him and His works, without thinking or reflecting on what it is doing for Him. The constant and habitual practice of this has suppressed all conscious reflection, and even those acts of fervour also which were present to it in the beginning of its conversion. The whole substance of the soul being thus occupied, what follows cannot but be true also.

Unconscious
love of the
perfect soul.

'Now I guard no flock.' I do not now go after my likings and desires, for having now fixed them all upon God, I now neither feed nor guard them. The soul not only does not guard them now, but has no other occupation than to wait upon God.

'Nor have I any other employment.' Before the soul suc-

ceeded in effecting this gift and surrender of itself, and of all its substance, to the Beloved, it was entangled in many unprofitable occupations, by which it sought to serve itself and others. It may be said of it, that its occupations of this kind corresponded with its habitual imperfections.

Habitual imperfections,—what, and how remedied.

These habitual imperfections may have been unprofitable conversations, thoughts, and acts, and the usage of them in a manner which did not tend to perfection. There are other desires also, serving to the satisfaction of others, such as ostentation, compliments, flattering speeches, personal consideration, seeking after the appearance of good, pleasing the world at large, with many other vanities whereby we seek to satisfy the world, wasting herein many anxious thoughts and acts, and, finally, the very substance of the soul. Such employment as this the soul has now abandoned, for all its words, thoughts, and works are directed to God, and conversant with Him, freed from their previous imperfections. It is as if the soul said: I follow no longer either my own or other men's likings, neither do I occupy or entertain myself with useless pastimes, or the things of this world.

Love in work, prayer, and suffering.

'My sole occupation is love.' All my occupation now is the practice of love for God, all the powers of soul and body, memory, intellect, and will, interior and exterior senses, the desires of the spiritual and of the sensitive nature, all work in and by love. All I do is done in love; all I suffer, I suffer in the sweetness of love. This is the meaning of David when he said: 'I will keep my strength to Thee.'*

When the soul has arrived at this state all the acts of its spiritual and sensitive nature, whether active or passive, and of whatever kind they may be, always occasion an increase of love and delight in God: even the act of prayer and com-

* Ps. lviii. 10.

STANZA
XXVIII.Prayer made
by loving.

munion with God, which was once carried on by reflections and divers other methods, is now wholly an act of love. So much so is this the case that the soul may always say, whether occupied with temporal or spiritual things, 'My sole occupation is love.' Happy life! happy state! and happy soul which has attained to it! where all is the very substance of love, the joyous delights of the betrothal, in which it may address the Beloved as the Bride in the Canticle: 'The new and the old, my Beloved, have I kept for Thee.'* All that is bitter and painful I keep for Thy sake, all that is sweet and pleasant I keep for Thee. The meaning of the words is that the soul, in the state of spiritual espousals, is for the most part living in the union of love, that is, the will is habitually waiting lovingly on God.

All things,—
new and old,
bitter and
sweet,—kept
for the
Beloved.

INTRODUCTION.

OF a truth the soul is now lost to all things, and gained only to love, and the mind is now no longer occupied with anything else. It is, therefore, deficient in what concerns the active life, and other exterior duties, that it may apply in earnest only to the one thing which the Bridegroom has pronounced necessary; † and that is, waiting upon God, and the continuous practice of His love. So precious is this in the eyes of God that He rebuked Martha, because she would withdraw Mary from His feet to occupy her actively in the service of our Lord. Martha thought that she was doing everything herself, and that Mary at the feet of Christ was doing nothing. But it was far otherwise: for there is nothing more important or more necessary than love. Thus, in the Canticle, the Bridegroom protects the Bride, adjuring the

Mary and
Martha.

* Cant. vii. 13.

† S. Luke x. 42.

daughters of Jerusalem, that is, all created things, not to disturb her spiritual sleep of love, nor to waken her, nor to let her open her eyes to anything till she pleased. 'I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you stir not up, nor awake my beloved till she please.' *

STANZA
XXIX.

Observe, however, that if the soul has not reached the state of unitive love, it is necessary for it to make acts of love, as well in the active as in the contemplative life. But when it has advanced so far, it is not requisite it should occupy itself in other and exterior duties—unless they be matters of obligation—which might hinder, were it but for a moment, the life of love, though they may be most profitable in themselves; because an instant of pure love is more precious in the eyes of God and the soul, and more profitable to the Church than all other good works together, though it may seem as if nothing were done. Thus, Mary Magdalen, though her preaching was most edifying, and might have been still more so afterwards, out of the great desire she had to please God and benefit the Church, hid herself in the desert thirty years, that she might surrender herself entirely to love; for she considered that she would gain more in that way, because an instant of pure love is so much more profitable and important to the Church.

Love for God
the best
means of
doing good
to others.

Example of
S. Mary
Magdalen.

When the soul has attained in any degree to the spirit of solitary love, we must not interfere with it. We should inflict a grievous wrong upon it, and upon the Church also, if we were to occupy it, were it only for a moment, in exterior or active duties, however important they might be. When God himself adjures all not to waken it from its love, who shall venture to do so, and be blameless? And after all, is it not for this love that we are all created? Let those men of zeal, who think by their preaching and exterior works, to

To love God,
the end of our
creation.

* Cant. iii. 5.

STANZA
XXIX.

Advice to
those who are
engaged in
active works.

convert the world, consider that they would be much more edifying to the Church, and more pleasing unto God—setting aside the good example they would give—if they would spend at least one half of their time in quiet prayer, even though they have not attained to the state of unitive love. Certainly in that case they would effect greater good, and with less trouble, by one single good work than by a thousand: because of the merit of their prayer, and the spiritual strength it supplies. To act otherwise is to beat the air, to do little more than nothing, sometimes nothing and occasionally even mischief; for God may give up such persons to vanity, so that they may seem to have done something, when in reality their outward occupations have no fruit at all; for it is quite certain that good works cannot be done but in the power of God. O how much might be written on this subject! this, however, is not the place for it.

Good works
can only be
done in the
power of
God.

I have said this with a view to explain the stanza that follows, in which the soul replies to those who call in question its holy tranquillity, who will have it wholly occupied with outward duties, that its light may shine before the world: these persons have no conception of the fibres and the unseen root whence the sap is drawn, and which nourish the fruit.

STANZA XXIX.

*If then on the common
I am no longer seen or found,
Say that I am lost;
That being enamoured,
I lost myself; and yet I gained.*

The soul replies to a tacit objection of the world. The worldly-minded are in the habit of censuring those who give themselves up in earnest to God; they look upon them as extravagant, in their withdrawal from the world, and in their whole manner of life. They say also of them that they

are useless in all important affairs, and lost to all that the world esteems and values. The soul replies to this objection in the most perfect way, setting its face boldly against it and any other which the world might invent. Having attained to the reality of God's love it despises all this; it even admits the censure to be true to its fullest extent, and boasts of its extravagance, and its abandonment of the world, and even of itself, for its Beloved. What the soul here says, addressing itself to the world, is in substance this:—If you see me no longer occupied with the subjects that engrossed me once, with the pastimes of the world, say and believe that I am lost to them, and a stranger to them, yea, that I am lost of my own choice, seeking my Beloved whom I so greatly love. And that they may see that the soul's loss is gain, and not consider it folly and delusion, it adds, that its loss was gain, and that it therefore lost itself deliberately.

STANZA
XXIX.
Objection of
the world to
the con-
templative
life.

Answer
thereto.

‘If then on the common I am no longer seen or found.’ The common is a public place where people assemble for recreation, and where shepherds feed their flocks. By the common here is meant the world in general, where men amuse themselves and feed the herd of their desires. The soul says to the worldly-minded: ‘If you see me no more where I used to be before I gave myself up wholly to God, look upon me as lost, and say so:’ the soul ever rejoices in that and would have men so speak of it.

‘Say that I am lost.’ He who loves is not ashamed in the presence of men of what he does for God, neither does he conceal what he does through a false modesty, though the whole world should condemn it. He who shall be ashamed to confess the Son of God before men, neglecting to do His work, the Son of God also will be ashamed to acknowledge such an one in the presence of His Father. ‘He that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father

Necessity of
confessing
Christ before
men.

STANZA
XXIX.

Who is in heaven.’* The soul, therefore, in the spirit of love glories in what ministers to the honour of the Beloved, in that it has done anything for Him in being lost to the things of the world.

God has few
true lovers.

But few spiritual persons arrive at this noble courage and resolution in their conduct. For though some attempt to practise it, and some even think themselves proficient therein, still they never entirely lose themselves on certain points connected with the world or self, so as to be perfectly detached for the sake of Christ, despising appearances and the opinion of the world. These can never answer, ‘Say that I am lost,’ because they are not lost to themselves, and are still ashamed to confess Christ before men through human respect; these do not therefore really live in Christ.

‘That being enamoured,’ that is, practising virtues for the love of God.

‘I lost myself; and yet I gained.’ The soul remembers well the words of the Bridegroom in the Gospel: ‘No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other,’† and therefore, in order not to lose God, loses all that is not God, that is, all created things, even itself, being lost to all things for the love of Him. He who truly loves makes shipwreck of himself in all else that he may gain the more in the object of his love. Thus the soul says that it has lost itself, that is, deliberately, of set purpose.

The soul loses
1. Self.

This loss occurs in two ways. The soul loses itself, making no account whatever of itself, but referring all to the Beloved, resigning itself freely into His hands without any selfish views, losing itself deliberately, and seeking nothing for itself. Secondly, it loses itself in all things, making no account of anything save that which concerns the Beloved. This is to lose

2. All things
else.

* S. Matth. x. 33.

† Ib. vi. 24.

oneself, that is, to be willing that others should have all things. Such is he that loves God; he seeks neither gain nor reward, but only to lose all, even himself according to God's will; this is what such an one counts gain. This is real gain, for the Apostle saith, 'to die is gain;'^{*} that is, to die for Christ is my gain and profit spiritually. This is why the soul says that it 'gained;' for he who knows not how to lose, gains not, but rather loses himself, as our Saviour teaches us in the Gospel, saying, 'He that will save his life shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.'[†]

But if we wish to enter into the deeper spiritual signification of this line, and its peculiar fitness to the subject before us, it is as follows:—When a soul has advanced so far on the spiritual road as to be lost to all the natural methods of communing with God; when it seeks Him no longer by meditation, images, impressions, nor by any other created ways, or representations of sense, but only by rising above them all, in the joyful communion with Him by faith and love, then it may be said to have gained God of a truth, because it has truly lost itself as to all that is not God, and also as to its own self.

God gained
by faith,
love, and
poverty of
spirit.

INTRODUCTION.

THE soul being thus gained, all its works are gain, for all its powers are exerted in the spiritual intercourse of most sweet interior love with the Beloved. The interior communications between God and the soul are now so delicious, so full of sweetness that no mortal tongue can describe them, nor human intellect comprehend them. As a bride on the

* Phil. i. 21.

† S. Matth. xvi. 25.

STANZA
XXX.

day of her espousals attends to nothing but to the joyous festival of her love, and brings all her jewels and ornaments for the pleasure of her spouse, and as he too in the same way exhibits his own magnificence for the pleasure of his bride, so is it also in the spiritual espousals where the soul feels that which the Bride says in the Canticle, 'I to my Beloved and my Beloved to me.'* The virtues and graces of the bride-soul, the grandeur and magnificence of the Bridegroom, the Son of God, come forth into the light, for the celebration of the nuptial feast, each communicating to the other their goods and joys with the wine of the sweet love of the Holy Ghost. The present stanza, addressed to the Bridegroom by the soul, has this for its subject.

STANZA XXX.

*Of emeralds, and of flowers
In the early morning culled,
We will make the garlands,
Flowering in Thy love,¹
And bound together with one hair of my head.*

The Bride now turns to the Bridegroom and addresses Him in the intercourse and comfort of their love. The subject of this stanza is the solace and delight which the bride-soul and the Son of God find in the possession of the virtues and gifts of each other, and in the mutual practice thereof, both rejoicing in their mutual love. Thus the soul, addressing the Beloved, says, that they will make garlands rich in graces and acquired virtues, obtained at the fitting and convenient season, beautiful and gracious in the love He bears the soul, and kept together by the love which it itself has for Him. This rejoicing in virtue is what is meant by making garlands, for the soul and God rejoice together in

* Cant. vi. 2.

The soul all
for Christ,
and Christ
all to the
soul.

these virtues bound up as flowers in a garland, in the common love which each bears the other.

STANZA
XXX.

‘Of emeralds, and of flowers.’ The flowers are the virtues of the soul; the emeralds are the gifts it has received from God.

‘In the early morning culled.’ That is, acquired in youth, which is the early morning of life. They are said to be culled, because the virtues which we acquire in youth are chosen virtues most pleasing unto God; because youth is the season when our vices most resist the acquisition of them, and when our natural inclinations are most prone to lose them. Those virtues also are more perfect which we acquire in early youth. This time of our life is the early morning; for as the freshness of the spring morning is more agreeable than any other part of the day, so also are the virtues acquired in our youth more pleasing in the sight of God. We may by the fresh morning also understand those acts of love by which we acquire virtue, and which are more pleasing unto God than the fresh morning is to the sons of men. Also good works, wrought in the season of spiritual dryness and hardness; this is the freshness of the winter morning, and what we then do for God in dryness of spirit is most precious in His eyes. Then it is that we acquire virtues and graces abundantly; and what we thus acquire with toil and labour is better, more perfect and durable than what we acquire in comfort and spiritual sweetness; for virtue sends forth its roots in the season of dryness, toil, and trial: as it is written, ‘Virtue is made perfect in infirmity.’* It is with a view to show forth the excellence of these virtues, of which the garland is wrought for the Beloved, that the soul says of them that they have been culled in the freshness of the morning; because it is these flowers alone, with the emeralds

Virtues most
pleasing to
God—when
acquired;

1. In youth.

2. By love.

3. In dryness
of spirit.

* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

STANZA
XXX.

The soul
adorned with
graces as
with a gar-
land of
flowers.

of virtue, the choice and perfect graces, and not the imperfect, which are pleasing to the Beloved.

‘We will make the garlands.’ All the virtues and graces which the soul, and God in it, acquire, are as a garland of divers flowers, wherewith the soul is marvellously adorned, as with a vesture of rich embroidery. As material flowers are gathered, and then formed into a garland, so the spiritual flowers of virtues and graces are acquired and set in order in the soul; and when the acquisition is complete, the garland of perfection is complete also. The soul and the Bridegroom rejoice in it, both beautiful, adorned with the garland, as in the state of perfection.

These are the garlands which the soul says they will make. That is, it will wreath itself with this variety of flowers, with the emeralds of virtues and perfect gifts, that it may present itself worthily before the face of the King, and be on an equality with Him, sitting as a queen on His right hand; for it has merited this exaltation by its beauty. Thus David saith, addressing himself to Christ: ‘The queen stood on Thy right hand in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety.’* That is, at His right hand, clothed in perfect love, surrounded with the variety of graces and perfect virtues. The soul does not say, I will make garlands, nor, Thou wilt make them, but, We will make them, not separately, but both together; because the soul cannot practise virtues alone, nor acquire them alone, without the help of God; neither does God alone, on the other hand, create virtue in the soul, without the soul’s concurrence. Though it be true, as the Apostle saith, that ‘every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of light,’ † still they enter into no soul without that soul’s concurrence and consent. Thus the Bride saith to the Spouse: ‘Draw me; we

Two elements
of virtue;
1. Grace of
God.
2. Act of
man.

* Ps. xliv. 10.

† S. James i. 17.

will run after thee.* Every inclination to good comes from God alone, as we learn here; but as to running, that is, good works, they proceed from God and the soul together, and it is therefore written, 'We will run,' that is, both together, but not God or the soul alone.

These words may also be fittingly applied to Christ and His Church, which, as His Bride, says unto Him, We will make the garlands. In this application of the words, the garlands are the holy souls born to Christ in the Church. Every such soul is by itself a garland adorned with the flowers of virtues and graces, and all of them together a garland for the head of Christ the Bridegroom. We may also understand by these beautiful garlands the crowns formed by Christ and the Church, of which there are three kinds. The first is formed of the beauty and white flowers of the Virgins, each one with her Virginal crown, and all together forming one for their Bridegroom Christ. The second, of the brilliant flowers of the holy Doctors, each with his crown of doctor, and all together forming one above that of the virgins on the head of Christ. The third is composed of the purple flowers of the Martyrs, each with his own crown of martyrdom, and all united into one for the final coronet on the head of Christ. Adorned with these garlands He will be so beautiful, and so lovely to behold, that Heaven itself will repeat the words of the Bride in the Canticle, saying: 'Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see king Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the joy of his heart.† These are the garlands of which the soul says:

'Flowering in Thy love.' The flowering of good works and virtues is the grace and power which they derive from the love of God, without which they not only flower not, but

STANZA
XXX.

Divine grace
goes before,
and with,
the human
will.

Christ
adorned by
the triple
crown of His
Saints;

1. White of
Virgins.

2. Luminous
of Doctors.

3. Purple of
Martyrs.

* Cant. i. 3.

† Cant. iii. 11.

STANZA
XXX.

become even dry, and worthless in the eyes of God, though they may be humanly perfect. But if He gives His grace and love, they flourish in His love.

No virtue
without
charity.

‘And bound together with one hair of my head.’ The hair here is the will of the soul, and the love it bears the Beloved. This love performs the function of the thread that keeps the garland together. For as a thread binds the flowers of a garland, so love knits together and sustains virtues in the soul. ‘Charity,’ that is, love, saith the Apostle, ‘is the bond of perfection.’* Love binds the virtues and supernatural gifts together, so that if love fails by our departure from God, all our virtue perishes also, just as the flowers drop from the garland, when the thread that bound them together is broken. It is not enough for God’s gift of virtues, that He should love us, but we too must love Him in order to receive them, and preserve them.

God must be
loved with
singleness of
heart.

The soul speaks of one hair, not of many, to show that the will by itself is fixed on God, detached from all other hairs; that is, from strange love. This points out the great price and worth of the garlands of virtues; for when love is single, firmly fixed on God, such as it is here described, the virtues also are entire, perfect, and flowering in the love of God; for the love He bears the soul is beyond all price, and the soul also knows it well.

Leviathau a
type of
Satan.

Were I to attempt a description of the beauty of that binding of the flowers and emeralds together, or of the strength and majesty which their harmonious arrangement furnishes to the soul, or the beauty and grace of its embroidered vesture, expressions and words would fail me; for if God says of the evil spirit, ‘His body is like molten shields, shut close up with scales, pressing upon one another; one is joined to another, and not so much as any air can come between them;’† if the

* Coloss. iii. 14.

† Job xli. 6, 7.

evil spirit be so strong, because covered with malice thus compacted together—for the scales that cover his body, like molten shields, are malice, and malice is in itself but weakness—what must be the strength of the soul that is clothed in virtues so compacted and united together that no impurity nor imperfection can penetrate between them; each virtue severally adding strength to strength, beauty to beauty, wealth to wealth, and to majesty dominion and grandeur? What a marvellous vision will be that of the Bride-soul, when it shall sit on the right hand of the Bridegroom-King, crowned with graces! ‘How beautiful are thy steps in shoes, O prince’s daughter!’* The soul is called a prince’s daughter because of the power it receives; and if the beauty of the steps in shoes be great, what must be that of the whole vesture? Not only is the beauty of the soul crowned with admirable flowers, but its strength also, flowing from the harmonious order of the flowers, intertwined with the emeralds of its innumerable graces, is terrible: ‘Terrible as an army set in array.’† For, as these virtues and gifts of God refresh the soul with their spiritual perfume, so also, when united in it, do they, out of their substance, minister strength. Thus, in the Canticle, when the Bride was weak, languishing with love—because she had not been able to bind together the flowers and the emeralds with the hair of her love—and anxious to strengthen herself by that union of them, cries out: ‘Stay me with flowers, compass me about with apples; because I languish with love.’‡ The flowers are the virtues, and the apples are the other graces.

STANZA
XXX.

Virtue
stronger
than Vice.

* Cant. vii. 1.

† Ib. vi. 3.

‡ Ib. ii. 5.

INTRODUCTION.

STANZA
XXXI.

Love the
cause of
Perfection,
i. e. Union
with God.

I BELIEVE I have now shown how the intertwining of the garlands, and their lasting presence in the soul, explains the Divine union of love which now exists between the soul and God. The Bridegroom, as He saith Himself, is 'the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys,'* and the soul's love is the hair that unites to itself this flower of flowers. Love is the most precious of all things, because it is the 'bond of perfection,' and perfection is union with God. The soul is, as it were, a sheaf of garlands, seeing that it is the subject of glory, no longer what it was before, but the very perfect flower of flowers in perfection, and the beauty of them all; for the thread of love binds so closely God and the soul, and so unites them that it transforms them and makes them one by love; so that, though in essence different, yet in glory the soul seems God and God the soul. Such is this marvellous union, which baffles all description.

God and the
soul one, not
in essence,
but by love.

David and
Jonathan.

We may form some conception of it from the love of David and Jonathan, whose 'soul was knit with the soul of David.' † If the love of one man for another can be thus strong, so as to knit two souls together, what must that love of God be which can knit the soul of man to God the Bridegroom? God Himself is here the Suitor Who in the omnipotence of His unfathomable love absorbs the soul with greater violence and efficacy than a torrent of fire the morning dew which resolves itself into air. The hair, therefore, which accomplishes such a union must, of necessity, be most strong and subtile, seeing that it penetrates and binds together so effectually the soul and God. In the present stanza the soul declares the qualities of this hair.

* Cant. ii. 1.

† 1 Kings xviii. 1.

STANZA XXXI.

*By that one hair
Thou hast observed fluttering on my neck,
And hast regarded on my neck,
Thou wert captivated ;
And wounded by one of my eyes.*

There are three things mentioned here. The first is, that the love, by which the virtues are bound together, is nothing less than a strong love ; for in truth it need be so, in order to preserve them. The second is, that God is greatly taken by this hair of love, seeing it to be alone and strong. The third is, that God is deeply enamoured of the soul, beholding the purity and integrity of its faith.

 STANZA
XXXI.

‘ By that one hair Thou hast observed fluttering on my neck.’ The neck signifies that strength in which, it is said, fluttered the hair of love, strong love, which bound the virtues together. It is not sufficient for the preservation of virtues that love be alone, it must be also strong, so that no contrary vice may anywhere destroy the perfection of the garland ; for the virtues are so bound up together in the soul by the hair, that if the thread be once broken, all the virtues are lost ; for where one virtue is, all are, and where one fails, all fail also. The hair is said to flutter on the neck, because its love of God, without any impediment whatever, flutters strongly and lightly in the strength of the soul. As the air causes the hair to wave and flutter on the neck, so the breath of the Holy Ghost stirs the strong love that it may fly upwards unto God ; for without this Divine wind, which excites the powers of the soul to the practice of Divine love, all the virtues the soul may possess become ineffectual and fruitless. The Beloved observed the hair fluttering on the neck, that is, He considered it with particular attention and regard ; because strong love is a great attraction for the eyes of God.

Love for God
must be
strong.

Mutual
dependence
of virtues.

‘And hast regarded on my neck.’ This shews us that God not only esteems this love, seeing it alone, but also loves it, seeing it strong; for to say that God regards is to say that He loves, and to say that He observes is to say that He esteems what He observes. The word neck is repeated in this line, because it—that is, the strength of the soul—is the cause why God loves it so much. It is as if the soul said, Thou hast loved it, seeing it strong without weakness or fear, and without any other love, and flying upwards swiftly and fervently.

Until now God had not looked upon this hair, so as to be captivated by it, because He had not seen it alone, separate from the others, withdrawn from other loves, feelings, and affections, which hindered it from fluttering alone on the neck of strength. Afterwards, however, when mortifications and trials, temptations and penance had detached it, and made it strong, so that nothing whatever could break it, then God beholds it, and is taken by it, and binds the flowers of the garlands with it; for it is now so strong that it can keep the virtues united together in the soul. I have already described, in the treatise of the *Obscure Night*, what these temptations and trials are, how deeply they affect the soul, and strengthen it so that it shall attain to this strength of love in which God unites Himself with it. I shall also say something on the same subject when I explain the four stanzas which begin with the words, ‘O living flame of love!’ The soul having passed through these trials, acquires such a degree of love that it merits the Divine union.

‘Thou wert captivated.’ O joyful wonder! God captive to a hair. The reason of this capture so precious is that God was pleased to observe the fluttering of the hair on the soul’s neck; for where God regards He loves. If He in His grace and mercy had not first looked upon us and loved

us,* as S. John saith, and humbled Himself to our vileness, He never would have been taken by the fluttering of the hair of our miserable love. His flight is not so low as that our love could lay hold of the Divine Bird, attract His attention, and fly so high with a strength worthy of His regard, if He had not first looked upon us. He, however, is taken by the fluttering of the hair, He makes it worthy and pleasing to Himself, and then is captivated by it. 'Thou hast seen it on my neck, Thou wert captivated by it.' This renders it credible that a bird which flies low may capture the royal eagle in its flight; if the eagle should fly so low and be taken by it willingly.

'And wounded by one of my eyes.' The eye is faith. The soul speaks of but one, and that this has wounded the Beloved. If the faith and trust of the soul in God were not one, without admixture of other considerations, God never could have been wounded by love. Thus the eye that wounds, and the hair that binds, must be one. So strong is that love which the Bride inspires in the Bridegroom by her simple trust, that, if the hair of her love binds Him, the eye of her faith imprisons Him so closely as to wound Him through that most tender affection He bears her, which is to the Bride a further progress in His love.

The Bridegroom himself speaks of the hair and the eyes; saying to the Bride, 'Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart with one of thy eyes, and with one hair of thy neck.'† He says twice that His heart is wounded with the eye and the hair, and therefore the soul in this stanza speaks of them both; because they signify its union with God in the intellect and the will; for the intellect is subdued by faith, signified by the eye, and the will by love. Here the soul exults in this union, and

STANZA
XXXI.

We love God
because He
first loved us.

Confidence in
God,—its
effects.

* 1 S. John iv. 10.

† Cant. iv. 9.

STANZA
XXXI.

gives thanks to the Bridegroom for it, as it is His gift; accounting it a great matter that He has been pleased to requite its love, and to become captive to it. We may also observe here the joy, happiness, and delight of the soul with its prisoner, it having been for a long time enamoured of Him.

INTRODUCTION.

GREAT is the power and courage of love, for God is its prisoner. Blessed is the soul that loves, for it has made a captive of God who obeys its good pleasure. Such is the nature of love, that it makes those under its influence do what is required of them, and, on the other hand, if love be wanting, no influence can be exercised even after many caresses. One hair will bind those that love. The soul, knowing this well, and conscious of blessings beyond its merits, in being raised up to so high a degree of love, through the rich endowments of graces and virtues, attributes all to the Beloved, saying:

STANZA XXXII.

*When Thou didst regard me,
Thine eyes imprinted Thy grace in me:
For this didst Thou love me again,
And thereby mine eyes did merit
To adore what in Thee they saw.*

It is the nature of perfect love to seek or accept nothing for itself, nor to attribute anything to itself, but to refer all to the beloved. If this be true of earthly love, how much more so of love for God, the reason of which is so constraining. In the previous stanzas it appeared as if the Bride attributed something to herself; she said that she would make garlands with her Beloved, and bind them with a hair of her

Power,
bliss, and
cause of love
for God.

Unselfish
nature of
true love.

STANZA
XXXII.The soul
refers
nothing to
self, but all
to God.

head; that is a great work, and of no slight importance and value; afterwards she said that she exulted in having captivated Him by a hair, and wounded Him with one of her eyes. All this seems as if she attributed great merits to herself. Now, however, she explains her meaning, and removes the error which might have occurred, with great care and fear, lest any merit should be attributed to herself, and less to God than His due, and less also than she intended. She now refers all to Him, and at the same time gives Him thanks, saying, that the cause of His being the captive of the hair of her love, and of His being wounded by the eye of her faith, was His mercy in looking lovingly upon her, thereby rendering her lovely and pleasing in His sight; and that the loveliness and worth she received from Him merited His love, and made her worthy to adore her Beloved, and to bring forth good works worthy of His love and favour.

‘When Thou didst regard me.’ That is, with loving affection, for I have already said, that where God regards there He loves.

‘Thine eyes imprinted Thy grace in me.’ The eyes of the Bridegroom signify here His merciful Divinity, which mercifully inclined to the soul, imprints or infuses in it the love and grace by which He makes it beautiful, and elevates it to be the partaker of His Divinity. When the soul sees to what height of dignity God has raised it, it says—

‘For this didst Thou love me again.’ To love again is to love much; it is more than simple love, it is a twofold love, and on two grounds. Here the soul explains the two motives of the Bridegroom’s love; He not only loved it because captivated by the hair, but He loved it again, because He was wounded with one of its eyes. He loved it so profoundly, because He would, when He looked upon it, give it grace to please Him, endowing it with the hair of love, and animating with charity the faith of the eye. And

The soul by
grace made
an object of
God’s love.

STANZA
XXXII.

therefore saith the soul: 'For this didst Thou love me again. To say that God shews favour to the soul is to say that He renders it worthy and capable of His love. It is therefore as if the soul said, Having shewn Thy favour to me, worthy pledges of Thy love, Thou hast therefore loved me again: that is, Thou hast given me grace upon grace; or, in the words of S. John, 'grace for grace;'^{*} grace for the grace He has given, that is, more grace, for without grace we cannot merit His grace.

If we would clearly understand this truth, we must keep in mind that, as God loves nothing beside Himself, so loves He nothing more than Himself, because He loves all things with reference to Himself. Thus love is the final cause, and God loves nothing for what it is in itself. Consequently, when we say that God loves such a soul, we say, in effect, that He brings it in a manner to Himself, making it His equal, and thus it is He loves that soul in Himself with that very love with which He loves Himself. Every good work, therefore, of the soul in God is meritorious of God's love, because the soul in His favour thus exalted, merits God Himself in every act.

'And thereby mine eyes did merit.' That is, by the grace and favour which the eyes of Thy compassion have wrought, when Thou didst look upon me, rendering me pleasing in Thy sight and worthy of Thy regard.

'To adore what in Thee they saw.' That is: The powers of my soul, O my Spouse, the eyes by which I can see Thee, although once fallen and miserable in the vileness of their mean occupations, have merited to look upon Thee. To look upon God is to do good works in His grace. Thus also the powers of the soul merit in adoring because they adore in the grace of God, in which every act is meritorious.

* S. John i. 16.

God the
Supreme
Good loves,
1. Himself.
2. All things
as related to
Himself.

STANZA
XXXII.*Attributes of
God seen by
love.*

Enlightened and exalted by grace, they adored what in Him they saw, and what they saw not before, because of their blindness and meanness. What then have they now seen? The greatness of His power, His overflowing sweetness, infinite goodness, love, and compassion, innumerable benefits received at His hands, as well now when so near Him, as before when far away. The eyes of the soul now merit to adore, and by adoring merit, for they are beautiful and pleasing to the Bridegroom. Before they were unworthy, not only to adore or behold Him, but even to look upon Him at all: great indeed is the stupidity and blindness of a soul without the grace of God.

*Misery of a
soul in sin.*

It is a melancholy thing to see how far a soul departs from its duty when it is not enlightened by the love of God. For being bound to acknowledge these and other innumerable favours which it has every moment received at His hands, temporal as well as spiritual, and to worship and serve Him unceasingly with all its faculties, it not only does not do so, but is also rendered unworthy even to think of Him; nor does it make any account of Him whatever. Such is the misery of those who are living, or rather who are dead, in sin.

INTRODUCTION.

For the better understanding of this and of what follows, we must keep in mind that the regard of God benefits the soul in four ways: it cleanses, adorns, enriches, and enlightens it—as the sun when it shines, dries, warms, beautifies, and brightens the earth. When God has visited the soul in the three latter ways, whereby He renders it pleasing to Himself, He remembers its former uncleanness and sin no more: as it is written, ‘I will not remember all his iniquities that he

*Four benefits
of the regard
of God.*

STANZA
XXXIII.

Guilt of
pardoned
sins returns
no more.

We should
not forget
them ;

1. To avoid presumption.
2. To renew thanksgiving.
3. To increase trust in God.

hath done.’* God having once done away with our sin and uncleanness, He will look upon them no more ; nor will He withhold His mercy because of them, for He never punishes twice for the same sin, according to the words of the Prophet : ‘ There shall not rise a double affliction.’ †

Still, though God forgets the sin He has once forgiven, we are not for that reason to forget it ourselves ; for the Wise Man saith, ‘ Be not without fear about sin forgiven.’ ‡ There are three reasons for this. We should always remember our sin, that we may not presume, that we may have a subject of perpetual thanksgiving, and that it may give us confidence in God that we shall receive greater favours ; for if, when we were in sin, God showed Himself unto us so merciful and forgiving, how much greater mercies may we not hope for when we are clean from sin, and in His love ?

The soul, therefore, calling to mind all the mercies it has received, and seeing itself united to the Bridegroom in such dignity, rejoices greatly with joy, thanksgiving, and love. In this it is helped exceedingly by the recollection of its former condition, which was so mean and filthy that it not only did not deserve that God should look upon it, but was unworthy that He should even utter its name, as He saith by the mouth of the prophet David : ‘ Nor will I be mindful of their names by My lips.’ § Thus the soul seeing that there was, and that there can be, nothing in itself to attract the eyes of God, but that all comes from Him of pure grace and good-will, attributes its misery to itself, and all the blessings it enjoys to the Beloved ; and seeing further, that because of these blessings it can merit now what it could not merit before, it becomes bold with God, and prays for the continuance of the Divine spiritual union, wherein its mercies are visibly multiplied. This is the subject of the following stanza.

* Ezech. xviii. 22.

‡ Ecclus. v. 5.

† Nahum i. 9.

§ Ps. xv. 4.

STANZA XXXIII.

*Despise me not,
For if I was swarthy once,
Thou canst regard me now ;
Since Thou hast regarded me,
Grace and beauty hast Thou given me.*

The soul now is becoming bold, and sets value upon itself, because of the gifts and endowments which the Beloved has bestowed upon it. It recognises that these things, while itself is worthless and undeserving, are at least means of merit for it, and consequently it ventures to say to the Beloved: 'Do not disregard me now, or despise me;' for if before it deserved contempt because of the filthiness of its sin and the meanness of its nature, now that He has once looked upon it, and thereby adorned it with grace and beauty, He may well look upon it a second time and increase its grace and beauty. That He has once done so, when the soul deserved it not, and had no attractions for Him, is reason enough why He should do so again and again.

'Despise me not.' The soul does not say this, because it desires in any way to be esteemed—for contempt and insult are of great price, and occasions of joy to the soul that truly loves God—but because it acknowledges that in itself it merits nothing else, were it not for the gifts and graces it has received from God, as it appears from the words that follow.

'For if I was swarthy once.' If, before Thou didst graciously look upon me, Thou didst find me in my filthiness, black with imperfections and sins, and naturally mean and vile,

'Thou canst regard me now; since Thou hast regarded me.' After once looking upon me, and taking away my swarthy complexion, defiled by sin and disagreeable to look upon, when Thou didst render me lovely for the first time, Thou mayest well look upon me now;—that is, now I may

STANZA
XXXIII.

Nothing
good unless
from God.

STANZA
XXXIII.

be looked on and deserve to be regarded, and thereby to receive further favours at Thy hands. For Thine eyes, when they first looked upon me, did not only take away my swarthy complexion, but rendered me also worthy of Thy regard; for when Thou hadst looked upon me in love Thou didst make me beautiful and lovely.

‘Grace and beauty hast Thou given me.’ The two preceding lines are a commentary on the words of S. John, ‘grace for grace,’* for when God beholds a soul that is lovely in His eyes, He is moved to bestow more grace upon it because He dwells, pleased, within it. Moses knew this, and prayed for further grace: he would, as it were, constrain God to grant it, because he had already received so much. ‘Thou hast said: I know thee by name, and thou hast found favour in My sight: if therefore I have found favour in Thy sight, shew me Thy face, that I may know Thee, and may find grace before Thy eyes.’ † Now a soul which in the eyes of God is thus exalted in grace, honourable and lovely, is for that reason an object of His unutterable love. If He loved that soul before it was in a state of grace, for His own sake, He loves it now, when in a state of grace, not only for His own sake, but also for itself. Thus enamoured of its beauty, through its affections and good works, now that it is never without them, He bestows upon it continually further grace and love, and the more honourable and exalted He renders that soul, the more is He captivated by it, and the greater His love for it.

God Himself sets this truth before us, saying to His people, by the mouth of the Prophet, ‘Since thou becamest honourable in My eyes, and glorious, I have loved thee.’ ‡ That is, since I have cast Mine eyes upon thee, and thereby shewed thee favour, and made thee glorious and honourable in My sight, thou hast merited other and further favours; for to

* S. John i. 16.

† Exod. xxxiii. 12, 13.

‡ Is. xliii. 4.

The more richly a soul is endowed by God, the more dearly is it loved by Him.

say that God loves, is to say that He multiplies His grace. The Bride in the Canticle speaks to the same effect, saying: 'I am black but beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,'* and the Church adds, saying: 'Therefore hath the King loved me, and brought me into His secret chamber.' This is as much as saying: O ye souls who have no knowledge nor understanding of these favours, marvel not that the heavenly King has shown such mercy unto me as to bring me within the sphere of His interior love, for, though I am swarthy, He has so regarded me, after once looking upon me, that He could not be satisfied without betrothing me to Himself, and inviting me into the inner chamber of His love.

God will not
be outdone in
generosity.

Who can measure the greatness of the soul's exaltation when God is pleased with it? No language, no imagination is sufficient for this; for in truth God doeth this as God, to show that it is He who does it. The dealings of God with such a soul may in some degree be understood; but only in this way, namely, that He gives more to him who has more, and that His gifts are multiplied in proportion to the previous endowments of the soul. This is what He teaches us Himself in the Gospel, saying: 'He that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound: but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath.†' Thus the talent of that servant who was not in favour with his lord was taken from him and given to another who had gained others, so that the latter might have all, together with the favour of his lord.‡ God heaps the noblest and the chiefest favours of His house, which is the Church militant as well as the Church triumphant, upon him who is most His friend, ordaining it thus for his greater honour and glory, as a great light absorbs the lesser lights in itself. This is the spiritual sense of those words the prophet Isaias addressed

* Cant. i. 4.

† Matth. xiii. 12.

‡ Ib. xxv. 28.

STANZA
XXXIII.

to the people of Israel : ' I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour : I have given Egypt for thy atonement and Saba for thee. I will give men for thee, and people for thy life.' *

Well mayest Thou then, O God, gaze upon and esteem that soul which Thou regardest, for Thou hast made it precious by looking upon it, and given it graces which Thou valuest, and by which Thou art captivated. That soul, therefore, deserves that Thou shouldst regard it not once only but often, seeing that Thou hast once looked upon it ; for so is it written by the Holy Ghost : ' This honour is he worthy of, whom the king hath a mind to honour.' †

INTRODUCTION.

Mutual love
of God and
the soul.

THE gifts of the Bridegroom to the soul in this state are inestimable ; the praises and endearing expressions of Divine love which pass so frequently between them are beyond all utterance. The soul is occupied in praising Him, and in giving Him thanks ; and He too in exalting, praising, and thanking the soul, as we see* in the Canticle, where He thus speaks to the Bride : ' Behold, thou art fair, O My love, behold, thou art fair ; thy eyes are as those of doves.' The Bride replies : ' Behold, Thou art fair, my Beloved, and comely.' † These, and other like expressions, are addressed by them each to the other. In the previous stanza the soul despised itself, and said it was swarthy and unclean, praising Him for His beauty and grace, and Who, by looking upon the soul, rendered it gracious and beautiful. He, whose way it is to exalt the humble, fixing His eyes upon the soul, as He was entreated to do, praises it in the following stanza. He does not call it swarthy, as the soul calls itself, but He ad-

God exalts
the humble.

* Is. xliii. 3, 4.

† Esth. vi. 11.

‡ Cant. iv. 1, vi. 3.

dresses it as His white dove, praising it for its good dispositions, those of a dove, and a turtle-dove.

STANZA
XXXIV.

STANZA XXXIV.

THE BRIDEGROOM.

*The little white dove
Has returned to the ark with the bough ;
And now the turtle-dove
Her desired mate
On the green banks has found.*

It is the Bridegroom Himself who now speaks. He celebrates the purity of the soul in its present state, the rich rewards it has gained, in having prepared itself, and laboured, for Him. He also speaks of its blessedness in having found the Bridegroom in this union, and of the fulfilment of all its desires, the delight and joy it finds in Him now that all the trials of life and time are over.

‘The little white dove’ is the soul, so called on account of its whiteness and purity—effects of the grace it has received at the hands of God. He calls it a dove, for this is the term He applies to it in the Canticle, to mark its simplicity, its natural gentleness, and its loving contemplation. The dove is not only simple, and gentle without gall, but its eyes are also clear, full of love. The Bridegroom, therefore, to point out in it this character of loving contemplation, wherein it looks upon God, says of it that its eyes are those of a dove : ‘Thy eyes are doves’ eyes.’*

The perfect soul has the simplicity, the gentleness, and the eyes of a dove.

‘Has returned to the ark with the bough.’ Here the Bridegroom compares the soul to the dove of Noe’s ark, the going and returning of which is a figure of what befalls the soul. For as the dove went forth from the ark, and returned because she found no rest for her feet on account of the waters of the deluge, until the time when she returned with the olive branch in her mouth—a sign of the mercy of God in

* Cant. iv. 1.

STANZA
XXXIV.

After the
deluge the
soul returns
to the Ark.

drying up the waters which had covered the earth—so the soul went forth at its creation out of the ark of God's omnipotence, and having traversed the deluge of its sins and imperfections, and finding no rest for its desires, flew and returned on the air of the longings of its love to the ark of its Creator's bosom; but it only effected an entrance when God had dried up the overwhelming waters of its imperfections. Then it returned with the olive branch, that is, the victory over all things by His merciful compassion, to this blessed and perfect recollection in the bosom of the Beloved, not only triumphant over all its enemies, but also rewarded for its merits; for both the one and the other are symbolised by the olive bough. Thus the dove-soul returns to the ark of God not only white and pure as it went forth when He created it, but with the olive branch of reward and peace obtained by the conquest of itself.

Reconquest
of innocence.

'And now the turtle-dove her desired mate on the green banks has found.' The Bridegroom calls the soul the turtle-dove, because when it is seeking after the Beloved it is like the turtle-dove when she cannot find her desired mate. It is said of the turtle-dove, when she cannot find her mate, that she sitteth not on the green boughs, nor drinketh of the cool refreshing waters, nor retireth to the shade, nor minglcth with companions; but when she finds him, then she doeth all this. Such, too, is the condition of the soul, and that necessarily, if it is to attain to union with the Bridegroom. The soul's love and anxiety must be such that it cannot rest on the green boughs of any joy, nor drink of the waters of this world's honour and glory, nor recreate itself with any temporal consolation, nor shelter itself beneath the shade of created help and protection: it must repose nowhere, it must avoid the society of all its inclinations, mourn in its loneliness, until it shall find the Bridegroom to its perfect contentment.

The soul
compared to
a turtle-dove,
in five ways.

And because the soul, before it attained to this estate, sought the Beloved in great love, and was satisfied with nothing short of Him, the Bridegroom here speaks of the end of its labours, and the fulfilment of its desires, saying: ‘Now the turtle-dove her desired mate on the green banks has found.’ That is: Now the Bride-soul sits on the green bough, rejoicing in her Beloved; drinks of the clear waters of highest contemplation and of the wisdom of God; is refreshed by the consolations it finds in God, and is also sheltered under the shadow of His favour and protection, which she had so earnestly desired. There is she deliciously and divinely comforted and nourished, as she saith in the Canticle: ‘I sat down under His shadow Whom I desired, and His fruit was sweet to my palate.’*

STANZA
XXXIV.

Joys of perfect union
with God.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Bridegroom proceeds to speak of the satisfaction which He derives from the happiness which the Bride has found in that solitude wherein she desired to live—a stable peace and unchangeable good. For when the Bride is confirmed in the tranquillity of her sole and solitary love of the Bridegroom, she reposes so sweetly in the love of God, and God also in her, that she requires no other means or masters to guide her in the way of God; for God Himself is now her light and guide, fulfilling in her what He promised by the mouth of the Prophet, saying: ‘I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart.’† The meaning of this is, that it is in solitude that He communicates Himself, and unites Himself, to the soul, for to speak to the heart is to satisfy the heart, and no heart can be satisfied with less than God.

No heart
satisfied with
less than
God.

* Cant. ii. 3.

† Os. ii. 14.

STANZA XXXV.

*In solitude she lived,
And in solitude hath she built her nest ;
And in solitude, alone
Hath the Beloved guided her,
In solitude also wounded with her love.*

 STANZA
XXXV.

Two things are to be noticed here. In the first place, the Bridegroom commends the solitude in which the soul desired to live, for it was the means whereby the soul found the Beloved, and rejoiced in Him, away from all its former anxieties and troubles. For, as the soul was willing to abide in solitude, abandoning all created help and consolation, in order to obtain the fellowship and union of the Beloved, it deserved thereby possession of the peace of solitude in the Beloved, in Whom it reposes alone, undisturbed by any anxieties.

Liberty of
spirit under
the guidance
of God.

In the second place. The Bridegroom saith that, inasmuch as the soul has desired to be alone, far away, for His sake, from all created things, He has been enamoured of it because of its loneliness, has taken care of it, embraced it with His arms, fed it with all good things, and guided it to the high things of God. He does not merely say, that He is now the soul's guide, but that He is its only guide, without any intermediate help, either of angels or of men, either of forms or of figures ; for the soul in this solitude has attained to true liberty of spirit, and is wholly detached from all subordinate means.

Solitude of
the soul in
search of
God.

‘In solitude she lived.’ The turtle-dove, that is, the soul, lived in solitude before she found the Beloved in this state of union ; for the soul that longs after God derives no consolation from any other companionship,—yea, until it finds Him, all such does but increase its solitude.

‘And in solitude hath she built her nest.’ The previous solitude of the soul was its voluntary self-privation of all the comforts of this world, for the sake of the Bridegroom—as in

the instance of the turtle-dove—its striving after perfection, and acquiring that perfect solitude wherein it attains to union with the Word, and in consequence to complete refreshment and repose. This is what is meant by 'nest;' and the words of the stanza may be thus explained: 'In that solitude, wherein the Bride formerly lived, tried by afflictions and troubles, because she was not yet perfect—there, in that solitude, hath she now fixed her nest, because she has found perfect rest in God.' This, too, is the spiritual sense of these words of the Psalmist: 'The sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself, where she may lay her young ones;'^{*} that is, a sure stay in God, in Whom all the desires and powers of the soul are satisfied.

STANZA
XXXV.

The soul by
self-denial
gains God.

'And in solitude.' In that solitude of the soul, its perfect detachment from all things, wherein it lives alone with God—there He guides it, moves it, and elevates it to Divine things. He guides the intellect in the perception of Divine things, because it is now detached from all contrary knowledge, and alone. He moves the will freely to love Himself, because it is now alone, disencumbered from all other affections. He fills the memory with Divine knowledge, because it also is now alone, emptied of all imaginations and fancies. For the instant the soul clears and empties its faculties of all earthly objects, and from attachments to higher things, keeping them in solitude, God immediately fills them with the invisible and Divine; it being God Himself Who guides it in this solitude. S. Paul says of the perfect, that they 'are led by the Spirit of God,' and that is the same as saying: 'In solitude hath He guided her.'

Alone with
God, in in-
tellect, will,
and memory.

'Alone hath the Beloved guided her.' That is, the Beloved not only guides the soul in its solitude, but it is He alone Who works in it directly without medium. It is of the nature

^{*} Ps. lxxxiii. 4.

STANZA
XXXV.

God, the
companion
of the soul's
solitude.

of the soul's union with God in spiritual matrimony, that God works directly, and communicates Himself immediately, not by the ministry of angels, or by the help of natural capacities. For the exterior and interior senses, all created things, and even the soul itself, contribute little towards the reception of those great supernatural favours which God bestows in this state; yea, rather, inasmuch as they do not fall within the cognizance of natural efforts, ability and application, God alone effects them. The reason is, that He finds the soul alone in its solitude, and therefore will not give it another companion, nor will He entrust His work to any other than Himself. There is also a certain fitness in this; for the soul having abandoned all things, and passed through all the ordinary means, rising above them unto God; God Himself becomes the guide, and the means of bringing it to Himself. The soul in solitude, detached from all things, having now ascended above all things, nothing now can profit or serve it except the Bridegroom Word Himself, Who, because enamoured of the Bride, will Himself alone bestow these graces on the soul.

‘In solitude also wounded with her love.’ That is, the love of the Bride for Him; for the Bridegroom not only loves greatly the solitude of the soul, but is also wounded with love, because the soul would abide in solitude and detachment, on account of its being itself wounded with His love. He will not, therefore, leave it alone; for being wounded with love because of the soul's solitude on His account, and seeing that nothing else can satisfy it, He comes Himself to be alone its guide, attracts it, and absorbs it in Himself. But He would not have done so, if He had not found it in this spiritual solitude.

INTRODUCTION.

It is a strange characteristic of persons in love, that they take a much greater pleasure in their loneliness than in associating with others. For if they meet together in the presence of others with whom they need have no intercourse, and from whom they have nothing to conceal, and if those others neither address them nor interfere with them, yet the very fact of their presence is sufficient to rob the lovers of all pleasure in their meeting. The cause of this lies in the fact, that love is the union of two persons, who will not communicate with each other if they are not alone. And now the soul, having reached the summit of perfection, and liberty of spirit in God, all the resistance and contradictions of the flesh being subdued, has no other occupation or employment than indulgence in the joys of its intimate love of the Bridegroom. It is written of holy Tobias, after the trials of his life were over, that God restored his sight, and that 'the rest of his life was in joy.'* So is it with the perfect soul, it rejoices in the blessings that surround it.

The prophet Isaias says of the soul which, having been tried in the works of perfection, has arrived at the goal desired: 'Then shall thy light rise up in darkness, and thy darkness shall be as the noonday. And the Lord will give thee rest continually, and will fill thy soul with brightness, and deliver thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a fountain of water whose waters shall not fail. And the places that have been desolate for ages shall be built in thee: thou shalt raise up the foundation of generation and generation; and thou shalt be called the repairer of the fences, turning the paths into rest. If thou turn away thy foot from

STANZA
XXXVI.

The soul
fully
employed in
loving God.

* Tob. xiv. 4.

STANZA
XXXVI.

the Sabbath, from doing thy own will in My holy day, and call the Sabbath delightful, and the Holy of the Lord glorious, and glorify Him while thou dost not thy own ways, and thy own will is not found, to speak a word: then shalt thou be delighted in the Lord, and I will lift thee up above the high places of the earth, and will feed thee with the inheritance of Jacob thy father; * Who is God Himself. The soul, therefore, has nothing else to do now but to rejoice in the delights of this pasture, and one thing only to desire—the perfect fruition of it in everlasting life. Thus, in the next and the following stanzas, it implores the Beloved to admit it into this beatific pasture in the clear vision of God.

STANZA XXXVI.

THE BRIDE.

*Let us rejoice, O my Beloved!
Let us go forth to see ourselves in Thy beauty,
To the mountain and the hill,
Where the pure water flows;
Let us enter into the heart of the thicket.*

Three petitions of the Bride-soul;

The perfect union of love between itself and God being now effected, the soul longs to occupy itself with the properties of that love. It is the soul which now speaks, making three petitions to the Beloved. In the first place, it asks for the joy and sweetness of love, saying: ‘Let us rejoice.’ In the second place it prays to be made like Him, saying: ‘Let us go forth to see ourselves in Thy beauty.’ In the third place, it begs to be admitted to the knowledge of His secrets, saying: ‘Let us enter into the heart of the thicket.’

1. For joy in love and good works.

‘Let us rejoice, O my Beloved.’ That is, in the sweetness of our love; not only in that sweetness of ordinary union, but also in that which flows from the active and effective love, whether in the will by an act of affection, or outwardly, in good works which tend to the service of the Beloved. For

* Is. lviii. 10–14.

love, as I have said, where it is firmly rooted, ever runs after those joys and delights which are the acts of exterior and interior love. All this the soul does that it may be made like to the Beloved.

‘Let us go forth to see ourselves in Thy beauty.’ Let us so act, that, by the practice of this love, we may come to see ourselves in Thy beauty in everlasting life. That is: Let me be so transformed in Thy beauty, that, being alike in beauty, we may see ourselves both in Thy beauty; having Thy beauty, so that, one beholding the other, each may see his own beauty in the other, the beauty of both being Thine only, and mine absorbed in it. And thus I shall see Thee in Thy beauty, and myself in Thy beauty, and Thou shalt see me in Thy beauty; and I shall see myself in Thee in Thy beauty, and Thou Thyself in me in Thy beauty; so shall I seem to be Thyself in Thy beauty, and Thou myself in Thy beauty; my beauty shall be Thine, Thine shall be mine, and I shall be Thou in it, and Thou myself in Thine own beauty; for Thy beauty will be my beauty, and so we shall see, each the other, in Thy beauty. This is the adoption of the sons of God, who may truly say what the Son Himself says to the Eternal Father: ‘All My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine,’* He by essence, being the Son of God by nature, we by participation, being sons by adoption. This He says not for Himself only, Who is the Head, but for the whole mystical body, which is the Church. For the Church will participate in the very beauty of the Bridegroom in the day of her triumph, when she shall see God face to face. And this is the vision which the soul prays that the Bridegroom and itself may go in His beauty to see.

2. For participation in the beauty of God.

Christ, the Son of God by nature: Christians, sons by adoption.

Union between Christ and His Church.

‘To the mountain and the hill.’ That is, to the morning and essential knowledge of God, which is the knowledge of Him in the Divine Word, Who, because He is so high, is here

* S. John xvii. 10.

STANZA
XXXVI.

God seen in
His works
and ways,
but best in
His Son.

signified by 'the mountain.' Thus Isaias saith, calling upon men to know the Son of God: 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord; '* and before: 'In the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared.' †

'And to the hill.' That is, to the evening knowledge of God, to the knowledge of Him in His creatures, in His works, and in His marvellous laws. This is signified by the expression 'hill,' because it is a lower kind of knowledge than the other. The soul prays for both when it says: 'to the mountain and the hill.'

When the soul says: 'Let us go forth to see ourselves in Thy beauty to the mountain,' its meaning is: Transform me, and make me like the beauty of the Divine Wisdom, the Word, the Son of God. When it says: 'to the hill,' the meaning is: Do Thou instruct me in the beauty of this lower knowledge, which is manifest in Thy creatures and mysterious works. This also is the beauty of the Son of God, where-with the soul desires to be enlightened.

But the soul cannot see itself in the beauty of God if it be not transformed in His wisdom, wherein all things are seen and possessed, whether in heaven or in earth. It was to this mountain and to this hill the Bride longed to come when she said: 'I will go to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.' ‡ The mountain of myrrh is the clear vision of God, and the hill of frankincense the knowledge of Him in His works, for the myrrh on the mountain is more precious than the incense on the hill.

'Where the pure water flows.' This is the wisdom and knowledge of God, which cleanse the intellect, and detach it from all accidents and fancies, and which clear it of the mist of ignorance. The soul is ever influenced by this desire of perfectly and clearly understanding the Divine

* Is. ii. 3.

† Ib. 2.

‡ Cant. iv. 6.

verities, and the more it loves the more it desires to penetrate them, and hence the third petition which it makes.

‘Let us enter into the heart of the thicket;’ into the depths of God’s marvellous works and profound judgments. Such is their multitude and variety, that they may be called a thicket. They are so full of wisdom and mystery, that we may not only call them a thicket, but we may even apply to them the words of David: ‘The mountain of God is a rich mountain, a mountain curdled as cheese, a rich mountain.’* The thicket of the wisdom and knowledge of God is so deep, and so immense, that the soul, though ever knowing more of it, may always penetrate further within it, because it is so immense and so incomprehensible. ‘O the depth,’ cries out the Apostle, ‘of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!’† But the soul longs to enter this thicket and incomprehensibility of His judgments, for it faints away with the desire of entering into a deeper knowledge of them. The knowledge of them is an inestimable delight, transcending all understanding. David speaking of the sweetness of them, saith: ‘The judgments of our Lord are true, justified in themselves, to be desired above gold and many precious stones, and sweeter than honey and the honey-comb. For Thy servant keepeth them.’‡ The soul longs to be profoundly absorbed in His judgments, and to have a deeper knowledge of them, and for that end would esteem it a joy and consolation to endure all sufferings and afflictions of the world, and whatever else might conduce to that end, however hard and painful it might be; it would gladly pass through the agonies of death to enter deeper into God.

Hence, also, the thicket, which the soul desires to enter,

STANZA
XXXVI.

3. For a
deeper
knowledge
of God.

* Ps. lxxvii. 16.

† Rom. xi. 33.

‡ Ps. xviii. 10-12.

STANZA
XXXVI.

Joy from
wisdom; and
wisdom from
suffering.

may be appropriately understood as signifying the great variety of trials and tribulations which the soul longs for, because suffering is most sweet and most profitable to it, inasmuch as it is the way by which it enters more and more into the thicket of the delicious wisdom of God. The most pure suffering leads to the most pure and the deepest knowledge, and consequently, to the purest and highest joy, for that is the issue of the deepest knowledge. Thus, the soul, not satisfied with ordinary suffering, says: 'Let us enter into the heart of the thicket,' even the anguish of death, that I may see God.

Job, desiring to suffer that he might see God, thus speaks: 'Who will grant that my request may come, and that God may give me what I look for? And that He that hath begun may destroy me, that He may let loose His hand and cut me off? And that this may be my comfort, that, afflicting me with sorrow, He spare not.* O that men would understand how impossible it is to enter the thicket, the manifold riches of the wisdom of God, without entering into the thicket of suffering — which, like the wisdom of God, has various manifestations — grounding thereon all the comfort and consolation of their souls; and how that the soul which really longs for the Divine wisdom, longs first of all for the sufferings of the Cross, that it may enter in. For this cause it was that S. Paul admonished the Ephesians not to faint in their tribulations, but to take courage: 'That being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth; to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God.† The gate by which we enter into the riches of the knowledge of God, is the Cross; and that gate is

Gate to the
knowledge
of God—
the Cross.

* Job vi. 8-10.

† Ephes. iii. 17-19.

narrow. They who desire to enter in that way are few, while those who desire the joys that come by it are many.

STANZA
XXXVI.

INTRODUCTION.

ONE of the principal reasons why the soul desires to be released and to be with Christ, is, that it may see Him face to face, and penetrate to the depths of His ways and the eternal mysteries of His Incarnation, which is not the least important part of its blessedness; for Christ Himself hath said: 'Now this is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent.'* As the first act of a person who has taken a long journey is to see and converse with him whom he was in search of, so the first thing which the soul desires, when it has attained to the Beatific Vision, is to know and enjoy the deep secrets and mysteries of the Incarnation and the ancient ways of God depending on them. Thus the soul, having said that it longed for the beauty of God, sings as in the following stanza:—

Bliss of
Heaven to
see JESUS.

STANZA XXXVII.

*We shall go at once
To the lofty caverns of the rock
Which are all secret,
There we shall enter in,
And taste of the new wine of the pomegranate.*

One of the reasons which most influence the soul to desire to enter into the 'thicket' of the wisdom of God, and to have a more intimate knowledge of the beauty of the Divine Wisdom, is, as I have said, that it may unite the intellect with God in the knowledge of the mysteries of the Incarnation, as being the highest and the most delicious knowledge

* S. John xvii. 3.

STANZA
XXXVII.

of all His works. And here the Bride says, that after she has entered in within the Divine Wisdom—that is, into the Spiritual Matrimony, which is now and will be in glory, seeing God face to face—her soul united with the Divine Wisdom, the Son of God, she will then understand the deep mysteries of God and Man, which are the highest wisdom hidden in God. They, that is, the Bride and the Bridegroom, will enter in—the soul ingulfed and absorbed— and both together will have the fruition of the joy which springs from the knowledge of mysteries, namely, the attributes and power of God which are revealed in those mysteries, such as His justice, His mercy, wisdom, power, and love.

Mysteries
of the
Incarnation.

‘We shall go at once to the lofty caverns of the rock.’ ‘This rock is Christ,’ as we learn from S. Paul.* The lofty caverns of the rock are the sublime mysteries of the wisdom of God in Christ, in the hypostatical union of the human nature with the Divine Word, and in the correspondence with it of the union of man with God, and in the congruity of God’s justice and mercy in the salvation of mankind, in the manifestation of His judgments. And because His judgments are so high and so deep, they are here fittingly called ‘lofty caverns;’ lofty because of the sublimity of His mysteries, and caverns because of the depth of His wisdom in them. For as caverns are deep, with many windings, so each mystery of Christ is of deepest wisdom, and has many windings of His secret judgments of predestination and foreknowledge with respect to men.

‘Which are all secret.’ Notwithstanding the marvellous mysteries which holy doctors have discovered, and holy souls have understood in this life, many more remain behind. There are in Christ great depths to be fathomed, for He is a rich mine, with many recesses full of treasure,

* 1 Cor. x. 4.

and however deeply we may descend we shall never reach the end, for in every recess new veins of new treasures abound in all directions: 'In Whom,' according to the Apostle, 'are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.'* But the soul cannot reach to these hidden treasures unless it first passes through the thicket of interior and exterior suffering: for even such a knowledge of the mysteries of Christ as is possible in this life, cannot be had without great sufferings, and without many intellectual and moral gifts, and without previous spiritual exercises; but all these gifts are far inferior to this knowledge of the mysteries of Christ, being only a preparation for it. Thus God said to Moses, when he asked to see His glory, 'Man shall not see Me and live.' God, however, said that He would show him all that could be revealed in this world; and so He set Moses 'in a hole of the rock,' which is Christ, where he might see His 'back parts;'[†] that is, He gave him the understanding of the mysteries of the Sacred Humanity.

STANZA
XXXVII.

Conditions
necessary for
knowing
Christ.

The Incarna-
tion taught
to Moses.

The soul longs to enter into these caverns of Christ, that it may be thus absorbed, transformed, and inebriated with love in the knowledge of His mysteries, hiding itself in the bosom of the Beloved. It is into these caverns that He invites the Bride to enter, saying: 'Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come; my dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall.'[‡] These clefts of the rock are the caverns of which we are here speaking.

'And there we shall enter in,' into this knowledge and these Divine mysteries. The soul says not, 'I will enter' alone, which seems the most fitting—seeing that the Bridegroom has no need to enter in again—but 'we will enter,' that is, the Bridegroom and the bride. It seems to say that this is not the work of the soul, but of the Bridegroom with it.

* Coloss. ii. 3.

† Exod. xxxiii. 20-23.

‡ Cant. ii. 13, 14.

STANZA
XXXVII.

The perfect
soul does
nothing of
itself.

Moreover, inasmuch as God and the soul are now united in spiritual matrimony, the soul doeth nothing of itself without God. And thus, to say 'we will enter,' is as much as saying, there shall we transform ourselves: that is, I shall be transformed in Thee through the love of Thy Divine and sweet judgments; for in the knowledge of the predestination of the just, and in the foresight of the wicked, wherein the Father foreknew the just in benedictions of sweetness in Jesus Christ His Son, the soul is transformed in a most exalted and perfect way in the love of God according to this knowledge, giving thanks to the Father, and loving Him again and again with great sweetness and delight, for the sake of Jesus Christ His Son. This the soul does in union with Christ and together with Him. The delight flowing from this act of praise is ineffably sweet, and the soul speaks of it in the words that follow.

Joy in the
attributes
and judgments
of
God.

'And taste of the new wine of the pomegranates.' The pomegranates are the mysteries of Christ and the judgments of the wisdom of God; His powers and attributes which, through the knowledge of these mysteries, are known in God to be infinite. For as pomegranates have many grains in their circular orb, so each one of the attributes and judgments and powers of God involve a multitude of admirable arrangements and marvellous issues contained within the spherical orbit of power and mystery, appertaining to those issues. Consider the round spherical form of the pomegranate; for each pomegranate signifies some one power and attribute of God, which power or attribute is God Himself, symbolized here by the circular figure, for such has neither beginning nor end. It was in the contemplation of the infinite judgments and mysteries of the wisdom of God that the bride said, 'His belly is of ivory set with sapphires.'* The sapphires are the

* Cant. v. 14.

mysteries and judgments of the Divine Wisdom, which is here signified by the 'belly'—the sapphire being a precious stone of the colour of the heavens when clear and serene.

The wine of the pomegranates is the fruition and joy of the love of God which overflows the soul in the understanding and knowledge of His mysteries. For as the many grains of the pomegranate pressed together give forth but one wine, so all the marvels and magnificence of God, infused into the soul, issue in but one fruition and joy of love, which is the drink of the Holy Ghost, and which the soul offers at once to God the Word, its Bridegroom, with great tenderness of love. This Divine drink the bride promised to the Bridegroom if He would lead her into this deep knowledge: 'There Thou shalt lead me,' saith the bride, 'and I will give Thee a cup of spiced wine, and new wine of my pomegranates.'* The soul, indeed, calls them 'my pomegranates,' though they are God's, Who had given them to it, and the soul offers them to God as if they were its own, saying, 'we will taste of the wine of the pomegranates;' for when He tastes it He gives it to the soul to taste, and when the soul tastes it, the soul gives it back to Him, and thus it is that both taste it together. Now the pomegranates are Divine Knowledge.

Beatific
knowledge of
God infused
by the Holy
Ghost.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the two previous stanzas the bride sung of those blessings which the Bridegroom is to give her in everlasting bliss, namely, her transformation in the beauty of created and uncreated wisdom, and also in the beauty of the union of the Word with flesh, wherein she shall behold His face as well as His back. Accordingly two things are set before us in the

* Cant. viii. 2.

STANZA
XXXVIII.

following stanza. The first is the way in which the soul tastes of the Divine wine of the pomegranates; the second is the soul's putting before the Bridegroom the glory of its predestination. And though these two things are spoken of separately, one after the other, they are both involved in the one essential glory of the soul.

STANZA XXXVIII.

*There Thou wilt show me
What my soul desired;
And there Thou wilt give me at once,
O Thou, my Life!
What Thou gavest me the other day.*

The reason why the soul longed to enter the caverns was that it might attain to the consummation of the love of God, the object of its continual desires; that is, that it might love God with the pureness and perfection wherewith He has loved it, so that it might thereby requite His love. Hence in the present stanza the bride saith to the Bridegroom that He will there show her what she had always aimed at in all her actions, namely, that He would show her how to love Him perfectly, as He has loved her. And, secondly, that what He will bestow upon her there is that essential glory for which He has predestined her from the day of His eternity.

‘There Thou wilt show me what my soul desired.’ This desire or aim of the soul is equality in love with God, the object of natural and supernatural desire. He who loves cannot be satisfied if he does not feel that he loves as much as he is beloved. And when the soul sees that in the transformation in God, such as is possible in this life, notwithstanding the immensity of its love, it cannot equal the perfection of that love wherewith God loves it, it desires the clear transformation of glory wherein it shall equal the perfection of love wherewith it is itself beloved of God; it desires, I say, the clear transformation of glory wherein it

The soul
desires to
love God as it
is loved by
Him.

shall equal His love. For though in this high estate, which the soul reaches on earth, there exists a real union of the will, yet it cannot reach that perfection and strength of love which it is to reach in the union of glory; seeing that then, according to the Apostle, the soul will know God as it is known of Him: 'Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known.*' That is, I shall then love God even as I am loved by Him. For as the understanding of the soul will then be the understanding of God, and its will the will of God, so its love will also be His love. Though in Heaven the will of the soul is not destroyed, it is so intimately united with the power of the will of God, Who loves it, that it loves Him as strongly and as perfectly as it is loved of Him; both wills being united in one sole will and in one sole love of God. Thus the soul loves God with the will and strength of God Himself, being made one with that very strength of love wherewith itself is loved of God. This strength is of the Holy Ghost, in Whom the soul is there transformed. He is given to the soul to strengthen its love; ministering to it, and supplying in it, because of its transformation in glory, that which is defective in it. In the perfect transformation, also, of the estate of spiritual marriage, such as is possible on earth, in which the soul is all clothed in grace, the soul loves in a certain way in the Holy Ghost, Who is given to it in that transformation.

In Heaven
the will not
destroyed
but
strengthened
by God
Himself.

The Holy
Ghost, the
Love of the
Father and
the Son, per-
fects the love
of the soul
for God.

We are to observe here that the bride does not say, There wilt Thou give me Thy love, though that be true—for that means only that God will love her—but that He will there show her how she is to love Him with that perfection at which she aims, because there He will give her His love, and at the same time show her how to love Him as He loves her. For God not only teaches the soul to love Himself purely,

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

STANZA
XXXVIII.

with a disinterested love, as He hath loved us, but He also enables it to love Him with that strength with which He loves the soul, transforming it in His love, wherein He bestows upon the soul His own power, so that it may love Him. It is as if He put an instrument in its hand, taught it the use of it, and played upon it together with the soul. This is shewing the soul how it is to love, and at the same time endowing it with the capacity of loving. The soul is not satisfied until it reaches this point, neither would it be satisfied even in Heaven, unless it felt, as S. Thomas teaches,* that it loved God as much as it is loved of Him. And as I have said of the state of spiritual matrimony of which I am speaking, there is now, at this time, though it cannot be that perfect love in glory, a certain vivid vision and likeness of that perfection, which is wholly indescribable.

‘And there Thou wilt give me at once, O Thou my Life, what Thou gavest me the other day.’ What He will give is the essential glory which consists in the vision of God. Before proceeding further it is requisite to solve a question which arises here, namely: Why is it, seeing that the essential glory consists in the vision of God, and not in loving Him, that the soul says that its longing is for His love, and not for the essential glory? Why is it that the soul begins the stanza with referring to His love, and then introduces the subject of the essential glory afterwards, as if it were something of less importance? There are two reasons for this. The first is this: As the end of all is love, which inheres in the will, the characteristic of which is to give and not to receive, and the characteristic of the intellect, the subject of the essential glory, being to receive and not to give, to the soul inebriated with love, the first object that presents itself is not the essential glory which God will bestow upon it, but the

‘ Per eandem
[dilectionem]
anima glori-
ficata diligit
Deum et dili-
gitur a Deo ;
alioquin . . .
nunquam
vere et per-
fecte quie-
sceret, nisi
Creatori suo
in amore
vicem
rependeret.
Hoc non fit
nisi per
Spiritus
Sanctum.’

The soul
speaks of
love before
vision.
Two reasons.

* Opusc. de Beatitudine, cap. 2.

entire surrender of itself to Him in true love, without any regard to its own advantage.

STANZA
XXXVIII.

The second reason is that the second object is included in the first, and has been taken for granted in the previous stanzas, it being impossible to attain to the perfect love of God without the perfect vision of Him. The question is solved by the first reason, for the soul renders to God by love that which is His due, while it rather receives from Him through the intellect.

I now resume the explanation of the stanza, and enquire what day is meant by the 'other day,' and what is it that God then gave the soul, and what that is which it prays for afterwards in glory? By this 'other day' is meant the day of the eternity of God, which is other than the day of time. In that day of eternity God predestined the soul unto glory, and determined the glory which He would give it, which He freely gave it from the beginning before He created it. This now, in a manner, so truly belongs to the soul that no event or accident, high or low, can ever take it away, for the soul must enjoy for ever that for which God had predestined it from all eternity. This is that which He gave it 'the other day,' that which the soul longs now to possess visibly in glory. And what is that which He gave it? What 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man.'* 'The eye hath not seen,' saith the Prophet, 'O God besides Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for Thee.'† The soul has no words to describe it, so it says 'What.' It is in truth the vision of God, and as there is no expression by which we can explain what it is to see God, the soul says only 'what Thou gavest me.'

Glory of the
soul predesti-
nated by
God.

But that I may not leave the subject without saying something further concerning it, I will repeat what Christ hath

* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

† Is. lxiv. 4.

STANZA
XXXVIII.Christ speaks
of Heaven as;1. The tree
of life.2. The crown
of life.3. The hidden
manna, and
the white
counter.4. The rod of
power, and
the morning
star of joy.5. The white
robe, and the
book of life.6. The temple
of God, and
the New
Jerusalem.

said of it in many terms, phrases, and comparisons, because a single word once uttered cannot describe it, for there is much still unsaid, notwithstanding all that Christ hath spoken at seven different times. 'To him that overcometh,' saith He, 'I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of My God.'* But as this does not perfectly describe it, He says again: 'Be thou faithful unto death; and I will give thee the crown of life.'†

This also is insufficient, and so He adds somewhat obscurely, but still explaining it: 'To him that overcometh I will give the hidden manna, and will give him a white counter, and on the counter a new name written, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it.'‡ And as even this is still insufficient, He proceeds to speak of great power and joy, saying: 'He that shall overcome and keep My works unto the end, I will give him power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and as a vessel of the potter they shall be broken, as I also have received of My Father, and I will give him the morning star.'§ Christ is not yet satisfied with what He hath said; and He adds: 'He that shall overcome shall thus be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father.'||

Still, all this falls short of the reality, and so Christ proceeds with words of unutterable majesty and grandeur to describe that which He gave the soul the other day: 'He that shall overcome I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem which cometh down out of Heaven from My God, and My new name.'¶ The seventh

* Apoc. ii. 7.

§ Ib. 26-8.

† Ib. 10.

|| Ib. iii. 5.

‡ Ib. 17.

¶ Ib. 12.

time He says: 'To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit in My throne: so I also have overcome, and am set down with My Father in His throne. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.'*

STANZA
XXXVIII.
7. The throne
of God.

These are the words of the Son of God; all of which tend to describe that which was given to the soul. The words correspond most accurately with it, but still they do not explain it, because it involves infinite good. The noblest expressions befit it, but none of them reach it, no, not all together.

How David
describes the
bliss of
Heaven.

Let us now see whether David hath said anything of it. In one of the Psalms he saith: 'O how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee.'† In another place he describes it as a 'torrent of pleasure,' saying, 'Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure.'‡ And as he did not consider this enough, he says again, 'Thou hast prevented him with blessings of sweetness.'§ The expression that rightly fits this 'what' of the soul, namely its predestined bliss, cannot be found. Let us, therefore, rest satisfied with what the soul has used in reference to it, and explain the words as follows: 'What Thou gavest me,' that is, that weight of glory to which Thou didst predestinate me, O my Bridegroom, in the day of Thy eternity, when it was Thy good pleasure to decree my creation, Thou wilt then give me in my day of my betrothal and of my nuptials, in my day of the joy of my heart, when released from the burden of the flesh, led into the lofty caverns of Thy bridal chamber and gloriously transformed in Thee we drink the wine of the sweet pomegranates.

It is beyond
adequate
expression.

* Ib. iii. 21, 22. † Ps. xxx. 20. ‡ Ib. xxxv. 9. § Ib. xx. 4.

INTRODUCTION.

STANZA
XXXIX.

BUT inasmuch as the soul, in the state of Spiritual Matrimony, of which I am now speaking, cannot but know something of this 'What,' seeing that because of its transformation in God something of that 'What' must be experienced by it, it will not omit to say something on the subject, the pledges and signs of which it is conscious of in itself, as it is written : 'Who can withhold the words he hath conceived?' * Hence in the following stanza the soul says something of the fruition which it shall have in the Beatific Vision, explaining so far as it is possible the nature and the manner of it.

STANZA XXXIX.

*The breathing of the air,
The song of the sweet nightingale,
The grove and its beauty
In the serene night,
With the fire that consumes but without pain.*

Five descrip-
tions of
Eternal
Beatitude ;

The soul refers here, under five different expressions, to that which the Bridegroom is to bestow upon it in the beatific transformation. 1. The aspiration of the Holy Spirit of God after it, and its own aspiration after God. 2. Exultation in God in the fruition of Him. 3. The knowledge of creatures and the order of them. 4. The pure and clear contemplation of the Divine Essence. 5. Perfect transformation in the infinite love of God.

1. Love of
the Holy
Ghost in the
soul uniting
it with the
Blessed
Trinity.

'The breathing of the air.' This is a certain faculty which God will there bestow upon the soul in the communication of the Holy Ghost, Who, like one breathing, elevates the soul by His Divine aspiration, informs it, strengthens it, so that it too may breathe in God, with the same aspiration of love

* Job iv. 2.

which the Father breathes with the Son, and the Son with the Father, which is the Holy Ghost Himself: Who is breathed into the soul in the Father and the Son in that transformation so as to unite it to Himself; for the transformation will not be true and perfect if the soul is not transformed in the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity in a clear manifest degree. This breathing of the Holy Ghost in the soul, whereby God transforms it in Himself, is to the soul a joy so deep, so exquisite, and so sublime, that no mortal tongue can describe it, no human understanding, as such, conceive it in any degree; for even that which passes in the soul with respect to the communication which takes place in its transformation wrought in this life, cannot be described, because the soul united with God and transformed in Him, breathes in God that very Divine aspiration which God breathes Himself in the soul when it is transformed in Him.

In the transformation which takes place in this life, this breathing of God in the soul, and of the soul in God, is of most frequent occurrence, and the source of the most exquisite delight of love to the soul, but not however in the clear and manifest degree which it will have in the life to come. This, in my opinion, is what S. Paul referred to when he said: 'Because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.'* The Blessed in the life to come and the perfect in this thus experience it. Nor is it to be thought impossible that the soul should be capable of so great a thing, that it should breathe in God as God in it, in the way of participation. For granting that God has bestowed upon it so great a favour as to unite it to the most Holy Trinity, whereby it becomes like unto God, and God by participation, is it altogether incredible that it should exercise the faculties of its intellect, perform its acts of knowledge

The perfect
in this life
taste the joys
of the Blessed
in Heaven.

* Gal. iv. 6.

STANZA
XXXIX.

The soul, in
power,
knowledge,
and love,
made a per-
fect image
of the Blessed
Trinity.

and of love, or to speak more accurately, should have it all done in the Holy Trinity together with It, as the Holy Trinity Itself? This however takes place by communication and participation, God Himself effecting it in the soul, for this is to be transformed in the Three Persons in power, wisdom, and love, and herein it is that the soul becomes like unto God, Who, that it might come to this, created it in His own image and likeness.

How this can be so cannot be explained in any other way than by showing how the Son of God has raised us to so high an estate, and merited for us the 'Power to be made the sons of God.'* He prayed to the Father saying: 'Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me, that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me.†' That is, that they may do by participation in us what I do naturally, namely, breathe the Holy Ghost. He says also: 'Not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me, that they all may be one, as Thou Father in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them: that they may be one as We also are one. I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one, and the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast also loved Me,‡ that is in bestowing upon them that love which He bestows upon the Son, though not naturally as upon Him, but in the way I speak of, in the union and transformation of love. Nor are we to suppose from this that our Lord prayed that the saints might become one in essential and natural unity, as the Father and the Son are; but that they might become one in the union of love as the Father and the Son are one in the oneness of their love.

Prayer of
Christ for
the unity of
His Church
in love.

* S. John i. 12.

† Ib. xvii. 24.

‡ Ib. xvii. 20-3.

STANZA
XXXIX.

Thus souls have this great blessing by participation which the Son has by nature, and are therefore really gods by participation like unto God and of His nature. S. Peter speaks of this as follows: 'Grace to you and peace be accomplished in the knowledge of God, and of Christ Jesus our Lord; as all things of His divine power, which appertain to life and godliness, are given us, through the knowledge of Him Who hath called us by His own proper glory and virtue, by Whom He hath given us most great and precious promises: that by these you may be made partakers of the Divine nature.*' Thus far S. Peter, who clearly teaches that the soul will be a partaker of God Himself, Who will effect within it, together with it, the work of the Most Holy Trinity, because of the substantial union between the soul and God. And though this union be perfect only in the life to come, yet even in this, in the state of perfection to which the soul is supposed now to have reached, some anticipation of its sweetness is given it, in the way I am speaking of, though in a manner wholly ineffable.

God and the soul one, not by fusion of natures, but by identity of will, i.e. Love.

O souls created for this, and called thereto, what are you doing? What are your occupations? Your aim is meanness, and your enjoyments misery. Oh, wretched blindness of the children of Adam, blind to so great a light, and deaf to so clear a voice; you see not that, while seeking after greatness and glory, you are miserable and contemptible, ignorant, and unworthy of blessings so great. I now proceed to the second expression which the soul has made use of to describe what He gave it.

How men fall from their high destiny.

'The song of the sweet nightingale.' Out of this 'breathing of the air' comes the sweet voice of the Beloved addressing Himself to the soul, in which the soul also sends forth its own sweet exultation in Him. Both the one and the other are

2. Song of God to the soul, and of the soul to God.

* 2 S. Pet. i. 2-4.

STANZA
XXXIX.

Winter past :
Spring come.

meant by the song of the nightingale. As the song of the nightingale is heard in the spring of the year, when the cold, and rain, and storms of winter are passed, filling the ear with melody, and the mind with joy; so, in the true intercourse and transformation of love, which takes place in this life, the bride now protected and delivered from all earthly trials and temptations; purified and detached from the imperfections, troubles and darkness, both of mind and body, becomes conscious of a new spring in liberty, largeness, and joy of spirit, when she hears the sweet voice of the Bridegroom, Who is her sweet nightingale, renewing and refreshing the very substance of her soul, which is now prepared for the journey of everlasting life. That voice is sweet to her ears, and calls her sweetly, as it is written: 'Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come. For winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land, the time of pruning is come: the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.'* When the bride hears the voice of the Bridegroom in her inmost soul, she feels that her troubles are over and her prosperity begun. In the refreshing comfort and sweet sense of this voice, the bride herself, like the nightingale, sends forth her voice in new songs of rejoicing unto God, in unison with Him Who now moves her to do so.

It is for this that the Beloved gives His voice to the Bride; that she in unison with Him may give it unto God; this is the aim and desire of the Bridegroom, that the soul should sing spiritually unto God; and this is what He asks of the Bride in the Canticle: 'Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come; my dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall, shew me thy face, let thy voice sound in my ears.'† The ears of God signify the desire He hath that

* Cant. ii. 10-12.

† Ib. ii. 13, 14.

STANZA
XXXIX.

The perfect soul begins to sing the Canticle of eternal joy.

the soul should send forth its voice of perfect jubilation. And that this voice may be perfect, the Bridegroom bids the soul to send it forth, and to let it sound in the clefts of the rock, in that transformation which I spoke of in connection with the mysteries of Christ. And because in this union of the soul with God, the soul sings praises unto Him together with Him, in the way I spoke of when I was speaking of love, the praises it sends forth are most perfect and pleasing unto God; for the acts of the soul, in the state of perfection, are most perfect; and thus the voice of its rejoicing is sweet unto God as well as to itself. 'Thy voice is sweet,'* saith the Bridegroom, not only to thee, but also to Me, for as we are one, thy voice is also in unison and one with Mine. This is the canticle which the soul sings in the transformation which takes place in this life, about which no exaggeration is possible. But as this song is not so perfect as the new song in the life of glory, the soul, having a foretaste of that by what it feels on earth, shadows forth by the grandeur of this the magnificence of that in glory, which is beyond all comparison nobler, and calls it to mind and says that what its portion there will be, is the song of the sweet nightingale.

'The grove and its beauty.' This is the third thing which the Bridegroom is to give to the soul. The grove, because it contains many plants and animals, signifies God as the Creator and Giver of life to all creatures, which have their being and origin from Him, and which show Him to be God, and make Him known as the Creator. The beauty of the grove, which the soul prays for, is not only the grace, wisdom, and loveliness which flow from God over all created things, whether in heaven or on earth, but also the beauty of the mutual harmony and wise arrangement of the inferior creation in itself, and the higher also in itself, and of the mutual relations

3. Knowledge of creatures in their mutual order, and in their relation to God.

* Cant. ii. 14.

STANZA
XXXIX.

4. Unclouded
vision of the
face of God.

of both. The contemplation of this is to the soul a subject of great joy and satisfaction. The fourth request is :—

‘In the serene night.’ That is, contemplation, in which the soul desires to behold the grove. It is called night, because contemplation is obscure; and that is the reason why it is also called mystical theology, that is, the secret or hidden wisdom of God, wherein God, without the sound of words, or the intervention of any bodily or spiritual sense; as it were in silence and in repose, in the darkness of sense and nature, teaches the soul—and the soul knows not how—in a most secret and hidden way. Some spiritual writers call this ‘understanding without understanding,’ because it does not take place in what philosophers call the active intellect, which is conversant with the forms, fancies, and apprehensions of the physical faculties, but in the intellect as it is passive, which, without receiving such forms, receives passively only the substantial intelligence of them free from all imagery. This occurs in the intellect without effort or exertion on its part, and for this reason contemplation is called night, in which the soul, through the channel of its transformation, learns in this life that it already has, in a supreme degree, this Divine grove, together with its beauty.

Still, however profound may be its knowledge of this, it is obscure night in comparison with that of the Blessed, for which the soul prays. Hence, while it prays for the clear contemplation; that is, the fruition of the grove and its beauty with the other objects here enumerated, it says let it be in the night now serene; that is, in the clear beatific contemplation: let the night of obscure contemplation cease here below, and change into the clear contemplation of the serene vision of God above. Thus the serene night is the clear and unclouded contemplation of the face of God. It was to this night of contemplation that David referred, when he said: ‘Night

shall be my light in my pleasures;’* that is, when I shall have my delight in the essential vision of God, the night of contemplation will have dawned in the day and light of my intellect.

STANZA
XXXIX.

5. Perfect transformation in the infinite love of God.

‘With the fire that consumes but without pain.’ The fire, here, is the love of the Holy Ghost; and ‘consuming’ signifies to make perfect. It is said that the soul is to have all things mentioned here given it by the Beloved, and that it shall possess them all in perfect and consummate love—all of them, and itself together with them, absorbed therein—and that is love without pain. Now, this is to show the entire perfection of that love, for these two qualities are necessary to constitute its perfection; that is, it must consume the soul, and transform it in God: this burning and transformation also must be painless. Now this can never happen except in the state of bliss, and where this fire is sweet love. In that transformation of the soul both parts of it are in a state of beatific conformity and satisfaction. There is, therefore, no suffering from any changes, such as increase or decrease of love, as was the case before, when the soul had not reached to this perfect love. Now, when it has attained thereto, it exists in such conformable and sweet love for God, that it knows Him only, though He is a consuming fire,† as the Author of its consummate perfection. This is not like the transformation which took place upon earth, which, though most perfect and complete in love, was still, in some degree, consuming the soul and wearing it away. It was like fire in burning coals, for though the coals may be transformed into fire, and conformed to it, and have ceased from seething, and smoke no longer arises from them, as was the case before they were wholly transformed into fire, still, though they have become perfect fire, the fire consumes them and reduces them into ashes.

* Ps. cxxxviii. 11.

† Deuteron. iv. 24.

STANZA
XXXIX.

The perfect
soul in this
life still
suffers pain
and loss.

Such is the state of the soul which in this life is transformed in perfect love: for though it be wholly conformed, yet it still suffers, in some measure, both pain and loss. Pain, on account of the beatific transformation which is still wanting; loss, through the weakness and corruption of the flesh coming in contact with love so strong and so deep: for everything that is grand hurts and pains our natural infirmity, as it is written: 'The corruptible body is a load upon the soul.'* But in the life of bliss there will be neither loss nor pain, though the sense of the soul will be most acute, and its love without measure, for God will give it power in the former and strength in the latter, perfecting the intellect in His Wisdom and the will in His Love.

As, in the foregoing stanzas, and in the one which follows, the Bride prays for the boundless knowledge of God, for which she requires the strongest and the deepest love that she may love Him in proportion to the grandeur of His communications, she prays now that all these things may be bestowed upon her in love consummated, perfect, and strong.

STANZA XL.

*None saw it ;
Neither did Aminadab appear.
The siege was intermitted,
And the cavalry dismounted
At the vision of the waters.*

The Bride perceiving that the desire of her will is now detached from all things, resting upon God with most fervent love; that the sensitive part of the soul, with all its powers, faculties, and desires, is now conformed to the spirit; that all rebellion is quelled for ever; that Satan is overcome and driven far away in the varied contest of the spiritual struggle;

* Wisd. ix. 15.

that her soul is united and transformed in the rich abundance of the heavenly gifts; and that she herself is now prepared, confirmed in strength, apparelled, 'leaning upon her Beloved,' to go up 'by the desert'* of death; full of joy in the glorious throne of her espousals, and of eager desire for the conclusion of her nuptials, puts before the eyes of her Bridegroom, in order to influence Him the more, all that is mentioned in the present stanza, namely:—

STANZA
XL.
The soul ripe
for Heaven!

1. The soul detached from all things and a stranger to them. Five signs :

2. The devil overcome and put to flight.

3. The passions subdued, and the natural desires mortified.

4, 5. The sensitive and lower nature of the soul changed and purified, and so conformed to the spiritual, as not only not to hinder the spiritual blessings, but rather to be prepared for them, for it is even a partaker already, according to its capacity, of those which have been bestowed upon the soul.

'None saw it.' That is, my soul is so detached, so denuded, so lonely, so estranged from all created things, in heaven and earth; it has penetrated so far within into interior recollection with Thee, that nothing whatever can come within sight of that most intimate joy which I have in Thee. That is, there is nothing whatever that can cause me pleasure with its sweetness, or disgust with its vileness; for my soul is so far removed from all such things, absorbed in such profound delight in Thee, that nothing can behold me. This is not the whole of my blessedness, for:

1. Detachment from all things.

'Neither did Aminadab appear.' Aminadab, in the Holy Writings, signifies the Devil; that is, the enemy of the soul, in a spiritual sense, who is ever fighting against it, and disturbing it with his innumerable artillery, that it may not enter into the fortress and secret place of interior recollection with the

2. Satan overcome.

* Cant. viii. 5; iii. 6.

STANZA
XL.

Bridegroom. There, the soul is so protected, so strong, so triumphant in virtue which it then practises, so defended by God's right hand, that the Devil not only dares not approach it, but runs away from it in great fear, and does not venture to appear. The practice of virtue, and the state of perfection to which the soul has come, is a victory over Satan, and causes him such terror, that he cannot present himself before it. Thus Aminadab appeared not with any right to disturb the soul.

3. Desires mortified, and passions subject to Reason.

'The siege was intermitted.' By the siege is meant the array of the passions and desires, which, when not overcome and mortified, surround the soul and fight against it on all sides. Hence the term siege is applied to them. This siege is 'intermitted,' the passions are brought into the subjection of reason, and the desires mortified. Under these circumstances the soul entreats the Beloved to communicate to it those graces for which it has prayed, for now the siege is so intermitted as to be no impediment. Until the four passions of the soul are ordered in reason according to God, and until the desires are mortified and purified, the soul is incapable of seeing God.

4, 5. The flesh conformed to the spirit.

'The cavalry dismounted at the vision of the waters.' The waters are the spiritual joys and blessings which the soul now enjoys interiorly with God. By the cavalry is meant the bodily senses of the sensitive part, interior as well as exterior, for they carry with them the phantasms and figures of their objects. They dismount now at the vision of the waters, because the sensitive and lower part of the soul in the state of spiritual matrimony is purified, and in a certain way spiritualised, so that the soul with its sensitive powers and natural forces becomes so recollected as to participate and rejoice, in their way, in the spiritual grandeurs which God communicates to the soul in the interior spirit. To this did the Psalmist refer when he said: 'My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God.'*

* Ps. lxxxiii. 2.

It is to be observed that the cavalry did not dismount to taste of the waters, but only at the vision of them, because the sensitive part of the soul, with its powers, is incapable of tasting substantially and properly the spiritual blessings, not merely in this life, but also in the life to come. Still, because of a certain overflowing of the Spirit, they are sensibly refreshed and delighted, and this delight attracts them—that is, the senses with their bodily powers—towards that interior recollection where the soul is drinking the waters of these spiritual benedictions. This condition of the senses is rather a dismounting at the vision of the waters than a dismounting for the purpose of seeing or tasting them. The soul says of them that they dismounted, not that they went, or did anything else, and the meaning is that in the communication of the sensitive with the spiritual part of the soul, when the spiritual waters become its drink, the natural operations subside and merge into spiritual recollection.

All these perfections and dispositions of the soul, the Bride sets forth before her Beloved, the Son of God, longing at the same time to be translated to Him out of the spiritual marriage, to which God has been pleased to advance her in the Church militant, to the glorious marriage of the Church triumphant. Whereunto may He bring of His mercy all those who call upon the most sweet name of Jesus, the Bridegroom of faithful souls, to Whom be all honour and glory, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, *in sæcula sæculorum*.

THE
LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.



THE
LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.

PROLOGUE.

It is not without some unwillingness that, to satisfy the requests of others, I enter upon the explanation of the four stanzas which are the subject of this treatise. My unwillingness arises from the fact that they relate to matters so interior and spiritual as to baffle the powers of language. The spiritual transcends the sensual, and he speaks but indifferently of the affections of the spirit who has not an affectionate spirit himself. I have, therefore, in consideration of my own defects, put off this matter until now. But now that our Lord seems in some way to have opened to me the way of knowledge herein, and to have given me some fervour of spirit, I have resolved to enter on the subject. I know too well that of myself I can say nothing to the purpose on any subject, how much less then on a matter of such depth and substance as this! What is mine here will be nothing but the defects and errors, and I therefore submit the whole to the better judgment and discretion of our Holy Mother the Catholic Roman Church, under whose guidance no one goeth astray. And now having said this, I will venture, in reliance on the Holy Writings, to give utterance to what I may have learned, warning all, at the same time, that all I say falls far short of that which passes in this intimate union of the soul with God.

The Author's
diffidence in
himself, and
submission
to the
Church.

There is nothing strange in the fact that God bestows

PROLOGUE.

No favour
too great for
God's love to
bestow.

Subject of
the following
stanzas,—
what.

Method to be
followed.

favours so great and so wonderful upon those souls whom He is pleased to comfort. For if we consider it attentively, it is God Himself as God, and with infinite love and goodness, Who bestows them; and this being the case, they will not seem unreasonable, for He hath said Himself that the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost 'will come to him' that loves Him, and will make their abode with him.* And this is accomplished in making such an one live and abide in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the life of God, as it shall be explained in the stanzas that follow. Though the former stanzas spoke of the highest degree of perfection to which it is possible to attain in this life, transformation in God; yet these, the explanation of which I now propose to undertake, speak of that love still more perfect and complete in the same estate of transformation. For though it is true that the former and the present stanzas refer to one and the same state of transformation, and that no soul can pass beyond it as such, still with time and habits of devotion the soul is more perfected and grounded in it. Thus, when a log of wood is set on fire, and when it is transformed into fire and united with it, the longer it burns and the hotter the fire, the more it glows until sparks and flames are emitted from it. So too the soul—and this is the subject of these stanzas—when transformed, and glowing interiorly in the fire of love, is not only united with the Divine fire, but becomes a living flame, and itself conscious of it. The soul speaks of this with an intimate delicious sweetness of love, burning in its own flame, and ponders over various marvellous effects wrought within it. These effects I now proceed to describe, following the same method: that is, I shall first transcribe the four stanzas, then each separately, and finally each line by itself as I explain them.

* S. John xiv. 23.

STANZAS.

I

O living Flame of Love,
 That woundest tenderly
 My soul in its inmost depth !
 As Thou art no longer grievous,
 Perfect Thy work, if it be Thy will,
 Break the web in this sweet encounter.

II

O sweet burn !
 O delicious wound !
 O tender hand ! O gentle touch !
 Savouring of everlasting life,
 And paying the whole debt,
 In destroying death Thou hast changed it into life.

III

O Lamps of fire,
 In whose splendours
 The deep caverns of sense,
 Obscure and dark,
 With unwonted brightness
 Give light and heat together to the Beloved.

IV

How gently and how lovingly
 Thou liest awake in my bosom,
 Where alone Thou secretly dwellest ;
 And in Thy sweet breathing
 Full of grace and glory,
 How tenderly Thou fillest me with Thy love.

EXPLANATION.

The Bride of Christ, feeling herself all on fire in the Divine union, feeling also that 'the rivers of living water' are flowing from her as our Lord hath promised of faithful souls,* imagines that as she is so vehemently transformed in God, so

* S. John vii. 38.

STANZA
I.

profoundly possessed by Him, so richly adorned with gifts and graces, she is near unto bliss, and that a slender veil only separates her from it. Seeing, too, that the sweet flame of love burning within her, each time it envelopes her, makes her as it were glorious with its foretaste of glory, so much so that whenever it absorbs and surrounds her, it seems to be admitting her to everlasting life, and to rend the veil of her mortality, she addresses herself, in her great desire, to this flame, which is the Holy Ghost, and prays Him to destroy her mortal life in this sweet encounter, and bestow upon her in reality what He seems about to give, namely, perfect glory, crying: 'O living Flame of love.'

The soul's
love and
desire, under
the influence
of the Holy
Ghost.

i. 'O living Flame of love.'—In order to express the intensity of her feelings, the Bride begins each of these four stanzas with *Oh!* or *How!* terms indicative of deep emotion, and which, whenever uttered, are signs of interior feelings beyond the power of language to express. *Oh!* is an exclamation of strong desire, and of earnest supplication, in the way of persuasion. The soul employs it in both senses here, for the Bride magnifies and intimates her great desire, persuading her Love, that she might put off her mortal life entirely. This flame of love is the Spirit of the Bridegroom, the Holy Ghost, of whose presence within itself the soul is conscious, not only as fire which consumes it, and transforms it in sweet love, but as a fire burning within it, sending forth a flame which bathes it in glory and recreates it with the refreshment of everlasting life. The operation of the Holy Ghost in a soul transformed in His love, is this: His interior action within it is to kindle it and set it on fire; this is the burning of love, in union with which the will loves most deeply, being now one in love with that flame of fire. And thus the soul's acts of love are most precious, and even one of them more meritorious than many elicited not in the state of transformation. The transformation in love differs from

Great value
of acts of
perfect love.

the flame of love as a habit differs from an act, or as the glowing fuel from the flames it emits, the flames being the effect of the fire which is there burning.

LINE
I.

Hence then we may say of a soul which is transformed in love, that its ordinary state is that of the fuel in the midst of the fire; that the acts of such a soul are the flames which rise up out of the fire of love, vehement in proportion to the intensity of the fire of union, and to the rapture and absorption of the will in the flame of the Holy Ghost; rising like the Angel who ascended to God in the flame which consumed the holocaust of Manue.* And as the soul, in its present condition, cannot elicit these acts without the special suggestions of the Holy Ghost, all these acts must be Divine, in so far as the soul is under the influence of God. Hence then it seems to the soul, as often as the flame breaks forth, causing it to love sweetly with a heavenly disposition, that life everlasting, which elevates it upwards to the Divine operation, is about to be bestowed on it.

Loving acts
of the soul
ascend to
God in the
love of the
Holy Ghost.

This is the language in which God addresses purified and stainless souls, namely words of fire. 'Thy word,' saith the Psalmist, 'is a vehement fire.'† And 'are not My words as a fire?' saith the Lord.‡ His 'words,' we learn from Himself, 'are spirit and life;' § the power and efficacy of which are felt by such souls as have ears to hear; pure souls full of love. But those souls whose palate is not healthy, whose desire is after other things, cannot perceive the spirit and life of His words. And therefore the more wonderful the words of the Son of God, the more insipid they are to some who hear them, because of the impurity in which they live.

How God
speaks to
pure souls.

Thus, when He announced the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, a doctrine full of sweetness and of love, 'many of His disciples went back.'|| If such persons as these have no

* Judg. xiii. 20. † Ps. cxviii. 140. Ignitum eloquium tuum vehementer.

‡ Jerem. xxiii. 29. § S. John vi. 64. || Ib. vi. 67.

STANZA

I.

Why the words of God are sweet to some, and tasteless to others.

taste for the words of God which He speaks inwardly to them, it is not to be supposed that all others are like them. S. Peter loved the words of Christ, for he replied, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.'* The woman of Samaria forgot the water, and 'left her waterpot' † at the well, because of the sweetness of the words of God.

And now when the soul has drawn so near unto God as to be transformed in the Flame of love, when the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are in communion with it, is it anything incredible to say, that it has a foretaste—though not perfectly, because this life admits not of it—of everlasting life in this fire of the Holy Ghost? This is the reason why this Flame is said to be a *living* flame, not because it is not always living, but because its effect is to make the soul live spiritually in God, and to be conscious of such a life, as it is written, 'My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God.' ‡ The Psalmist makes use of the word 'living,' not because it was necessary, for God is ever-living, but to show that the body and the spirit had a lively feeling of God; and that is rejoicing in the living God. Thus, in this Flame, the soul has so vivid a sense of God, and a perception of Him so sweet and delicious, that it cries out: 'O living Flame of love!'

ii. 'That woundest tenderly.'—That is, Thou touchest me tenderly in Thy love. For when this Flame of Divine life wounds the soul with the gentle languishing for the life of God, it wounds it with so much endearing tenderness, and so softens it that it melts away in love. The words of the Bride in the Canticle are now fulfilled in the soul. 'My soul melted when He spoke.' § This is the effect of the words of God in the soul.

But how can we say that He wounds the soul, when there is nothing to wound, seeing that it is all consumed in the fire

* S. John vi. 69. † Ib. iv. 28. ‡ Ps. lxxxiii. 3. § Cant. v. 6.

The Flame called *living*—why.

of love? It is certainly marvellous; for as fire is never idle, but in continual movement, flashing in one direction, then in another, so love, the function of which is to wound, so as to cause love and joy, when it exists in the soul as a living flame, darts forth its most tender flames of love, causing wounds, exerting joyously all the arts and wiles of love as in the palace of its nuptials. So Assuerus exhibited his riches, and the glory of his power at 'the marriage and wedding of Esther;'^{*} and so might be fulfilled what Christ hath said of Himself: I 'was delighted every day . . . playing in the world, and My delights were to be with the children of men,'[†] that is to give myself to them. This wounding, therefore, which is the 'playing' of the Divine wisdom, is the flames of those tender touches which touch the soul continually, touches of the fire of love which is never idle. And of these flashings of the fire it is said that they wound the soul in its inmost substance.

iii. 'My soul in its inmost depth.'—The feast of the Holy Ghost is celebrated in the substance of the soul, which is inaccessible to the devil, the world, and the flesh; and therefore the more interior the feast, the more secure, substantial, and delicious is it. For the more interior it is, the purer it is; and the greater the purity, the greater the abundance, frequency, and universality of God's communication of Himself; and thus the joy of the soul and spirit is so much the greater, for it is God Himself Who is the Author of all this, and the soul doeth nothing of itself, in the sense I shall immediately explain. And inasmuch as the soul cannot work naturally here, nor make any efforts of its own otherwise than through the bodily senses and by their help—of which it is in this case completely free, and from which it is most detached—the work of the soul is solely to receive what

LINE
II.

Love in the
soul like a
flame of fire.

Two illustra-
tions.

Festival of
the Holy
Ghost in the
soul.

* Esth. ii. 18.

† Prov. viii. 30, 31.

STANZA

I.

God in the
soul does not
violate its
freedom.

God communicates, Who only, in the depths of the soul, without the help of the senses, can influence and direct it, and operate within it. Thus then all the movements of such a soul are Divine, and though of God, still they are the soul's, because God effects them within it, with itself willing them and assenting to them.

How *depth*
is to be
understood.

The expression, 'inmost depth,' implies other depths of the soul less profound, and it is necessary to consider this. In the first place the soul, regarded as spirit, has neither height nor depth of greater or less degree in its own nature, as bodies have which have bulk. The soul has no parts, neither is there any difference between its interior and exterior, for it is uniform; it has no depths of greater or less profundity, nor can one part of it be more enlightened than another, as is the case with physical bodies, for the whole of it is enlightened uniformly at once.

The soul
tends to God
as a stone
to the centre
of the earth.

Setting aside this signification of depth, material and measurable, we say that the inmost depth of the soul is there where its being, power, and the force of its action and movement penetrate, and cannot go further. Thus fire, or a stone, tend by their natural force to the centre of their sphere, and cannot go beyond it, or help resting there, unless some obstacle intervene. Accordingly, when a stone lies on the ground it is said to be within its centre, because within the sphere of its active motion, which is the element of earth, but not in the inmost depth of that centre, the middle of the earth, because it has still power and force to descend thither, provided all that hinders it be taken away. So when it shall have reached the centre of the earth, and is incapable of further motion of its own, we say of it that it is then in its inmost or deepest centre.

The centre of the soul is God. When the soul shall have reached Him, according to its essence, and according to the power of its operations, it will then have attained to its ulti-

mate and deepest centre in God. This will be when the soul shall love Him, comprehend Him, and enjoy Him with all its strength. When, however, the soul has not attained to this state, though it be in God, Who is the centre of it by grace and communion with Him, still if it can move further and is not satisfied, though in the centre, it is not in the deepest centre, because there is still room for it to advance.

LINE
III.

Love unites the soul with God, and the greater its love the deeper does it enter into God, and the more is it centred in Him. According to this way of speaking we may say, that as the degrees of love, so are the centres, which the soul finds in God. These are the many mansions of the Father's house.* Thus, a soul which has but one degree of love is already in God, Who is its centre: for one degree of love is sufficient for our abiding in Him in the state of grace. If we have two degrees of love we shall then have found another centre, more interiorly in God; and if we have three we shall have reached another and more interior centre still. But if the soul shall have attained to the highest degree of love, the love of God will then wound it in its inmost depth or centre; and the soul will be transformed and enlightened in the highest degree in its substance, faculties, and powers, until it shall become most like unto God. The soul in this state may be compared to crystal, lucid and pure; the greater the light thrown upon it, the more luminous it becomes by the concentration thereof, until at last it seems to be all light, and undistinguishable from it; it being then so illuminated, and to the utmost extent, that it seems to be one with the light itself.

Degrees of
love for God,
the centres
of the soul.

One degree
of love
enough for
the state of
grace.

The perfect
soul com-
pared to a
pure crystal
in the
sunlight.

The flame wounds the soul in its inmost depth; that is, it wounds it when it touches the very depths of its substance, power and force. This expression implies that abundance of joy and glory, which is the greater and the more tender, the

* S. John xiv. 2.

STANZA
I.

more vehemently and substantially the soul is transformed and centred in God. It greatly surpasses that which occurs in the ordinary union of love, for it is in proportion to the greater heat of the fire of love which now emits the living flame. The soul which has the fruition only of the ordinary union of love may be compared, in a certain sense, to the 'fire' of God which is in Sion, that is in the Church Militant; while the soul which has the fruition of glory so sweet may be compared to 'His furnace in Jerusalem,'* which means the vision of peace. The soul in the burning furnace is in a more peaceful, glorious, and tender union, the more the flame of the furnace transcends the fire of ordinary love. Thus the soul, feeling that the living flame ministers to it all good — the Divine love brings all blessings with it — cries out: 'O living flame of love, that woundest tenderly.' The cry of the soul is: O kindling burning love, how tenderly dost thou make me glorious by thy loving motions in my greatest power and strength, giving me a Divine intelligence according to the capacity of my understanding, and communicating love according to the utmost freedom of my will; that is, thou hast elevated to the greatest height, by the Divine intelligence, the powers of my understanding in the most intense fervour and substantial union of my will. This ineffable effect then takes place when this flame of fire rushes upwards in the soul. The Divine wisdom absorbs the soul — which is now purified and most clean — profoundly and sublimely in itself; for 'Wisdom reacheth everywhere by reason of her purity.' † It is in this absorption of wisdom that the Holy Ghost effects those glorious quiverings of His flame of which I am speaking. And as the flame is so sweet, the soul says: 'As thou art no longer grievous.'

iv. 'As thou art no longer grievous.' Thou dost not

All blessings
contained
in supreme
love for God.

* Is. xxxi. 9.

† Wisd. vii. 24.

afflict, nor vex, nor weary me as before. This flame, when the soul was in the state of spiritual purgation, that is, when it was entering that of contemplation, was not so peaceful and sweet as it is now in the state of union. For before the Divine fire enters into the soul and unites itself to it in its inmost depth by the perfect purgation and purity thereof, the flame wounds it, destroys and consumes the imperfections of its evil habits. This is the work of the Holy Ghost, who thereby disposes the soul for its Divine union and transformation in God by love. For the flame which afterwards unites itself to the soul in the glory of love, is the very same which before enveloped and purified it; just as the fire which ultimately penetrates the substance of the fuel, is the very same which in the beginning darted its flames around it, playing about it, and depriving it of its coldness until it prepared it with its heat for its own entrance into it, and transformation of it into itself.

Work of the Holy Ghost in the soul begins painfully, but ends joyfully.

The soul suffers much in this spiritual exercise, and endures grievous afflictions of spirit which occasionally overflow into the senses; for then the flame is felt to be grievous. As I have described it in the Treatise of the Obscure Night, and in that of the Ascent of Mount Carmel, I shall therefore not pursue the subject further. It is enough for us to know that God, Who seeks to enter the soul by union and the transformation of love, is He who previously enveloped the soul, purifying it with the light and heat of His Divine Flame, which was before grievous but is now sweet. The meaning of the whole is as follows: Thou art now not only not obscure as before, but the Divine light of my intellect wherewith I behold Thee: not only dost Thou abstain from causing me to faint in my weakness, but Thou art become the strength of my will, wherein I can love and enjoy Thee, being wholly changed into Divine love. Thou art no longer grief and affliction, but rather my glory, my delight, and my liberty, seeing that I

STANZA
I.

may apply to myself the words in the Canticle, 'Who is this that cometh up from the desert flowing with delights leaning upon her Beloved,'* scattering love on this side and on that? 'Perfect Thy work, if it be Thy will.'

Perfect love for God harmonises desire with resignation.

v. 'Perfect Thy work, if it be Thy will;' that is, do Thou perfect the spiritual marriage in the Beatific Vision. Though it is true that the soul is the more resigned the more it is transformed, when it has attained to a state so high as this is—seeing that it knows nothing and seeks nothing with a view to itself,† but only in and for the Beloved, for Charity seeks nothing but the good and glory of the Beloved—still because it lives in Hope, and Hope implies a want, it groans deeply, though sweetly and joyfully, because it has not fully attained to the perfect adoption of the sons of God, in which, being perfected in glory, all its desires will be satisfied. However intimate the soul's union may be with God, it will never be satisfied here below till His 'glory shall appear;'‡ and this is especially the case because it has already tasted, by anticipation, of its sweetness; and that sweetness is such that if God had not had pity on its natural frailty and covered it with His right hand, as He did Moses, that he might not die when he saw the glory of God—for the natural powers of the soul receive comfort and delight from that right hand, rather than hurt—it would have died at each vibration of the flame, seeing that the inferior part thereof is incapable of enduring so great and so sharp a fire. This desire of the soul is therefore no longer a painful one, for its condition is now such that all pain is over, and its prayers are offered for the object it desires with great sweetness, joy, and resignation. This is the reason why it says, 'if it be Thy will,' for the will and desire are now so united in God, each in its own way, that

* Cant. viii. 5.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

‡ Ps. xvi. 15.

the soul regards it as its glory that the will of God should be done in it. Such are now the glimpses of glory, and such the love which now shines forth, that it would argue but little love on its part if it did not pray to be admitted to this perfect consummation of love.

Moreover, the soul in the power of this sweet communication, sees that the Holy Ghost incites it, and invites it in most wonderful ways, and by sweet affections, to this immeasurable glory, which He there sets before the eyes of the soul, saying, 'Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come. For winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land. . . . The fig-tree hath put forth her green figs, the vines in flower yield their sweet smell. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come; my dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall, show me thy face, let thy voice sound in my ears, for thy voice is sweet, and thy face comely.* The soul hears all this spoken interiorly to it, by the Holy Ghost in this sweet and tender flame, and therefore it is that it replies to Him, saying, 'Perfect Thy work, if it be Thy will.' This is in effect the two petitions which our Lord commands us to make, 'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done;† that is, give Thy kingdom according to Thy will. And thus the soul continues, 'Break the web in this sweet encounter.'

vi. 'Break the web in this sweet encounter;' that is, the obstacle to this so grand an affair. It is an easy thing to draw near unto God when all hindrances are set aside, and when the web that divides us from Him is broken. There are three webs to be broken before we can have the perfect fruition of God: 1. The temporal web, which comprises all created things. 2. The natural web, which comprises all

LINE
V.

The soul
invited to
Heaven.

* Cant. ii. 10-14.

† S. Matth. vi. 10.

STANZA
I.

To enjoy
God, three
webs must
be broken :
1. Temporal.
2. Natural.
3. Sensitive.

mere natural actions and inclinations. 3. The sensitive web, which is merely the union of soul and body ; that is, the sensitive and animal life, of which S. Paul speaks, saying, ' For we know if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven.'*

The first and second web must of necessity have been broken in order to enter into the fruition of God in the union of love, when we denied ourselves in worldly things and renounced them, when our affections and desires were mortified, and when all our operations became Divine ; these webs were broken in the assaults of this flame when it was still grievous. In the spiritual purgation the soul breaks the two webs I am speaking of, and becomes united with God ; the third alone, the web of the sensitive life, remains now to be broken. This is the reason why but one web is mentioned here. For now one web alone remains, and this the flame assails not painfully and grievously as it assailed the others, but with great sweetness and delight. Thus the death of such souls is most full of sweetness, beyond that of their whole spiritual life, for they die of the sweet violence of love, like the swan which sings more sweetly when death is nigh.

It was the thought of this that made the Psalmist say, ' Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints,'† for then the rivers of the soul's love flow into the sea of love, so wide and deep as to seem a sea in themselves ; the beginning and the end unite together to accompany the just departing for His kingdom. ' From the ends of the earth ' are ' heard praises, the glory of the just one,'‡ and the soul feels itself in the midst of these glorious encounters on the point of departing in all abundance for the perfect fruition of the kingdom, for it beholds itself pure and rich, and prepared,

First and
second
broken in
spiritual
purgation ;
third only
by death.

Peaceful
death of the
servants of
God.

* 2 Cor. v. 1.

† Ps. cxv. 15.

‡ Is. xxiv. 16.

so far as it is possible for it to be, consistently with faith and the conditions of this life. God now permits such a soul to behold its own beauty, and intrusts it with the gifts and the graces He has endowed it with, for all this turns into love and praise without the least stain of presumption or of vanity, because no leaven of imperfection remains now to corrupt it.

LINE
VI.

When the soul sees that nothing more is wanting than the breaking of the frail web of its natural life, by which its liberty is enthralled, it prays that it may be broken; for it longs 'to be dissolved and to be with Christ,' to burst the bonds which bind the spirit and the flesh together, that both may resume their proper state, for they are by nature different, the flesh to 'return into its earth, and the spirit return to God who gave it,'* for the mortal body, as S. John records, 'profiteth nothing,'† but is rather an impediment to the good of the spirit. The soul, therefore, prays for the dissolution of the body, for it is sad that an existence so mean should be an obstacle in the way of a life so noble.

Desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.

This life is called a web for three reasons: 1. Because of the connection between the Spirit and the Flesh. 2. Because it separates the soul and God. 3. Because a web is not so thick but that light penetrates it; so the connection between soul and body, in this state of perfection, is so slight a web, that the Divinity shines through it, now that the soul is so spiritualised, subtilised, and refined. When the power of the life to come begins to be felt in the soul, the weakness of this life becomes evident. Its present life seems to be but a slender web, even a spider's web, 'our years shall be considered as a spider,'‡ and even less than that, when the soul is thus exalted to so high a state. The soul being thus exalted to the perceptions of God, perceives things as God does, in Whose sight

This life called 'a web,' for three reasons.

* Eccles. xii. 7. † S. John vi. 64. ‡ Ps. lxxxix. 9.

STANZA
I.

‘ a thousand years are as yesterday which is past,’* and before Whom ‘ all nations are as if they had no being at all.’† In the same way all things appear to the soul as nothing, yea, itself is nothing in its own eyes, and God alone is its all.

The soul
prays for the
breaking of
the web,—
Four reasons.

It may be asked here why the soul prays for the breaking of the web rather than for its cutting or its removal, since the effect would be the same in either case. There are four reasons which determine it : 1. The expression it employs is the most proper, because it is more natural that a thing should be broken in an encounter than that it should be cut or taken away. 2. Because love is more familiar with force, with violent and impetuous contacts, and these result in breaking rather than in cutting or taking away. 3. Because the soul's love is so strong, it desires that the act of breaking the web may be so rapid as to accomplish the work quickly ; and because the value and energy of love are proportional to its rapidity and spirituality. For the virtue of love is now more concentrated and more vigorous, and the perfection of transforming love enters the soul, as form into matter, in an instant. Until now no act of perfect transformation had occurred, but only the disposition towards it in desires and affections successively repeated, which in very few men attain to the perfect act of transformation. Hence a soul that is well disposed may therefore elicit many more, and more intense acts in a brief period than another soul not so disposed in a long time. Such a soul spends all its energies in the preparation of itself, and even afterwards the fire does not always penetrate the fuel it has to burn. But when the soul is already prepared, love enters in continuously, and the spark seizes at the first contact on the fuel that is dry. And thus the enamoured soul prefers the abrupt breaking of the web to its tedious cutting or delayed removal. 4. The fourth reason why the soul prays for the breaking of the web of life is that it desires it may be

* Ps. lxxxix. 4.

† Is. xl. 17.

done quickly; for when we cut or remove anything we do it deliberately, when the matter is ripe, and then time and thought become necessary; but a violent rupture requires nothing of the kind. The soul's desire is not to wait for the natural termination of its mortal life, because the violence of its love and the disposition it is in incline it with resignation towards the violent rupture of its natural life in the supernatural assaults of love. Moreover, it knows well that it is the way of God to call such souls to Himself before the time, that He fills them with good, and delivers them from evil, perfecting them in a short space, and bestowing upon them, through love, what they could have gained only by length of time. 'He pleased God and was beloved, and living among sinners he was translated. He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long time, for his soul pleased God, therefore He hastened to bring him out of the midst of iniquity.'* The constant practice of love is therefore a matter of the last importance, for when the soul is perfect therein, its detention here below cannot be long before it is admitted to see God face to face.

 LINE
VI.

The good
die first.

Death
hastened by
love.

But why is this interior assault of the Holy Ghost called an encounter? Though the soul is very desirous to see the end of its natural life, yet because the time is not yet come that cannot be, and so God, to make it perfect and to raise it above the flesh more and more, assails it divinely and gloriously, and these assaults are really encounters wherein God penetrates the soul, deifies the very substance of it, and renders it as it were divine. The substance of God absorbs the soul, because He assails and penetrates it in a lively manner by the Holy Ghost, whose communications are vehement when they are of fire as at present. This encounter

The interior
assault of
the Holy
Ghost called
an encounter,
—why.

* Wisd. iv. 10-14.

STANZA
I.

is called sweet, because the soul has therein a lively taste of God; not that many other touches and encounters of God, of which the soul is now the object, cease to be sweet and delicious, but on account of the supereminent sweetness of this; for God effects it with a view to the perfect dissolution of the soul and its final glory. Hence the soul relying on His protection becomes bold, and says, 'Break the web in this sweet encounter.'

Paraphrase
of the first
stanza.

The whole stanza may be paraphrased as follows:— O fire of the Holy Ghost, penetrating so profoundly and so tenderly the very substance of my soul, and burning it with Thy flames, since Thou art now so gentle as to manifest Thy desire of giving Thyself to me in everlasting life; if formerly my petitions did not reach Thine ears, when weary and worn with love, overcome through the weakness of sense and spirit, because of my infirmities, impurity, and little love, I prayed to be dissolved—for with desire hath my soul desired Thee—when my impatient love would not suffer me to submit to the conditions of this life according to Thy will—for it was Thy will that I should live—and when the previous impulses of my love were insufficient in Thy sight, because there was no substance in them; now that I am grown strong in love, that body and soul together do not only follow after Thee, but that my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God* with one consent, so that I am praying for that which Thou wilt I should pray for, and what Thou wilt not, that I pray not for—it seems even that I could not do it, neither does it enter into my mind to do so—and as my prayers are now more efficacious and more reasonable in Thy sight, for they proceed from Thee, and Thou wilt I should so pray, and as I pray in the joy and sweetness of the Holy Ghost, and 'my judgment cometh forth from Thy countenance,'† when Thou art pleased with my prayer and hearkenest to it—

* Ps. lxxxiii. 2.

† Ps. xvi. 2.

Break Thou the slender web of this life that I may be enabled to love Thee hereafter with that fulness and abundance which my soul desires, without end for evermore.

LINE
VI.

STANZA II.

*O sweet burn !
O delicious wound !
O tender hand ! O gentle touch !
Savouring of everlasting life,
And paying the whole debt,
In destroying death Thou hast changed it into life.*

EXPLANATION.

We learn here that it is the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Who accomplish the Divine work of union. The 'hand,' the 'touch,' and the 'burn' are in substance one and the same; and the three terms are employed because they express the effects which are peculiar to each. The 'burn' is the Holy Ghost; the 'hand' is the Father; and the 'touch' is the Son. Here the soul magnifies the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, extolling those three grand gifts and graces which They perfect within it, in that They have changed death into life, transforming it into Themselves.

Work of the
Blessed
Trinity in
the soul.

The first of these gifts is the delicious wound, which is attributed to the Holy Ghost, and for this the soul calls Him the 'burn.' The second is the 'taste of everlasting life,' attributed to the Son, on account of which He is called the 'gentle touch.' The third is that 'gift' which is the perfect recompense of the soul, attributed to the Father, Who is therefore called the 'tender hand.' Though the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity are referred to severally, because of the peculiar operations of Each, the soul is addressing itself to but One Essence, saying, 'Thou hast changed it into life,' for the Three Divine Persons work together, and the whole is attributed to Each, and to All.

Three
Divine gifts
received by
the soul.

STANZA
II.

First gift,—
the *burn* or
wound, i.e.
the Holy
Ghost.

i. 'O sweet burn.' 'The Lord thy God,' saith Moses, 'is a consuming fire,'* that is, a fire of love. And as His power is infinite, He consumes infinitely, burning with great vehemence, and transforming into Himself all He touches. But He burns all according to the measure of their preparation, some more, others less; and also according to His own good pleasure, as, and when, and how, He will. And as the fire of love is infinite, so when God touches the soul somewhat sharply, the burning heat within it becomes so extreme as to surpass in its intensity all the fires of the world. This is the reason why this touch of God is said to be a 'burn:' for the fire there is more intense, and more concentrated, and the effect of it surpasses that of all other fires. When the Divine fire shall have transformed the soul into itself, the soul feels not only the burn, but also that itself has become wholly and entirely burnt up in this vehement fire. O how wonderful the fire of God! though so vehement and so consuming, though it can destroy a thousand worlds with more ease than the material fire can destroy a single straw, it consumes not the spirit wherein it burns, but rather, in proportion to its strength and heat, delights and deifies it, burning sweetly within according to the strength which God has given. Thus, on the day of Pentecost the fire descended with great vehemence upon the Apostles, who, according to S. Gregory,† sweetly burned interiorly. The Church also says, when celebrating that event: 'The Divine fire came down, not consuming but enlightening.'‡ For as the object of these communications is to elevate the soul, the burning of the fire does not distress it but cheers it, does not weary it but delights it, and renders it glorious and rich. This is the reason why it is said to be sweet.

Thus then the blessed soul, which by the mercy of God

* Deut. iv. 24. † Hom. 30, in Evangel. ‡ Brev. Rom. 2 die Pent.

'Per amorem
suaviter
arserunt.'

'Advenit
ignis Divi-
nus, non
combrens,
sed illumina-
ns.'

has been burnt, knoweth all things, tasteth all things, 'whatsoever it shall do shall prosper,'* against it nothing shall prevail, nothing shall touch it. It is to such a soul that the Apostle referred when he said: 'The spiritual man judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man,'† for 'The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God,'‡ because it belongs to love to search into all that the Beloved has.

O great glory of souls who are worthy of this Supreme fire, which having infinite power to consume and annihilate you, consumes you not, but makes you infinitely perfect in glory! Wonder not that God should elevate some souls to so high a degree, for He alone is wonderful in His marvellous works. As this burn then is so sweet—as it is here said to be—how happy must that soul be which this fire has touched! The soul, anxious to express its joy, cannot do it, so it rests satisfied with words of endearment and esteem, saying: 'O delicious wound.'

Dignity and
glory of
the perfect
soul.

ii. 'O delicious wound,' which He Who causes relieves, and heals while He inflicts it. It bears some resemblance to the caustic usage of natural fire, which when applied to a wound increases it, and renders a wound, which iron or other instruments occasioned, a wound of fire. The longer the caustic is applied, the more grievous the wound, until the whole matter be destroyed. Thus the Divine cautery of love heals the wound which love has caused, and by each application renders it greater. The healing which love brings is to wound again what was wounded before, until the soul melts away in the fire of love. So when the soul shall become wholly one wound of love it will then be transformed in love, wounded with love. For herein the soul most wounded is the most healthy, and he who is all wound is all health.

The Holy
Ghost heals
the soul by
wounding it
again.

And yet even if the whole soul be one wound, and conse-

* Pa. i. 3.

† 1 Cor. ii. 15.

‡ Ib. 10.

STANZA
II.

quently sound, the Divine burning is not intermitted; it continues its work, which is to wound the soul with love. But then, too, its work is to soothe the healed wound, and thus the soul cries out, 'O delicious wound,' and so much the more delicious the more penetrating the fire of love. The Holy Ghost Himself inflicted the wound that He might soothe it, and as His will and desire to soothe it are great, great will be the wound which He will inflict, in order that the soul He has wounded may be greatly comforted. O blessed wound inflicted by Him Who cannot but heal it! O happy and most blessed wound! For thou art inflicted only for the joy and comfort of the soul. Great is the wound, because He is great Who has wrought it; and great is the delight of it: for the fire of love is infinite. O delicious wound then, and the more delicious the more the cautery of love penetrates the inmost substance of the soul, burning all it can burn that it may supply all the delight it can give. This burning and wound, in my opinion, are the highest condition attainable in this life. There are many other forms of this burning, but they do not reach so far, neither are they like unto this: for this is the touch of the Divinity without form or figure, either natural, formal, or imaginary.

But the soul is burned in another and a most excellent way, which is this: When a soul is on fire with love—though not in the same degree with the soul of which I have been now speaking, though it is expedient it should be so, that it may be the subject of this—it will feel as if a Seraph with a burning brand of love had struck it, and penetrated it already on fire as glowing coal, or rather as a flame, and cauterised it all at once. And then in that act of cauterising the flame rushes forth and surges vehemently, as in a glowing furnace or forge the fire revives and the flame ascends when the burning fuel is disturbed. At this time when the burning brand touches it, the soul feels that the wound it has

The soul
inflamed in
another
manner,—
how.

thus received is delicious beyond all imagination. For besides being altogether moved and stirred, at the time of this stirring of the fire, by the vehement movement of the Seraph, wherein the ardour and the melting of love is great, it feels that its wound is perfect, and that the herbs which serve to attemper the steel are efficacious; it feels the very depths of the spirit transpierced, and its delight to be exquisite beyond the power of language to express. The soul feels, as it were, a most minute grain of mustard seed, most pungent and burning in the inmost heart—in the spot of the wound, where the substance and the power of the herb reside—diffuse itself most subtilely through all the spiritual veins of the soul in proportion to the strength and power of the heat. It feels its love to grow, strengthen, and refine itself to such a degree, as to seem to itself to be seas of fire overflowing with love.

The feelings of the soul, at this time, cannot be described otherwise than by saying that it now understands why the kingdom of Heaven is compared to a mustard seed, which by reason of its great natural heat grows into a lofty tree. 'The kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. Which is the least indeed of all seeds; but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof.'* The soul beholds itself now as one immense sea of fire. Few souls, however, attain to this state, but some have done so, especially those whose spirit and power is to be transmitted to their spiritual children; since God bestows on the Founder such gifts and graces, as shall be proportionate to the succession of the Order, as the first-fruits of the Spirit.

To return to the operation of the Seraph, which in truth

LINE
II.

Kingdom of Heaven compared to a mustard seed,—why.

Highest gifts given to Founders of Religious Orders.

* S. Matth. xiii. 31, 32.

STANZA
II.

The
stigmata of
S. FRANCIS
an expres-
sion of the
inward
wounds of
love.

is to wound. If the effect of the wound be permitted to flow exteriorly into the bodily senses, an effect corresponding to the interior wound itself will manifest itself without. Thus it was with S. Francis, for when the Seraph wounded his soul with love, the effects of that wound became outwardly visible. God confers no favours on the body which He does not confer in the first place chiefly on the soul. In that case, the greater the joy and violence of the love which is the cause of the interior wound, the greater will be the pain of the visible wound, and as the former grows so does the latter. The reason is this: such souls as these being already purified and strong in God, their spirit, strong and sound, delights in the strong and sweet Spirit of God; Who, however, causes pain and suffering in their weak and corruptible flesh. It is thus a most marvellous thing to feel pain and sweetness together. Job felt it when he said, 'Returning, Thou tormentest me wonderfully.*' This is marvellous, worthy of the multitude of the sweetness of God, which He has hidden for them that fear Him; † the greater the sweetness and delight, the greater the pain and suffering.

Union of
pain and
delight.

O Infinite greatness, in all things showing Thyself Omnipotent. Who, O Lord, can cause sweetness in the midst of bitterness, and pleasure in the midst of pain? O delicious wound, the greater the delight the deeper the wound. But when the wound is within the soul, and not communicated to the body without, it is then much more intense and keen. As the flesh is a bridle to the spirit, so, when the graces of the latter overflow into the former, the flesh draws in and restrains the swift steed of the spirit and checks its course; 'for the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things.' ‡ He, therefore, who shall trust too much to

The flesh
must be
restrained,
because it
impedes the
spirit.

* Job x. 16.

† Ps. xxx. 20.

‡ Wisd. ix. 15.

the bodily senses will never become a very spiritual man. I say this for the sake of those who think they can ascend to the heights and power of the spirit, by the mere energy and action of the senses, which are mean and vile. We cannot become spiritual unless the bodily senses be restrained. It is a state of things wholly different from this, when the spirit overflows into the senses, for there may be great spirituality in this; as in the case of S. Paul, whose deep sense of the sufferings of Christ overflowed into his body, so that he said: 'I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body.'* Thus, as the wound and the burn, so the hand that inflicted it; and as the touch, so He who touched. O tender hand, O gentle touch.

S. PAUL
bore the
marks of the
Passion in
his body.

iii. 'O tender hand, O gentle touch.' O hand, as generous as Thou art powerful and rich, giving me gifts with power. O gentle hand! laid so gently upon me, and yet, if Thou wert to press at all, the whole world must perish; for only at the sight of Thee the earth trembles,† the nations melt, and the mountains are crushed in pieces.‡ O gentle hand, Thou wert hard and heavy when Thou didst touch Job,§ but to me, gentle, loving, and gracious; as sweet and gentle to me as Thou wert sharp and rough for him; the tenderness with which Thou touchest me surpasses the severity with which Thou didst touch Job. Thou killest and Thou givest life, and there is no one who shall escape out of Thy hand. But Thou, O Divine Life, never killest but to give life, as Thou never woundest but to heal. Thou hast wounded me, O Divine hand! that Thou mayest heal me. Thou hast slain in me that which made me dead, and destitute of the life of God which I now live. This Thou hast wrought in the liberality of Thy bountiful grace, through that touch, wherewith Thou dost touch me, of the brightness of Thy glory

Second gift,
—the hand,
i.e. the
Father.

* Galat. vi. 17. † Ps. ciii. 32. ‡ Habac. iii. 6. § Job xix. 21.

STANZA
II.

and the figure of Thy substance,* Thine only begotten Son, in Whom, being Thy Wisdom, Thou reachest 'from end to end mightily.'†

Third gift,—
the touch,
i.e. the Son.

O gentle, subtile touch, the Word, the Son of God, Who, because of the pureness of Thy Divine nature, dost penetrate subtilely the very substance of my soul, and touching it gently absorbest it wholly in Divine ways of sweetness not 'heard of in the land of Chanaan,' nor 'seen in Teman.'‡ O touch of the Word, so gentle, so wonderfully gentle to me; and yet Thou wert 'overthrowing the mountains, and breaking the rocks in pieces' in Horeb, by the shadow of Thy power going before Thee, when Thou didst announce Thy presence to the Prophet in 'the whistling of a gentle air.'§ O gentle air, how is it that Thou touchest so gently when Thou art so terrible and so strong? O blessed soul, most blessed, which Thou, who art so terrible and so strong, touchest so gently. Proclaim it to the world, O my soul—no, proclaim it not, for the world knoweth not the 'gentle air,' neither will it listen to it, because it cannot comprehend matters so deep.

'Blessed are
the pure in
heart, for
they shall
see God.'

O my God and my life, they shall know Thee|| and behold Thee when Thou touchest them, who, making themselves strangers upon earth, shall purify themselves, because purity corresponds with purity. Thou the more gently touchest, the more Thou art hidden in the purified soul of those who have made themselves strangers here, hidden from the face of all creatures, and whom 'Thou shalt hide in the secret of Thy face from the disturbance of men.'¶ O, again and again, gentle touch, which by the power of thy subtility undoest the soul, removest it far away from every other touch whatever, and makest it Thine own; Thou which leavest behind Thee effects and impressions so pure, that the

* Heb. i. 3.

† Wisd. viii. 1.

‡ Bar. iii. 22.

§ 3 Kings xix. 11, 12.

|| S. John xiv. 17.

¶ Ps. xxx. 21.

touch of everything else seems vile and low, the very sight offensive, and all relations therewith a deep affliction. The more subtile any matter is, the more it spreads and fills, and the more it diffuses itself the more subtile is it. O gentle touch, the more subtile the more infused. And now the vessel of my soul, because Thou hast touched it, is pure and clean and able to receive Thee. O gentle touch! as in Thee there is nothing material, so the more profoundly dost Thou touch me, changing what in me is human into Divine, according as Thy Divine essence, wherewith Thou touchest me, is wholly unaffected by modes and manner, free from the husks of form and figure. Finally then, O gentle touch, O most gentle, for Thou touchest me with Thy most simple and pure essence, which being infinite is infinitely gentle; therefore it is that this touch is so subtile, so loving, so surpassing, and so delicious.

iv. 'Savouring of everlasting life.' What the soul tastes now in this touch of God, is, in truth, though not perfectly, a certain foretaste of everlasting life. It is not incredible that it should be so when we believe, as we do believe, that this touch is substantial, and that the substance of God touches the substance of the soul. Many Saints have experienced it in this life. The sweetness of delight which this touch occasions baffles all description. Neither will I speak of it, lest men should suppose that it is nothing beyond what my words imply, for there are no terms by which we can designate or explain the deep things of God transacted in perfect souls. The language that befits these things is this: Let him who has been favoured with them judge of them by himself, feel them and enjoy them, and be silent about them. For the soul sees that they are in some measure like the white counter of which it is written, 'To him that overcometh I will give . . . a white counter, and in the counter a new name written, which no man knoweth but he that

Bliss of the
Divine touch
cannot be
described.

STANZA
II.

Foretaste of
everlasting
life.

receiveth it.* Thus it may be truly said, 'savouring of everlasting life.' For though the fruition of it is not perfect in this life as it will be in glory; nevertheless, the touch, being of God, savoureth of everlasting life, and the soul tastes in a marvellous manner, and by participation, of all the things of God—fortitude, wisdom, love, beauty, grace, and goodness being communicated unto it.

Now as God is all this, the soul tastes of all in one single touch of God in a certain eminent way. And by reason of this great good which is bestowed upon the soul, some of the unction of the Spirit overflows at times into the body itself, penetrating into the very bones, as it is written, 'All my bones shall say: Lord, who is like unto Thee?'† But as all I can say on the subject must be defective, it is enough to repeat, 'savouring of everlasting life.'

Debt paid by
Divine love,
—what.

v. 'And paying the whole debt.' But what debt is it to which the soul here refers, and which it declares to be paid or satisfied? It is this: those souls which attain to this high estate, to the kingdom of the spiritual betrothal, have in general passed through many tribulations and trials, because that 'through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.‡ And these tribulations are now passed.

What they have to suffer who are to attain unto union with God, are divers afflictions and temptations of sense, trials, tribulations, temptations, darkness, and distress of mind, so that both the flesh and the spirit may be purified together, as I said in my Treatise of the Ascent of Mount Carmel, and of the Obscure Night. The reason of this is that the joy and knowledge of God cannot be established in the soul, if the flesh and spirit are not perfectly purified and refined, and as trials and penances purify and refine the senses, as tribulations, temptations, darkness, and distress

* Apoc. ii. 17 † Ps. xxxiv. 10. ‡ Acts xiv. 21.

refine and prepare the spirit, so they must undergo them who would be transformed in God—as the souls in Purgatory who through that trial attain to the Beatific vision—some more intensely than others, some for a longer, others for a shorter time, according to those degrees of union to which God intends to raise them, and according to their need of purification.

LINE
V.
Purgatory
here, or here-
after.

It is by these trials to which God subjects the spirit and the flesh that the soul acquires virtues and fortitude and perfection, in bitterness, as the Apostle writes, ‘Power is made perfect in infirmity;’* for virtue is made perfect in weakness, and refined in the contest of the passions. Iron cannot be fashioned according to the pattern of the artificer but through the instrumentality of fire and the hammer, and during the process its previous condition is injured. This is the way of God’s teaching, as the Prophet says, ‘From above He hath sent fire into my bones and hath chastised me.’† He speaks of the hammer also when he saith, ‘Thou hast chastised me, and I was instructed.’‡ So, too, the Wise Man asks, ‘He that hath not been tried, what manner of things doth he know?’§

Here comes the question why is it that so few ever attain to this state? The reason is that, in this marvellous work which God Himself begins, so many are weak, shrinking from trouble, and unwilling to endure the least discomfort or mortification, or to labour with constant patience. Hence it is that God, not finding them diligent in cultivating the graces He has given them when He began to try them, proceeds no further with their purification, neither does He lift them up out of the dust of the earth, because it required greater courage and resolution for this than they possessed. Thus it may be said to those who desire to advance, but who

Few attain to
Perfection,—
why.

* 2 Cor. xii. 9. † Lam. i. 13. ‡ Jerem. xxxi. 18. § Ecclus. xxxiv. 11.

STANZA
II.

Illustration
from the
prophet
Jeremias.

will not submit to these lesser afflictions nor consent to be exposed to them, in the words of the Prophet, 'If thou hast been wearied with running with footmen, how canst thou contend with horses? and if thou hast been secure in a land of peace, what wilt thou do in the swelling of the Jordan?''* That is, if the ordinary trials of human life to which all men living are liable are too heavy for thee, and a burden which thou canst not carry, how art thou to 'contend with horses?' that is, how canst thou venture out of the common trials of life upon others of greater violence and swiftness? If thou hast been unwilling to make war against the peace and pleasures of the earth, thine own sensuality, but rather seekest comfort and tranquillity on it, what wilt thou do in the swelling of the Jordan? that is, how wilt thou stand against the rushing waters of tribulations and spiritual trials to which the interior life is subject?

Exhortation
to bear sufferings with
patience and
courage.

O souls that seek your own ease and comfort, if you knew how necessary for this high estate is suffering, and how profitable suffering and mortification are with reference to these great blessings, you would never seek for comfort anywhere, but you would rather take up the cross with the vinegar and the gall, and would count it an inestimable favour, knowing that by thus dying to the world and to your own selves, you are about to live to God in spiritual joy; you would suffer your exterior afflictions so as to merit at the hands of God, that He should look upon you, and cleanse and purify you more and more in these spiritual tribulations. They whom He thus blesses must have served Him well and long, must have been patient and persevering, and their life must have been pleasing in His sight. The Angel said unto Tobias, 'Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee.'† Tobias was acceptable to

* Jerem. xii. 5.

† Tob. xii. 13.

God, therefore He tried him: He gave him the grace of tribulation, the source of greater graces still, and it is written of him that 'the rest of his life was in joy.'*

LINE
V.

The same truth is exemplified in the life of Job. God acknowledged him as His faithful servant in the presence of the angels good and evil, and immediately sent him heavy trials, that He might afterwards raise him higher, as He did both in temporal and in spiritual things.†

This is the way God deals with those whom it is His will to exalt. He suffers them to be tempted, afflicted, tormented, and chastened, inwardly and outwardly to the utmost limit of their capacity, that He may deify them, unite them to Himself in His wisdom, which is the highest state, purifying them in that wisdom, as it is written, 'The words of the Lord are pure words, silver tried by the fire, purged from the earth, refined seven times.'‡ The wisdom of the Lord is silver tried by the fire, purged from the earth of our flesh, refined seven times, that is perfectly refined.

Tribulation
a great grace,
—its good
effects.

It is not necessary I should stop here to speak of each of these degrees of purgation, and how they tend to bring the soul to the Divine Wisdom, which in this life is as silver, for though it becomes exceedingly grand, yet it is not comparable to that of pure gold, which is reserved for everlasting glory.

But it is most necessary that we should endure these tribulations and trials, inward and outward, spiritual and corporal, great and small, with great resolution and patience, accepting all as from the hand of God for our healing and our good, not shrinking from them, because they are for the health of our soul. 'If the spirit of him that hath power,' saith the Wise Man, 'ascend upon thee, leave not thy place, because care'—that is healing—'will make the greatest sins to cease.' §

* Tob. xiv. 4. † Job i. 8-20; xlii. 12. ‡ Ps. xi. 7. § Eccles. x. 4.

STANZA
II.

Few deserve
to be made
perfect
through
sufferings.

‘Leave not thy place,’ that is the place of thy trial, which is thy troubles; for the healing which they bring will break the thread of thy sins and imperfections, evil habits, so that they shall proceed no further. Thus, interior trials and tribulations destroy and purge away the imperfect and evil habits of the soul. We are, therefore, to count it a great favour when our Lord sends us interior and exterior trials, remembering that they are few in number who deserve to be made perfect through sufferings, so as to attain to so high a state as this.

Sorrow
turned into
joy.

I now return to the explanation of the words before me. The soul now remembers that its past afflictions are sufficiently recompensed, for as was its darkness so is its light,* and that having once been ‘a partaker of the sufferings,’ it is now ‘of the consolation,’† that its interior and exterior trials have been recompensed by the Divine mercies, none of them being without its corresponding reward. It therefore acknowledges itself perfectly satisfied, and says, ‘paying the whole debt,’ with David in the like circumstances: ‘How great troubles hast Thou shown me, many and grievous, and turning Thou hast brought me to life, and hast brought me back again from the depths of the earth. Thou hast multiplied Thy magnificence, and turning to me Thou hast comforted me.’‡ Thus the soul which once stood without at the gates of the palace of God, like Mardochai weeping in the streets of Susan because his life was threatened, clothed with sack-cloth and refusing the garments which Esther sent him, unrewarded for his faithful service in defending the king’s honour and life,§ finds, also, like Mardochai, all its trials and service rewarded in one day. It is not only admitted within the palace and stands before the king in its royal robes, but it has also a diadem on its head, and in its hand a

Illustration
from the
life of
Mardochai.

* Ps. cxxxviii. 12. † 2 Cor. i. 7. ‡ Ps. lxx. 20. § Esth. iv. 1-6.

sceptre, sitting on the royal throne with the king's signet on its finger, symbols of its power in the kingdom of the Spouse. For those souls who attain to this high estate obtain all their desires; the whole debt due to them is amply paid; the appetites, their enemies which sought their life, are dead, while they are living to God. 'In destroying death Thou hast changed it into life.'

LINE
V.

vi. 'In destroying death Thou hast changed it into life.'— Death is nothing else but the privation of life, for when life cometh there is no trace of death in that which is spiritual. There are two kinds of life, one beatific, consisting in the Vision of God, and this must be preceded by a natural and bodily death, as it is written, 'We know if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven:'* the other is the perfect spiritual life, consisting in the possession of God by the union of love. Men attain to this through the mortification of their evil habits and desires. Until this be done, the perfection of the spiritual life of union with God is unattainable, 'For, if you live according to the flesh, you shall die: but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.'†

Two kinds of
spiritual life:

1. Beatific,
i.e. the Vision
of God.

2. Perfect
union with
God by love.

By 'death' is meant here the old man, that is the employment of our faculties, memory, intellect, and will, upon the things of this world, and the wasting of our desires upon created things. All this is our old life, the death of the new life which is all spiritual. The soul cannot live this life perfectly unless the old man be perfectly dead, for so the Apostle teaches, when he bids us 'put off according to former conversation, the old man . . . and put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice and holiness of truth.'‡ In this new life, when it shall have

The old, and
the new man.

* 2 Cor. v. 1.

† Rom. viii. 13.

‡ Ephes. iv. 22, 24.

STANZA
II.

The perfect soul lives in God, because its acts are in Him.

attained to perfect union with God, all the affections of the soul, its powers, and its acts, in themselves imperfect and vile, become as it were Divine. And as everything that lives, to use the expression of philosophers, lives in its acts, so the soul, having its acts in God by virtue of its union with Him, lives the life of God, its death being changed into life.

Intellect, will, and memory transformed in God.

This is so, because the intellect, which, previous to its union with God, understood but dimly by means of its natural light, is now under the influence and direction of another principle, and of a higher illumination of God. The will, which previously loved but weakly, is now changed into the life of Divine Love, for now it loves deeply with the affections of Divine Love, moved by the Holy Ghost in whom it now lives. The memory, which once saw nothing but the forms and figures of created things, is now changed, and keeps in 'mind the eternal years.*' The desire, which previously longed for created food, now tastes and relishes the food that is Divine, influenced by another and more efficacious principle, the sweetness of God. Finally, all the motions and acts of the soul, proceeding from the principle of its natural and imperfect life, are now changed in this union with God into motions Divine. For the soul, as the true child of God, is moved by the Spirit of God, as it is written, 'Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.†' The substance of the soul, though it is not the substance of God, because inconvertible into Him, yet being united to Him and absorbed in Him, is by participation God. This is accomplished in the perfect state of the spiritual life, but not so perfectly as in the other; hence is it well said: 'In destroying death Thou hast changed it into life.'

The soul made divine, not in substance, but by grace.

The soul, therefore, has reason for saying with S. Paul,

* Ps. lxxvi. 6.

† Rom. viii. 14.

‘I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.’* What in the soul is dead and cold, becomes changed into the life of God, fulfilling the words of the Apostle, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory,’† and those of the Prophet, ‘O death, I will be thy death.’‡

The soul being thus swallowed up of life, detached from all secular and temporal things, and delivered from all its natural deordination, is led into the chamber of the King, where it rejoices in the Beloved, ‘remembering His breasts more than wine,’ and saying, ‘I am black but beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,’§ for my natural blackness is changed into the beauty of the Heavenly King. O then, the burning of the fire! infinitely burning above all other fires, O how infinitely beyond all other fires dost thou burn me, and the more thou burnest the sweeter thou art to me. ‘O delicious wound,’ more delicious to me than all the delights of the world. ‘O tender hand,’ infinitely more tender than all tenderness, and the greater the pressure of it the more tender it is to me. ‘O gentle touch,’ the gentleness of which surpasses infinitely all the gentleness and all the loveliness of created things, sweeter and more delicious than honey and the honeycomb, because thou savourest of everlasting life; the more profoundly thou dost touch me, the more I taste it. Thou art infinitely more precious than gold and precious stones, for thou payest debts which nothing else can pay, because thou changest admirably death into life.

In this state of life, so perfect, the soul is as it were keeping a perpetual feast with the praises of God in its mouth, with a new song of joy and love, full of the knowledge of its high dignity. It sometimes exulteth, repeating the words of Job, ‘My glory shall always be

LINE
VI.

Recapitulation
of the
second
stanza.

* Galat. ii. 20. † 1 Cor. xv. 54. ‡ Os. xiii. 14. § Cant. i. 3, 4.

STANZA
II.

Joy of the
state of
Perfection.

renewed,' and 'as a palm tree' I 'shall multiply my days.'* That is, God will not suffer my glory to grow old as before, and He will multiply my days, that is my merits, unto heaven, as a palm tree multiplies its branches. What David saith in the twenty-ninth Psalm, the soul sings interiorly to God, especially the conclusion thereof, 'Thou hast turned for me my mourning into joy: Thou hast cut my sackcloth and hast compassed me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing to Thee, and I may not regret'—for this state is inaccessible to pain—'O Lord my God, I will give praise to Thee for ever.'

Here the soul is so conscious of God's solicitude to comfort it, feeling that He is Himself encouraging it with words so precious, so tender, so endearing; that He is conferring graces upon it, one upon another, so that it seems as if there were no other soul in the world for Him to comfort, no other object of His care, but that everything was done for this one soul alone. This truth is admitted by the bride in the Canticle when she says, 'My beloved to me, and I to him.'†

STANZA III.

*O Lamps of fire,
In whose splendours
The deep caverns of sense,
Obscure and dark,
With unwonted brightness
Give light and heat together to the Beloved.*

EXPLANATION.

I stand greatly in need of the help of God to enter into the deep meaning of this stanza: great attention also is necessary on the part of the reader, for if he be without experience of the matter he will find it full of obscurity, while, on the other hand, it will be clear and full of joy to him who has had that experience.

Attention of
the reader
necessary.

* Job xxix. 18, 20. † Cant. ii. 16.

The bride-soul from her inmost heart gives thanks to the Bridegroom for the great mercies which, in the state of union, she has received at His hands, for He has bestowed upon her therein a manifold and most profound knowledge of Himself, which enlightens the powers and senses of the soul, and fills them with love. These powers, previous to the state of union, were in darkness and obscurity, but are now illuminated by the fires of love and respond thereto, offering that very light and love to Him who has kindled and inspired them, when He infused into the soul gifts so Divine. For he who truly loves is satisfied then when his whole self, all he is, all he can be, all he has, and all he can acquire, is spent in the service of the object of his love; and the greater that service, the greater is his pleasure in giving it. Such is the joy of the soul now, because it can shine in the presence of the Beloved in the splendours with which He has surrounded it, and love Him with that which He has communicated to it.

LINE
I.

Marks of
true love for
God,—what.

i. 'O Lamps of fire.'—Premising in the first instance that lamps have two properties, that of giving light, and of burning, we must keep in mind, if we are to understand this stanza, that God in His one and simple essence is all the powers and grandeurs of His attributes. He is omnipotent, wise, good, merciful, just, strong, loving; He is all the other attributes of which we have no knowledge here below. And He being all this, and in union with the soul, when He is pleased to reveal Himself to it in a special way, the soul beholds in Him all these powers and grandeurs in the one and simple Essence, perfectly and profoundly known according to the conditions of Faith. And as each one attribute is the very Essence of God, Who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—each attribute of Whom being God Himself—and as God is infinite light, and infinite Divine Fire, it follows that He gives light and burns as true God in each one of His

God is all His
Attributes.

STANZA
III.

attributes. God therefore, according to this knowledge of Him in union, is to the soul as many lamps, because it has the knowledge of each of them, and because they minister to it the warmth of love, each in its own way, and yet all of one substance, all one lamp. This lamp is all lamps, because it gives light, and burns, in all ways.

When the soul reflects upon this, the one lamp is to it as many lamps, for though but one, it can do all, and involves all powers and comprehends every spirit. And thus it may be said that the one lamp shines and burns many ways in one: it shines and burns as omnipotent, as wise, as good, ministering to the soul intelligence and love, and revealing itself unto it, according to the measure of its strength for the reception of all. The splendour of the lamp as omnipotent gives to the soul the light and heat of the love of God as omnipotent, and accordingly God is now the lamp of Omnipotence to the soul, shining and burning according to that attribute. The splendour of the lamp as Wisdom produces the warmth of the love of God as all-wise, and so of the other attributes; for the light which emanates from each of the attributes of God and from all, produces in the soul the fire of the love of God as such. Thus God is to the soul in these communications and manifestations of Himself — they are, I think, the highest possible in this life — as innumerable lamps from which light and love proceed.

These lamps were seen by Moses on Mount Sinai, where God passed before Him, and where Moses threw himself prostrate on the earth in all haste. He mentions some of the grandeurs of God which he then beheld, and, loving Him in them, speaks of them separately in the following words: ‘O the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, patient and of much compassion, and true, Who keepest mercy unto thousands; Who takest away iniquity and wickedness

God light
and heat to
the soul in
many ways.

Moses on
Mount Sinai
saw some of
the lamps
of God.

and sin, and no man of himself is innocent before Thee.’* It appears that the principal attributes of God which Moses then recognised and loved were those of omnipotence, dominion, mercy, justice, and truth. This is a most profound knowledge, and the deepest delight of love.

It follows from this that the joy and rapture of love communicated to the soul in the fire of the light of these lamps is admirable, and immeasurable; as abundant as from many lamps, each of which burns with love, the heat of one subserving that of the other, as the light of one ministers to that of the other; all of them forming but one light and fire, and each of them that one fire. The soul, too infinitely absorbed in these delicate flames, is subtly wounded by each one of them, and by all of them more subtly and more profoundly, in the love of life; the soul now sees clearly that this love is everlasting life which is the union of all blessings, and recognises the truth of those words, ‘The lamps thereof are fire and flames.’†

If ‘a great and darksome horror seized upon’ Abram as he saw the ‘lamp of fire passing’ ‡ before him, when he learned with what rigorous justice God was about to visit the Amorrites, shall not the lamps of the knowledge of God shining now sweetly and lovingly produce greater light and joy of love than that one lamp produced of horror and darkness, when it passed before Abram? O my soul! how great, how excellent, and how manifold, will be thy light and joy: seeing that in all, and by all, thou shalt feel that He gives thee His own joy and love, loving thee according to His powers, attributes, and properties. For he who loves and does good to another honours him and does him good according to his own nature and qualities. Thus thy Spouse abiding in thee, being omnipotent, gives Himself to thee, and loves thee with omnipotence; being wise, with wisdom; being good, with

Illustration
from the
lamp seen
by Abram.

Beatitude of
the soul,—
in what it
consists.

* Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. † Cant. viii. 6. ‡ Genes. xv. 12, 17.

STANZA
III.

goodness ; being holy, with holiness. And as He is liberal thou wilt feel also that He loves thee with liberality, without self-interest, only to do thee good, showing joyfully His countenance full of grace, and saying : I am thine and for thee, and it is My pleasure to be what I am, to give Myself to thee and to be thine.

Joys of the
soul beloved
by God.

Who shall then describe thy feeling, O blessed soul, when thou shalt behold thyself thus beloved, and so highly honoured ? ‘ Thy belly is like a heap of wheat set about with lilies.’ * ‘ Thy belly,’ that is, thy will, is like a heap of wheat covered and set about with lilies ; for with the grains of wheat which form the bread of life, and of which thou now art tasting, the lilies of virtue, which gird thee about, fill thee with delight. For the daughters of the king, that is the virtues, will delight thee wondrously with the fragrance of their aromatical herbs, which are the knowledge of Himself which He gives thee. Thou wilt be so absorbed in this knowledge, and it will be so infused in thee, that thou too shalt be ‘ a well of living waters which run with a strong stream from Libanus,’ † and Libanus is God. Thy joy will now be so marvellously complete, because the words of the Psalmist are accomplished in thee : ‘ The stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful.’ ‡

The lamps of
the fire of
love are also
the living
waters of
wisdom.

O wonder ! The soul is now overflowing with the Divine waters, which run from it as from an abundant fountain unto everlasting life.§ It is very true that this communication is light and fire of the lamps of God, yet the fire is here so sweet, that though an infinite fire, it is as the waters of life which satisfy the soul, and quench its thirst with that vehemence for which the spirit longs. Thus, though they are lamps of fire, they are also the living waters of the spirit. Those which descended on the Apostles, though lamps of fire,

* Cant. vii. 2. † Cant. iv. 15. ‡ Ps. xlv. 5. § S. John iv. 14.

were also waters pure and limpid, according to the words of Ezechiel who thus prophesied the descent of the Holy Ghost : ' I will pour upon you clean water, and put a new spirit within you.' * Thus though it be fire, it is water also, a figure of which we have in the sacrificial fire which Jeremias concealed, † which was water in the place of concealment, but fire when it was brought forth and sprinkled upon the sacrifice. ‡ So in like manner the Spirit of God, while hidden in the veins of the soul, is sweet water quenching its spiritual thirst; but when the soul offers the sacrifice of love the Spirit is then living flames of fire, and these are the lamps of the acts of love of which the bride spoke in the Canticle when she said, ' The lamps thereof are fire and flames.' § The soul speaks of them thus because it has the fruition thereof not only as waters of wisdom, but also as the fire of love in an act of love, saying, ' O Lamps of fire.' All language now is ineffectual to express the matter. If we consider that the soul is now transformed in God, we shall in some measure understand how it is true that it is also become a fountain of living waters boiling and bubbling upwards in the fire of love which is God.

ii. ' In whose splendours.' I have already said that these splendours are the communications of the Divine lamps in which the soul in union shines forth with all its faculties, memory, intellect, and will, enlightened and united in this loving knowledge. But we are not to suppose that the light of these splendours is like that of material fire, when its flames shine upon and communicate heat to objects external to it, but rather when it heats what is within it, for the soul is now within these splendours,—' in whose splendours.' That is to say, it is within them, not near them, within their splendours, in the flames of the lamps, itself

LINE
I.

Illustration
from the
sacrificial fire
concealed by
Jeremias.

The soul
within the
splendours
of God.

* Ezech. xxxvi. 25, 26. † 2 Mac. ii. 1. ‡ Ib. i. 22. § Cant. viii. 6.

STANZA
III.

Analogy of
natural
flame.

transformed in flame. The soul therefore may be said to resemble the air which is burning within the flame and transformed in fire, for the flame is nothing else but air inflamed. The flickerings of the flame are not those of air only or of fire only, but of air and fire together; and the fire causes the air which is within to burn. It is thus that the soul with its powers is illuminated in the splendours of God. The movements of the flame, that is its vibrations and its flickerings, are not the work of the soul only, transformed in the fire of the Holy Ghost, nor of the Holy Ghost only, but of the soul and of the Holy Ghost together Who moves the soul as the fire moves the air that is burning.

Thus then these motions of God and of the soul together are as it were the acts of God by which He renders the soul glorious. For these vibrations and motions are the 'playing' and the joyous feasts of the Holy Ghost in the soul,* in which He seems to be on the point of admitting it into everlasting life. And thus these movements and quiverings of the flame are as it were stimulants applied to the soul, furthering its translation into His perfect glory now that it is really entered into Him. So also is it with the fire: all the motions and vibrations to and fro which it causes in the air burning within it, are the efforts which the fire makes to ascend to its proper sphere; and all these quiverings are the effects of its perseverance in its upward efforts, but they are all fruitless because the air itself is within its own sphere. In the same way the motions of the Holy Ghost, though full of fire and most effectual to absorb the soul in great glory, do not accomplish their work before the time is come when it is to sally forth from the sphere of the air of this mortal life and reach the centre of the spirit, the perfect life in Christ. These visions of the glory of God, to which the soul

* Stanza 1, line 2, p. 223.

is now admitted, are more continuous than they used to be, more perfect and more durable; but it is in the life to come that they will be most perfect, unchanging, and uninterrupted. There too the soul will see clearly how that God, though here appearing to move within it, yet in Himself moves not at all, as the fire moves not in its centre. These splendours are inestimable graces and favours which God bestows upon the soul. They are called also overshadowings, and are, in my opinion, the greatest and the highest graces which can be bestowed in this life in the way of transformation.

Now overshadowing is the throwing of a shadow; and to throw one's shadow over another signifies protection and favour, for when the shadow of one touches us, it is a sign that he whose shadow it is stands by us to favour and protect us. Thus it was said to the Virgin, 'The power of the Most High shall overshadow thee,'* for the Holy Ghost was about to approach her so closely as to 'come upon' her. The shadow of every object partakes of the nature and proportions of it, for if the object be dense, the shadow will be dense and dark; if it be light and clear, so will be the shadow, as we see in the case of wood or crystal; the former being dense, throws a dark shadow, and the latter being clear, throws a shadow that is light. In spiritual things too, death is the privation of all things, so the shadow of death will be darkness, which in a manner deprives us of all things. Thus, too, speaks the Psalmist, saying, 'sitting in darkness and the shadow of death,'† whether the spiritual darkness of spiritual death, or the bodily darkness of bodily death.

The shadow of life is light; if Divine, a Divine light, and if the shadow be human, the light is natural. Thus the shadow of beauty will be as another beauty according to the nature and quality of that beauty of which it is the shadow. The

LINE
II.

The Divine
splendours
also called
overshadow-
ings.

Darkness,
the shadow
of death:
light, of life.

* S. Luke i. 35.

† Ps. cvi. 10.

STANZA
III.

shadow of strength will be another strength, in measure and proportion. The shadow of wisdom will be another wisdom. Or rather, beauty, strength, and wisdom themselves will be in the shadow, wherein is traced the form and property, the shadow whereof is there. This then being the case, what must be the shadow of the Holy Ghost, the shadow of all His power, might, and attributes, when He is so near the soul? He touches the soul not with His shadow only, for He unites Himself to it, feeling and tasting with it the form and properties of God in the shadow of God: that is, feeling and tasting the property of Divine power in the shadow of omnipotence; feeling and tasting the Divine wisdom in the shadow of the Divine wisdom; and finally, tasting the glory of God in the shadow of glory, which begets the knowledge and the taste of the property and form of the glory of God. All this takes place in clear and luminous shadows, because the attributes and powers of God are lamps, which, being resplendent and luminous in their own nature, throw forth shadows resplendent and luminous, and a multitude in one essence.

Vision of the
prophet
Ezekiel.

O what a vision for the soul when it shall experience the power of that which Ezekiel saw: 'the likeness of four living creatures,' and the 'wheel with four faces,' the appearance 'like that of burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps;*' when it shall behold that wheel, the wisdom of God, full of eyes within and without, that is the marvellous intelligence of wisdom; when it shall hear the noise of their wings as they pass, a noise 'like the noise of an army,' that is of many things at once which the soul learns by one sole sound of God's passing before it; and finally, when it shall hear the beating of the wings, which is like the 'noise of many waters, as it were the voice of the Most High God,' †

* Ezech. i. 5, 13, 15.

† Ib. i. 24.

which signifies the rushing of the Divine waters, at the overflowing of which the Holy Ghost envelops the soul in flames of love. Here the soul rejoices in the glory of God, under the protection of His shadow, for the Prophet adds: 'This was the vision of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.'* O how high is the condition of this happy soul! O how exalted! O how it marvels at the visions it has within the limits of the Faith! Who can describe them? O how it is profoundly immersed in these waters of the Divine splendours where the everlasting Father sends forth the irrigating streams with a bounteous hand, for these streams penetrate soul and body.

O wonder! the lamps of the Divine attributes though one in substance are still distinct, each burning as the other, one being substantially the other. O abyss of delights, and the more abundant, the more thy riches are gathered together in infinite simplicity and unity. There the one is so recognised and felt as not to hinder the feeling and recognition of the other; yea, rather everything in Thee is light which does not impede anything; and by reason of Thy pureness, O Divine Wisdom, many things are known in Thee in one, for Thou art the treasury of the everlasting Father, 'the brightness of eternal light, the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of His goodness,' † 'in Whose splendours,'

iii. § 1. 'The deep caverns of sense.' The caverns are the powers of the soul, memory, intellect, and will, and their depth is commensurate with their capacity for great good, for nothing less than the infinite can fill them. What they suffer when they are empty, shows in some measure the greatness of their delight when they are full of God; for contraries are known by contraries. In the first place, it is to be remembered that these caverns are not conscious of their extreme emptiness when they are impure, stained by affections for created

The spiritual
appetite of
the soul only
satisfied by
the Infinite
Good.

* Ezech. ii. 1.

† Wisd. vii. 26.

STANZA
III.

The soul
must be
emptied of
the Finite,
before it can
realise its
desire for the
Infinite.

things. In this life every trifle that enters them is enough to perplex them, and to render them insensible to their loss, and unable to recognise the infinite good which is wanting, or their own capacity for it. It is assuredly a most wonderful thing how, notwithstanding their capacity for infinite good, a mere trifle perplexes them, so that they cannot become the recipients of that for which they are intended, till they are completely emptied. But when they are empty, the hunger, the thirst, and the anxiety of the spiritual sense become intolerable, for as the appetite of these caverns is large, so their suffering is great, because the food which they need is great, namely, God. This feeling of pain, so deep, usually occurs towards the close of the illuminative life and the purgation of the soul, previous to the state of perfect union during which it is satisfied. For when the spiritual appetite is empty, pure from every creature and from every affection thereto, and when the natural temper is lost and the soul attempered to the Divine, and the emptied appetite is well disposed—the Divine communication in the union with God being still withheld—the pain of this emptiness and thirst is greater than that of death, especially then when certain glimpses of the Divine ray are visible, but not communicated. Souls in this state suffer from impatient love, and they cannot endure it long without either receiving that which they desire, or dying.

§ 2. As to the first cavern, which is the intellect, its emptiness is the thirst after God. So great is this thirst, that the Psalmist compares it to that of the hart, for he knew of none greater, saying, ‘As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters: so my soul panteth after Thee, O God.’* This thirst is a thirst for the waters of the Divine Wisdom, the object of the intellect. The second cavern is the will,

Three
caverns:

1. The intel-
lect, which
thirsts for
Divine
Truth.

and the emptiness thereof is a hunger so great after God, that the soul faints away, 'My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.'* This hunger is for the perfection of love, the object of the soul's desires. The third cavern is the memory, and the emptiness thereof is the soul's melting away and languishing for the enjoyment of God: 'I will be mindful and remember, and my soul shall languish within me: these things I shall think over in my heart, therefore will I hope.'† Great, then, is the capacity of these caverns, because that which they are capable of containing is great and infinite, that is, God. Thus their capacity is in a certain sense infinite, their hunger and thirst infinite also, and their languishing and their pain, in their way, infinite. So when the soul is suffering this pain, though the pain be not so keen as in the other world, it seems to be a vivid image of that pain, because the soul is in a measure prepared to receive that which fills it, the privation of which is its greatest pain. Nevertheless the suffering belongs to another condition, for it abides in the depth of the will's love; but in this life love does not alleviate the pain, because the greater it is the greater the soul's impatience for the fruition of God, for which it hopes continually with intense desire.

§ 3. But, O my God, seeing it is certain that he who truly longs for God is already, as S. Gregory saith,‡ entered into possession, how comes it that the soul is in pain? If that desire which the Angels have to look upon the Son of God § is free from pain and anxiety, because they have the fruition of Him, it would seem then that the soul also having the fruition of God in proportion to its desire of Him—and the fruition of God is the fulness of delight—must in this its desire, in proportion to its intensity, be conscious of that

 LINE
 III.

2. The will, which longs for Divine Love.

3. The memory, which hopes for Divine Fruition.

Capacity for bliss implies capacity for pain,—both, in one sense, infinite.

' Qui mento integra Deum desiderat, profecto jam habet quem amat.'

* Ps. lxxxiii. 1.

† Lam. iii. 20, 21.

‡ Hom. 30 in Evangel.

§ 1 S. Pet. i. 12.

STANZA
III.

fulness, seeing that it longs so earnestly after God, and so herein there ought not to be any anxiety or pain.

But it is not so, for there is a great difference between the fruition of God by grace only, and the fruition of Him in union also; the former is one of mutual good will, the latter one of special communion. This difference resembles that which exists between espousals and marriage. The former implies only an agreement and the mutual good will of the parties, contracting together with the bridal presents, and the ornaments graciously given by the bridegroom. But marriage involves also personal union and mutual self-surrender. Though in the state of betrothal, the bridegroom is sometimes seen by the bride, and gives her presents; yet there is no personal union, which is the end of espousals. So when the soul has attained to such purity in itself, and in its powers, that the will is purged completely from all strange desires and inclinations, in its higher and lower nature, and when it wholly consents unto God, the will of both being one in free and ready concord, it has then attained to the fruition of God by grace in the state of betrothal and conformity of will. In this state of spiritual betrothal between the soul and the Word, the Bridegroom confers great favours upon the soul, and visits it oftentimes most lovingly to its great comfort and delight. But all this admits of no comparison with that which belongs to the state of the spiritual marriage.

Now, though it is true that this takes place in the soul when it is perfectly purged of every created affection—because that must occur previous to the spiritual espousals—still other positive dispositions on the part of God, His visits and gifts of greater excellence, are requisite for this union, and for the spiritual marriage. It is by means of these dispositions, gifts, and visits, that the soul grows more and more in purity, beauty, and refinement, so as to become

The soul may enjoy God in the fruition of grace, and yet suffer through want of the fruition of union.

meety prepared for a union so high. All this requires time, in some souls more, in others less. We have a type of this in the history of the virgins chosen for King Assuerus. These were taken in all the provinces of the kingdom, and brought from their fathers' houses; but before they could be presented to the king, they were kept in the palace a whole year: 'For six months they were anointed with oil of myrrh,' and for the other six with 'certain perfumes and sweet spices' of a costlier nature, after which they appeared in the presence of the king.*

LINE
III.
Perfection
requires
time.

During the time of the espousals, and in expectation of the spiritual marriage in the unction of the Holy Ghost, when the unction disposing the soul for union is most penetrating, the anxieties of the caverns become most pressing and keen. For as the unction of the Holy Ghost is a proximate disposition for union with God, the unction is most near unto Him; it fires the soul with the taste thereof, and inspires it with a delicious longing after it. Thus this desire is much more delicious and deep, because the desire for God is a disposition for union with Him.

Uction of
the Holy
Ghost,—
what.

§ 4. This would be a good opportunity to warn souls whom God is guiding to this delicate unction to take care what they are doing, and to whose hands they commit themselves, that they may not go backwards, were such a task not altogether beside my purpose. But such is the pain and grief of heart which I feel at the sight of some souls who go backwards, not only by withdrawing themselves from the further anointing of the Holy Ghost, but by losing the effects of what they have already received, that I cannot refrain from speaking on the subject, and telling them what they ought to do in order to escape from so great an evil. I will therefore leave my subject for a moment, but I shall return to it soon again. And in truth the consideration of

Digression.

Necessity
of proper
spiritual
guidance.

* Esth. ii. 2, 12.

STANZA
III.

this matter tends to elucidate the nature of these caverns, and it is also necessary, not only for those souls who prosper in their work, but also for all others who are searching after the Beloved.

In the first place, if a soul is seeking after God, the Beloved is seeking it much more; if it sends after Him its loving desires, which are sweet as 'a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh and frankincense,'* He on His part sends forth the odour of His ointments, which draw the soul and make it run after Him.† These ointments are His Divine inspirations and touches, which, in that they proceed from Him, are always directed and ordered by the motives of the perfection of the law of God and of the Faith, in which perfection the soul must ever draw nearer and nearer unto God. The soul, therefore, ought to see that the desire of God in all the graces which He bestows upon it by means of the unction and odour of His ointments, is to dispose it for another and higher unction, and more in union with His nature, until it attains to that delicate and pure disposition, which is meritorious of the Divine union, and of its transformation in all its powers.

The soul, therefore, considering that God is the chief agent in this matter, that it is He who guides it and leads it by the hand whither it knows not, namely, unto supernatural things beyond the reach of intellect, memory, and will, must take especial care to put no difficulties in the way of its guide, who is the Holy Ghost, on that road along which He leads it by the law of God and the Faith. Such a difficulty will be raised if the soul intrusts itself to a blind guide; and the blind guides of the soul which lead it astray are three, namely, the spiritual director, the devil, and its own self.

As to the first of these blind guides, it is of the greatest

God seeks the soul more than it seeks Him.

Divine grace acts according to the Law of God, and the Faith.

Holy Ghost the Guide to Perfection.

Three blind guides.

* Cant. iii. 6.

† Ib. i. 3.

importance to the soul desirous of perfection and anxious not to fall back, to consider well into whose hands it resigns itself; for as the master, so is the disciple; as the father, so the child. You will scarcely find one who is in all respects qualified to guide a soul in the higher parts of this road, or even in the ordinary divisions of it, for a director must be learned, prudent, and experienced. Though the foundations of good direction be learning and discretion, yet if experience of the higher ways be wanting, there are no means of guiding a soul therein when God is showing the way, and inexperienced directors will therefore inflict great evils on their penitents. Such directors, not understanding these ways of the Spirit, will very frequently be the cause of souls losing the unction of the delicate ointments, by means of which the Holy Ghost is preparing the soul for Himself: for they will guide them by other means of which they have read, but which are adapted only for beginners. These directors knowing how to guide beginners only—and God grant they may know that—will not suffer their penitents to advance, though it be the will of God, beyond the mere rudiments, acts of reflection and imagination, whereby their profit is extremely little.

§ 5. In order to have a clear perception of the state of beginners, we must keep in mind that it is one of meditation and of acts of reflection. It is necessary to furnish the soul in this state with matter for meditation, that it may make reflections and those interior acts, and avail itself of the sensible spiritual heat and fervour, for this is necessary in order to accustom the senses and desires to good things, so that by satisfying them by the sweetness thereof they may be detached from the world.

When this is in some degree effected, God begins at once to introduce the soul into the state of contemplation, and that very quickly, especially in the case of Religious, because

LINE
III.

First blind
guide,—an
unfit
Director.

A Spiritual
guide should
be :
1. Learned.
2. Prudent.
3. Experi-
enced.

Direction for
beginners
unfit for
those more
advanced.

STANZA
III.

Progress
from Medita-
tion to
Contempla-
tion, requires
a corre-
sponding
change in
spiritual
direction.

these, having renounced the world, quickly fashion their senses and desires according to God; they have, therefore, to pass at once from meditation to contemplation. This passage, then, takes place when the discursive acts and meditation fail, when sensible sweetness and the first fervours cease, when the soul cannot make reflections as before, nor find any sensible comfort, but is fallen into aridity, because the spiritual life is changed, and the spirit is not cognisable by sense. And as all the natural operations of the soul, which are within its control, depend on the senses only, it follows that God is now working in a special manner in this state, that it is He who infuses and teaches, that the soul is the recipient on which He bestows spiritual blessings by contemplation, the knowledge and the love of Himself together; that is, He gives it the loving knowledge without the instrumentality of its discursive acts, because it is no longer able to form them as before.

§ 6. At this time, then, the direction of the soul must be wholly different from what it was at first. If formerly it was supplied with matter for meditation and it did meditate, now that matter must be withheld and meditation must cease, because, as I have said, it cannot meditate, do what it will, and distractions are the result. If before it looked for fervour and sweetness and found them, let it look for them no more nor desire them; and if it attempt to seek them, not only will it not find them, but it will meet with aridity, because it turns away from the peaceful and tranquil good secretly bestowed upon it, when it attempts to fall back on the operations of sense. In this way it loses the latter without gaining the former, because the senses have ceased to be the channel of spiritual good. Souls in this state are not to be forced to meditate, nor to apply themselves to discursive reflections laboriously effected, neither are they to strive after sweetness and fervour, for if

they did so, they would be thereby placing obstacles in the way of the principal agent, who is God Himself, for He is now secretly and quietly infusing wisdom into the soul, together with the loving knowledge of Himself, independently of these divers acts, without their being multiplied or elicited, though He produces them sometimes specifically in the soul, and that for some space of time. And in that case, the soul too must be lovingly intent upon God without specifically eliciting other acts beyond those to which He inclines it; it must be as it were passive, making no efforts of its own, purely, simply, and lovingly intent upon God, as a man who opens his eyes with loving attention. For as God is now dealing with the soul in the way of bestowing by simple and loving knowledge, so the soul also, on its part, must deal with Him in the way of receiving by simple and loving knowledge, so that knowledge may be joined to knowledge, and love to love; because it is necessary here that the recipient should be adapted to the gift, and not otherwise, and that the gift may be accepted and preserved as it is given.

It is evident therefore, that if the soul does not now abandon its previous ways of meditation, it will receive this gift of God in a scanty and imperfect manner, not in that perfection with which it is bestowed; for the gift being so grand, and an infused gift, cannot be received in this scanty and imperfect way. Consequently, if the soul will at this time make efforts of its own, and encourage another disposition than that of passive loving attention, most submissive and calm, and if it does not abstain from its previous discursive acts, it will place a complete barrier against those graces which God is about to communicate to it in this loving knowledge. He gives His grace to beginners in the exercise of purgation, as I have said, and afterwards with an increase of the sweetness of love. But if the soul is to be the recipient of this grace passively, in the natural way of

LINE
III.

Dispositions
necessary for
Contem-
plation,—
what.

As God deals
with the
soul, so must
it deal with
Him.

STANZA
III.

God speaks
to the soul
when silent
and
detached.

God, and not in the supernatural way of the soul, it follows that, in order to be such a recipient, it must be perfectly detached, calm, peaceful, and serene; it must be like the atmosphere, which the sun illumines and warms in proportion to its calmness and purity. Thus the soul must be attached to nothing, not even to the subject of its meditation, not to sensible or spiritual sweetness, because God requires a spirit so free, so annihilated, that every act of the soul, even of thought, of liking or disliking, will impede and disturb it, and break that profound silence of sense and spirit necessary for hearing the deep and delicate voice of God, Who speaks to the heart in solitude;* it is in profound peace and tranquillity that the soul is to listen to God, Who will speak peace unto His people.† When this takes place, when the soul feels that it is silent and listens, its loving attention must be most pure, without a thought of self, in a manner self-forgotten, so that it shall be wholly intent upon hearing, for thus it is that the soul is free and ready for that which our Lord requires at its hands.

§ 7. This tranquillity and self-forgetfulness are ever attended with a certain interior absorption; and, therefore, under no circumstances whatever, either of time or place, is it lawful for the soul, now that it has entered on the state of contemplation, tranquil and simple, to recur to its previous meditations, or to cleave to spiritual sweetness, as I have said, and at great length, in the tenth chapter of the first book of the *Obscure Night*, and previously in the last chapter of the second, and in the first of the third book of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*. The soul must detach itself from all spiritual sweetness, rise above it in freedom of spirit; this is what the Prophet Habacuc did, for he says of himself, 'I will stand upon my watch' over my senses—that is, I

* Os. ii. 14.

† Ps. lxxxiv. 9.

will leave them below—‘and fix my foot upon the tower’ of my faculties—that is, they shall not advance a step even in thought—‘and I will watch to see what will be said to me,’* that is, I will receive what God shall communicate to me passively. I have already said that to contemplate is to receive, and it is impossible to receive the highest wisdom, that is contemplation, otherwise than in a silent spirit, detached from all sweetness and particular knowledge. The Prophet Isaias teaches the same truth when he says, ‘Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand the hearing? them that are weaned from the milk,’ that is from sweetness and personal likings, ‘that are drawn away from the breasts,’† from their reliance on particular knowledge. Take away the mote and the film from thine eye, and make it clean, O thou who art spiritual, and then the sun will shine for thee, and thou shalt see clearly. Establish thy soul in the freedom of calm peace, withdraw it from the yoke and slavery of the miserable efforts of thine own strength, which is the captivity of Egypt—for all thou canst do is little more than to gather straw for the bricks—and guide it into the land of promise flowing with milk and honey.

O spiritual director, remember it is for this liberty and holy rest that God calls the soul into the wilderness; there it journeys in festal robes, with ornaments of gold and silver,‡ for the Egyptians are spoiled and their riches carried away.§ Nor is this all: the enemies of the soul are drowned in the sea of contemplation, where the Egyptian of sense could find no support for his feet, leaving the child of God free, that is the spirit, to transcend the narrow limits of its own operations, of its low views, rude perceptions, and wretched likings. God does all this for the soul that He

Advice to
spiritual
directors.

* Habac. ii. 1. † Ia. xxviii. 9. ‡ Exod. xxxiii. 4. § Ib. xii. 35.

STANZA
III.

may give it the manna, which, though 'having in it all that is delicious and the sweetness of every taste'*—objects of desire for the soul according to thy direction—and though it is so delicious that it melts in the mouth, thy penitent shall not taste of it, if he encourages any other desire whatever, for he shall not receive of this.

How the
contempla-
tive soul is to
be guided.

Strive, therefore, to root out of the soul all desire after sweetness, all efforts after meditations; do not disquiet it by any solicitude about spiritual things, still less after earthly things; establish it in an estrangement from all around, and in the utmost possible solitude. For the greater its progress in this, and the more rapidly it attains to this calm tranquillity, the more abundant will be the infusion of the spirit of Divine Wisdom, the loving, calm, lonely, peaceful, sweet ravisher of the spirit. The soul will feel itself at times enraptured, gently and tenderly wounded, not knowing by whom, how, or when, because the Spirit communicates Himself to it without effort on its own part. The least portion of the action of God on the soul in this state of holy rest and solitude is an inestimable good, transcending the very thought of the soul and of its spiritual guide, and though it does not appear so then, it will show itself in due time. What the soul feels in this state is a certain estrangement and alienation from all things around it, sometimes more, sometimes less, with a certain sweet aspiration of love and life of the spirit, an inclination to solitude, and a sense of weariness in the things of this world, for when we taste of the spirit, the flesh becomes insipid. But the interior goods which silent contemplation impresses on the soul without the soul's consciousness of them, are of inestimable value, for they are the most sweet and delicious unctions of the Holy Ghost, whereby He secretly fills the soul with the riches of

Its feelings,
and solitude.

* Wisd. xvi. 20.

His gifts and graces; for being God, He doeth the work of God as God.

LINE
III.

§ 8. These goods, then, these great riches, these sublime and delicate unctions, this knowledge of the Holy Ghost—which, on account of their exquisite and subtile pureness, neither the soul itself, nor he to whom the direction of it is entrusted, can comprehend, but only He Who infuses them in order to render it more pleasing to Himself—are most easily, even by the slightest application of sense or desire to any particular knowledge or sweetness, disturbed and hindered. This is a serious evil, and a matter of deep grief. O how sad, and how wonderful! The evil done is not perceived, and the cause of it is almost nothing, and yet it is more grievous, an object of deeper sorrow, and inflicts a greater stain, than any other, though seemingly more important in common souls which have not attained to such a high estate of pureness. It is as if a beautiful painting were roughly handled, besmeared with coarse and vile colours; for the injury done is greater, more observable, and more deplorable, than it would be if a multitude of common paintings were thus bedaubed.

Great and frequent evils of spiritual misdirection.

Though this evil be so great that it cannot be exaggerated, it is still so common that there is scarcely one spiritual director who does not inflict it upon souls whom God has begun to lead by this way to contemplation. For, whenever God is anointing a soul with the unction of loving knowledge, most delicate, serene, peaceful, lonely, strange to sense and imagination; whenever He withholds all sweetness from it, and suspends its power of meditation—because He reserves it for this lonely unction, inclined to solitude and quiet—a spiritual director will appear, who, like a rough blacksmith, knows only the use of his hammer, and who, because all his knowledge is limited to the coarser work, will say to it: Come, get rid of this, this is waste of time and idleness: arise and meditate, resume thine interior acts, for it is necessary that

An inexperienced director compared to a rough blacksmith.

STANZA
III.

thou shouldest make diligent efforts of thine own; everything else is delusion and folly. Such a director as this does not understand the gradations of prayer, nor the ways of the Spirit, neither does he consider that what he recommends the soul is too late, since it has passed through that state already, having attained to the state of sensitive abnegation; for when the goal is reached, and the journey ended, all further travelling must be away from the goal.

Such a spiritual director, therefore, is one who understands not that the soul has already attained to the life of the Spirit, wherein there is no reflection, and where the senses cease from their work; where God is Himself the agent in a special way, and is speaking in secret to the solitary soul. Directors of this kind bedaub the soul with the coarse ointments of particular knowledge and sensible sweetness, to which they bring it back; they rob it of its loneliness and recollection, and consequently disfigure the exquisite work which God was doing within it. The soul that is under such guidance as this fails in one method and does not profit by the other.

Real guide of
souls, the
Holy Ghost.

§ 9. Let spiritual directors of this kind remember, that the Holy Ghost is the principal agent here, and the real guide of souls; that He never ceases to take care of them, and never neglects any means by which they may profit and draw near unto God as quickly as possible, and in the best way. Let them remember that they are not the agents, but mere instruments only to guide souls by the rule of Faith and the law of God, according to the spirit which God gives to each. Their object therefore should be, not to guide souls by a way of their own suitable to themselves, but to ascertain, if they can, the way by which God Himself is guiding them. If they cannot ascertain it, let them leave these souls alone and not disquiet them. Let them adapt their instructions to the direction of God, and endeavour to lead their penitents into

Directors are
only instru-
ments, and
must guide
souls by:
1. The Rule
of Faith.
2. The Law
of God.
3. The Spirit
of God.

greater solitude, liberty, and tranquillity, so that their spirit may not be tied down to any particular course when God is thus leading them on. The spiritual director must not be anxious or afflicted because he is doing nothing in this case, as he imagines, for provided the soul of his penitent be detached from all particular knowledge, from every desire and inclination of sense; provided it abide in the self-denial of poverty of spirit, emptied of darkness and sweetness, weaned from the breast—for this is all that the soul should look to, and all that the spiritual director is to consider as within the province of them both—it is impossible—according to the course of the Divine Goodness and Mercy—that God will not perform His own work, yea, more impossible than that the sun should not shine in a cloudless sky. As the sun rising in the morning shines into thy house if thou dost but open thy windows, so God, the unsleeping Keeper of Israel,* will shine in upon the emptied soul and fill it with good things. God is here like the sun, above our souls and ready to enter within them. Let spiritual directors, therefore, be content to prepare souls according to the laws of evangelical perfection, which consists in detachment, and in the emptiness of sense and spirit. Let them not go beyond this with the building, for that is the work of our Lord alone, from Whom cometh ‘every perfect gift.’† For, ‘unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.’‡ And as He is the supernatural Builder, He will build up in every soul, according to His own good pleasure, the supernatural building. Do thou, who art the spiritual director, dispose the natural faculties by annihilating them in their acts—that is thy work; the work of God, as the Wise Man says,§ is to direct man’s steps towards supernatural goods by ways and means utterly unknown to thee and thy penitent. Say not,

 LINE
 III.

 Conditions of
 Divine
 Illumination.

 Evangelical
 Perfection,—
 what.

 God the
 Architect of
 the super-
 natural
 building.

* Ps. cxx. 4. † S. James i. 17. ‡ Ps. cxxvi. 1. § Prov. xvi. 1, 9.

STANZA
III.

Further from
self, nearer
to God.

therefore, that thy penitent is making no progress, or is doing nothing, for if he have no greater pleasure than he once had in particular knowledge, he is advancing towards that which is above nature. Neither do thou complain that thy penitent has no distinct perceptions, for if he had he would be making no progress, because God is incomprehensible, surpassing all understanding. And so the further the penitent advances, the further from himself must he go, walking by faith, believing and not seeing; he thus draws nearer unto God by not understanding, than by understanding. Trouble not thyself about this, for if the intellect goes not backwards occupying itself with distinct knowledge and other matters of this world, it is going forwards; for to go forwards is to go more and more by faith. The intellect, having neither the knowledge nor the power of comprehending God, advances towards Him by not understanding. Thus, then, what thou judgest amiss in thy penitent is for his profit: namely, that he does not perplex himself with distinct perceptions, but walks onwards in perfect faith.

Not to go
back, is to
advance.

The intellect
goes forward
by faith.

§ 10. Or, you will say, perhaps, that the will, if the intellect have no distinct perceptions, will be at the least idle, and without love, because we can love nothing that we do not know. That is very true as to the natural actions of the soul, for the will does not love or desire anything of which there is no distinct conception in the intellect. But during the season of infused contemplation, it is not at all necessary for the soul to have distinct knowledge, or to form many discursive acts, because God Himself is then communicating to it loving knowledge, which is at the same time heat and light indistinctly, and then according to the state of the intellect is love also in the will. As the knowledge is general and obscure—the intellect being unable to conceive distinctly what it understands—so the will also loves generally and indistinctly. For as God is light and love in

Supernatural
love for God
does not need
distinct
knowledge,
or discursive
acts.

this delicate communication, He informs equally the intellect and the will, though at times His presence is felt in one more than in the other. At one time the intellect is more filled with knowledge than the will with love, and at another, love is deeper than intelligence.

There is no reason, therefore, to be afraid of the will's idleness in this state, for if it ceases to elicit acts directed by particular knowledge, so far as they depend on itself, God inebriates it with infused love through the knowledge which contemplation ministers, as I have just said.

The will
active in Con-
templation.

These acts of the will which are consequent upon infused contemplation are so much the nobler, the more meritorious and the sweeter, the nobler their source, God, Who infuses this love and kindles it in the soul, for the will is now near unto God, and detached from all other joys. Take care, therefore, to empty the will and detach it from all its inclinations, for if it is not going backwards, searching after sweetness and comfort, even though it have none in God distinctly felt, it is really advancing upwards above all such things to God, seeing that it is without any particular pleasure.

Test of true
progress,—
what.

And though the penitent have no particular comfort in God distinctly apprehended, though he does not make distinct acts of love, he does find more comfort in Him in that general secret and obscure infusion than if he were under the influence of distinct acts of knowledge, because the soul sees clearly then that nothing can furnish so much comfort and delight as this calm and lonely infusion. He loves God too more than all lovely things, because the soul has thrown aside all other joys and pleasures, for they have become insipid. There is no ground for uneasiness here, for if the will can find no rest in the joys and satisfactions of particular acts, there is then real progress, because not to go backwards, embracing what is sensible, is to go onwards to the

STANZA
III.

How the will
is to fulfil
the precept
of Love.

unapproachable, who is God. Hence, then, if the will is to advance, it is to do so more by detachment from, than by attachment to, what is pleasurable and sweet. Herein is fulfilled the precept of love, namely, that we are to love Him above all things. And if this love is to be perfect, we must live in perfect detachment, and in a special emptiness of all things.

The memory
more fitted
for God, when
emptied of
images.

§ 11. Neither are we to be distressed when the memory is emptied of all forms and figures; for as God is without form or figure, the memory is safe when emptied of them, and draws thereby the nearer to God. For the more the memory relies on the imagination, the further it departs from God, and the greater the risks it runs; because God, being above our thoughts, is not cognisable by the imagination. These spiritual directors, not understanding the case of souls who have already entered into the state of quiet and solitary contemplation, and perhaps having never advanced beyond the ordinary state of reflection and meditation themselves, look upon penitents, such as I am speaking of, as idle—for ‘the sensual man,’ the man who still dwells with the feelings of the sensitive part of the soul, ‘perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God’*—disturb the peace of that calm and tranquil contemplation given them by God, and force them back to their former meditations. This is followed by great loss, repugnance, dryness, and distractions on the part of such penitents, who desire to abide in their quiet and peaceful self-recollection. These directors will have them strive after sweetness and fervours, though in truth they should have given them a wholly different advice. Their penitents are unable to follow their direction, being incapable of meditating as before; because the time for that is past, and because that is not the road by which they are to

Mistake
made by in-
experienced
directors.

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

travel now. They are, therefore, doubly disquieted, and imagine themselves in the way of perdition. Their directors encourage them in this supposition, dry up their spirit, rob them of those precious unctions which God gave them in solitude and calm—and this is a great evil—and furnish them with mere mud instead, for they lose the former, and labour in vain with the latter.

Such directors as these do not really know what spirituality is. They wrong God most grievously, and treat Him irreverently, putting forth their coarse hands to the work which He is doing Himself. It has cost God not a little to have brought souls thus far, and He greatly esteems this solitude to which He has led them, this emptiness of their faculties, for He has brought them thither that He may speak to their heart,* which is the object of His continual desire. He now takes them by the hand, and reigns within them in the abundance of peace. He has deprived the discursive faculties of their strength, wherewith they had 'laboured all the night' and had taken nothing.† He feeds them now in spirit, not by the operation of sense, because the senses together with their acts cannot contain the spirit.

How direc-
tors may
wrong God.

How precious in His sight is this calm, or sleep, or annihilation of the senses, His words in the Canticle show: 'I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and harts of the fields, that you stir not up nor awake my beloved till she please.'‡ He shows clearly how much He values this sleep and oblivion of the soul, by the mention of those solitary and retired animals. But the spiritual directors of whom I am speaking will not suffer their penitents to repose, but insist upon continual labour, so that God shall find no opportunity for doing His own work; what He is doing they undo and disfigure by the compulsory activity of the

God loves the
repose of the
soul in Him.

* Os. ii. 14. † S. Luke v. 5. ‡ Cant. iii. 5.

STANZA
III.

God complains of those who hinder His work.

soul of their penitents ; and the little foxes that destroy the vines are not driven away. God complains of these directors by the mouth of the Prophet, saying, ‘ You have devoured the vineyard.’*

Caution to spiritual directors.

But it may be said that these directors err, perhaps, with good intentions, because their knowledge is scanty. Be it so ; but they are not therefore justified in giving the rash counsels they do, without previously ascertaining the way and spirit of their penitent. And if they do not understand the case, it is not for them to interfere in what they do not comprehend, but rather to send their penitent to others who understand him better than they. It is not a trivial matter, or a slight fault to cause, by incompetent direction, the loss of inestimable blessings, and to endanger a soul. Thus, he who rashly errs, being under an obligation to give good advice—for so is everyone in the office he assumes—shall not go unpunished for the evil he has done. The affairs of God are to be handled with great caution and watchful circumspection, and especially this, which is so delicate, and so high, and where the gain is infinite if the direction given be right, and the loss also infinite if it be wrong.

Their great responsibility.

How the affairs of God are to be handled.

A director inexcusable, —when.

§ 12. But if you say that such a director may be excused—though for my part I do not see how—you must at least admit that he is inexcusable if he persist in keeping a penitent in his power for certain empty reasons and considerations known to himself. It is quite certain that a soul which is to make progress in the spiritual life, and which God is ever assisting, must change its method of prayer, and be in need of a higher instruction, and of another spirit than those of such a director. Not all directors have the knowledge which every event on the spiritual road requires ; neither are they all qualified to determine how a given soul is to be directed

Liberty of the penitent.

Change of direction,—when necessary.

* Is. iii. 14.

under every circumstance of the spiritual life; at least they must not presume that they have, or that it is God's will that a particular soul should not advance further. As it is not everyone who can trim a block of wood, can also carve an image out of it; nor can everyone form the outlines who can carve; nor can everyone who fashions the outlines paint them, as neither can everyone who can paint perfect and complete the image: for everyone of these can do only what he understands himself; and if any one of them were to attempt that which is not within the compass of his skill, he would spoil the statue.

So is it in the spiritual life; for if a director whose only work it is to trim the rude block, that is, to make his penitent despise the world, and mortify his desires; or if, further, it be that of the carver, which is to guide the soul into holy meditations, and if his science extend no further, how can he guide his penitent to the highest perfection of the finished portrait, to that delicate colouring which consists not in the rough hewing of the wood, nor in the carving thereof, nor even in the formation of the outlines, but is rather a work which God Himself perfects in the soul with His own hand. It is therefore quite certain that such a director as this, whose teaching is ever the same, cannot help driving back the penitent whom he subjects to it, or, at the least, hindering his advancement. For what will be the state of the image, if nothing be done to it but to rough-hew the wood and beat it with a mallet? What is this, but the discipline of the faculties? When shall the image be finished? When shall it be ready for God to colour it?

Is it possible that any spiritual director can think himself qualified for all this? that he looks upon himself as sufficiently skilful, so as to render the teaching of any other needless for his penitent? Granting even that he is qualified for the whole direction of a particular soul, because, perhaps, such a

LINE
III.

Illustration
from the art
of sculpture.

Different
stages of
progress
require
different
methods of
guidance.

Who can
become all
things to
all men?

STANZA
III.

God leads every soul by a separate path.

soul has no vocation for a higher walk, it is almost impossible that he can be also a sufficient guide for all whom he hinders from passing out of his hands into the hands of others. God leads every soul by a separate path, and you will scarcely meet with one spirit which agrees with another in one half of the way by which it advances. Who can be like S. Paul, who 'became all things to all men, that he might save all?'

Spiritual tyranny,—what.

Thou art thus become a tyrant of souls, the robber of their liberties, assuming to thyself all the freedom of the evangelical doctrine, and taking every precaution lest any of thy penitents should leave thee; yea, still further, and much worse, should it come to thy knowledge that any of them had gone elsewhere for direction, or to discuss a question which it was not convenient to submit to thee; or if God had led them for the purpose of learning what thou teachest not—I say it with shame—thou art jealous, like a husband of his wife. This is not zeal for the honour of God, but the zeal which cometh out of thine own pride and presumption. How couldest thou be sure that thy penitent had no need of other guidance than thine? With such directors God is angry, and he threatens to chastise them, saying: 'Woe to the shepherds of Israel . . . you eat the milk and you clothed yourselves with the wool . . . but my flock you did not feed. . . . I will require my flock at their hand.'†

Woe pronounced against unfaithful shepherds.

Duties of directors to penitents,—what.

These directors, therefore, ought to leave their penitents at liberty, yea, they lie under an obligation to allow them to have recourse to the advice of others, and always to receive them again with a cheerful countenance; for they know not by what way God intends to lead them, especially when their present direction is not suited to them. That, indeed, is a sign that God is leading their penitents by another road, and

* 1 Cor. ix. 22.

† Ezech. xxxiv. 2, 10.

that they require another director; they should, therefore, counsel the change, for a contrary course of proceeding springs from a foolish pride and presumption.

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III.

§ 13. Let me now pass on from this and speak of those other means, fatal as the plague, which these directors, or others worse than they, make use of in the guidance of souls. When God sends into a soul the unctions of holy desires, and leads it to give up the world, draws it on to change its state of life, and to serve Himself by despising the world—it is a great matter in His eyes that souls should have advanced to this, for the things of the world are not according to the heart of God—these directors, with their human reasonings and worldly motives, contrary to the doctrine of Christ, at variance with mortification and contempt of all things, consulting their own interest or pleasure, or fearing where no fear is, interpose delays or suggest difficulties, or, what is worse, take away all such good thoughts from the hearts of their penitents. These directors have an evil spirit, indevout and exceedingly worldly; unaccustomed to the ways of Christ, they do not enter in themselves by the strait gate, neither will they suffer others to enter in. These are they whom our Lord threatens in the Gospel, saying: ‘Woe to you lawyers, for you have taken away the key of knowledge: you yourselves have not entered in, and those that were entering you have hindered.’*

Evil of
hindering a
soul from
forsaking the
world.

How
directors
shut the
strait gate to
themselves
and others.

These directors are in truth like barriers before the gate of Heaven, forgetting that God has called them to the functions they exercise that they may compel those to enter in whom He has invited. He has given them this charge in the Gospel, but they, on the contrary, compel their penitents not to enter in by the narrow gate which leadeth unto life.† Such a director as this is one of the blind guides leading souls astray from

* S. Luke xi. 52.

† S. Matth. vii. 13, 14.

STANZA
III.Ignorance—
when
inexcusable.

the way of the Holy Ghost. This happens in many ways; some err knowingly; others ignorantly; but both the one and the other shall be punished; for by taking upon themselves the office which they fill, they are bound to understand and consider what they do.

Second blind
guide,—the
devil.

§ 14. The other blind guide that disturbs the soul in this interior recollection is Satan, who, being blind himself, desires to render the soul blind also. He labours, therefore, when the soul has entered into those deep solitudes, wherein the delicate unctions of the Holy Ghost are infused—he hates and envies the soul for this, because he sees it fly beyond his reach, adorned with the riches of God—to throw over the soul's detachment and estrangement from the world, certain cataracts of knowledge, and the darkness of sensible sweetness, sometimes good, the more to entice the soul, and to draw it back to the way of sense. He would have it fix its eyes on this, and make use of it with a view of drawing near to God, relying upon this kind of knowledge, and sensible sweetness. By this means Satan distracts the soul, and easily withdraws it from that solitude and recollection wherein the Holy Ghost worketh secretly His great marvels within. And then the soul, naturally prone to sensible satisfactions and sweetness—especially if it aims at them—is most easily induced to rely upon such knowledge and sweetness, and so draws back from the solitude wherein God was working. For as the soul, as it seemed, was doing nothing then, this new way appears preferable, because it is something, while solitude seemed to be nothing. How sad it is that the soul, not understanding its own state, should, for one mouthful, disqualify itself for feeding upon God Himself; for He offers Himself to be its food when He absorbs it in these spiritual and solitary unctions of His mouth.

He tries to
deceive
the soul by
knowledge
and
sweetness.

In this way, the evil spirit, for a mere nothing, inflicts upon souls the very greatest injuries, causing the loss of great

riches, and dragging them forth, like fish with a trifling bait, out of the depths of the pure waters of the Spirit, where they were engulfed and drowned in God, resting upon no created support. He drags them to the bank, and supplies them with objects whereon to rest, and makes them walk on the earth painfully, that they may not float on 'the waters of Siloe, that go with silence,'* bathed in the unctions of God. It is wonderful how much Satan makes of this: and as a slight injury inflicted on the soul in this state is a great one, you will scarcely meet with one which has gone this way that has not suffered great injuries, and incurred grievous losses. Satan stations himself with great cunning on the frontiers between sense and spirit; there he deludes the soul, and feeds the senses, interposing sensible things so as to detain it, and hinder it from escaping out of his hands.

 LINE
III.

Satan found
in the border-
land between
sense and
spirit.

The soul, too, is most easily taken by these devices, for it knows as yet of nothing better; neither does it dream that this is a loss, yea rather, it looks on it as a great gain, and accepts the suggestions of the evil one gladly, for it thinks that God has come to visit it; consequently it omits to enter into the inner chamber of the Bridegroom, and stands at the door to see what is passing without in the sensitive part of itself.

The devil 'beholdeth every high thing'† that relates to souls that he may assail them. If, therefore, a soul becomes recollected, he labours to disturb it by horrors and fears, or by bodily pains, or outward noise and tumults, that he may ruin it; he strives to draw its attention to the tumult he excites, and to fix it upon what is passing without, and to withdraw it from the interior spirit, but when he fails in his efforts he leaves it alone. So easily does Satan squander great riches and bring about the ruin of these precious

* Is. viii. 9.

† Job xli. 25.

STANZA
III.

souls, though he thinks this of more consequence than the fall of many others, that he looks upon it as a small matter because of the ease with which he effects it and because of the little trouble it costs him.

Satan compared to the Behemoth and the Leviathan.

§ 15. We may also understand in the same sense the following words, spoken by God to Job: ‘Behold he will drink up a river and not wonder: and he trusteth that the Jordan’—the highest perfection—‘may run into his mouth. In his eyes as with a hook he shall take him, and bore through his nostrils with stakes.’ That is, he will turn away the soul from true spirituality by means of the arrows of distinct knowledge wherewith he pierces it, for the breath which goeth out through the nostrils in one volume becomes dispersed if the nostrils be pierced, and escapes through the divers perforations.

Again it is said, ‘The beams of the sun shall be under him, and he shall strew gold under him like mire.’ He causes souls that have been enlightened to lose the marvelous beams of Divine knowledge, takes away and disperses abroad the precious gold of the Divine adorning by which souls had been made rich.

Advice to souls whom God is leading to Contemplation.

O souls, now that God shows you mercies so great, leading you into solitude and recollection, withdrawing you from the labours of sense, do not you return thereto. If your own exertions were once profitable, enabling you to deny the world and your own selves when you were but beginners, cease from them now when God of His mercy has begun to work in you, for now they will only embarrass you. If you will be careful to lay no stress on your own operations, withdrawing them from all things, and involving them in nothing—which is your duty in your present state—and wait lovingly and sincerely upon God at the same time—doing no violence to yourselves except to detach yourselves wholly, so as not to disturb your tranquillity and peace—God

Himself will feed you with the heavenly food, since you cease to hinder Him.

LINE
III.

§ 16. The third blind guide of the soul is the soul itself, which, not understanding its own state, disturbs and injures itself. For as the soul knows of no operations except those of sense, when God leads it into solitude, where it cannot exert its faculties and elicit the acts it elicited before, and as it appears to itself then to be doing nothing, it strives to elicit its previous acts more distinctly and more sensibly. The consequence is distraction, aridity, and disgust, in that very soul which once delighted in the calm peace and spiritual silence, wherein God Himself was in secret infusing His sweetness. It sometimes happens that God persists in keeping the soul in this quiet calm, and that the soul persists in crying out with the imagination, and in walking with the intellect. Such souls are like children in their mothers' arms, who, unable to walk, cry, and struggle with their feet, demanding to be allowed to walk alone, but who cannot walk themselves, and suffer not their mothers to do so either. These souls make God resemble a painter whose work is hindered because the subject he portrays is not suffered to remain stationary.

Third blind
guide,—the
soul itself.

How a soul
may hinder
its own
progress.

The soul, then, should keep in mind that it is now making greater progress than it could make by any efforts of its own, though it be wholly unconscious of that progress. God Himself is carrying it in His own arms, and thus it happens that it is not aware that it is advancing. Though it thinks that it is doing nothing, yet in truth more is done than if itself were the agent; for God Himself is working. If this work be invisible, that is nothing strange, for the work of God in the soul is not cognisable by sense, because silently wrought: 'The words of the wise are heard in silence.'*

Spiritual
progress not
ascertained
by conscious-
ness.

* Eccles. ix. 17.

STANZA
III.

Let the soul abandon itself to the hands of God and confide in Him. He that will do so shall walk securely, for there is no danger then unless the soul should attempt anything in its own strength, or by the exercise of its proper faculties.

Subject of
the *Caverns*
resumed.

§ 17. Let us now return to the deep caverns of the faculties, in which I said the sufferings of the soul were ordinarily very great when God is anointing it, and preparing it for union with Himself by His subtile and delicate unctions. These unctions of God are so subtile that, penetrating into the inmost depths of the soul, they so dispose it, and so fill it with sweetness, that the sufferings and fainting of the soul through its great desire in the immense void of the caverns are immense. Now if the unction which disposes the caverns for the union of the spiritual marriage be so wonderful, what shall the accomplishment thereof be?

As desire,
so fruition.

Certain it is that as the hunger and thirst and suffering of the caverns so will be the satisfaction, fulness, and delight thereof. According to the perfection of these dispositions will be the exquisite delight of the fruition of the sense of the soul, which is that power and energy of its very substance for perceiving and delighting in the objects of the faculties.

Faculties of
the soul
called
Caverns,—
why.

These faculties are with great propriety called caverns. For as the soul is conscious that they admit the profound intelligence and splendours of the lamps, it sees clearly also, that they are deep in proportion to the depth of the intelligence and love; that they have space and capacity commensurate with the distinct sources of the intelligence, of the sweetness and delight which it receives in them. All this is received and established in the cavern of the sense of the soul which is the capacity thereof for possession, perception, and fruition. Thus, as the common sense of the fancy is the place where all the objects of the outward senses are treasured up, so is this common sense of the soul in a like

way enlightened and made rich by a possession so grand and so glorious.

LINE
IV.

iv. 'Obscure and dark.'—The eye sees not in two ways, either because it is in darkness or is blind. God is the light and the true object of the soul, and when He does not shine upon it, it is then in darkness, though its vision may be most perfect. When the soul is in sin, or when it occupies the desires with other things than God, it is then blind. Though the light of God be not wanting to it then, yet, being blind, it cannot see the light because of its blindness, which is the practical ignorance in which it lives. Before God enlightened the soul in its transformation it was in darkness and ignorant of His great goodness, as was the Wise Man before he was enlightened, for he says, 'He enlightened my ignorances.'*

Difference
between
blindness
and darkness.

Speaking spiritually, it is one thing to be blind and another to be in darkness. Blindness proceeds from sin, but darkness does not necessarily involve sin, and it happens in two ways. There is natural darkness where the light of natural things shines not, and there is supernatural darkness where there is no knowledge of many supernatural things. Here the soul says with regard to them both, that the intellect without God abode in darkness. For until the Lord said, 'Let light be,'† darkness was upon the face of the deep of the cavern of the soul's sense. The deeper the cavern when God shines not upon it, the deeper is the darkness thereof. Thus it is impossible for it to lift up the eyes to the Divine light, yea the Divine light is not even thought of, because never seen or known to exist; there is therefore no desire for it. In that case it desires the darkness rather than light, and so goes on from darkness to darkness, guided by the darkness, for

Conditions of
sight :
1. Object.
2. Medium.
3. Organ.

* Ecclus. li. 26. Ignorantias meas illuminavit. See *Obscure Night*, Bk. ii. c. 12.

† Genes. i. 3.

STANZA
III.

darkness can guide the soul only to darkness again. As 'day to day uttereth speech and night to night showeth knowledge,'* so the deep of darkness calleth another deep, and the deep of light another; † like calling upon like. Thus, then, the light of grace which God had before given to the soul, and by which He opened the eyes of it from the deep to behold the Divine light, and made it pleasing to Himself, calls to another deep of grace, namely, the Divine transformation of the soul in God, wherein the eye of sense is enlightened and rendered acceptable.

Eye of the
intellect
suffused by
the affections
of the will.

The mind was also blind in that it took pleasure in other than God. The blindness of the higher and rational sense is caused by the desire which, like a cloud or a cataract, overlies and covers the eye of reason, so that it shall not see what is before it. Thus, then, the grandeur and magnificence of the Divine beauty are rendered invisible, so far as the pleasure of sense is followed. For if we cover the eye with anything, however trifling it may be, that is enough to obstruct the vision of objects before us, be they ever so grand. Thus, then, a single desire entertained by the soul suffices to impede the vision of all the Divine grandeurs which are beyond its desires and longings. Who can say how impossible it is for the soul, subject to desires, to judge of the things of God? for he that would judge aright of these things must cast away from himself all desires, because he cannot judge aright while subject thereto; for in that case he will come to consider the things of God not to be God's, and those things which are not God's to be the things of God.

How to
rectify judg-
ment of the
things of
God.

While this cloud and cataract cover the eye of the judgment, nothing is visible except the cloud itself, sometimes of one colour, sometimes of another, according to circumstances,

* Ps. xviii. 2.

† Ib. xli. 8.

and men will take the cloud for God, because they see nothing beside the cloud which overshadows the sense, and God is not comprehended by sense. Thus, desire and sensual satisfactions hinder the knowledge of high things, as it is written, 'The bewitching of vanity obscureth good things, and the wandering of concupiscence overturneth the innocent mind.'* Those persons, therefore, who are not so spiritually advanced as to be perfectly purified from their desires and inclinations, but are still somewhat sensual, believe and account those things to be important which are in truth of no account in spirituality, being intimately connected with sense; they make no account and despise those things which are highly spiritual, further removed from sense, yea sometimes they look upon them as folly, as it is written, 'The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God: for it is foolishness to him and he cannot understand.'†

LINE
IV.
Purity of
heart neces-
sary for
spiritual
vision.

The 'sensual man' is he who still lives according to the desires and inclinations of the natural man, and even though these natural desires come occasionally into contact with the things of the spirit, yet, if man cleaves to spiritual things with his natural desires, they are still natural desires only. The spirituality of the object is little to the purpose, if the desire of it proceed from itself, having its root and strength in nature. What! you will say, is it not a supernatural desire to desire God? No, not always; but only then when the motive is supernatural, and when the strength of the desire proceeds from God; that is a very different thing. When the desire comes from thyself, so far as it relates to the manner thereof, it is nothing more than natural. So, then, when thou leanest on thy spiritual tastes, exerting thine own natural desire, thou bringest a cataract

The *sensual*
man
describ'd.

Character of
acts deter-
min'd by
their
motives.

How
self-love
degrades
actions.

* Wisd. iv. 12.

† 1 Cor. ii. 14.

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III.

over thine eye, thou art wholly sensual, thou canst neither perceive nor judge what is spiritual, for that transcends all natural sense and desire.

If you still doubt, I have nothing further to add except to bid you read over again what I have written, and if you will do so perhaps your doubts will vanish. What I have said is the substance of the truth, and I cannot now enlarge upon it. This sense of the soul, hitherto obscure without the Divine light and blinded by its desires, is now such that its deep caverns, because of the Divine union, 'with unwonted brightness give light and heat together to the Beloved.'

The purified
soul reflects
the light of
God.

v. vi. 'With unwonted brightness give light and heat together to the Beloved.'—These caverns of the soul's faculties being now among the marvellous splendours of the lamps which burn within them, being lighted and burning in God, remit back to God in God, in addition to their self-surrender to Him, those very splendours which they receive from Him in loving glory; they also, turning to God in God, being themselves lamps burning in the brightness of the Divine lamps, return to the Beloved that very light and warmth of love which they received from Him. Now, indeed, they give back unto Him, in the way they received them, those very splendours which He communicates, as crystal reflects the rays of the sun when shone upon. But this state of the soul effects this in a nobler manner, because of the intervention of the will.

'With unwonted brightness;' that is, strange and surpassing all imagination and description. For the perfection of beauty wherein the soul restores to God what it has received from Him is now in conformity with that perfection wherewith the intellect—made one with that of God—received the Divine Wisdom; and the perfection wherewith the will restores to God in God that very goodness He gave it—for it was given only to be restored—is in conformity with

that perfection wherein the will is united with the will of God. In the same way, proportional to the perfection of its knowledge of God's greatness, united therewith, does the soul shine and give forth the warmth of love. And according to the perfection of the other Divine attributes communicated to the soul, such as strength, beauty, justice, are those perfections wherewith the spiritual mind, now in enjoyment, gives back to the Beloved in the Beloved the very light and heat received from Him.

The soul now being one with God is itself God by participation, and though not so perfectly as it will be in the world to come, is still, as I have said, God in a shadow. Thus, then, the soul, by reason of its transformation, being a shadow of God, effects through God in God what He effects within it Himself by Himself, because the will of both is one. And as God is giving Himself with a free and gracious will, so the soul also with a will, the more free and the more generous, the more it is united with God in God, is, as it were, giving back to God—in that loving complacency with which it regards the Divine Essence and perfections—God Himself. This is a mystic and affective gift of the soul to God, for then the soul seems in truth to have God for its own possession, and that it possesses Him, as His adopted child, by a right of ownership, by the free gift of Himself made unto it. The soul gives to the Beloved, Who is God Himself, what He had given to it. Herein every debt is paid, for the soul giveth as much voluntarily with inestimable joy and delight, giving the Holy Spirit as its own of its own free will, so that God may be loved as He deserves to be.

The transformed soul
a shadow of
God.

The perfect
return of
love.

Herein consists the inestimable joy of the soul, for it sees that it offers to God what becomes Him in His Infinite Being. Though it be true that the soul cannot give God to God anew, because He is always in Himself, still it does

STANZA
III.

so, perfectly and wisely, giving all that He has given it in requital of His love; this is to give as it is given, and God is repaid by this gift of the soul; nothing less could repay Him. He receives this gift of the soul as if it were its own, with kindness and grace, in the sense I have explained; and in that gift He loves it anew, and gives Himself to it, and the soul also loves Him anew. Thus, there is in fact a mutual interchange of love between the soul and God in the conformity of their union, and in the matrimonial surrender, wherein the goods of both, that is the Divine Essence, are possessed by both together in the voluntary giving up of each to the other. God and the soul say, the one to the other, what the Son of God said to His Father, 'All My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them.'* This will be verified in the fruition of the next life without intermission, and is verified in the state of union when the soul's communion with God energises in an act of love.

Illustration.

The soul can offer such a gift, though far greater than itself, just as he who rules over many kingdoms and nations, though greater than he is, can bestow them upon whom he will. This is the source of the soul's great delight, that it sees itself able to give unto God more than itself is worth, that it gives Himself to God with such liberality, as if God were its own, in that Divine light and warmth of love which He Himself has given it. This is effected in the life to come through the light of glory and of love, and in this life by faith most enlightened and by love most enkindled. Thus it is that the deep caverns of sense, with unwonted brightness give light and heat together to the Beloved. I say together, because the communication of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost in the soul is one; they are the light and the fire of love therein.

Source of the
soul's delight,
—what.

* S. John xvii. 10.

I must here observe briefly on the perfection of beauty wherewith the soul makes this oblation unto God. In the act of union, as the soul enjoys a certain image of fruition, caused by the union of the intellect and affection in God, it makes this oblation of God to God, and of itself to Him, in most wonderful ways; delighting itself therein and constrained thereto. With respect to love, the soul stands before God in strange beauty, with respect to this shadow of fruition in the same way, and also with respect to praise and gratitude. As to the first, that is love, the soul has three grand perfections of beauty. 1. It loves God by means of God. This is an admirable perfection, because the soul, set on fire by the Holy Ghost, and having the Holy Ghost dwelling within it, loves as the Father loves the Son, as it is written, 'that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them, and I in them.'* 2. The second perfection is to love God in God, for in this union the soul is vehemently absorbed in the love of God, and God communicates Himself with great vehemence to the soul. 3. The third perfection of beauty is that the soul now loves God for what He is; for it loves Him not merely because He is bountiful, good, and generous to the soul, but much more, because He is all this essentially in Himself.

There are also three perfections of beauty with respect to that shadow of fruition, marvellously great. 1. The soul enjoys God here, united with God Himself, for as the soul unites its intellect with wisdom and goodness, and perceives so clearly — though not so clearly as in the life to come — it delights greatly in all these things, clearly understood, as I said before. 2. The second principal perfection of beauty is that the soul delights itself in God alone without the admixture of any created thing. 3. The third is that it enjoys Him alone for what He is, without the admixture of any selfish feeling, or of any created object.

LINES
V., VI.
Perfections
of the soul's
beauty:

1. In love.

(1) It loves
God by
means of
God.

(2) It loves
God in
God.

(3) It loves
God for
God.

2. In the
shadow of
fruition.

(1) It is
united to
God.

(2) To
nothing
else.

(3) With a
pure
heart.

* S. John xvii. 26.

STANZA
III.

There are also three principal perfections of beauty in the praises of God which the soul offers to Him in union. 1. The soul offers it as an act of duty, because it recognises this as the end of its creation; as it is written, 'This people have I formed for Myself, they shall show forth My praise.'* 2. The second is, that it praises Him for blessings received, and because of the pleasure which the praise of so great a Lord inspires. 3. The third is, it praises Him for what He is in Himself, for if the praises of God were unaccompanied by any pleasure at all, still the soul would praise Him for what He is.

3. In praise :
(1) As the
end of its
creation.

(2) For
blessings
received.

(3) For
what God
is.

4. In grati-
tude

(1) For all
benefits.

(2) For the
delight of
praising
God.

(3) For
God in
Himself.

Gratitude also involves three principal perfections. 1. Thanksgiving for all natural and spiritual blessings, and for all benefits received. 2. The second is the great delight of praising God, in the way of thanksgiving, for it is moved with great vehemence to such an act. 3. The third is that the soul gives thanks unto God only for what He is, which is much more efficacious and more delightful.

STANZA IV.

*How gently and how lovingly
Thou liest awake in my bosom,
Where alone Thou secretly dwellest ;
And in Thy sweet breathing
Full of grace and glory,
How tenderly Thou fillest me with Thy love.*

EXPLANATION.

Here the soul turns towards the Bridegroom in great love, magnifying Him and giving Him thanks for two marvellous acts which He sometimes effects within the soul through its union with Himself. The soul too observes on the way He produces them and on their effects upon itself.

The first effect is the awakening of God in the soul, and the way of that is gentleness and love. The second is the

* Is. xliii. 21.

breathing of God in the soul, and the way of that is grace and glory given in that breathing. The effect of this upon the soul is to make it love Him sweetly and tenderly. The stanza therefore may be paraphrased as follows : O how gently and how lovingly dost Thou lie awake in the depth and centre of my soul, where Thou in secret and in silence alone, as its sole Lord, abidest, not only as if in Thine own house or in Thine own chamber, but also as within my own bosom, in close and intimate union : O how gently and how lovingly ! Sweet to me is Thy breathing in that awakening, for it is full of grace and glory. O with what tenderness dost Thou inspire me with love of Thee ! The figure is borrowed from one awaking from sleep, and drawing his breath, for the soul in this state feels it to be so.

LINES
I., II.

Paraphrase
of the fourth
stanza.

i. ii. 'How gently and how lovingly Thou liest awake in my bosom.'—The awakenings of God in the soul are manifold, and so many that were I to describe them I should never end. This awakening, to which the soul refers here, the work of the Son of God, is, in my opinion, of the highest kind, and the source of the greatest good to the soul. This awakening is a movement of the Word in the depth of the soul of such grandeur, authority and glory, and of such profound sweetness that all the balsams, all the aromatic herbs and flowers of the world seem to be mingled and shaken together for the production of that sweetness : that all the kingdoms and dominions of the world, all the powers and virtues of heaven seem to be moved ; this is not the whole, all the virtues, substance, perfections and graces of all created things, shine forth and make the same movement in unison together. For as S. John saith, 'what was made in Him was life,'* and in Him moves and lives ; as the Apostle says, 'In Him we live and move and are.' †

First effect
of Divine
union,—
The awaken-
ing of God in
the soul.

Its nature
and effects.

* S. John i. 3 ; see p. 46.

† Acts xvii. 28.

STANZA
IV.

The reason is this; when the grand Emperor wills to reveal Himself to the soul, moving Himself in the way of giving it light, and yet not moving at all—He upon whose shoulder is the government,* that is, the three worlds of Heaven, earth, and hell, and all that is in them, and who sustains all by the word of His power,†—then all seem to move together. As when the earth moves, all natural things upon it move with it; so is it when the Prince moves, for He bears the court, not the court Him. This, however, is an exceedingly imperfect illustration; for here not only all seem to move, but also to reveal the beauties, power, loveliness of their being, the root of their duration and life in Him. There, indeed, the soul understands how all creatures, higher and lower, live, continue, and energise in Him, and enters also into the meaning of these words, ‘By Me kings reign, by Me princes rule, and the mighty decree justice.’‡

How creatures, although distinct from, are in God.

Though it is true that the soul here sees that all these things are distinct from God, in that they have a created existence, and understands them in Him in their force, origin, and strength, it knows also that God in His own essence is, in an infinitely pre-eminent way, all these things, so that it understands them better in Him, their First Cause, than in themselves. This is the great joy of this awakening, namely, to know creatures in God, and not God in His creatures: this is to know effects in their causes, and not causes by their effects.

Joy of knowing the creature in the Creator.

This movement in the soul is wonderful, for God is Himself immovable. Without movement on the part of God, the soul is renewed and moved by Him; and the Divine life and Being and the harmony of creation is revealed unto it with marvellous newness, the cause assuming the designation of the effects resulting from it. If we regard the effect, we may say with the Wise Man that God moves, ‘for Wisdom is more

How the Immovable moves.

* *Is. ix. 6.*† *Heb. i. 3.*‡ *Prov. viii. 15, 16.*

active than all active things,'* not because it moves itself but because it is the source and principle of all motion, and 'remaining in herself the same, reneweth all things;' † this is the meaning of the words, 'more active than all active things.'

Thus then, strictly speaking, it is the soul itself that is moved and awakened, and the expression 'awake' is correct. God however being always, as the soul sees Him, the Mover, the Ruler, and the Giver of life, power, graces, and gifts to all creatures, contains all in Himself, virtually, presentially, and supremely. The soul beholds what God is in Himself, and what He is in creatures. So may we see, when the palace is thrown open, in one glance, both the magnificence of him who inhabits it, and what he is doing. This, according to my understanding of it, is this awakening and vision of the soul; it is as if God drew back some of the many veils and coverings that are before it, so that it might see what He is; then indeed—but still obscurely, because all the veils are not drawn back, that of faith remaining—the Divine face full of grace bursts through and shines, which, as it moves all things by its power, appears together with the effect it produces, and this is the awakening of the soul.

The soul
awakes to
see God in
all things.

God
unveiling
His Face.

In this life
the veil of
faith still
remains.

Though all that is good in man comes from God, and though man of himself can do nothing that is good, it may be said in truth, that our awakening is the awakening of God, and our rising the rising of God. 'Arise, why sleepest Thou, O Lord?' ‡ saith the Psalmist. That is in effect to say, Raise us up and awake us, for we are fallen and asleep. Thus then, because the soul had fallen asleep and could never rouse itself again, and because it is God alone who can open its eyes, and effect its awakening, this awakening is most properly referred to God: 'Thou liest awake in my bosom.'

The
awakening
referred to
God,—why

* Wisd. vii. 24.

† Ib. 27.

‡ Ps. xliii. 23.

STANZA
IV.

ii. 'Thou liest awake in my bosom.' Awake us, O Lord, and enlighten us, that we may know and love those good things which Thou hast set always before us, and that we may know that Thou art moved to do us good, and hast had us in remembrance. It is utterly impossible to describe what the soul, in this awakening, knows and feels of the goodness of God, in the inmost depths of its being, that is its 'bosom.' For in the soul resounds an infinite power, with the voice of a multitude of excellences, of thousands of thousands of virtues, wherein itself abiding and subsisting, becomes 'terrible as an army set in array,'* sweet and gracious in Him who comprehends in Himself all the sweetness, and all the graces of His creation.

How can the soul bear this Divine communication?

But here comes the question, how can the soul bear so vehement a communication while in the flesh, when in truth it has not strength for it without fainting away? The mere sight of Assuerus on his throne, in his royal robe, glittering with gold and precious stones, was so terrible in the eyes of Esther, that she fainted through fear, so awful was his face. 'I saw thee, my Lord, as an angel of God, and my heart was troubled, for fear of thy Majesty.' † Glory oppresses him who beholds it, if he be not made glorious by it. How much more then is the soul now liable to faint away, when it beholds not an angel but God Himself, the Lord of the angels, with His face full of the beauty of all creatures, of terrible power and glory, and the voice of the multitude of His excellences. It is to this that Job referred when he said, 'We have heard scarce a little drop of His word; who shall be able to behold the thunder of His greatness?' ‡ and again, 'I would not that He should contend with me with much strength, lest He should overwhelm me with the weight of His greatness.' §

Two reasons.

The soul, however, does not faint away and tremble at this awakening so powerful and glorious. There are two reasons

* Cant. vi. 9. † Esth. xv. 16. ‡ Job xxvi. 14. § Ib. xxiii. 6.

for this: 1. It is now in the state of perfection, and therefore the lower portion of it is purified and conformed to the spirit. It is in consequence exempt from that pain and loss which spiritual communications involve, when the sense and spirit are not purified and disposed for the reception of them. 2. The second and the principal reason is that referred to in the first line of this stanza, namely that God shows Himself gentle and loving. For as He shows His greatness and glory to the soul in order to comfort and exalt it, so does He favour and strengthen it also, and sustain its natural powers while manifesting His greatness gently and lovingly. This is easy enough to Him, who with His right hand protected Moses, so that he might behold His glory.*

LINES
I., II.

1. It is now
in the state
of Perfection.

2. God shows
Himself
gentle and
loving.

Thus the soul feels God's love and gentleness to be commensurate with His power, authority, and greatness, for in Him these are all one. Its delight is therefore vehement, and the protection it receives strong in gentleness and love, so that itself being made strong may be able without fainting away to sustain this vehement joy. Esther, indeed, fainted away, but that was because the king seemed unfavourable towards her, for with 'burning eyes' he 'showed the wrath of his heart,'† but the moment he looked graciously upon her, touched her with his sceptre and kissed her, she recovered herself, for he said to her, 'I am thy brother, fear not.' So is it with the soul in the presence of the King of kings, for the moment He shows himself as its Spouse and Brother, all fear vanishes away. Because in showing unto it, in gentleness and not in anger, the strength of His power and the love of His goodness, He communicates to it the strength and love of His breast, 'leaping from His throne' ‡ to caress it, as the bridegroom from his secret chamber, touching it with the sceptre of His Majesty, and as a brother embracing it. There the royal

Illustration
from the life
of Esther.

* Exod. xxxiii. 22.

† Esth. xv. 10.

‡ Ib. xv. 11.

STANZA
IV.

robes and the fragrance thereof, which are the marvellous attributes of God; there the splendour of gold, which is charity, and the glittering of the precious stones of supernatural knowledge; and there the face of the Word full of grace, strike the queenly soul, so that, transformed in the virtues of the King of Heaven, it beholds itself a queen: with the Psalmist therefore may it be said of it, and with truth, 'The queen stood on Thy right hand in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety.'* And as all this passes in the very depths of the soul, it is added immediately, 'Where alone Thou secretly dwellest.'

God dwells in all souls, but in different ways.

iii. 'Where alone Thou secretly dwellest.'—He is said to dwell secretly in the soul's bosom, because, as I have said, this sweet embracing takes place in the inmost substance and powers of the soul. We must keep in mind that God dwells in a secret and hidden way in all souls, in their very substance, for if He did not, they could not exist at all. This dwelling of God is very different in different souls; in some He dwells alone, in others not; in some He dwells contented, in others displeased; in some as in His own house, giving His orders, and ruling it; in others, as a stranger in a house not His own, where He is not permitted to command, or to do anything at all. Where personal desires and self-will least abound, there is He most alone, most contented, there He dwells as in His own house, ruling and directing it, and the more secretly He dwells, the more He is alone.

His presence most intimate to the soul most purified.

So then in that soul wherein no desire dwells, and out of which all images and forms of created things have been cast, the Beloved dwells most secretly Himself, and the purer the soul and the greater its estrangement from everything but God, the more intimate His converse and the closer His embrace. He thus dwells in secret; for Satan himself cannot penetrate this secrecy, nor discover this converse, nor can

* Ps. xlv. 10.

any intellect ascertain how it is effected. But in this secrecy He is not hidden from the soul in the state of perfection, for such a soul is ever conscious of His presence. Only in these awakenings He seems to awake who before was asleep in the soul's bosom; and though it felt and enjoyed His presence, He seemed as one sleeping within.

LINE
III.
Continual consciousness of the presence of God.

O how blessed is that soul ever conscious of God reposing and resting Himself within it. How necessary it is for such a soul to flee from the matters of this world, to live in great tranquillity, so that nothing whatever shall disturb the Beloved 'at His repose.'*

Happiness of the soul should make it vigilant.

He is there as it were asleep in the embraces of the soul, and the soul is, in general, conscious of His presence, and, in general, has the fruition of it most deeply. If He were always awake in the soul, the communications of knowledge and love would be unceasing, and that would be a state of glory. If He awakes but once, merely opening His eyes, and affects the soul so profoundly, what would become of it if He were continually awake within it?

He dwells secretly in other souls, those which have not attained to this state of union, not indeed displeased, though they are not yet perfectly disposed for union: these souls in general are not conscious of His presence, but only during the time of these sweet awakenings, which however are not of the same kind with those already described, neither indeed are they to be compared with them. But the state of these souls is not secret from the devil and the intellect, like that of the others, because the senses always furnish some indications of it by the excitement into which they are thrown. The senses are not perfectly annihilated before the union is complete, and they manifest their power in some degree, because they are not yet wholly spiritual. But in this

Lower degrees of Divine union described.

* Cant. i. 11.

STANZA
IV.

awakening of the Bridegroom in the perfect soul, all is perfect because He effects it all Himself in the way I have spoken of. In this awakening, as of one aroused from sleep and drawing breath, the soul feels the breathing of God, and therefore it says: 'In Thy sweet breathing.'

Second effect
of Divine
union,—
The
breathing of
God in the
soul.

iv. v. vi. 'And in Thy sweet breathing, full of grace and glory, how tenderly Thou fillest me with Thy love.'—I would not speak of this breathing of God, neither do I wish to do so, because I am certain that I cannot; and indeed were I to speak of it, it would seem then to be something less than what it is in reality. This aspiration of God is an act of His in the soul, whereby in the awakening of the deep knowledge of the Divinity, He breathes into it the Holy Ghost according to the measure of that knowledge which absorbs it most profoundly, which inspires it most tenderly with love according to what it saw. This breathing is full of grace and glory, and therefore the Holy Ghost fills the soul with goodness and glory, whereby He inspires it with the love of Himself, transcending all glory and all understanding. This is the reason why I quit the subject.

Its nature
and effects.

INSTRUCTIONS AND CAUTIONS.



INSTRUCTIONS AND CAUTIONS

TO BE CONTINUALLY OBSERVED BY HIM WHO SEEKS TO BE
A TRUE RELIGIOUS AND TO ARRIVE QUICKLY AT GREAT
PERFECTION.

IF any Religious desires to attain in a short time to holy recollection, spiritual silence, detachment, and poverty of spirit—where the peaceful rest of the spirit is enjoyed, and union with God attained; if he desires to be delivered from all the difficulties which created things put in his way, to be defended against all the wiles and illusions of Satan, and to be protected against himself, he must strictly practise the following instructions.

How to overcome the three spiritual enemies:
1. The World.
2. The Devil.
3. The Flesh.

If he will do this, with but ordinary attention, without other efforts or other practices, at the same time carefully observing what his rule prescribes, he will advance rapidly to great perfection, acquire all virtues in succession, and attain unto holy peace.

All the evils to which the soul is subject proceed from three sources: the world, the devil, and the flesh. If we can hide ourselves from these we shall have no combats to fight. The world is less difficult, and the devil more difficult, to understand; but the flesh is the most obstinate of all, and the last to be overcome together with the 'old man.' If we do not conquer the three, we shall never conquer one; and if we conquer one, we shall also conquer the others in the same proportion.

Three
cautions
against the
world.

In order to escape perfectly from the evils which the world inflicts, there are three cautions to be observed.

FIRST CAUTION.

1. Love all
men equally,
in and for
God.

The first is, preserve an equal love and an equal forgetfulness of all men whether relatives or not: withdraw your affections from the former as well as from the latter, yea even rather more from the former, on account of the ties of blood, for fear lest the natural affections, which men always feel for their kindred, should thereby revive again. You must mortify this affection if you are to attain unto spiritual perfection. Look upon your kindred as strangers, and you will thereby the more completely discharge the obligations which they impose upon you; for by not withdrawing your heart from God on their account, you will fulfil your duties towards them better by not giving to them those affections which are due unto God.

He most
worthy of
love who is
nearest to
God, Who is
Love.

Do not love one man more than another, for if you do you will fall into error. He whom God loves most is the most worthy of love, and you do not know who he is. But if you labour to forget all men alike—as holy recollection requires you to do—you will escape all error, whether great or small. Do not think about them; have nothing to say about them either good or bad. Avoid them as much as you possibly can. If you do not observe this, as things go, you never will become a good religious, you will never attain to holy recollection, nor will you get rid of your imperfections. If you will indulge yourself here, Satan will in some way or other delude you, or you will delude yourself under the pretence of good or evil.

If you will observe this direction you will be safe; and in no other way will you ever get rid of the imperfections and escape the evils which result to your soul from intercourse with men.

SECOND CAUTION.

The second caution against the world relates to temporal goods. If you desire in earnest to escape the evils which worldly goods occasion, and restrain your excessive desires, you must hold all personal possession in abhorrence, and cast from you every thought about it. You must not be solicitous about what you eat or drink or wear, or about any created thing whatever: you must not be 'solicitous for to-morrow,' but occupy yourself with higher things—with the Kingdom of God, that is, fidelity unto Him—than with all these things which, as He says in the Gospel, 'shall be added unto you.'* He who takes care of the beasts of the field will not forget you. If you do this you will attain unto silence, and have peace in your senses.

2. Cultivate poverty of spirit and detachment from all temporal goods.

THIRD CAUTION.

The third caution is most necessary, that you may avoid all evil in relation to the other Religious of the Community. Many persons from not heeding this have not only lost their peace of mind, but have also fallen, and fall daily, into great disorders and sin. Be especially careful never to let your mind dwell upon, still less your tongue to speak of, what is passing in the Community, its past or its present state. Do not speak of any Religious in particular, do not discuss his condition or his conversation, or anything that belongs to him, however important, either under the cloak of zeal, or of remedying what seems amiss, except only to him who of right should be spoken to, and then at the fitting time. Never be scandalised or surprised at what you see or hear, and labour to preserve yourself in complete oblivion of all. If you lived among the Angels and gave heed to what was going on, many things would

3. Avoid criticising other members of the religious House.

* S. Matth. vi. 33.

seem to you not to be good, because you do not understand them.

Example of
Lot's wife.

Take warning from the example of Lot's wife who, because she was disturbed at the destruction of Sodom, looked back to behold it. God punished her for this, and she 'was turned into a pillar of salt.* This teaches you that it is the will of God, even if you were living among devils, you should so live as not to turn back in thought to consider what they are doing, but forget them utterly. You are to keep your soul in purity before God, and not to suffer the thought of this or that to disturb you.

No place so
secure but
the devil
may enter.

Be sure of this, there is no lack of stumbling blocks in religious houses, because there is no lack of devils who are always labouring to throw down the saints. God permits this in order to try them and to prove them, and if you will not take care of yourself by observing this caution, you will never become a true Religious, do what you may, neither will you attain to holy detachment and recollection, or escape the evils I am speaking of. If you live otherwise, in spite of your zeal and good intentions, Satan will lay hold of you in one way or another, and indeed you are already sufficiently in his power, when your soul is allowed such distractions as this. Remember those words of the Apostle, 'If any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, this man's religion is vain.† This is applicable to the interior, quite as much as to the exterior, tongue—to thoughts as well as words.

Three
cautions
against
Satan.

Three cautions to be observed in order to be delivered from the devil in Religion.

If you wish to escape from Satan in Religion, you must give heed to three things, without which you cannot be in safety

* Genes. xix. 26.

† S. Jam. i. 26.

from his cunning. In the first place I would have you take this general advice, which you should never forget, namely, that it is the ordinary practice of Satan to deceive those who are going on unto perfection by an appearance of good: he does not tempt them by what seems to be evil. He knows that they will scarcely regard that which they know to be wrong. You must therefore continually distrust that which seems to be good, and especially when obedience does not intervene. The remedy here is to take the advice of him who has authority to give it. This then is the

Satan as an
angel of
light.

FIRST CAUTION.

Never set about anything, however good and charitable it may seem, either to yourself or to any other, whether in the Community or out of it, except under obedience, unless you are bound to do it by the rule of your Order. If you do this you will acquire merit, and be in security; you will be safe against yourself and against evil; you will also avoid evils of which you are ignorant, and of which God will require an account one day. If you do not observe this caution in little things as well as in great, notwithstanding your apparent success, Satan will most certainly deceive you little or much. Even if your whole error consist in your not being guided in everything by obedience, you are plainly wrong, because God wills obedience rather than sacrifice,* and the actions of a Religious are not his own, but those of obedience, and if he withdraws them from the control of obedience, he will have to give account of them as lost.

1. Never act
unless
through holy
obedience.

SECOND CAUTION.

The second caution is one very necessary, because the devil interferes exceedingly in the matter to which it refers. The

* 1 Kings xv. 22.

2. Regard the lawful Superior as holding the place of God.

observance of it brings great gain and profit, and the neglect of it great loss and ruin. Never look upon your superior, be he who he may, otherwise than if you were looking upon God, in Whose place he stands. Keep a careful watch over yourself in this matter, and do not reflect upon the character, ways, or conversation, or habits of your superior. If you do, you will injure yourself, and you will change your obedience from divine into human, and you will be influenced by what you see in your superior, and not by the Invisible God whom you should obey in him. Your obedience will be in vain, or the more barren the more you are troubled by the untowardness, or the more you are pleased by the favour, of your superior. I tell you that a great many Religious in the way of perfection have been ruined by not looking upon their superiors as they ought to have done; their obedience was almost worthless in the eyes of God, because it was influenced by human considerations. Unless you force yourself therefore to be indifferent as to who your superior may be, so far as your private feelings go, you will never be spiritual, neither will you faithfully observe your vows.

THIRD CAUTION.

3. Study humility in thought, word, and work.

The third caution directed against Satan is this: strive with all your heart after humility in thought, word, and work, taking more pleasure in others than in yourself, wishing to see them in all things preferred to yourself, and this too with all your power from a sincere heart. In this way you will overcome evil with good, drive the devil away, and have joy in your heart. Labour to do this with respect to those who are less agreeable to you; for be assured, if you do not, you will never have true charity nor make progress in it. Be always more ready to receive instruction than to give it, even to the least of your brethren.

Three cautions to be observed by those who would conquer themselves, and master the cunning of the flesh.

Three cautions against the flesh.

FIRST CAUTION.

If you wish to be delivered from the uneasiness and imperfections which present themselves before you, in the habits and conversation of the Religious, and profit by what may occur, you must keep in mind that you entered the Community only to be mortified and tried, and that all the inmates of it are there, as in truth is the case, for the express purpose of trying you. Some mortify you by words, others by works, and others by thoughts; in all this you are to submit yourself, unresisting as a statue to the polisher, the painter, and the gilder of it. If you do not, you will never be able to live as you ought with the Religious of your House; you will not have holy peace, nor will you deliver yourself from much evil.

1. Remember a community is a place of trial.

SECOND CAUTION.

Never omit any practices, if they are such as befit you, because they are disagreeable; neither observe them, on account of the pleasure which results from them, unless they be as necessary as those which are not agreeable. Otherwise you will find it impossible to acquire firmness, and conquer your weakness.

2. Disregard likes and dislikes.

THIRD CAUTION.

In all your spiritual exercises never set your eyes upon the sweetness of them so as to cling to it, but embrace rather that in them which is unpleasant and troublesome. If you do not observe this rule, you will never destroy self love, nor acquire the love of God.

3. Do not seek sweetness in devotions.

LETTERS.

LETTERS.



LETTER I.

TO MOTHER CATHERINE OF JESUS, A BAREFOOTED CARMELITE AND
COMPANION OF S. TERESA OF JESUS.

*He informs her of his state since his imprisonment, and gives her
spiritual consolation.*

JESUS

Be in your soul, my daughter Catherine. Although I know not where you are, I write you these few lines, trusting that our Mother will forward them to you if you are not with her. And even should you be absent from her, you may account yourself happy in comparison with me, who am shut up in so lonely and distant a prison-house. For since I was swallowed by that *whale*, and cast forth upon this distant shore, I have not been counted worthy to see her or the saints who dwell near her. God has worked it all for good; for in truth to be abandoned by creatures serves as a file to free us from the fetters of earth, and to suffer darkness is the direct way to the enjoyment of great light.

God grant that we may not walk in darkness. Oh! how many things would I fain say to you! But I am constrained to write in enigmas, fearing that you may not receive this letter; and therefore I break off without finishing it. Recommend me to God. I will say no more of these parts, for I am weary.

Your servant in Christ,

FRIAR JOHN OF THE CROSS.

BAEZA: the 6th of July, 1531.

LETTER II.

TO THE RELIGIOUS OF VEAS.

He gives them some spiritual advice, full of heavenly instruction, and worthy of perpetual remembrance.

JESUS AND MARY

Be in your souls, my daughters in Christ.

Your letter greatly consoled me, and may our Lord reward you for it. It was not from want of will that I have refrained from writing to you, for truly do I desire for you all possible good; but because it seemed to me that enough had been already said to effect all that was needful, and that what is wanting to you, if indeed anything be wanting, is not writing or speaking—whereof ordinarily there is more than enough—but silence and work. For whereas speaking distracts, silence and action collect the thoughts, and strengthen the spirit. As soon therefore as a person understands what has been said to him for his good, he has no further need to hear or to discuss; but to set himself in earnest to practise what he has learnt with silence and attention, in humility, charity, and contempt of self; not turning aside incessantly to seek after novelties which serve only to satisfy the desire in outward things—failing however to satisfy it really—and to leave it weak and empty, devoid of interior virtue. The result is unprofitable in every way; for a man who, before he has digested his last meal, takes another—the natural heat being wasted upon both—cannot convert all this food into the substance of his body, and sickness follows. It is most necessary, my daughters, to know how to preserve our spirit beyond the reach of the devil and of our own sensuality, or we shall find ourselves unawares at a great loss, and strangers to the virtues of Christ, and appear in the end with our labour lost and our work done the wrong way. The lamps which we

believed to be alight will be found extinguished in our hands, because the breath whereby we thought to keep them burning has served rather to blow them out. To avert this evil, and to preserve our spirit, as I have said, there is no surer remedy than to suffer, to work, to be silent and to close our senses, accustoming ourselves to solitude, and seeking to forget and to be forgotten by creatures, and to be indifferent to whatever may happen, even if the world were to come to an end. Never fail, whatever may befall you, be it good or evil, to keep your heart quiet and calm in the tranquillity of love, that so it may be ready to suffer all things which may come upon you. For so momentous a thing is perfection, and so priceless the treasure of spiritual joy, that it is God's will this should be barely sufficient; for it is impossible to make progress but by the way of virtuous doing and silent suffering. I have heard, my daughters, *that the soul which is easily drawn to talk and converse with creatures, pays little heed to the presence of God; for if it remembered Him, it would be soon drawn forcibly inwards, loving silence and avoiding all exterior conversation; as God wills that the soul should delight in Him rather than in any creature, however pleasing and profitable it may be.* I commend myself to your charitable prayers; and do you rest assured that, scant as is my charity, it is so bound up in you that I never forget those to whom I owe so much in our Lord. May He be with us all. Amen.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

FROM GRANADA: the 22nd of Nov. 1587.

LETTER III.

TO MOTHER ELEANORA BAPTIST, PRIORRESS OF THE CONVENT
AT VEAS.

*The Blessed Father consoles her under an affliction which she
was suffering.*

JESUS

Be in your soul. Think not, my daughter in Christ, that I have not sorrowed over your labours and sufferings, and those of your companions; though when I consider that as God has called you to an apostolical life, that is to a life of contempt, He is now leading you in that way, I cannot but rejoice thereat. God wills, indeed, that Religious be so wholly and absolutely Religious that they shall have done with all things, and that all things shall have done with them; inasmuch as He is pleased to be their riches, their consolation, their glory, and their bliss. God has, moreover, conferred a great grace upon your Reverence, for now, forgetting all other things, you may enjoy Him to the utmost of your desire, caring nothing, in your love of God, for what may come upon you, since you are no longer your own, but His. Let me know whether your departure is certain, and whether the Mother Prioress is coming. I commend myself especially to my daughters Magdalen and Anna and the rest, not having leisure to write to each of them separately.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

FROM GRANADA: the 8th February, 1588.

LETTER IV.

TO MOTHER ANNE OF S. ALBERT, Prioress of the Barefooted Carmelites of Caravaca.

He makes known to her by a prophetic inspiration the state of her soul, and delivers her from scruples.

JESUS

Be in your soul. How long, my daughter, will you need to be carried in the arms of others? I desire now to see in you a great detachment of spirit, and such a freedom from any dependance upon creatures, that all the powers of hell may be unable to disturb you. What useless tears have you been shedding in these last days! How much precious time, think you, have these scruples caused you to throw away? If you would communicate your troubles to me, go straight to that spotless mirror of the Eternal Father—His only Begotten Son; for there do I daily behold your soul, and without doubt you will come away consoled, and have no more need to beg at the door of beggars.

Your servant in Christ,

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

FROM GRANADA.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME RELIGIOUS.

On the same subject.

JESUS

Be in your soul, dearest daughter in Christ. Though you say nothing to me I have something to say to you; and that is, to bid you close the entrance of your soul to those vain fears which make the spirit cowardly. Leave to our Lord

that which He has given and daily gives, and think not to measure God by the narrowness of your own capacity, for not thus must we deal with Him. Prepare yourself to receive a great grace from our Lord.

Your servant in Christ,

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

FROM GRANADA.

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME RELIGIOUS.

The Holy Father informs her of the foundation of the monastery at Cordova, and of the removal of the community of Nuns in Seville.

JESUS

Be in your soul. I wrote to you in haste when I left Granada for the foundation at Cordova. I have since received your letter there, and those of the gentlemen who went to Madrid, thinking that they should find me at the congregation. You must know, however, that this meeting has never taken place, for I have been waiting to finish these visitations and foundations which our Lord has hastened forward in such wise that there has been no time to spare. The Friars have been received at Cordova with the greatest joy and solemnity on the part of the whole city. No Order has been better received there. All the Clergy and Confraternities of Cordova assembled together on the occasion, and there was a solemn procession of the Most Holy Sacrament from the Cathedral Church—all the houses being hung with tapestry—with great concourse of people, as on the Feast of Corpus Christi.

This took place on the Sunday after Ascension Day, and the Bishop preached, praising us much in his sermon. The house is in the best part of the city, and belongs to the Cathedral. I am now busied at Seville with the removal of

our Nuns, who have bought one of the principal houses at a cost of about 14,000 ducats, being worth more than 20,000. They are now established there. His Eminence the Cardinal is to place the Blessed Sacrament in their chapel with great solemnity on the Feast of S. Barnabas. Before my departure I intend to establish another house of Friars here, so that there will be two of our Order in Seville. Before the Feast of S. John I shall set forth for Ecija, where, with the Divine blessing, we shall found another; thence to Malaga; and then to the congregation. I wish I had authority to make this foundation, as I had for the others. I do not expect much difficulty; but I hope in God that so it will be, and at the congregation I will do what I can; and you may say so to these gentlemen to whom I am writing.

Be pleased to send me the little book containing the *Stanzas of the Spouse*, which I think Sister —— of the Mother of God will by this time have copied for me. Remember to present my humble respects to Señor Gonzalo Muñoz, to whom I do not write for fear of being troublesome to him, and because your Reverence will make known to him that which I have here related to you.

Dearest Daughter in Christ,

Your Servant,

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From SEVILLE: June, 1588.

LETTER VII.

TO F. AMBROSE MARIANO OF S. BENEDICT, PRIOR OF MADRID.

Containing wholesome instructions for the training of Novices.

JESUS

Be with your Reverence. Our need of Religious is very great, as your Reverence knows, for the multitude of foundations which we are making. It is therefore necessary that your Reverence should have patience and allow Father Michael to leave this place, and wait at Pastrana for the Father Provincial; the Foundation of the Convent of Molina being nearly completed. It has seemed good to the Fathers also to assign to your Reverence a Sub-Prior, and they have made choice of Father Angelo for that office, believing that he will agree perfectly with the Prior, which is a point of the utmost importance in every religious house. Your Reverence will give to each of these Fathers his letters, and will not fail to take care that no Priest meddle or converse with the Novices, it being well known to your Reverence that nothing is more injurious to them than to pass through many hands, or to be managed by any but their own master. Since, however, you have so many under your care, it is reasonable that your work should be lightened by the assistance of Father Angelo. You can therefore give him the necessary authority, as the authority of Sub-Prior is also conferred upon him to give him greater weight in the house.

It seemed that Father Michael was no longer much needed here, and that he might do greater service to the Order elsewhere. Of Father Gratian I have nothing new to communicate. Father Antony is now here.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From SEGOVIA : Nov. 9, 1588.

LETTER VIII.

TO A YOUNG LADY, AT MADRID, WHO DESIRED TO BECOME A BAREFOOTED CARMELITE, AND WHO WAS AFTERWARDS PROFESSED IN A CONVENT AT ARENAS, IN NEW CASTILE, AFTERWARDS TRANSFERRED TO GUADALAXARA.

JESUS

Be in your soul. Your messenger came at a time when I was unable to reply before he left the place, and now, on his return, he is waiting for my letter. May God ever grant you, my daughter, His holy grace, that always and in all things you may be wholly occupied with His holy love ; for to this are you bound, inasmuch as for this end He created and redeemed you. As to the three questions which you have proposed to me, I could say much more than time and the brevity which befits a letter will allow. I will, however, suggest three points, the consideration of which you will find very profitable.

With regard to the sins which God so greatly abhors, that He was constrained to die because of them, it is expedient, in order utterly to root them out, and never to commit any, to have as little intercourse with people as possible, avoiding their society, and conversing with them only when strictly obliged to do so. For all such conversation, beyond what necessity or the reason absolutely requires, has never profited any man, however holy he may have been. To this watchfulness add an exact and loving observance of the law of God.

With regard to the Passion of Our Lord, endeavour to chastise your body with discretion, to hate and to mortify yourself, and never in anything to follow your own will and your own inclination, seeing that these were the causes of His death and passion. Whatever you may do, do it all under the advice of your director. As to the third point, the contemplation of heavenly glory, to meditate upon and love it

aright, we must hold all the riches of the world and all its pleasures to be mere dross, and vanity, and weariness, as, in truth, they are; and make no account of anything, however great and precious it may be, but only to become pleasing to God; because the best things here below, when compared with the eternal good for which God created us, are vile and bitter; and yet, brief as is their bitterness and deformity, it shall abide for ever in the soul which has chosen them for its portion.

I have not forgotten your matter; but at present, much as I desire it, I can do nothing for its furtherance. Recommend it earnestly to our Lord, and take our Lady and S. Joseph as your advocates with Him.

Remember me especially to your mother, to whom, as well as to yourself, this letter is addressed; and do you both pray for me, and in your charity ask your friends to do the same. May God give you His Spirit.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From SEGOVIA : February, 1589.

LETTER IX.

TO A SPIRITUAL SON IN RELIGION, TEACHING HIM HOW TO OCCUPY HIS WILL WITH GOD BY WITHDRAWING IT FROM PLEASURE AND JOY IN CREATED THINGS.

The peace of JESUS CHRIST, my son, be ever in your soul.

I have received the letter of your Reverence, wherein you tell me of the great desire you have, given you by Our Lord, to occupy your will with Him alone, loving Him above all things, and wherein you also ask me for directions how to obtain your end. I rejoice that God has given you such holy desires, and I shall rejoice the more at their fulfilment. Remember then that all pleasure, joy, and affections come upon the soul through the will and the desire of those things

which seem good, befitting, and pleasurable. Now, because these things seem to be pleasing and precious, the affections of the will are attracted by them, and the will hopes for them, delighting in them when it possesses them, and dreads the loss of them. The soul, therefore, by reason of these affections and joys, is disturbed and disquieted.

In order then to annihilate and mortify these emotions of pleasure in all things that are not God, your Reverence will observe, that everything in which the will can have a distinct joy is sweet and delectable, because pleasant in its eyes; but no delectable thing in which it can have joy and delight can be God, for as God is not cognisable by the apprehensions of the other faculties, neither can He be by the pleasure and desires of the will. In this life, as the soul cannot taste of God essentially, so all the sweetness and delight of which it is capable, and, however great it may be, cannot be God, for whatever the will takes pleasure in and desires as a distinct thing, it desires so far as it knows it to be that which it longs for. For as the will has never tasted of God as He is, nor ever known Him under any apprehension of the desire, and cannot therefore comprehend what He is, so its taste can never know what He is; its very being, desire, and taste can never know how to desire God, because He is above and beyond all its powers.

It is, therefore, plain that no distinct object among those in which the will rejoices, can be God; and for that reason, if it is to be united with Him, it must empty itself, cast away every disorderly affection of the desire, every satisfaction it may distinctly have, high and low, temporal and spiritual, so that, purified and cleansed from all unruly satisfactions, joys and desires, it may be wholly occupied, with all its affections, in loving God. For if the will could in any way comprehend God and be united with Him, it cannot be through any capacity of the desire, but only by love; and as all delight,

sweetness, and joy, of which the will is sensible, is not love, it follows that none of these pleasing impressions can be the adequate means of uniting the will to God: those means are really an act of the will.

Now, as an act of the will is perfectly distinct from the feeling which attends it, it is by that act that union with God is wrought—that act ends in Him, and is love; and not by the impressions and apprehensions of the desire which are in the soul as ends themselves, and not as means of union. True, these impressions may serve as motives of love, if the will uses them for the purpose of advancing, and not otherwise. These sweet impressions of themselves do not lead the soul to God, but rather cause it to rest upon them: but an act of the will to love God causes the soul to put its whole affection, joy, delight, contentment, and love in Him only, casting everything else aside, and loving Him above all things.

For this reason, then, if any one is moved to love God by that sweetness he feels, he casts that sweetness away from him, and fixes his love upon God, Whom he does not feel; but if he allowed himself to rest in that sweetness and delight which he feels, dwelling upon them with satisfaction, that would be to love the creature, and that which is of it, and to make the motive an end. The issue then would be that the act of the will would be vitiated, for as God is incomprehensible and inaccessible, the will, in order to direct its act of love unto God, must not direct it to that which is tangible and capable of being reached by the desire, but must direct it to that which it cannot comprehend nor reach thereby. In this way the will loves that which is certain and true, to the satisfaction of faith, in emptiness and darkness as to its own feelings, above all that it can understand by the operations of the intellect, believing and loving in a higher way than that of the understanding.

He then is very unwise, who, when sweetness and spiritual delight fail him, thinks for that reason that God also has

failed him; and when he has that sweetness and delight, rejoices and is glad, thinking for that reason that God is with him. More unwise still is he who goes about seeking for sweetness in God, rejoices in it, and dwells upon it; for, in so doing, he is not seeking after God with the will grounded in the emptiness of faith and charity, but only in spiritual sweetness and delight, which is a created thing, following herein his own will and fond pleasure. Such an one does not love God purely above all things; that is, the whole strength of the will is not directed to God only; for by clinging to and resting on the creature by desire, the will cannot ascend upwards beyond it to God Who is inaccessible. It is impossible for the will to attain to the sweetness and delight of the Divine union, to feel the sweet and loving embraces of God, otherwise than in detachment, in refusing to the desire every pleasure in the things of Heaven and earth, for that is the meaning of those words of the Psalmist: 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.'* Now, in this place 'the mouth' of the will is desire: that mouth opens, when not filled or hindered with the morsels of its own satisfactions: for when the desire is intent upon anything, it is then shut, because out of God everything is shut up.

The soul then that is to advance straightway unto God, and to be united with Him, must keep the mouth of the will open, but only for God Himself, in detachment from every morsel of the desire, in order that God may fill it with His own love and sweetness: it must hunger and thirst after God alone, seeking its satisfaction in nothing else, seeing that in this life it cannot taste Him as He is. That which may be tasted here, if there be a desire for it, hinders the taste of God.

This is what the prophet Isaiah teaches when he says: 'All you that thirst come to the waters.'† He invites all who thirst for God only to come to the fulness of the Divine waters

* Psalm lxxx. 11.

† Isaiah lv. i.

of the union with Him: namely, those who have 'no money' of the desire. It is most expedient then, for your Reverence, if you wish to have great peace in your soul, and to reach perfection, to give up your whole will to God, that it may be united to Him, and utterly detached from the mean and vile occupations of earth. May His Majesty make you as spiritual and as holy as I desire you may be.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

SEGOVIA, April 14, 1589.

LETTER X.

TO MOTHER LEONORA OF S. GABRIEL, A BAREFOOTED CARMELITE NUN.

The Holy Father having sent her from the Convent of Seville to found that of Cordova, gives her some spiritual instruction concerning interior solitude and the good government of her Community.

JESUS

Be in your soul, my daughter in Christ. Your letter was very welcome to me, and I thank God that He has been pleased to make use of you in this foundation, which His Majesty has done for your greater profit; for the more He is minded to give us, the more does he enlarge our desires, even leaving us empty that there may be the more space for Him to fill with blessings. You shall be well repaid for those which, for the love of your Sisters, you now leave behind you in Seville; for the immense benefits of God can only be received and contained by empty and solitary hearts; and, therefore, because He has a special love for you, our Lord will have you to be alone for the desire He has to be your only companion. Your Reverence must therefore apply your mind to Him alone, and in Him alone content yourself, that in Him you may find all consolation. And true it is that

even were the soul in Heaven, if the will were not bent to love it, the soul would be still unsatisfied. So is it with God—though He be ever with us—if our heart be attached to other things and not fixed on Him alone. I well believe that those in Seville will be very lonely without your Reverence. But, perhaps, you have already done all the good there which you were intended to do, and God wills that you should now work here, for this will be one of our principal foundations. To this end, I pray your Reverence to afford all the assistance you can to the Mother Prioress, with great love and union of heart in all things; though I know that I have no need to enforce this upon one of such experience in religion, and so well instructed in all that is needful for such foundations. For this reason, we chose your Reverence for this work from among many less well fitted for it. Be pleased to remember me particularly to Sister Mary of the Visitation, and to Sister Joanna of S. Gabriel, to whom I return thanks for her letter. May God give your Reverence His Holy Spirit.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From SEGOVIA, the 8th of July, 1589.

LETTER XI.

TO MOTHER MARY OF JESUS, Prioress OF THE BAREFOOTED
CARMELITES OF CORDOVA.

*Containing useful lessons for Religious engaged in the foundation of a
new Convent, of which they are to form the first stones.*

JESUS

Be in your soul. You are bound to correspond to the grace of our Lord in proportion to the welcome which you have received, the tidings of which have rejoiced my heart. It was by His appointment that you entered so poor a dwelling,

under the heat of such a burning sun. He would have you to give edification to the people, and to show them that it is your vocation to follow Christ in destitution of all things ; so shall those who come to you hereafter learn in what spirit they must come. I send you all necessary faculties. Be very careful whom you receive at first, because such will be those who follow ; and strive to preserve the spirit of poverty and contempt of all earthly things, being content with God alone : otherwise be assured that you will fall into a thousand temporal and spiritual necessities ; and that you will never, and can never, experience greater necessities than those to which you voluntarily subject your heart : for the poor in spirit is content and joyful in the want of all things ; having made very nothingness his all, and having found therein fulness and freedom in all things. O blessed nothingness, and blessed hiddenness of heart, which is of such surpassing virtue, which renders all things subject to the soul, suffering nothing to bring it into subjection, and leaving every thought free to burn more and more intensely with love ! Salute all the sisters in our Lord. Tell them that since our Lord has chosen them for the first stones of this building, they must consider well what they ought to be, for upon them, as on a strong foundation, those who follow after them are to be built. Let them profit by that fervour which God is wont to infuse into the first founders of a work, to make a wholly new beginning of the way of perfection ; walking therein in all humility and entire detachment from all things, both within and without, no longer at a child's pace, but with a strong will conformed to their vocation of mortification and penance. Let them see that Christ costs them something, and let them not be like those who are ever seeking their own ease, and looking for consolation either in God or out of Him. But let them seek to suffer either in Him or out of Him, by means of silence, hope, and loving memory. Make

all this known to Gabriela and the Sisters at Malaga. To the others I have already written. God grant you His holy grace. Amen.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From SEGOVIA: the 28th of July, 1589.

LETTER XII.

TO MOTHER MAGDALEN OF THE HOLY GHOST, A RELIGIOUS OF THE SAME CONVENT OF CORDOVA.

He treats of the spirit which should mark a new foundation.

JESUS

Be in your soul, my daughter in Christ. I rejoice to see the good resolution expressed in your letter. I bless God, who provides for all things! Much need will you have of a strong purpose in the beginning of this foundation, to bear poverty, straitness, heat, and labours of all kinds, in such a manner that none may perceive whether or not all these things are grievous to you. Consider that for such beginnings God will not have delicate and feeble souls, far less such as are lovers of themselves; and to this end does His Majesty at such times give a special grace, that they, with moderate diligence, may advance in all virtues. It is assuredly a great grace, and a sign of the Divine favour, that, passing by others, He has led you hither. And though it has cost you much to forsake what you have left behind, you must not count it much; for you must in any case have shortly left it all. In order to have God in all things, we must have nothing at all; for how can the heart, given to one, be given at all to another?

I say this also to Sister Joanna, and let her recommend me to God. May He be in your heart. Amen.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From SEGOVIA: the 28th of July, 1589.

LETTER XIII.

TO THE LADY JOANNA DE PEDRAÇA, A PENITENT OF THE
HOLY FATHER AT GRANADA.

JESUS

Be in your soul. I give Him thanks that He has given me the grace not to forget the poor, and not to take my ease, as you suggest. It would be a great pain to me did I believe that you seriously think what you say. It would be an evil return on my part for so much kindness, especially when I have not deserved it. All that is wanting now is that I should forget you; but consider how that is to be forgotten which is ever present to the soul. But as you are now walking in the darkness and emptiness of spiritual poverty, you imagine that all things and all men are failing you; nor is this wonderful, since you imagine that God Himself fails you. And yet in truth there is nothing wanting to you, nor have you need of aid or counsel from any, all these doubts and fears being without foundation. He who desires nothing but God does not walk in darkness, however blind and poor he may seem to himself to be; and he who indulges in no presumptuous thoughts, nor seeks his own satisfaction either in God or in creatures, nor to do his own will in anything, is in no danger of falling, nor in any need of counsel. You are in the right path, my daughter; once for all, be resigned, and live in peace. What! are you to undertake to guide yourself? You would do it well, no doubt. You have never been in a better state than now, for you have never been so humble, so submissive; you have never made so little account of yourself, nor of all the things in the world put together; you have never seen yourself to be so bad, nor God to be so good; you have never served Him so purely and disinterestedly as now. You are not running after the imperfections of your own will, seeking self, as perhaps you once did. What do you mean? What

manner of life and conversation do you propose to yourself in this world? In what do you imagine the service of God to consist, except in abstaining from evil, keeping His commandments, and using our whole power and strength in doing His will? When we do this, what need have we of other imaginations, other lights, other consolations gathered here and there, in which ordinarily lurk many snares and dangers to the soul, which is deceived and led astray by its appetites and perceptions: its very faculties cause it to err. It is therefore a singular grace from God when He so darkens and impoverishes the soul as to leave in it nothing which can lead it astray. And that it may not go astray, it has nothing to do but to walk in the beaten path of the laws of God and of the Church, living solely by faith, obscure and true, in assured hope and perfect charity, looking for all its blessings in Heaven; living here as pilgrims, beggars, exiles, orphans, desolate wanderers, possessing nothing, and looking for everything above. Rejoice, then, and put your trust in God, who has given you these tokens that you *can* do, nay, that you *ought* to do, much for Him. If not, you must not be surprised if He should be angry when He finds you so dull, seeing that He has placed you in so safe a path, and led you to so secure a haven. Desire nothing beyond, tranquillise your soul, which is in a good and safe condition, and go to communion as usual. Go to confession when you have some clear matter for the sacrament, but beyond this be not too eager to speak of your interior. When you have anything distinct to mention, write to me, and that promptly and frequently, which you can always do through Doña Anna, if not through the nuns.

I have been somewhat unwell, but am now much better. Fr. John Evangelist, however, is still suffering. Recommend him to God, and me also, my daughter in our Lord.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From SEGOVIA: Oct. 12th, 1580.

LETTER XIV.

TO MOTHER MARY OF JESUS, Prioress of Cordova.

Containing much profitable advice to those whose office is to govern and provide for a Community.

JESUS

Be in your soul. My daughter in Christ, the cause of my not having written to you for so long a time has been rather the remote position of Segovia than any want of will. For my good will has ever been, and I trust in God shall ever be, the same towards you. I feel for you in all your trials. But I would not have you take too much thought concerning the temporal provision for your house, lest God should cease to take thought for it; and so you should fall into many temporal and spiritual necessities; for it is our over anxious solicitude which brings us to want. Cast all your care, my daughter, upon God, and He will nourish you: for He who has given and will give the greater, will not fail to give the less.

Take care that the desire to be in want and poor never fails you, for that instant your spirit will fail you, and your virtues will become weak. For if in time past you have desired poverty, now that you are Superior you should desire it still more, and love it; for the house must be ruled, and furnished with virtues and heavenly desires, rather than by carefulness and arrangements for the things of this world; inasmuch as our Lord hath bidden us to take no thought for our food, or for our raiment, or for to-morrow. What you have to do is to train your own soul and the souls of your nuns in all perfection in Religion, in union with God, and rejoicing in Him alone; and I will assure you of the rest. It seems to me very difficult to imagine that the other houses will come to your help, when you are settled in so good a position, and have such excel-

lent nuns. Nevertheless, if I have an opportunity, I will not fail to do what I can for you.

I wish much consolation to the Mother Sub-Prioress, and I trust in our Lord that He will give it, and strengthen her to bear her pilgrimage and exile cheerfully for love of Him.

Many salutations in our Sovereign Good, to my daughters Magdalen of S. Gabriel, Mary of S. Paul, Mary of the Visitation, and Mary of S. Francis. May He be ever with your spirit, my daughter. Amen.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From MADRID : the 20th of June, 1590.

LETTER XV.

TO MOTHER ANNE OF JESUS, A BAREFOOTED CARMELITE OF THE CONVENT OF SEGOVIA.

He consoles her on his not having been chosen Superior.

JESUS

Be in your soul. Your letter was most grateful to me, and has added to the obligations I already owe you. That things have not fallen out as you desired, should be a consolation to you, and a motive of much thanksgiving to God; because His Majesty has thus disposed them to the greater benefit of us all. It remains only that we submit our will in this, that we may see it in its true light. For when things befall us that we do not like, they seem to us evil and contrary, be they never so good and profitable to our souls. But in this case there is plainly no evil either to me or to any other. To me, indeed, it is most favourable; for being free from the care of souls, I may, by God's help, if I like, enjoy peace and solitude, and the blessed fruit of forgetfulness of self and of all created things.

And others, also, will receive benefit by my being set aside; for so will they be delivered from falling into the defects which by reason of my miseries they would have committed. What I beg of you, then, my daughter, is to pray to God that He will continue to me this grace; for I fear that they will send me to Segovia, and that I shall not be left at liberty. But I shall do my utmost to escape from this burthen also. However this may be, Mother Anne of Jesus will not get out of my hands as she expects, and so will have no occasion to die of grief at losing the opportunity, as she thinks, of becoming a great saint. But whether going or staying, wherever or however I may be, I will never forget her nor blot her out of the book of my remembrance, because I really desire her eternal good. Now, therefore, until God gives it in Heaven, let her exercise herself continually in the virtues of patience and mortification, endeavouring to become likened in some measure, through suffering, to our great God, who was humbled and crucified for us, because our life here is good for no other end but to imitate Him. May His Majesty preserve you and make you increase daily in His love, as His holy and well-beloved child. Amen.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From MADRID: the 6th of July, 1591.

LETTER XVI.

TO MOTHER MARY OF THE INCARNATION, PRIORESS OF THE
SAME CONVENT.

On the same subject as the preceding.

JESUS

Be in your soul. Trouble not yourself, my daughter, about what concerns me, since it troubles me not. The only

thing which grieves me much is to see the blame laid upon those to whom it does not belong ; for the Author of these things is not man, but God, Who knows what is best for us, and orders all things for our greater good. Think of this only, that all is ordained by God. And do you love where there is no love, and you shall have love. May His Majesty preserve you, and make you grow in His love. Amen.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From MADRID : the 6th of July, 1591.

LETTER XVII.

TO DOÑA ANNA DE PEÑALOSA.

He informs her of his recent illness, and congratulates her on the ordination of a Priest.

JESUS

Be in your soul, my daughter. I have received here in Peñuela the letter brought me by your servant, and I prize exceedingly the kindness thus shown to me. I am going to-morrow to Ubeda, for the cure of a feverish attack, which, having hung about me for more than a week past, has obliged me to have recourse to medical treatment. It is my desire, however, to return here immediately, as I find great good in this holy solitude. As to the advice you give me not to go with F. Antony, be assured that in this, as in all other matters of the kind, I will be careful. I rejoice greatly to hear that Don Luìs is now a priest of God ; may he be so for many a year, and may His Divine Majesty fulfil all the desires of his soul. Oh, what a blessed state has he now entered for casting away all solicitude, and speedily enriching his soul ! Congratulate him from

me. I dare not venture to ask him sometimes to remember me in his Mass, though I, as in duty bound, shall always remember him; for never shall I, how forgetful soever I be, fail to recollect him, closely bound as he is with the sister whom I ever bear in my memory. I salute my daughter Doña Inez very heartily in our Lord; and I beg both brother and sister to pray God for me, that He will be pleased to prepare me to go speedily to Him.

Now I remember nothing further that I have to write to you, and besides, the fever will not suffer me to add any more. But for this, gladly would I write at much greater length.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From PEÑUELA : Sept. 21, 1591.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE OPINION AND ADVICE WHICH THE BLESSED FATHER GAVE TOUCHING THE SPIRIT AND METHOD OF PRAYER OF ONE OF THE NUNS OF HIS ORDER.

IN the affective prayer of this soul, there are, as it seems to me, five defects, so that I cannot consider her spirit to be good. The first is, that she has a great fondness for her own way: and a true spirit consists in great detachment from all desire. The second is, that she is too confident, and has too little fear of delusions; in such a case the Spirit of God is never present to keep a soul from sin.* The third is, that she is inclined to persuade people into the belief that she is in a good and high state: this is not the fruit of a true spirit: for that, on the contrary, would wish to be lightly esteemed, and despised, and does despise itself. The fourth and the chief is, that the fruits of humility are not visible in the state of this soul; when these gifts—as she says here—are real, they are ordinarily never communicated to the soul without first undoing and annihilating it in an interior abasement of humility. Now, if they had wrought this effect in her, she could not fail to say something, or rather a good deal, about it; because the first subjects that would suggest themselves to her to speak about, and make much of, are the fruits of humility; and these in their operations are so effectual, that it is impossible to conceal them. Though they are not equally observable in all apprehensions of God, yet these, which she calls Union, are never found without them. Because a soul is humbled before it is exalted; † and ‘it is good for me that Thou hast humbled me.’ ‡ The fifth is, that the style and language she uses do

* Prov. xv. 27.

† Prov. xviii. 12.

‡ Psalm cxviii. 71.

not seem to me those of the spirit she refers to; for that spirit teaches a style which is more simple, and free from affectation, and which avoids all exaggeration: and such is not the one before me. All this that she says: God spoke to me: I spoke to God: seems nonsense.

What I would say is this: she should not be required nor permitted to write anything on these matters: and her confessor should not seem to hear of them willingly, except to disparage and set aside what she has to say. Let her superiors try her in the practice of virtue only, particularly in that of contempt of self, humility, and obedience; and then at the sound of this blow will come forth that gentleness of soul in which graces so great have been wrought. These tests must be sharp, for every evil spirit will suffer a good deal for his own credit.

SPIRITUAL MAXIMS.

NOTE.



These maxims in the earlier editions of the Saint's works did not exceed a hundred in number. But in the later editions a new arrangement has been adopted: the maxims have been classified, and others have been added to them, taken from the Treatises and the Letters, with a view, apparently, of increasing the number to 365. In this the editors have failed, for two of the maxims have been repeated, and in this translation they are only 363.

SPIRITUAL MAXIMS.



PROLOGUE.

O MY GOD, sweetness and joy of my heart, behold my soul for love of Thee will occupy itself with these maxims of love and light. For though the words thereof are mine, I have not the meaning and the power, and these are more pleasing to Thee than the language and the knowledge thereof. Nevertheless, O Lord, it may be that some may be drawn by them to serve and love Thee, and profit where I fail: that will be a consolation to me, if through me Thou shalt find in others what Thou canst not find in me. O my Lord, Thou lovest discretion, and light, and love, more than all the other operations of the soul; so then let these maxims furnish discretion to the wayfarer, enlighten him by the way, and supply him with motives of love for his journey. Away, then, with the rhetoric of this world, sounding words and the dry eloquence of human wisdom, weak and delusive, never pleasing unto Thee. Let us speak to the heart words flowing with sweetness and love, and such as Thou delightest in. Thou wilt be pleased herein, O my God, and it may be that Thou wilt also remove the hindrance and the stones of stumbling from before many souls who fall through ignorance, and who for want of light wander out of the right way, though they think they are walking in it, and following the footsteps of Thy most sweet Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and imitating His life, estate, and virtues according to the rule

of detachment and of spiritual poverty. But, O Father of mercy, do Thou give us this grace, for without Thee, O Lord, we shall do nothing.

I.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

1. There is no progress but in the imitation of Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and the Gate by which he who will be saved must enter. Every spirit, therefore, that will walk in sweetness at its ease, shunning the imitation of Christ, is, in my opinion, nothing worth.

2. Your first care must be to be anxiously and lovingly earnest in your endeavours to imitate Christ in all your actions; doing everyone of them to the uttermost of your power, as our Lord Himself would have done them.

3. Every satisfaction offered to the senses which is not for God's honour and glory you must renounce and reject for the love of Jesus Christ, Who, while upon earth, had, and sought for, no other pleasure than doing the will of His Father; this, He said, was His meat and drink.

4. In none of your actions whatever should you take any man, however holy he may be, for your example, because Satan is sure to put his imperfections forward so as to attract your attention. Rather imitate Jesus Christ, Who is supremely perfect and supremely holy. So doing you will never fall into error.

5. Inwardly and outwardly live always crucified with Christ, and you will attain unto peace and contentment of spirit, and in your patience you shall possess your soul.

6. Let Christ crucified alone be enough for you; with Him suffer, with Him take your rest, never rest nor suffer without Him; striving with all your might to rid yourself of all selfish affections and inclinations in the annihilation of self.

7. He who makes any account whatever of himself, neither denies himself nor follows Christ.

8. Love tribulations more than all good things, and do not imagine that you are doing anything when you endure them; so shall you please Him who did not hesitate to die for you.

9. If you wish to attain to the possession of Christ, never seek Him without the Cross.

10. He who seeks not the Cross of Christ, seeks not the glory of Christ.

11. Desire to make yourself in suffering somewhat like our great God, humiliated and crucified; for life, if not an imitation of Him, is worth nothing.

12. What does he know who does not know how to suffer for Christ? The greater and the heavier the sufferings—when suffering is in question—the better is his lot who suffers.

13. All men desire to enter into the treasures and consolations of God; but few desire to enter into tribulations and sorrows for the Son of God.

14. Jesus Christ is but little known of those who consider themselves His friends; for we see them seeking in Him their own comfort, and not His bitter sorrows.

II.

THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES.

15. Because it is the function of the theological virtues to withdraw the soul from all that is less than God, it is theirs also to unite it with Him.

16. Without walking truly in the practice of these three virtues, it is impossible to attain to the perfect love of God.

FAITH.

17. The way of Faith is sound and safe, and along this souls must journey on from virtue to virtue, shutting their

eyes against every object of sense and of clear and particular perception.

18. When the inspirations are from God they are always in the order of the motives of His Law, and of the Faith, in the perfection of which the soul should ever draw nearer and nearer on the way to God.

19. The soul that travels in the light and verities of the Faith is secured against error, for error proceeds ordinarily from our own proper desires, tastes, reflections, and understanding, wherein there is generally too much or too little; and hence the inclination to that which is not seemly.

20. By Faith the soul travels protected against the devil, its strongest and craftiest foe; and S. Peter knew of no stronger defence against him when he said: Resist him, strong in faith.

21. The soul that would draw near unto God and unite itself with Him, must do so by not comprehending rather than by comprehending, in utter forgetfulness of created things; because it must exchange the mutable and comprehensible for the immutable and the incomprehensible, Who is God.

22. Outward light enables us to see that we may not fall; it is otherwise in the things of God, for there it is better not to see, and the soul, not seeing, is in greater security.

23. It being certain that in this life we know God better by what He is not than by what He is, it is necessary, if we are to draw near unto Him, that the soul must deny, to the uttermost, all that may be denied of its apprehensions, both natural and supernatural.

24. All apprehension and knowledge of supernatural things cannot help us to love God so much as the least act of living Faith and Hope made in detachment from all things.

25. As in natural generation no new form results without the corruption of the one previously existing—for this obstructs

the former by reason of the contrariety between them—so, while the soul is under the dominion of the sensual and animal spirit, the pure and heavenly spirit can never enter within it.

26. Let no created thing have a place in your heart if you would have the face of God pure and clear in your soul; yea, rather empty your spirit of all created things, and you will walk in the Divine light; for God resembles no created thing.

27. The soul is most recollected in Faith; for then the Holy Ghost gives it light: the more pure and refined the soul in a perfect living Faith, the greater the infusion of Charity, and the greater the communication of supernatural gifts and light.

28. One of the greatest gifts of God to the soul in this life—not permanent but transient—is that deep sense and understanding of God by which it feels and understands clearly, that it can neither understand nor feel Him at all.

29. The soul that leans upon any understanding, sense, or feeling of its own—all this being very little and very unlike to God—in order to travel on the right road, is most easily led astray or impeded, because it is not perfectly blind in Faith, which is its true guide.

30. There is one thing in our day that ought to make us afraid: persons who have hardly begun to make their meditations, if they seem to hear anything during their recollection, pronounce it to have come from God; so they tell us, God has spoken or I have had an answer from God. In truth all this is nothing: these persons have been speaking to themselves, out of a longing for such communications.

31. He who should now enquire of God by vision or revelation would offend Him, because he does not fix his eyes upon Christ alone. To such an one the answer of God is: This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased, hear Him, and

do not seek for new instructions, for in Him I have spoken and revealed all that can be asked or desired, and I have given Him to be your Brother, Master, Companion, Ransom, and Reward.

32. We must be guided in all things by the teaching of Christ and His Church, and thereby seek the remedy for our spiritual ignorances and infirmities: it is thus that we shall obtain abundant relief; and all that goes beyond this is not only curiosity but great rashness.

33. You are not to believe that which reaches you in a supernatural way, but only that which reaches you through the teaching of Christ and His ministers.

34. The soul that seeks after revelations sins venially at least; so does the director who encourages or allows that seeking, be the end sought never so good: there is no necessity for this, seeing that we have our natural reason and the Evangelical Law to guide us in all things.

35. The soul that desires revelations undermines the perfect guidance of the Faith, and opens a door for Satan to deceive it by false revelations; for he knows well how to disguise them so as to make them appear good.

36. The wisdom of the Saints consists in knowing how to direct the will courageously to God, in the perfect fulfilment of His law and His holy counsels.

III.

HOPE.

37. That which moves and overcomes God is earnest Hope; in order to attain to the union of love, the soul must journey in hope of God alone; for without it nothing will be obtained.

38. A living Hope in God gives the soul such courage and elevation in the things of everlasting life, that it looks on

this world—so indeed it is—as dry, weak, valueless, and dead, in comparison with that it hopes for hereafter.

39. The soul in Hope strips itself of all the trappings of this world, setting the heart upon nothing, hoping for nothing in it or of it, clad in the vesture of hope of everlasting life.

40. Through a living Hope in God the heart is so raised up above the world and delivered from all its snares, that it can neither be touched nor even be seen by it.

41. In all your trials have recourse to God in all confidence, and you will be comforted, enlightened, and instructed.

42. The soul that retains the slightest desire for earthly things, is more unseemly and impure in the way of God than if it were labouring under the heaviest and most impure temptations, provided the natural will did not consent to them; such a soul may, with greater confidence, draw near to God in obedience to the Divine will; for our Lord hath said: Come unto me all you who labour and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you.

43. Have an interior desire that God may give you all He knows to be needful for you, to His greater honour and glory.

44. Have a continual trust in God, esteeming in yourself and in your brethren that which He most esteems; namely, spiritual good.

45. The more God gives, the more He makes us desire; until He leaves us empty that He may fill us with His blessings.

46. So pleased is God with the soul hoping in Him, and looking to nothing else, that it may be truly said the more that soul hopes for, the more it obtains.

FEAR OF GOD.

47. If you have sweetness and delight, draw near to God in fear and in truth, and you will never be deceived nor entangled in vanity.

48. Do not rejoice in temporal prosperity, because you do not certainly know that your eternal life is secure.

49. Though a man prosper in all his undertakings, and though every wish of his heart may be gratified, he ought in such a case to fear rather than rejoice; for this multiplies the occasions of forgetting God, and the risks of offending Him.

50. Do not presume upon vain joy; knowing how many and how grievous are the sins you have committed, and not knowing whether you are pleasing unto God. But always fear and always hope in God.

51. How can you venture to live without fear, seeing that you must appear before God to give account of your lightest words and thoughts?

52. Lo! many are called and few are chosen; and if you are not careful, your final ruin is more certain than your salvation; for the way that leadeth to eternal life is strait.

53. As in the hour of death you will certainly be sorry that you have not employed all your time in the service of God, why is it that you do not now so employ your time, as you will wish you had done when you shall come to die?

IV.

CHARITY.

54. The strength of the soul lies in its faculties, passions, and desires; if these be directed towards God by the will, and withdrawn from all that is not God, the soul then keeps its strength for Him and loves Him with all its might, as our Lord commands us.

55. Charity is like a fine robe of many colours, which lends grace, beauty, and freshness, not only to the white garment of Faith and the green vesture of Hope, but also to all the virtues; for without Charity no virtue is pleasing in the sight of God.

56. The worth of love does not consist in high feelings, but in detachment: in patience under trials for the sake of God Whom we love.

57. God has a greater esteem for the lowest degree of purity of conscience, than for the greatest service you can render Him if that be wanting.

58. To seek God for Himself is to be without every consolation for His sake: an inclination to the choice of all that is most unpleasing, whether in the things of God or in the things of the world; this is to love God.

59. Do not imagine that God is pleased with many good works, so much as with the doing of them with a good will, without self-seeking or human respect.

60. Herein a man may know whether he really loves God: Is he satisfied with anything less than God?

61. As the hair which is frequently dressed is the cleaner, and is the more easily dressed upon all occasions, so is it with the soul which frequently examines its thoughts, words, and works, doing all things for the love of God.

62. As the hair is to be dressed from the top of the head if it is to be thoroughly cleansed, so our good works must have their beginning in the height of the love of God, if they are to be thoroughly pure and clean.

63. To restrain the tongue and the thoughts, and to set the affections regularly upon God, quickly sets the soul on fire in a Divine way.

64. Study always to please God; pray that His will may be accomplished in you; love Him much, for it is His due.

65. All our goodness is a loan; God is the owner; God worketh, and His work is God.

66. We gain more by the goods of God in one hour, than in our whole life by our own.

67. Our Lord has always manifested the treasures of His

wisdom and His Spirit to men: but now that wickedness manifests itself the more, He manifests them still more.

68. In one sense the purification of a soul from the contradictions of desire is a greater work of God than its creation out of nothing; that nothing offered no resistance to His Majesty: not so the desires of the creature.

69. That which God intends is to make us God by participation, He being God by nature; as the fire changes everything into fire.

70. At the close of life you will be examined as to your love: learn then to love God as He wishes to be loved, and give up all that is your own.

71. The soul that seeks God wholly, must give itself wholly to Him.

72. New and imperfect lovers are like new wine, easily spoiled until the sum of imperfections has been cleared away, and the heat with gross satisfaction of the senses has died out.

73. The passions rule over the soul and assail it in proportion to the weakness of the will in God, and to its dependence on creatures; for then it rejoices so easily in things which do not deserve to be rejoiced in; hopes for that which is of no profit, and grieves over that in which perhaps it ought to rejoice, and fears where there is nothing to be afraid of.

74. They provoke the Divine Majesty to anger exceedingly, who, seeking for spiritual food, are not content with God only, but intermingle therewith carnal and earthly satisfactions.

75. He who loves any other thing with God makes light of Him, because He puts into the balance with Him that which is at an infinite distance from Him.

76. As a sick man is too weak for work, so the soul that is weak in the love of God is also too weak for the practice of perfect virtue.

77. To seek self in God is to seek for comfort and refreshment from God; now this is contrary to the pure love of God.

78. To regard the gifts of God more than God Himself, is a great evil.

79. Many there are who seek their own pleasure and comfort in God, and on whom He bestows His gifts and graces; but they who seek to please Him and to give Him something at their own cost—setting their own pleasure aside—are very few.

80. Few spiritual persons—even among those who think themselves most advanced—attain to a perfect resolution in well-doing, for they never entirely lose themselves on some point or other connected with the world or self, despising appearances and the opinions of men, so as to make their good works perfect and in detachment from all things for the sake of Christ.

81. Self-will and self-satisfaction in the works they do so prevail among men, whether ordinary or more advanced Christians, that scarcely one is to be found who works simply for God without looking for some consolation or comfort or other advantage in his work.

82. Some souls call God their Spouse and their Beloved; but He is not really beloved by them, because their heart is not whole with Him.

83. What good will it do you if you give God one thing when He asks something else? Consider what God wills, and do it, for so will you satisfy your heart better than by doing that to which you are inclined yourself.

84. To find all satisfaction in God you must be satisfied with Him only, for in heaven itself, if you did not bend your will to His will, you would never be satisfied; so is it here, if your heart is set upon anything other than God.

85. As aromatic spices exposed to the air gradually lose

their fragrance and the strength of their perfume, so the soul, not recollected in the love of God alone, loses the heat and vigour of virtue.

86. He who seeks nothing but God walks not in darkness, however blind and poor he may be in his own estimation.

87. For a man to be in pain for God is a sign that he has given himself up to Him, and that he loves Him.

88. He who in the midst of dryness and abandonment is painfully anxious about God, and afraid that he does not serve Him, offers Him a sacrifice that pleaseth Him well.

89. When God is really loved, He hears most readily the cry of the soul that loves Him.

90. The soul defends itself against its fleshly enemy by charity; for where there is a real love of God neither the love of self nor the love of creatures can enter in.

91. The loving soul is meek, gentle, humble, and patient; the soul that is hard in self-love hardens itself still more. If Thou, O good Jesus, in Thy love dost not make the soul gentle, it will persist in its natural hardness.

92. The soul that loves is neither wearied nor wearies.

93. Behold the infinite wisdom and the hidden mysteries; the peace, the love, the silence of the Divine Bosom; the deep science God teaches there; what we call anagogic acts—ejaculatory prayer—how they set the heart on fire!

94. The perfect love of God cannot subsist without the knowledge of God and of self.

95. Perfect love naturally seeks nothing, and claims nothing, for itself, but all for the beloved; if this be the case with earthly love, how much more with the love of God?

96. The ancient friends of God scarcely ever fail Him, because they are raised above all occasions of failure.

97. True love accepts prosperity and adversity with an equal spirit, that of joy and delight.

98. The soul that labours to divest itself of all that is not

God for God's sake is immediately enlightened by, and transformed in, God, in such a way that the soul seems to be God Himself, and to possess the things of God.

99. Satan fears a soul united with God, as he fears God Himself.

100. The soul, in the union of love, resists even the first impulses.

101. Purity of heart is nothing less than the love and grace of God. Hence our Lord says: Blessed are the pure in heart; that is, those who love; for blessedness is given to nothing less than love.

102. He who truly loves God does not blush before men for what he does for God; neither does he conceal his good works out of shame, though the whole world may condemn them.

103. He who truly loves God thinks it a great gain to lose all he has, and his own life, for God.

104. If the soul had but one glimpse of the beauty of God, not only would it desire to die that it might see Him for ever, but it would joyfully undergo a thousand most bitter deaths to see Him again, if only for a moment.

105. He who acts out of the pure love of God, not only does not perform his actions to be seen of men, but does not do them even that God may know of them. Such an one, if he thought it possible that his good works might escape the eye of God, would still perform them with the same joy, and in the same pureness of love.

106. It is a great matter to be much exercised in love: in order that the soul, made perfect and consummated therein, may not be long detained, either in this life or the next, from the vision of God.

107. A pure and perfect work, wrought for God in a pure heart, makes a perfect kingdom for its Lord.

108. To the pure in heart high things and low are profitable,

and minister to their greater purity ; while to the impure, by reason of their impurity, both the one and the other are occasions of greater evil.

109. The pure in heart find in all things the knowledge of God, sweet, chaste, pure, spiritual, joyous, and loving.

PEACE.

110. By keeping guard over the senses, which are the gates of the soul, we keep also and increase its tranquillity and purity.

111. Man would never lose peace if he forgot and cast aside his thoughts and notions, and withdrew from the sight, hearing, and discussion of passing events, so far as he well may.

112. If we forget all created things, there is then nothing to disturb our peace ; nothing to excite our desires. These are they that disturb it ; for, as the proverb says, What the eye hath not seen, the heart does not desire.

113. The restless and perturbed soul, not built up in mortification of the passions and desires, is, as such, incapacitated for spiritual good, for that enters only into the soul which is under control and ordered in peace.

114. God reigns only in the peaceful and unselfish soul.

115. Be tranquil ; put away superfluous thoughts, and make light of whatever may happen ; so shall your service be pleasing unto God, and you shall rejoice in Him.

116. Keep your heart in peace ; let nothing in this world disturb it : all things have an end.

117. Be not made sad by the adverse events of this life, for you know not the good they bring with them, ordained in the justice of God, for the everlasting joy of the elect.

118. In all circumstances, however hard they may be, we should rejoice, rather than be cast down, that we may not lose the greatest good, the peace and tranquillity of our soul.

119. If the whole world and all that is in it were thrown

into confusion, disquietude on that account would be vanity, because that disquietude would do more harm than good.

120. To endure all things with an equable and peaceful mind, not only brings with it many blessings to the soul, but it also enables us, in the midst of our difficulties, to have a clear judgment about them, and to minister the fitting remedy for them.

121. It is not the will of God that the soul should be troubled by anything, or that it should be afflicted; for if men are afflicted because of the adversities of this world, that is the effect of their being weak in virtue; for the soul of the perfect rejoices even in that which gives pain to the soul of the imperfect.

122. The heavens are stedfast, not subject to generation; and souls which are of a heavenly nature are stedfast, not subject to the generation of desires, nor of anything of that kind: they are in some measure like unto God, Who is not moved for ever.

LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

123. Wisdom enters by love, silence, and mortification. It is a great wisdom to know when to be silent, when to suffer, and never to regard the sayings, doings, or lives of others.

124. See that you do not intermeddle in the affairs of other people, nor discuss them in your own thoughts; for perhaps you will not be able to fulfil your own task.

125. Do not entertain a suspicious thought of a brother, for that takes away purity of heart.

126. Never listen to accounts of the frailties of others; and if anyone should complain to you of another, humbly ask him not to speak about him at all.

127. Do not shrink from trouble: though it may seem to you more than you can bear. Let all men find you compassionate.

128. No one merits love except for the virtue that he has ; and when love is so ordered, it is according to God and in great freedom.

129. When the love and affection we give to the creature is purely spiritual and founded on God, the love of God grows with it ; and the more we remember the earthly love, the more we also remember God and desire Him : the one grows apace with the other.

130. When the love of the creature springs from sensual vice, or from a purely natural inclination, in proportion to its growth is the diminution of the love of God and forgetfulness of Him ; remorse of conscience comes from the recollection of the creature.

131. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit, saith our Saviour in His Gospel. So the love which grows out of sensuality ends in sensuality ; that which is of the spirit ends in the Spirit of God, and makes it grow. This is the difference between these two loves, that men may distinguish between them.

V.

DISORDERLY APPETITES.

132. He who loves any creature out of the order of charity becomes vile as that creature itself, and in one sense even viler ; for love not only levels but subjects also the lover to the object of his love.

133. The passions and desires, when under control and restrained, are the sources of all virtues, and, when they have broken loose, of all the vices and imperfections of the soul also.

134. Every desire hurts the soul in five ways, beside robbing it of the Spirit of God : 1. It fatigues it. 2. Torments it. 3. Obscures it. 4. Defiles it. 5. Weakens it.

135. All created things are but the crumbs which fall from the table of God; and for that reason, they who go about feeding on the creature are rightly called dogs; they are, therefore, always hungry like dogs, and justly so, because crumbs excite, rather than appease, hunger.

136. The desires are like restless and dissatisfied children begging of their mother, now one thing, now another, never contented; like one ill of a burning fever, never at rest, and whose thirst increases while the fever lasts.

137. As a man dragging a cart up hill, so is that soul on its way to God, which does not throw aside the cares of this life, and which does not deny itself.

138. As he is tormented who falls into the hands of his enemies, so is the soul afflicted and tormented which is carried away by its desires.

139. As a man is tormented and afflicted who lies down naked amid thorns and briers, so is the soul tormented and afflicted which lies down in the midst of its desires: they pierce, torture, and tear it painfully.

140. As vapours obscure the air and hide the light of the sun, so the soul, captive to its desires, is intellectually in darkness, so that neither the sun of natural reason nor that of the supernatural wisdom of God can inform or enlighten it.

141. He who feeds his desires is like a moth, or a fish dazzled by the light which the fishermen throw over the water, that it may not see the ruin which the fishermen have prepared for it.

142. Who can tell how impossible it is for the soul, subject to desires, to judge of the things of God? for while there is a film over the eye of its judgment, it sees nothing but that film, now of one colour, now of another; and so it comes to regard the things of God as not the things of God, and those which are not the things of God as the things of God.

143. A bird that has perched upon a twig covered with

birdlime labours in a twofold way—in extricating itself and in cleaning itself; so a soul, that has given way to desires; it has to extricate itself in the first place, and then, when it has done so, it has to clean itself of that which has clung to it.

144. As soot defiles the most beautiful and perfect face, so the unruly desires of the soul defile and pollute that soul which entertains them, and yet that soul in itself is the most beautiful and perfect image of God.

145. He that toucheth pitch, saith the Holy Ghost, shall be defiled with it. A soul touches pitch when it satisfies the desires of the will in any created thing.

146. If my object were to describe the foul and corrupt condition to which the desires reduce the soul, I should not be able to find anything so full of cobwebs and worms, not even corruption itself, wherewith to compare it.

147. The desires are like the suckers which grow on a tree, they sap its strength and destroy its fertility.

148. There are no corrupt humours which so enfeeble a man's gait, and make him to loathe his food, as the desire of the creature enfeebles the soul, indisposing it for the practice of virtue.

149. Many souls have no inclination for virtue, because their desires are impure, and not for God.

150. As the young vipers, growing in the womb, feed on their mother and kill her, preserving their own lives at the cost of hers, so the unmortified desires prey on the soul and kill the life of God in it; they at last are the only things that live in it, because the soul has not killed them first.

151. As it is necessary to till the earth that it may bring forth fruit—for otherwise it will produce nothing but weeds,—so also is it necessary to mortify our desires, in order to have purity of soul.

152. As wood is never transformed into fire if but one degree of heat necessary for that end be wanting, so the soul

that has but one imperfection can never be perfectly transformed in God.

153. Whether it be a strong wire rope, or a slender and delicate thread, that holds the bird, it matters not if it really detains it, for, until the cord be broken, the bird cannot fly ; so the soul, held in the bonds of human affections, however slight they may be, cannot, while they last, fly upwards to God.

154. The desires and attachments of the soul have the property attributed to the remora, which, though it be but a little fish, yet it arrests the progress of the ship to which it clings.

155. O that spiritual men knew how they are losing the blessings and fulness of the Spirit, merely because they will not raise up their desires above trifles ! and how they might have the sweetness of all things in the pure food of the Spirit —of which the manna was a figure—if they would only abstain from tasting other food !

156. The children of Israel did not find in the manna all the sweetness and strength they might have found in it ; not because the manna did not contain them, but because they longed for other meat.

157. Of one spark cometh a great fire, and one imperfection is enough to beget another. We shall never see a soul negligent in resisting but one single desire, which has not many other desires, springing out of that weakness and imperfection from which the first proceeds.

158. Voluntary and perfectly deliberate desires, however slight they may be, if only habitual, are those which chiefly impede our progress to perfection.

159. Any imperfection to which the soul is attached is a greater injury to virtue than a daily fall into many other and even greater imperfections, provided they do not result from the habitual indulgence of an evil inclination.

160. God is justly angry with those souls whom He, in the power of His arm, has delivered from the world, and from the occasions of grievous sins, but who are yet weak and negligent in mortifying certain imperfections; for this He permits them to fall in their desires from bad to worse.

VI.

PRUDENCE.

161. Give heed to reason, that you may perform that which it dictates to you in the way of God: and it will serve you more than all good works heedlessly done, and all the spiritual sweetness you aim at.

162. Blessed is he who, setting his own tastes and inclinations aside, looks at things according to reason and justice, in order to accomplish them.

163. He who acts according to reason is as one who eats strong and substantial food; but he who in his works seeks the satisfaction of his own will, is as one who eats poor and unripe fruit.

164. No creature may transgress the limits which God has set for it in the order of its nature: and as He has appointed for man's governance certain natural and rational laws, the transgression thereof, by seeking for information in a supernatural way, is neither holy nor becoming: moreover, God is displeased; and if at any time He vouchsafes an answer, it is out of condescension to the soul's weakness.

165. Man knows not how to order his joy and grief reasonably and prudently, because he knows not the difference between good and evil.

166. We know not how to distinguish between our right hand and our left: for at every step we take evil for good and good for evil, and if this be as it were natural to us, what must it be if desire be added to our natural blindness?

167. The desire, as desire, is blind, because in itself it regards not reason, which is that which ever guides and directs the soul aright in its operations: so the soul, whenever it is guided by its desires, is blind.

THE ANGELS.

168. The angels are our shepherds, because they carry not only our message to God, but also those of God to our souls, feeding them with sweet inspirations and Divine communications: as good shepherds they protect us, and defend us from the wolves, which are the evil spirits.

169. Through the secret inspirations which the angels convey to the soul, they effect a deeper knowledge of God, and make it love Him the more, till they leave it wounded with love.

170. The Divine wisdom which in heaven illumines the angels, and cleanses them of their ignorances, is the same which illumines men upon earth, and cleanses them of their errors and imperfections; it flows from God through the first orders of the hierarchies down to the lowest, and thence to men.

171. The light of God, which illumines the angels, enlightening and setting them on fire with love, as pure spirits disposed for that inflowing, illumines men ordinarily in obscurity, pain, and distress, because of men's impurity and weakness: so is the sun to a weak eye; the light it gives is painful.

172. When man has become spiritualised and refined in the fire of Divine love which purifies him, he then receives the union and inflowing of the loving illumination with the sweetness with which an angel receives them. There are souls who in this life receive a more perfect illumination than the angels.

173. When God gives great graces to a soul through the

hands of an angel, He ordinarily allows the devil to know it, that he may assail that soul with all his might, according to the measure of justice, in order that the victory may be the more prized, and the soul, faithful in temptation, may be the more rewarded.

174. Remember that your guardian angel does not always move the will to act, though he always enlightens the reason; therefore do not promise yourself sensible sweetness always in your works, because reason and understanding are sufficient.

175. When the desires of man are occupied with anything that is not God they embarrass the soul and shut the door against the light by which the angel moves to virtue.

176. Consider what utter vanity it is to rejoice in anything but in the service of God, how dangerous and how fatal; how ruinous it proved to the angels who rejoiced and had complacency in their own beauty and their natural endowments! for this they fell foul into the abyss.

A SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR.

177. A soul without a director is like a kindled coal, which, if left by itself, cools instead of burning.

178. He who insists on being left to himself, without a director to guide him, is like an unowned tree by the way-side; however fruitful it may be, the travellers pick its fruit, and none of it ripens.

179. The tree that is cultivated and kept carefully by its owner produces fruit in due season, and the owner is not disappointed.

180. He who falls alone remains alone in his fall; he makes little account of his soul, because he trusts in himself alone.

181. He who is burdened when he falls, rises with difficulty under his burden.

182. He who falls, being blind, cannot rise, being blind and alone; and if he should rise by himself, he will walk in a direction that is not good for him.

183. If you are not afraid to fall by yourself, how can you venture to raise yourself alone? Remember that two are better than one.

184. Our Lord did not say in His Gospel, where one is by himself there am I, but where there are at the least two: this is to show us that no one should believe of himself, or confirm himself in the things which he thinks are those of God, without the counsel and direction of the Church and her ministers.

185. Woe to him that is alone, saith the Holy Ghost; and therefore the soul has need of a director, for both will resist the devil more easily, being both together to learn and practise the truth.

186. It is the will of God that the government of one man should be in the hands of another, and that we should not give perfect credit to those matters which He communicates supernaturally Himself, until they shall have passed through the human channel of another man's mouth.

187. When God makes a particular revelation to a soul, he also inclines that soul to make it known to the minister of His Church, who stands in His place.

188. It is not every one who is fitted for the direction of souls; it being a matter of the last importance to give right or wrong advice in so serious a matter as that.

189. Let the soul that would advance, and not go back, take care into whose hands it commits itself; for, as is the master, so is the scholar, and as is the father so is the child.

190. The inclinations and tastes of the director are easily impressed upon the penitent.

191. The chief solicitude of spiritual directors should be to mortify every desire of their penitents: to make them

deny themselves in all they desire, so as to deliver them from so great misery.

192. However high the doctrine, adorned the eloquence, sublime the style, the fruits of the sermon will be, in general, no better than the spirit of the preacher.

193. A good style and action, high doctrines and correct expression, have a greater effect when accompanied by true spirituality; but without that the will is scarcely or but little inflamed, though the senses may be charmed and the understanding delighted.

194. God is angry with those who teach His law and keep it not; and who preach spirituality to others without being spiritual themselves.

195. For the highest parts, and even for the ordinary parts, of the way of perfection, you will scarcely find one capable guide throughout, such as men have need of: such an one must be wise, discreet, and experienced.

196. For though the foundations of direction be knowledge and discretion, yet if directors be without experience, they will never be able to guide the soul in the way in which God is leading it; they will make it go backwards, ordering it after low methods which they pick up in books.

197. He who shall presumptuously err in the direction of souls, being under obligation to give good counsel—as everyone is in the office he undertakes—shall not escape punishment according to the evil he has done; for the work of God—and such is the direction of souls—demands great caution and counsel.

198. Who can be like St. Paul, who was all things to all, that he might save all? knowing all the ways by which God leads souls, which are so different one from another, that you can scarcely find one which in half its ways agrees with the ways of another.

RELIGION AND PRAYER.

199. The greatest honour we can render unto God, is to serve Him in evangelical perfection: and whatever is beside this is of no value or advantage to man.

200. One thought of man is of more value than the whole world; God alone is, for that reason, the worthy object of it, and to Him alone is it due; every thought of man, therefore, which is not given to God, is a robbery.

201. In all nature there are correspondences; insensible things correspond with those that are insensible; sense with things sensible; and man's thoughts with the Spirit of God.

NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

202. Never let your heart waste its affections, not even for a moment.

203. The soul cannot overcome the devil without prayer, nor penetrate his devices without humility and mortification; for the weapons of God are prayer and the Cross of Christ.

204. In all our necessities, trials, and afflictions, there is no better nor safer remedy than prayer, and hope that God will provide for us in His own way.

FRUITS OF PRAYER.

205. Let God be the spouse and friend of your soul, remain always in His presence, and so you shall avoid sin, learn to love Him, and all things will prosper with you.

206. Enter into your innermost heart, and labour in the presence of God, the spouse of your soul, Who is ever present doing you good.

207. Strive to be continually in the presence of God, and to preserve the purity which He teaches.

208. By prayer aridity is expelled, devotion increased, and the interior practice of virtue established in the soul.

209. By shutting the eyes to the defects of others, keeping silence, and conversing continually with God, great imperfections are rooted out of the soul, which thereby becomes the mistress of great virtues.

210. When prayer is made in the pure and simple understanding of God, it seems to the soul to have lasted but a moment, though in fact it occupied much time : this is that prayer of a moment, of which it is said that it pierces the clouds.

THE QUALITY OF PRAYER.

211. The powers and senses of the soul should not be employed altogether upon anything unless it be a matter which cannot be neglected ; for the rest, they should be unoccupied for God.

212. Wait lovingly upon God, without any desire to feel or understand anything particular in Him.

213. Strive to attain to that state in which nothing is of importance to you, and you of importance to none, so that being utterly forgotten you may be with God in secret.

214. He who will not allow his desires to carry him away will wing his flight like a bird whose wings are strong.

215. Do not nourish your soul upon anything else but on God : repel the remembrance of things, let peace and recollection fill your heart.

216. If you would attain to holy recollection, it must be by rejecting, and not by admitting.

217. Seek by reading and you will find by meditating ; cry in prayer and the door will be opened in contemplation.

218. True devotion and spirituality consist in perseverance in prayer, with patience and humility, distrusting yourself that you may please God only.

219. They call upon God in truth who pray for that which is most true : that which belongs to their eternal salvation.

220. There is no better way to obtain the desires of our heart than to pray with all our might for that which is most pleasing unto God; for then He will grant us not only our salvation but also that which He sees most expedient for us, though we may never ask for it, and though it may have never entered into our hearts to do so.

221. Let every soul understand that, although God may not succour it in its necessities when it cries, He will not however fail it when the time comes; provided it does not lose heart and cease from prayer.

MOTIVES FOR PRAYER.

222. When the will, the moment it feels any joy in sensible things, rises upwards in that joy to God, and when sensible things move it to pray, it ought not then to reject, yea rather it should make use of, them for so holy an exercise; because sensible things, under these conditions, subserve the end for which God created them: namely, to be occasions of making Him better loved and known.

223. He whose senses are subject to the Spirit, purged from all sensible objects, even in his first movements, elicits delights in the sweet knowledge and contemplation of God.

224. As it is a truth of sound philosophy that the life of every creature is in harmony with its constitution, so is it clear beyond all contradiction, that he whose life is spiritual—the animal life being mortified—must be wholly tending towards God.

225. The will of a devout person rests chiefly on the invisible; he requires but few images for his use, and these are such as are more conformable to Divine, than to human, taste; ordering himself herein after the ways of the other world, and not of this.

226. The chief thing to be regarded in images is devotion

and faith ; if these be absent, the image will not be sufficient. What a perfect living image our Lord was upon earth, and yet those who had no faith, though they were constantly about Him, and saw His wonderful works, were not the better for His presence.

PLACE FOR PRAYER.

227. Keep yourself apart for one thing only, which brings everything with it—solitude, accompanied by prayer and spiritual reading : and there abide, forgetting all things, if there be no obligation upon you to remember them. You will please God more by keeping watch over, and perfecting yourself, than if you gained everything : for what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, if he loses his own soul ?

228. Pure spirituality gives no heed to matters which do not concern it, nor to human respect ; but alone and apart from all created forms, communicates interiorly in sweet tranquillity with God ; for the knowledge of Him lies in the Divine silence.

229. For the purposes of prayer that place is to be chosen in which sense and spirit may be least hindered from rising up to God.

230. The place of prayer must not be pleasant and delectable to the senses—some people seek such a place—lest the issue should be recreation of the senses, and not recollection of spirit.

231. He who goes on a pilgrimage will do well to do so when others do not, though it be at an unusual season. When pilgrims are many, I would advise staying at home, for in general men return more dissipated than they were before they went. And they who become pilgrims for recreation, rather than devotion, are many in number.

IMPEDIMENTS TO PRAYER.

232. He who interrupts the course of his spiritual exercises and prayer, is like a man who allows a bird to escape from his hand; he can hardly catch it again.

233. God being, as He is, inaccessible, do not repose on the consideration of objects perceptible by sense, and comprehended by the understanding. This is to be satisfied with what is less than God; so doing you will destroy that energy of the soul which is necessary for drawing near unto Him.

234. Never consent to admit into your soul that which is not substantially spiritual; for if you do so you will lose the sweetness of devotion and recollection.

235. He who relies much on the senses will never be very spiritual; they deceive themselves who think they can, in the sheer strength of our grovelling senses, attain to the power of the spirit.

236. The imperfect destroy true devotion, because they seek sensible sweetness in prayer.

237. The fly that touches the honey cannot fly; so the soul that clings to spiritual sweetness ruins its own freedom and hinders contemplation.

238. He who will not dispose himself to pray in every place, but only there where his own taste is gratified, will frequently fail in his prayer; because, as they say, he can pray only in his own parish.

239. He who does not feel liberty of spirit amid the things of sense and sweetness, which should serve as motives to prayer, and whose will rests and feeds upon them, ought to abstain from the use of them, for to him they are a hindrance on the road to God.

240. It is very foolish, when spiritual sweetness and delight fail, to imagine that God has failed us also; and to

imagine, that because we have such sweetness, that we have God also.

241. Very often many spiritual persons employ their senses upon sensible things, under the pretext of giving themselves to prayer, and raising their hearts to God; now this that they do should be called recreation rather than prayer; pleasing themselves rather than God.

242. Meditation tends to contemplation, as means to an end. So when the end is attained, the means are laid aside; men rest at the end of their journey; thus, when the state of contemplation has been attained, meditation must cease.

243. As it is necessary, at the proper time, to give up the work of reflection and meditation in order to draw near unto God, lest it should prove an impediment, so also is it necessary not to give it up before the time lest we should go back.

244. There are three signs of contemplation and interior recollection of the soul: 1. When the soul takes no pleasure in transitory things. 2. When it seeks solitude and silence, striving after that which is the more perfect. 3. When meditation, which was once a help, proves a hindrance. These three signs must be found together.

245. In the beginning of the state of contemplation the loving knowledge of God is, as it were, imperceptible: in the first place, because it is most subtile and delicate, and, as it were, unfelt; in the second place, because the soul has been accustomed to the practice of meditation, which is more cognisable by the senses.

246. The more the soul is disposed for tranquillity, the more will the loving knowledge of contemplation grow; the soul will feel it and relish it more than all other things whatever; because it brings with it peace and rest, sweetness and delight, without trouble.

247. They who have passed on to the state of contempla-

tion, must not for that reason suppose that they are never to make their meditations any more; for in the beginning the habit of it is not so established that they can have it whenever they will; neither are they so far removed from meditation as to be unable to meditate as they were accustomed to do.

248. Except in the act of contemplation, in all exercises and good works, the soul must make use of good meditations on, and recollection of, what is good in such a way as to increase devotion and profit, particularly dwelling on the life, passion, and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, in order that its works, exercises, and life may be conformed to His.

249. The conditions of the 'solitary sparrow' are five: 1. It ascends as high as it can. 2. It admits none to be its companion, even of its own kind. 3. It faces the wind. 4. It has no definite colour. 5. It sings sweetly. The contemplative soul must do the same; it must rise high above transitory things, making no more account of them than if they never existed; it must be so enamoured of solitude and silence as to suffer no creature to be in its company; it must face the wind of the Holy Ghost, corresponding to His inspirations, that so doing, it may become more worthy of His company; it must have no definite colour, bent upon nothing but on doing the will of God; it must sing sweetly in contemplation and in the love of God.

250. Though occasionally, in the height of contemplation and pure intuition of the Divinity, the soul may not remember the most sacred humanity of Christ, because God elevates the spirit to the most supernatural knowledge, yet studiously to forget it is in nowise seemly, seeing that by the contemplation thereof, and loving meditation thereon, the soul ascends to the highest state of union; for Christ our Lord is the Truth, the Gate, the Way, and the Guide to all good.

VII.

OBEDIENCE.

251. The way of life demands little trouble and care, it demands denial of the will rather than much knowledge ; he who inclines to pleasure and sweetness will be the less able to travel on it.

252. He who does not walk in the way of his own pleasure, nor in that of the pleasures which come from God, nor in that of those which come from creatures, and never does his own will, he shall never stumble.

253. Though you may undertake great things, yet, if you will not learn to deny your own will and to be obedient, casting away all anxiety about yourself and your own affairs, you will make no progress in the way of perfection.

254. Let others teach you, let others order you, let others rule over you, and you will become perfect.

255. God is more pleased with that soul which, in aridity and trouble of spirit, is subject and obedient, than with that which, without obedience, performs all its duties with great sweetness of spirit.

256. God would rather have from you the lowest degree of obedience and subjection, than all those services you would render Him.

257. Subjection and obedience is the penance of reason and discretion ; and is therefore a more pleasing sacrifice in the eyes of God than all other bodily penances.

258. Bodily penance, without obedience, is a most imperfect thing ; beginners practise it out of a desire for it, and for the pleasure they find in it ; and therefore because they herein do their own will, they grow in vice, rather than in virtue.

259. Inasmuch as a double bitterness results from fulfilling one's own will, do not fulfil it ; although it may be bitterness to remain quiet.

260. The devil prevails with ease over those who are alone, and who in the things of God order themselves according to their own will.

VIII.

FORTITUDE AND PATIENCE.

261. It is better when burdened to be joined to the strong, than unburdened to the weak. When you are loaded with afflictions you are joined to God, Who is your strength, and He is the strength of the afflicted. When you are unburdened you are joined to yourself, who are weakness itself, for virtue and fortitude grow in the soul, and are strengthened, in tribulations.

262. Your flesh is weak, and no worldly thing can strengthen or comfort your spirit; that which is born of the world is worldly, and that which is born of the flesh is flesh: a good spirit is born only of the Spirit of God, and is communicated neither through the world nor the flesh.

263. The most delicate flower is the first to wither, and to lose its fragrance: therefore take care you do not walk in the way of spiritual sweetness, for you will never be firm. Choose rather a strong spirit, attached to nothing, and you will find sweetness and abundance of peace. Savoury, sweet, and lasting fruit is gathered only in a dry and cold soil.

264. Though the road be plain and pleasant for men of good will, he who travels on it will travel little, and that with difficulty, if he be not possessed of great courage, physical strength, and resolute perseverance.

265. Feed not in the forbidden pastures, which are those of this life: the blessed are they who hungered and thirsted after justice, and it is they who are filled.

266. Verily he has overcome all things in whom the pleasures of them excite no joy, and the bitterness of them no sadness.

267. By fortitude the soul labours, practises virtue, and overcomes vice.

268. Let your heart be strong against everything that may attract you to that which is not God, and be at home in the sufferings of Christ.

269. Rejoice in God always, for He is your salvation, and consider how good it is to suffer whatever may come from Him who is the true good.

270. If you incline to aridities and suffering for the love of God, He will esteem that in you of more value than all the spiritual visions, meditations, and consolations you may ever have.

271. Never, for good or for evil, suffer your heart to be otherwise than calm in the affections of love; that you may endure whatever may befall you.

272. We are not to measure our trials by ourselves, but ourselves by our trials.

273. If souls but knew the advantage of suffering and mortification for the attainment of great blessings, they would never seek for consolation anywhere.

274. If a soul has more patience under suffering, a greater endurance in the absence of sweetness, that is a sign of greater progress in virtue.

275. The way of suffering is more secure and more profitable than that of joy and action. In suffering, the strength of God is given to the soul, while in joy and action it has to do with its own weakness and imperfections: in suffering also virtues are acquired and practised; the soul is purified, and is rendered more prudent and cautious.

276. The soul that is not tried and proved in temptations and afflictions can never attain unto wisdom, as it is written in the book Ecclesiasticus: 'What doth he know that hath not been tried?'

* Eccles. xxxiv. 9.

277. The most perfect suffering brings with it the most perfect understanding.

IX.

MODESTY.

278. The soul, by refraining from joy in the objects of sense, recovers itself from the distractions into which it has fallen through the excessive indulgence of the senses, and recollects itself in God: spirituality and the virtues it has acquired are also preserved and increased.

279. As the man who seeks pleasure in the things of sense, and rejoices in them, ought not, and deserves not, to be called by any other name than sensual, animal, and earthly, so he whose joy is beyond and above these things, merits the name of spiritual, heavenly, and divine.

280. If you will deny yourself one joy in the things of sense, our Lord will repay you a hundred-fold in this life spiritually and temporally; and for one joy indulged in the things of sense, you shall have a hundred sorrows and afflictions.

281. All the functions and powers of his senses, who no longer lives after the flesh, are directed to Divine contemplation.

282. Though the goods of sense may deserve to be somewhat rejoiced in when they help a man to raise his thoughts to God, yet this is so uncertain that in general they do a man more harm than good.

283. Until a man shall have so habituated his senses to the purgation from sensible joy, that all things raise him up to God, he must refrain from all joy in them, in order that he may wean his soul from the life of sense.

SILENCE.

284. The Father uttered one Word; that Word is His Son: and He utters Him for ever in everlasting silence, and the soul to hear It must be silent.

285. That which we most require for our spiritual growth is the silence of the desire and of the tongue before God, Who is so high: the language He most listens to is that of silent love.

286. Speak little; and do not meddle in matters when you are not desired to do so.

287. Complain of no one: ask for nothing, but if it should be necessary to ask, do so in few words.

288. Abstain from contradiction: on no account let your words be other than pure.

289. Let your language be offensive to none; let it be about matters such as will cause you no trouble if everybody knew of them.

290. Preserve your spirit in peace, lovingly attentive to God: and when you must speak, do so calmly and peaceably.

291. Be silent about what God may say to you, remembering the words of Scripture: 'My secret to me.' *

292. Never forget that of every word uttered without the direction of obedience, God will require a strict account.

293. Intercourse with people beyond what is strictly necessary, and required by reason, has never been good for any man, however holy he may have been.

294. It is impossible to make progress otherwise than by doing and suffering everything in silence.

295. For growth in virtue, the important thing is to be silent, and to work: conversation distracts, silence and work bring recollection.

296. The moment a person understands what is told him for his good, there is no necessity for him to ask for further direction, nor to speak about it, but to act upon it sincerely in silence carefully, in humility, charity, and contempt of self.

297. I have understood that the soul which is ready for

* Is. xxiv. 16.

talking and the commerce of the world is but little attentive to God: for if it were otherwise, it would withdraw itself at once into silence within, and avoid all conversation whatever.

298. It is the will of God that the soul should delight in Him, rather than in any created thing, however useful or necessary it may be to it.

X.

HUMILITY.

299. The first thing the soul must have in order to attain to the knowledge of God is the knowledge of itself.

300. God is more pleased with certain actions, however few they may be, done in silence and in secret, and without any desire that men might see them, than with a thousand grand actions undertaken with the intention of their becoming known to men.

301. The secrecy of conscience is broken when a man reveals to others the blessings he has received: the reward of his actions is the praise of men.

302. The wise Spirit of God Who dwells in humble souls inclines them to keep His treasures in secret, and to make visible their imperfections.

303. Perfection consists not in those virtues which everyone recognises in himself, but in those which God approves of. And as His approval is hidden from the eyes of men, no one has any reason to presume, but rather much whereof to be afraid.

304. God, when He gives His love to a soul, regards not its greatness in itself, but rather the greatness of its contempt of self, and its humility.

305. What you most seek, and most anxiously desire, you will never find if you seek it of yourself, not even in the most profound contemplation; but only in deep humility and submission of heart.

306. If you will glory in yourself, cast away everything not your own : what remains will be nothing, and it is nothing you should glory in.

307. Do not despise others because, as it seems to you, they do not possess the virtues you thought they had : they may be pleasing to God for other reasons which you cannot discover.

308. Never excuse yourself : listen calmly to the reprimand and consider it to come from God.

309. Look upon it as a special mercy of God, that people ever speak kindly to you : you do not deserve it.

310. Make neither much nor little of him who may be against you, and strive always to please God. Pray that His will may be done, and love Him much, for that is your duty.

311. Love to be unknown to yourself and others : never regard the good nor the evil of others.

312. Never forget the life to come. Consider how many in heaven are great, and in great glory, who in their own eyes were of no account, humble and poor.

313. In order to mortify really the desire of honour out of which so many other desires proceed, you will do those things which will bring you into contempt, and you will wish others to do the same : you will speak disparagingly of yourself and you will contrive that others may do so too : you will think humbly and contemptuously of yourself, and you will wish others to do so also.

314. Humility and submission to your spiritual director, disclosing to him all that passes in your intercourse with God, will bring light, rest, contentment, and security.

315. Virtue consists not in apprehensions of, and feelings about God, however sublime they may be, nor in any personal experiences of this kind, but, on the contrary, in that which is not matter of feeling at all, in great humility, contempt of

self, and of all that belongs to us profoundly rooted in the soul.

316. All visions, revelations, and impressions of heaven, however much the spiritual man may esteem them, are not equal in worth to the least act of humility: for this brings forth the fruits of charity, which never esteems nor thinks well of self, but only of others.

317. The communications which come really from God, have this property, that they humble and exalt the soul at the same time, for in the way of the Spirit to descend is to ascend, and to ascend is to descend.

318. When God communicates His gifts and graces to the soul, He excites in it a repugnance to accept honours and distinctions, but in the way of humility and self-abasement, He gives it ease and readiness.

319. God hates to see men ready to accept dignities, even when it is His will that they should accept them, but it is not His will that they should do so eagerly and promptly.

320. When the devil speaks, he makes men ready and eager to accept dignities, but he makes them reject humiliations and self-abasement.

VANITY.

321. He who loves superiorities and dignities, or the indulgence of his desires, stands before God, not as a son who is free, but as one of mean condition, the slave of his passions.

322. The soul that is not humble, the devil most easily deludes, and makes it believe a thousand lies.

323. There are many Christians in our day who have certain virtues, and who do great things, but all of no use to them in the matter of everlasting life, merely because they do not keep in view the honour and glory of God alone, but rather the empty satisfaction of their own will.

324. Empty joy in our good works is always attended by

a great esteem of them : out of this comes boasting, and other faults such as we see in the Pharisee in the gospel.

325. Such is the misery of the children of men, that so far as I can see, the greater part of their good works done in public are either sinful or worthless, or imperfect and defective in the sight of God, because men will not detach themselves from self-interest and from human respect.

326. O souls created for, and called unto, a dignity so great! what are you doing, what is it that detains you? O miserable blindness of the children of Adam, who in a light so great are blind, and to such an invitation deaf! While they seek after greatness and honour they are themselves miserable and base, and of such blessings unworthy.

XI.

VOLUNTARY POVERTY.

327. If rejoicing in riches can be made in any way endurable, it is when men spend and use them in the service of God; there is no other way of making them profitable: the same principle applies to all other temporal goods, titles, rank, and office.

328. The spiritual man must be very careful of the beginnings of joy in temporal things, lest from little it should become great, increasing from one degree to another; out of slight beginnings great evils result. One spark is enough to set a mountain on fire.

329. However small an attachment may be, be not too confident that you can cut it off at any time, but cut it off at once: for if you have not the courage to destroy it when it is but beginning, how can you presume upon success when it has taken root and grown?

330. He who turns aside from what is little, will not stumble over what is large. Little matters cause great evils,

because the fences and walls of the heart are broken down when they enter in; for the proverb says: he who has begun his work has accomplished the half of it.

331. Joy darkens the judgment as a cloud, for there can be no rejoicing in created things without the attachment of the will. The negation and purgation of this joy leaves the judgment clear as the sky when the mist has been scattered.

332. He who is detached is not molested when he prays, nor at any other time, and so without wasting his time he gains with ease great spiritual treasures.

AVARICE.

333. Although temporal goods are not, in themselves, necessarily, occasions of sin, yet ordinarily, by reason of our frailty, the heart of man sets its affections upon them, and falls away from God, which is sin: for this reason the wise man saith: the rich shall not be free from sin.

334. The things of this world neither occupy nor injure the soul; it is not they that enter into it, but rather the will, and the desire of them, which dwell within it.

335. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the gospel, calls riches thorns, giving us to understand that he who sets his will upon them shall be wounded by sin.

336. It is vanity to desire to have children, as some do, who weary the world with their fretting for them: they know not if their children will be good, and servants of God: neither do they know whether the pleasure they expect from them may not be turned into disquietude, pain, and trouble.

337. The covetous man runs to and fro within the limits of the chain by which his heart is bound, and with all his efforts can scarcely set himself free, even for a moment, from the bondage of his thoughts, running incessantly hither and thither within the length of the chain that binds him.

POVERTY OF SPIRIT.

338. Consider how very necessary it is for you to set your face against yourself, and walk in the way of penance, if you would attain to perfection.

339. If any one tempts you with lax opinions, and should even confirm them by miracles, trust him not : but rely rather upon penance and perfect detachment from creatures.

340. God in the old law commanded that the altar of sacrifice should be empty within. This is to teach us that the soul, which is to become an altar worthy of His Majesty, should be emptied of all things.

341. One desire only does God allow, and suffer in his presence within the soul—the desire of keeping the law perfectly, and carrying the cross of Christ. It is not said, in the sacred writings, that God commanded anything to be laid up in the ark with the manna except the book of the law and the rod of Moses, a type of the cross of Christ.

342. That soul which has no other aim than the perfect observance of the law of our Lord, and the carrying of the cross of Christ, will be a true ark containing the true manna, which is God.

343. If you wish devotion to be born in your heart, the love of God to grow, together with the desire for divine things, cleanse your soul from every desire and self-seeking, so that nothing of the kind remain with you. For as a sick man, freed from the evil humours which troubled him, feels instantly returning health and a taste for his food, so shall you recover your health in God if you rid yourself of your spiritual disorders : and if this be not done, whatever you may do, you will make no progress.

344. Live in this world as if God and your soul only were in it ; so shall your heart be never made captive by any earthly thing.

345. Do not weary yourself to no purpose: do not seek spiritual joy and sweetness, unless it be by denying yourself in that which you aim at.

346. Be interiorly detached from all things, and do not set your affection upon any temporal thing, and your soul will gather in a harvest of blessings beyond its comprehension.

347. The goods of God, which are beyond all measure, can be contained only in an empty and solitary heart.

348. So far as it lies in your power, refuse nothing asked of you, though you may have need of it yourself.

349. He will never attain to perfection who will not labour to be satisfied with this: that all his natural and spiritual desires should be satisfied in the absence of everything which is not God. This is most necessary for an abiding peace and tranquillity of spirit.

350. Let your soul be always ordered by a desire not for that which is easy, but for that which is most difficult; not for that which is most pleasant, but for that which is most unpleasant; not for that which is elevated and precious, but for that which is vile and despised; not for great things, but for little things; not to seek for anything, but to seek for nothing; not for that which is best, but for that which is worst; desiring to enter, for the love of Jesus, upon detachment, emptiness, and poverty in everything of this world.

351. If you will cleanse your soul of strange possessions and desires, you will understand all things spiritually; and if you will restrain yourself from setting your heart upon them, you will rejoice truly in them, and understand them certainly.

352. All people will be your servants, and all things will minister to you, if only you will forget them and yourself.

353. You will never have to do with necessities greater than those to which you made your heart yield itself: for the poor in spirit are most happy and joyous in a state of

privation; and he who has set his heart upon nothing, finds fulness everywhere.

354. The poor in spirit give generously all they have, and their pleasure consists in being thus deprived of everything for God's sake, and out of love to their neighbour, ordering all things by the laws of virtue.

355. Poverty of spirit looks to the substance of devotion, and makes use only of what is sufficient for it: weary of the multiplicity and curiosity of visible means.

356. A soul withdrawn from exterior things, detached from its own will, even in divine things, will not be raised by prosperity nor subdued by adversity.

357. The poor that are naked shall be clothed: and the soul that will strip itself of all its desires, likings, and dislikings, God will clothe with His own purity, His own joy, and His own will.

358. The love of God in a pure and simple soul, detached from every desire, is frequently in act.

359. Restrain your desires, and you will find that which your heart longs for: how can you tell that your desire is according to the will of God?

360. If you desire to have your soul in peace and comfort, and to serve God in truth, do not rest satisfied with what you have done in the way of self-denial, for it may be that on the new road you have entered, you may find yourself as much hindered, or even more than you were, but give up everything that you have.

361. If you fail in the practice of self-denial, which is the sum and root of virtue: every other way is but beating the air, and you will make no progress, notwithstanding great meditations and communications.

362. Not only do temporal goods, the delights and the tastes of sense, hinder and thwart the way of God, but spiritual delights and consolations also, if sought for, or clung to eagerly, disturb the way of virtue.

363. Such is the nature of our vain concupiscence that it clings to everything: like the dry-rot, which wastes away what is sound, it has its way both in what is good and what is bad.

XII.

PRAYER OF THE ENAMOURED SOUL.

O Lord God, my Love, if Thou art still mindful of my sins, and will not grant my petitions, Thy will be done, for that is my chief desire. Show Thou Thy goodness and mercy, and Thou shalt be known by them. If it be that Thou art waiting for me to do good works, that in them Thou mayest grant my petition, do Thou give them and work them in me: send also the penalties which Thou wilt accept, and do Thou inflict them. But if Thou art not waiting for my good works; what art Thou waiting for, O Most Merciful Lord? why tarriest Thou? For if at last it must be grace and mercy, and I pray for it in Thy Son, do Thou accept my worthless offering, according to Thy will, and give me this good also according to Thy will. O Lord, Omnipotent, my spirit has fainted within me because it has forgotten to feed upon Thee. I knew Thee not, O my Lord, when I went after vanity.

Who can free himself from base and mean ways, if Thou, O my God, wilt not lift him up to Thee in pure love? Thou hastenest joyfully and lovingly, O Lord, to raise up him who has offended Thee, but I make no haste to honour and raise him up who has offended me. How shall a man raise himself up to Thee, for he is born and bred in misery, if Thou wilt not lift him up with the hand that made him? O Lord, omnipotent, if the shadow of the power of Thy justice in earthly sovereigns who govern and rule the nations can do so much, what must be Thy omnipotent justice, dealing with the just man and the sinner?

O Lord my God, Thou art not estranged from him who

does not estrange himself from Thee. How is it that men say thou art absent? O Lord my God, who is there that seeks Thee in pure and true love, who does not find Thee to be the joy of his will? It is Thou who art the first to show Thyself, going forth to meet those who desire to meet Thee. Thou wilt not take away from me, O my God, what Thou hast once said to me in Thy Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ, in Whom Thou dost tell me all I desire. I will therefore rejoice, Thou wilt not tarry if I wait for Thee. Wait in hope then, O my soul, for from henceforth thou mayest love God in thy heart.

The heavens are mine, the earth is mine, and the nations are mine: mine are the just, and the sinners are mine: mine are the Angels, the Mother of God, and all things are mine: God Himself is mine and for me, because Christ is mine, and all for me. What dost thou then ask for, what dost thou seek for, O my soul? All is thine, all is for thee, do not take less, nor rest with the crumbs which fall from the table of thy Father. Go forth and exult in thy glory, hide thyself in it, and rejoice, and thou shalt obtain all the desires of thy heart.

O sweetest love of God, too little known; he who has found thee is at rest: let everything be changed, O my God, that we may rest in Thee. Everywhere with Thee, O my God, everywhere all things with Thee as I wish. O my Love, all for Thee, nothing for me: nothing for Thee, everything for me. All sweetness and delight for Thee, none for me: all bitterness and trouble for me, none for Thee. O my God, how sweet to me Thy presence, who art the Supreme Good. I will draw near to Thee in silence, and will uncover Thy feet*, that it may please Thee to unite me to Thyself, making my soul Thy bride: I will rejoice in nothing till I am in thine arms. O Lord, I beseech Thee, leave me not for a moment, because I know not the value of my soul.

* Ruth iii. 7, 9.

POEMS.



POEMS.



THE OBSCURE NIGHT OF THE SOUL.

I

In an obscure night,
With anxious love inflamed,
O, happy lot !
Forth unobserved I went,
My house being now at rest.

II

In darkness and security,
By the secret ladder, disguised,
O, happy lot !
In darkness and concealment,
My house being now at rest.

III

In that happy night,
In secret, seen of none,
Seeing nought myself,
Without other light or guide
Save that which in my heart was burning,

IV

That light guided me
More surely than the noonday sun
To the place where He was waiting for me,
Whom I knew well,
And where none but He appeared.

V

O, guiding night;
O, night more lovely than the dawn;
O, night that hast united
The Lover with His beloved,
And changed her into her Love.

VI

On my flowery bosom,
Kept whole for Him alone,
He reposed and slept;
I kept Him, and the waving
Of the cedars fanned Him.

VI

Then His hair floated in the breeze
That blew from the turret;
He struck me on the neck
With His gentle hand,
And all sensation left me.

VIII

I continued in oblivion lost,
My head was resting on my Love;
I fainted away, abandoned,
And, amid the lilies forgotten,
Threw all my cares away.

A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE BETWEEN THE SOUL
AND CHRIST.



I

THE BRIDE.

WHERE hast Thou hidden Thyself?
Why hast Thou forsaken me in my groaning, O my
Beloved?
Thou didst fly like the hart, away,
When Thou hadst wounded me.
I ran after Thee, crying; but Thou wert gone.

II

O shepherds, you who go
Through the sheepcots up the hill,
If you shall see Him
Whom I love,
Tell Him I languish, agonize, and die.

III

In search of my Love
I will traverse mountains and strands;
I will gather no flowers,
I will fear no wild beasts;
And I will overpass the mighty and the frontiers.

IV

Ye groves and thickets
Planted by the hand of the Beloved;
Ye verdant meads
Enamelled with flowers;
Tell me, has He passed by you?

V

ANSWER OF THE CREATURES.

A thousand graces diffusing
 He passed through the groves in haste,
 And beholding them only
 As He passed,
 He clothed them with His beauty.

VI

THE BRIDE.

O who can heal me ?
 Give me perfectly Thyself,
 Send me no more
 A messenger
 Who cannot tell me what I seek.

VII

All they who serve
 Relate a thousand graces of Thee ;
 And all wound me more and more,
 And they leave me dying,
 While they babble I know not what.

VIII

But how thou perseverest, O life !
 Not living where thou livest ;
 The arrows bring death
 Which thou receivest
 From thy conceptions of the Beloved.

IX

Why, after wounding
 This heart, hast Thou not healed it ?
 And why, after stealing it,
 Hast Thou thus abandoned it,
 And not carried away what Thou hast stolen ?

X

Quench Thou my troubles,
 For none else can do so ;
 And let mine eyes behold Thee
 Who art their light,
 And it is for Thee alone I would use them.

XI

Reveal Thy presence,
 And let the vision of Thy beauty kill me.
 Behold, the disease
 Of love is incurable
 Except in Thy presence and in the light of Thy
 countenance.

XII

O Fount of crystal !
 O that on Thy silvered surface
 Thou wouldst mirror forth at once
 Those eyes desirable
 Which I have in my heart delineated !

XIII

Turn them away, O my Beloved !
 I fly away.

THE BRIDEGROOM.

Return, My Dove !
 The wounded hart
 Looms on the hill
 In the air of thy flight and is refreshed.

XIV

THE BRIDE.

My Beloved is the mountains,
 The solitary wooded valleys,
 The strange islands,
 The roaring torrents,
 The whisper of the amorous gales ;

XV

The tranquil night
 At the approaches of the dawn,
 The silent music,
 The murmuring solitude,
 The supper which revives, and enkindles love.

XVI

Catch us the foxes,
 For our vineyard hath flourished ;
 While of roses
 We make a nosegay,
 And let no one appear on the hill.

XVII

Cease, O thou killing north wind !
 Come, O south wind, thou that awakenest love !
 Blow through my garden,
 And let its odours flow,
 And my Beloved shall feed among the flowers.

XVIII

O nymphs of Judea !
 While amid the flowers and the rose-trees
 The amber sends forth its perfume,
 Tarry in the suburbs,
 And touch not my threshold.

XIX

Hide Thyself, O my Beloved !
 Let Thy face shine on the mountains.
 Do not tell it,
 But regard the companions
 Of her who traverses strange islands.

XX

THE BRIDEGROOM.

Light-winged birds,
 Lions, fawns, bounding deer,
 Mountains, valleys, strands,
 Waters, winds, fires,
 And the terrors that keep watch by night ;

XXI

By the soft lyres
 And the siren strains, I adjure you,
 Let your fury cease,
 And touch not the wall,
 That the Bride may sleep in peace.

XXII

The Bride has entered
 The pleasant and desirable garden,
 And there reposes to her heart's content ;
 Her neck reclining
 On the sweet arms of her Beloved.

XXIII

Beneath the apple-tree
 I espoused thee :
 There I gave thee My hand,
 And thou wert there redeemed
 Where thy mother was corrupted.

XXIV

THE BRIDE.

Our bed is of flowers
 By the dens of lions encompassed,
 Hung with purple,
 Made in peace,
 And crowned with a thousand shields of gold.

XXV

In Thy footsteps
 The young ones run Thy way ;
 At the touch of the fire,
 And by the spiced wine,
 The Divine balsam flows.

XXVI

In the inmost cellar
 Of my Beloved have I drunk ; and when I went forth
 Over all the plain
 I knew nothing,
 And lost the flock I followed before.

XXVII

There He gave me His breasts,
 There He taught me the science full of sweetness,
 And there I gave to Him
 Myself without reserve ;
 There I promised to be His Bride.

XXVIII

My soul is occupied,
 And all my substance in His service ;
 Now I guard no flock,
 Nor have I any other employment :
 My sole occupation is love.

XXIX

If, then, on the common
 I am no longer seen or found,
 Say that I am lost ;
 That, being enamoured,
 I lost myself ; and yet I gained.

XXX

Of emeralds, and of flowers
 In the early morning culled,
 We will make the garlands,
 Flowering in Thy love,
 And bound together with one hair of my head.

XXXI

By that one hair
 Thou hast observed fluttering on my neck,
 And hast regarded on my neck,
 Thou wert captivated ;
 And wounded by one of my eyes.

XXXII

When Thou didst regard me,
 Thine eyes imprinted Thy grace in me :
 For this didst Thou love me again,
 And thereby mine eyes did merit
 To adore what in Thee they saw.

XXXIII

Despise me not,
 For if I was swarthy once
 Thou canst regard me now ;
 Since Thou hast regarded me,
 Grace and beauty hast Thou given me.

XXXIV

THE BRIDEGROOM.

THE little white dove
 Has returned to the ark with the bough ;
 And now the turtle-dove
 Her desired mate
 On the green banks has found.

XXXV

In solitude she lived,
 And in solitude built her nest ;
 And in solitude, alone
 Hath the Beloved guided her,
 In solitude also wounded with her love.

XXXVI

THE BRIDE.

Let us rejoice, O my Beloved !
 Let us go forth to see ourselves in Thy beauty,
 To the mountain and the hill,
 Where the pure water flows ;
 Let us enter into the heart of the thicket.

XXXVII

We shall go at once
 To the lofty caverns of the rocks
 Which are all secret,
 There we shall enter in
 And taste of the new wine of the pomegranate.

XXXVIII

There Thou wilt show me
What my soul desired ;
And there Thou wilt give at once,
O Thou, my life !
What Thou gavest me the other day,

XXXIX

The breathing of the air,
The song of the sweet nightingale,
The grove and its beauty
In the serene night,
With the fire that consumes, but without pain.

XL

None saw it ;
Neither did Aminadab appear.
The siege was intermitted,
And the cavalry dismounted
At the vision of the waters.

THE LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.



I

O LIVING Flame of Love,
 That woundest tenderly
 My soul in its inmost depth !
 As Thou art no longer grievous,
 Perfect Thy work, if it be Thy will,
 Break the web in this sweet encounter.

II

O sweet burn !
 O delicious wound !
 O tender hand ! O gentle touch !
 Savouring of everlasting life,
 And paying the whole debt,
 In destroying death Thou hast changed it into life.

III

O Lamps of fire,
 In whose splendours
 The deep caverns of sense,
 Obscure and dark,
 With unwonted brightness
 Give light and heat together to the Beloved.

IV

How gently and how lovingly
 Thou liest awake in my bosom,
 Where alone Thou secretly dwellest ;
 And in Thy sweet breathing
 Full of grace and glory,
 How tenderly 'Thou fillest me with Thy love.

A SOUL LONGING FOR THE VISION OF GOD.

I LIVE, and yet not I,
 In a manner hoping
 That I am dying because I am not dead.

I

I am not now living in myself,
 And without God I cannot live ;
 For without Him, I am also without myself.
 This life of mine, what is it ?
 A thousand deaths to me ;
 For in my very life I hope
 That I am dying because I am not dead.

II

This life that I am living
 Is but a lifeless life.
 And so, a death continuing
 Until I come to live with Thee.
 O God, hear thou my cry !
 This life of mine I will it not ;
 I die because I am not dead.

III

When I am away from Thee,
 What is my life to me ?
 The agony of death.
 None greater have I seen.
 O, wretched that I am !
 For thus I persevere ;
 I die because I am not dead.

IV

The fish that from the water leapeth
 Is there not unrelieved ;
 The death that it endures

Does end in death at last.
 What death can ever equal
 My misery of life?
 For I, the more I live, the more I am not dead.

V

When I see Thee in the Sacrament
 And begin to be relieved,
 The absence of fruition
 Creates a deeper pang ;
 In all things greater suffering,
 And I am sick at heart
 And die, because I am not dead.

VI

And if, O Lord, I have a joy
 In hopes of seeing Thee ;
 My sorrow is increased,
 Because I still may lose Thee.
 Living in dread so great
 And hoping as I hope,
 I die, because I am not dead.

VII

Deliver me from this death,
 O God, and give me life,
 Nor let these fetters hold me ;
 They are so strong :
 Behold, I die to see Thee,
 And in a manner hoping
 That I am dying, because I am not dead.

VIII

My death I will bewail then,
 And lament my life
 By reason of my sins
 Still here prolonged.
 O my God, when shall I be there
 Where I may truly say,
 I live at last because I am not dead?

ECSTASY OF CONTEMPLATION.



I ENTERED, but I knew not where,
 And there I stood nought knowing,
 All science transcending.

I

I knew not where I entered,
 For, when I stood within,
 Not knowing where I was,
 I heard great things.
 What I heard I will not tell:
 I was there as one who knew not,
 All science transcending.

II

Of peace and devotion
 I had perfect knowledge,
 In solitude profound:
 The right way was clear,
 But so secret was it,
 That I stood babbling,
 All science transcending.

III

I stood enraptured
 In ecstasy, beside myself,
 And in my every sense
 No sense remained.
 My spirit was endowed
 With understanding, understanding nought,
 All science transcending.

IV

That cloud of darkness
 Illumining the night,
 The higher it ascended
 The less I understood.
 Whoever understands it,
 Knows therefore ever less,
 All science transcending.

V

He who comes here truly
 Annihilates himself,
 And all his previous knowledge
 Seems ever less and less ;
 His science grows, and he
 Abides as one nought knowing,
 All science transcending.

VI

This knowing of nought knowing
 Is so potent in its might
 That the prudent in their reasoning
 Never can defeat it ;
 For their wisdom never reaches
 To the understanding that understandeth nothing,
 All science transcending.

VII

This sovereign wisdom
 Is of an excellence so high
 That no faculty nor science
 Can ever unto it attain.
 He who shall overcome himself
 By the knowledge which knows nothing,
 He will always have it, all science transcending.

VIII

If you would learn wherein
This sovereign wisdom doth consist :
In a sense profound
Of the essence of God :
It is an act of His compassion,
To abide, nought understanding,
All science transcending.

THE SAME SUBJECT.



I

In the wake of a loving cast,
 And not of hope abandoned,
 I mounted higher and higher,
 So that I came in sight of the prey.

II

That I might come in sight
 Of that cast Divine,
 I was forced to fly so high
 As to be lost to sight ;
 Yet in that act supreme
 I grew weaker in my flight,
 But my love was still so strong
 That I came in sight of the prey.

III

When I ascended higher
 My sight grew faint and dim,
 And the greatest acquisition
 In obscurity was made ;
 But as my love was violent
 Blindly forth I leapt,
 I mounted higher and higher,
 So that I came in sight of the prey.

IV

In a way most strange
 I made a thousand flights in one,
 For the hope that is from heaven,
 What it hopes, attains ;

For this cast alone I hoped,
And my hope was not in vain,
For I mounted higher and higher,
So that I came in sight of the prey.

v

But the nearer I drew
To this cast sublime,
The more lowly, base, and vile,
And humiliated I grew.
I said, none can reach it ;
I abased myself still more and more ;
So that I mounted higher and higher,
So that I came in sight of the prey.

GOD THE SUPREME GOOD.



Without support, and with support,
 Without light and in darkness living,
 I see myself wasting away.

I

My soul lives in detachment
 From every thing created,
 And raised above itself
 Into a life delicious,
 Of God alone supported.
 And therefore I will say,
 That what I most esteem
 Is that my soul is now
 Without support, and with support.

II

And though I am in darkness,
 In this my mortal life
 My misery is not so great :
 For if I have not light
 I have the life celestial ;
 For in the love of that life,
 In obscurity the greatest
 The soul is submissive,
 Without light and in darkness living.

III

Love has wrought this ;
 Since I have known it,
 That be it ill or well with me
 I have the same pleasure.
 It has transformed my soul ;
 And so in its sweet flame,
 Which in myself I feel,
 I see myself rapidly burning
 And wasting away.

THE SAME SUBJECT.



For all the beauty of the world
 Never will I lose myself,
 But only for that I know not,
 Which may happily be found.

I

Sweetness of good that is finite,
 The utmost it can do
 Is to pall upon the appetite
 And vitiate the taste.
 For all the sweetness in the world
 Never will I lose myself,
 But only for that I know not,
 Which may happily be found.

II

The generous heart
 Will never rest
 Where it can be at ease,
 But only where it meets with difficulties;
 Nought can ever satisfy it;
 And its faith ascends so high
 As to taste of that I know not,
 Which may happily be found.

III

He that is on fire with love
 Divinely touched of God
 Receives a taste so new
 That all his own are gone.
 Like one who of a fever ill
 Disdains the food before him,
 And longs for that I know not,
 Which may happily be found.

IV

Be not at this astonished,
That the taste should thus be changed ;
For the cause of this affection
From all others differs.
And so the whole creation
Beholds itself estranged,
And tastes that I know not,
Which may happily be found.

V

For when once the will
Has been touched of God,
It never can be satisfied
Except in God alone.
But because His beauty
Is such that faith alone can see it,
It tastes it in I know not what,
Which may happily be found.

VI

And now of Him enamoured,
Tell me if you are in pain ;
For as He has no sweetness
In all created things,
But without form and figure,
Without support or rest,
Tasting there I know not what,
Which may happily be found.

VII

Do not think the inner heart,
Which is of priceless worth,
Rejoices or is glad
In that which here sweetness gives ;
But rather above all beauty raised
That is, can be, or has ever been,
Tastes there I know not what,
Which may happily be found.

VIII

He who seeks a greater gain
Will rather turn his thoughts
To that he has not acquired
Than to that he has already.
And therefore for a greater venture
I shall always be inclined,
Neglecting all for that I know not,
Which may happily be found.

IX

For all that in the way of sense
I may obtain on earth,
And all I may understand,
However high it may be—
For all grace and beauty—
Never will I lose myself;
But only for that I know not,
Which may happily be found.

SONG OF THE SOUL REJOICING IN THE KNOW-
LEDGE OF GOD BY FAITH.



I KNOW the fountain well which flows and runs,
Though of the night.

I

That everlasting fountain is a secret well,
And I know well its home,
Though of the night.

II

Its source I know not, because it has none ;
But I know that therein all things have their source,
Though of the night.

III

I know that nothing can be in beauty like it,
And that of it heaven and earth do drink,
Though of the night.

IV

I know well it is of depths unfathomable,
And that none may ever sound it,
Though of the night.

V

Its brightness never is obscured,
And I know that from it all light proceeds,
Though of the night.

VI

I know its streams are so abundant,
It waters hell and heaven and earth,
Though of the night.

VII

The torrent that from this fountain rises
I know well, is so grand and so strong,
Though of the night.

VIII

The torrent that from Both proceeds,
I know that Neither of them It precedes,
Though of the night.

IX

This everlasting fountain lies concealed
In the living Bread to give us life,
Though of the night.

X

It calls on every creature to be filled
With its waters, but in the darkness,
Though of the night.

XI

This living fount which I desire
I see it in this Bread of life,
Though of the night.

SONG OF CHRIST AND THE SOUL.



I

THERE is a shepherd alone in his grief,
Deprived of all pleasure and joy,
His thoughts on his shepherdess intent,
And his heart is by love most cruelly torn.

II

He weeps, not because wounded with love,
Nor because of the pain of his grief,
Though his heart has been pierced so deep;
But because he thinks he is forgot.

III

His beautiful shepherdess, so does he think,
Has forgotten him : that thought alone
Overwhelms him with grief in a land not his own,
And his heart is by love most cruelly torn.

IV

The shepherd exclaims, ah wretch that I am !
For I am abandoned and left ;
My presence is shunned by my love,
And my heart for her love is most cruelly torn.

V

At last he was raised on a tree,
Where he opened his beautiful arms,
And hanging thereby breathed his last,
His heart by love most cruelly torn.

THE MOST HOLY TRINITY.

(In principio erat verbum.)

I

In the beginning was the Word,
The Word was God,
In Whom He possessed
Bliss everlasting.

II

That very Word was God,
And the Beginning as well ;
He was in the Beginning,
And yet had none.

III

He was the Beginning Itself,
And therefore had none ;
The Word is the Son,
From the beginning born.

IV

He has begotten for ever,
And is for ever begetting ;
He has given Him of His substance for ever,
And has it for ever Himself.

V

And thus the glory of the Son
Is that He hath in the Father,
And all His glory the Father
Hath in the Son.

VI

As the lover with his love,
 Each in the Other living,
 So this Love which Both unites
 Is One in Both.

VII

In dignity and might
 Coequal with Them Both,
 Three Persons, one Love,
 The Three are One.

VIII

And in the Three one Love,
 One Lover makes of All;
 The Lover is the Love
 In Whom Each doth live.

IX

The Being which the Three possess
 Each by Himself possesses,
 And of the Three Each One exults
 In that He hath this Being.

X

This Being is Each One,
 And makes Them One alone
 In a way ineffable,
 Beyond all thoughts or word.

XI

And so that Love which makes Them One
 Is Infinite Itself;
 For one Love make One the Three,
 And is their Being as well.
 And that Love the more it makes Them One
 The more It is Their Love.

THE COMMUNICATION OF THE THREE PERSONS.



I

IN the Love from Both proceeding
 It hath limits none.
 The Sire uttered words of gladness
 To His only Son.

II

Words they were of joy profoundest,
 Understood of none,
 But of Him exulting in them
 Whose they were—the Son.

III

Of these words of gladness, only
 This was heard by me—
 Nought, my Son, can give Me pleasure
 When I have not Thee.

IV

But if aught should give Me pleasure.
 That I seek in Thee,
 He who gives to Thee most pleasure
 Gives it most to Me.

V

He who Thee in nought resembleth
 Cannot be like Me.
 Life of Life, My whole rejoicing
 Is alone in Thee.

VI

Thou art My Eternal Wisdom,
Thou, Light of My light ;
In Thee, Figure of My substance,
Is My whole delight.

VII

Thee, My Son, he who loveth
Shall have love of Me,
And the love wherewith I love him
Is My love of Thee.
So great, then, is My love of Thee, that he
Who loveth Thee shall be also loved by Me.

THE CREATION.



I

O MY SON, I long to give Thee
 In My love a loving bride,
 Who shall by Thy goodness merit
 With Us ever to abide :

II

Who shall, at the heavenly banquet,
 Eating of My bread with Me,
 Learn to know the wondrous treasure,
 What I have, My Son, in Thee;

III

And that in Thy grace and beauty,
 As a glory round her shed,
 She with Me may joy together.
 He gave the Sire thanks, and said :—

IV

On the bride which Thou wilt give Me
 I My brightness will bestow,
 So that she My Father's goodness
 In its light may love and know ;
 Learning also how My Being
 From His Being doth outflow.

V

With My arms I will embrace her,
 And Thy love shall be her light,
 So for ever shall Thy goodness
 Be exalted with delight.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

I

For the merits of Thy love, then,
 'Be it done,' the Father said ;
 In the word the Father uttered
 All created things were made.

II

In the everlasting wisdom
 Rose the palace of the bride,
 Which two substances created
 In a twofold form divide.

III

With varieties unnumbered
 Was the lower part arrayed,
 While the higher glowed in beauty,
 With the wondrous gems displayed.

IV

That the bride might know the Bridegroom
 Who her heavenly nuptials graced,
 The Angelic hosts in order
 In the higher part were placed.

V

Man was placed—his nature lower—
 In the lower part on earth,
 Being fashioned of a substance
 Which was of inferior worth.

VI

And although both place and nature
 God in this way did divide,
 Yet the two are, both together,
 But one body of the bride.

VII

And the two, although divided,
 Are one bride in His one love,
 Who, in gladness, as the Bridegroom
 Is possessed of those above.

VIII

Those below in hope are living
 Of the faith that He has given,
 For He one day will exalt them—
 He hath said so—unto heaven.

IX

For of those of base condition
 He will take away the shame,
 And exalt them, so that nothing
 Shall remain to them of blame.

X

He in all things with their likeness
 Will Himself one day invest;
 He will come and dwell among them,
 As His own elected rest.

XI

God Himself will be Incarnate,
 God will have a human birth;
 Eating, He will come, and drinking,
 And converse with men on earth.

XII

He will dwell Himself among them
 And continually stay,
 Till the final consummation—
 When the ages melt away.

XIII

Then shall both rejoice together
In an endless life of bliss,
For to Him belongs the Headship
Of the bride, and she is His.

XIV

He shall bring the just together—
Nought shall them from her divide—
For they are the living members
Of the body of the bride.

XV

He will tenderly embrace her,
He will give her of His love,
And, united with Him, take her,
To His Father's home above.

XVI

Into joy shall she then enter :
God no greater joy can give ;
When absorbed in Him for ever
She the life of God shall live.

XVII

So the Father, Son, and Spirit,
Three in One and One in Three,
Live, Each living in the Other,
The most blessed Trinity.

THE DESIRES OF THE HOLY FATHERS.



I

WHEN the ancient Saints were waiting,
 Hope came down to their relief,
 And made lighter by its presence
 The sore pressure of their grief.

II

But still, hope deferred, together
 With the longing which they had
 To behold the promised Bridegroom,
 Made them sick at heart, and sad.

III

Pouring forth their supplications—
 In their misery they lay,
 Sighing, weeping, and lamenting,
 With strong crying night and day,—

IV

That He would the times determine,
 And among them come and stay :
 ‘ O that I,’ so one entreated,
 ‘ Might rejoice to see His day!’

V

‘ Hasten, then, Thy work, and finish ;
 Send Him, Lord, Whom Thou wilt send,
 Was the cry of one. Another’s,
 ‘ O that He the heavens would rend !’

VI

'That I might behold His coming,
And my wail be turned to mirth ;
Let the clouds rain down the Just One,
So long desired on the earth ;'

VII

'Let the earth which brought forth briers
Now break forth, and in their room
Let it bear the sacred flower
Which shall ever on it bloom.'

VIII

Others also : 'O how blessed
Shall that generation be !
Which shall merit in time coming
God's Most Holy Face to see ;'

IX

'Men shall throng around, and touch, Him,
They shall in His sight remain ;
In the Sacraments rejoicing
He Himself shall then ordain.'

THE SAME SUBJECT.

I

THESE and other supplications,
 As the centuries rolled by,
 Men poured forth: with greater fervour
 As the promised time drew nigh.

II

Aged Simeon in the furnace
 Of his longing, burning lay,
 Praying God that He would grant him
 Of His grace to see that day.

III

And the Ever-blessed Spirit
 Condescended to his cry;
 And consoled him with the promise
 That the old man should not die

IV

Till he saw the Ever-living
 God, descended from above,
 Took Him in his arms and held Him,
 And embraced Him in His love.

THE INCARNATION.

I

In the fulness of the ages
 Now had come the holy tide,
 For the payment of the ransom
 Of the long-expectant bride,

II

Groaning in the house of bondage
 Underneath the legal yoke
 Of the precepts given by Moses.
 When these words the Father spoke :

III

I, my Son, have in Thy likeness
 And Thy image made Thy bride,
 And in that resemblance worthy
 To be ever at Thy side ;

IV

But in one respect unlike Thee,
 For her nature is not Thine :
 She is flesh—her nature human—
 While Thy nature is Divine.

V

Perfect love demands a likeness
 In the lovers it unites,
 For the most complete resemblance
 Most aboundeth in delights.

VI

Now the love and exultation
Of the bride would greatly grow
If she saw Thee in her likeness,
In the flesh, on earth below.

VII

Then the Son the Father answered,
Lo! My will is ever Thine,
And My glory which I cherish
Is that Thine is also Mine.

VIII

I am ready at Thy bidding,
For Thy will is my delight,
To make known at once Thy goodness
And Thy wisdom and Thy might.

IX

I will manifest Thy justice,
And proclaim throughout the earth
Thy supremacy and beauty
And the sweetness of Thy worth.

X

I will go and seek My bride, then,
And upon Myself will take
All the poverty and sorrows
She now suffers for My sake.

XI

And that I true life may give her,
I will give for her My own,
So shall I present her, rescued
From the pit, before Thy throne.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

I

God then summoned the Archangel
 Holy Gabriel—him He sent
 To the Blessed Virgin Mary
 To obtain the Maid's consent.

II

She consented: in that instant
 The mysterious work was done,
 And the Trinity a body
 Wrought and fashioned for the Son.

III

In this wondrous operation,
 Though the Sacred Three concurred,
 He Who in the womb of Mary
 Was Incarnate, is the Word.

IV

He Who had a Father only
 Had a Mother also then:
 But it was in other fashion
 Than the manner is of men.

V

In the womb of Holy Mary
 He His flesh did then receive:
 So the Son of God Most Highest
 We the Son of Man believe.

THE NATIVITY.

I

Now at last the destined ages
 Their appointed course had run,
 When rejoicing from His chamber
 Issued forth the Bridegroom Son.

II

He embraced His bride, and held her
 Lovingly upon His breast,
 And the gracious Mother laid Him
 In the manger down to rest.

III

There He lay, the dumb beasts by Him,
 They were fitly stabled there,
 While the shepherds and the angels
 Filled with melody the air.

IV

So the feast of their espousals
 With solemnity was kept ;
 But Almighty God, an Infant,
 In the manger moaned and wept.

V

So the bride at her betrothal
 Did the bridal gifts arrange ;
 But the Mother looked in wonder
 At the marvellous exchange.

VI

Man gave forth a song of gladness,
 God Himself a plaintive moan ;
 Both possessing that which never
 Had been hitherto their own.

SUPER FLUMINA BABYLONIS.

(Ps. cxxxvi.)



I

By the waters of the river—
 Close by Babylon it swept—
 On the banks—my tears were flowing—
 There I sat me down and wept.

II

I remembered thee, O Sion,
 With thy love my heart was sore;
 Sweet to me was thy memorial,
 So I wept still more and more,

III

Of my festal robes divested,
 Those of woe around me flung
 While my silent harp suspended
 From the willow branches hung.

IV

There I left it; fondly trusting,
 For my hopes in thee still lay.
 Love my heart had deeply wounded,
 And had carried it away.

V

So, I said, my wound is grievous;
 O let love me wholly slay.
 Into its fires then I throw me,
 That I might be burned away.

VI

Now the silly moth I blame not,
 That in the fire seeks its death ;
 For I, while in myself but dying,
 Draw in thee alone my breath.

VII

I for thee to death submitted,
 And for thee to life returned ;
 For in thy most sweet memorial
 Life and death were both inurned.

VIII

In their merriment exulting,
 Heedless of the captive's wrongs,
 Strangers bade me rise and sing them
 Sion's old familiar songs.

IX

Sing us of the songs of Sion ;
 We would hear them—strange demand—
 How can I, lamenting Sion,
 Sing them in a foreign land ?

X

In the chants once so familiar
 How can I uplift my voice ?
 May they never be remembered
 If in exile I rejoice !

XI

Let my tongue, from speech refraining,
 To my palate silent cleave ;
 If I, in the land of exile,
 Where I dwell alone and grieve,

XII

Even amidst the verdant bowers
 Of the Babylonian land
 Should forget thee. Let my right hand
 Cease its cunning to command

XIII

If I make not thee, O Sion,
The beginning of my mirth;
Or if I rejoice in keeping
Any festival of earth.

XIV

Thou, of Babylon the daughter,
Shalt lie prostrate in the dust,
Lost and wretched; but for ever
Blest is He in Whom I trust.

XV

In the day of retribution
He will thee at last afflict;
He will lay on thee the burden
Thou didst once on me inflict.

XVI

He will me, thy weeping captive,
With thy little children take,
And to Christ the Rock will bring them—
I have left thee for His sake.



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PASSAGES FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE.

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- „ 18, II. 223. Assuerus exhibited his riches and glory at the marriage of Esther.
- iv. 1, II. 248. Mordecai rent his garments, and put on sackcloth.
- v. 2, I. 439. The king held out the golden sceptre to Esther.
- vi. 11, II. 178. This honour is he worthy of.
- viii. 4, I. 439. Esther rose and stood before the king.
- xv. 10, II. 301. With burning eyes he showed the wrath of his heart.
- „ 11, II. 30. He leaped from his throne.
- „ 16, II. 300. I saw Thee, my Lord, as an angel of God.

JOB.

- i. 8, II. 247. Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?
- „ 8, I. 362. And he took a potsherd.
- iii. 24, I. 400; II. 66. As overflowing waters, so is my roaring.
- iv. 2, II. 202. Who can withhold the words he hath conceived.
- „ 12, II. 83. My ears by stealth received the veins of its whisper.
- vi. 6, I. 104. Can an unsavoury thing be eaten that is not seasoned with salt?
- „ 8, II. 43, 190. Who will grant that my request may come.
- vii. 2, I. 408. As a soul longeth for the shade.
- „ 20, I. 383. Why hast Thou set me opposite to Thee.
- ix. 11, II. 14. If He come to me, I shall not see Him.

JOB—*continued.*

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page	
x.	16,	ii.	240.	Returning, Thou tormentest me wonderfully.
xii.	22,	i.	390.	He discovereth deep things.
xiv.	5,	ii.	12.	The days of man are short.
xvi.	13,	i.	388.	I sometime that wealthy one, suddenly am broken.
xix.	21,	i.	384.	Have pity on me.
"	"	ii.	241.	The hand of the Lord hath touched me.
xx.	22,	i.	25.	When he shall be filled he shall burn.
xxiii.	6,	i.	383;	ii. 300. I would not that He contend with me.
xxvi.	14,	ii.	300.	We have heard scarce a little drop of His word.
xxix.	18,	ii.	252.	As a palm tree I shall multiply my days.
xxx.	16,	i.	401.	My soul fadeth within myself.
"	17,	i.	362, 401.	My bone is pierced with sorrows.
xxxi.	27,	i.	279.	If my heart in secret hath rejoiced.
xxxvii.	16,	i.	430.	Knowest thou the path of the clouds.
xxxviii.	1,	i.	86, 362.	The Lord answered Job out of a whirlwind.
xl.	16,	i.	281.	He sleepeth under the shadow.
xli.	6,	ii.	164.	His body is like molten shields.
"	24,	ii.	33.	There is no power upon earth.
"	25,	i.	449.	He beholdeth every high thing.
xlii.	5,	ii.	82.	With the hearing of the ear I have heard Thee.

PSALMS.

i.	3,	ii.	237.	Whatsoever he shall do shall prosper.
ii.	9,	i.	141.	Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron.
vi.	4,	i.	29.	My soul is troubled exceedingly.
ix.	10,	ii.	26.	A helper in due time in tribulation.
"	17,	i.	141.	The Lord hath heard the desire of the poor.
xi.	7,	i.	409;	ii. 247. The words of the Lord are pure words.
xv.	4,	ii.	174.	Nor will I be mindful of their names by My lips.
xvi.	2,	ii.	234.	Let my judgment come forth from Thy countenance.
"	4,	i.	442.	I have kept hard ways.
"	15,	ii.	21, 228.	I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear.
xvii.	5,	i.	385.	The sorrows of death surrounded me.
"	10,	i.	85.	Darkness was under His feet.
"	12,	i.	85, 424;	ii. 19, 67. He made darkness His covert.
"	13,	i.	382, 424.	At the brightness that was before Him the clouds passed.
xviii.	3,	i.	60;	ii. 290. Day to day uttereth speech.
"	10,	i.	176;	ii. 189. The judgments of the Lord are true.
xx.	4,	ii.	201.	Thou hast prevented him with blessings of sweetness.
xxiv.	15,	i.	443.	My eyes are ever towards the Lord.
xxix.	7,	i.	391.	I shall never be moved.
xxx.	20,	ii.	201, 240.	O how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness.
"	21,	i.	425;	ii. 242. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy face.

PSALMS—*continued.*

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xxxiii.	8,	ii.	90.	The angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them.	
"	20,	ii.	20.	Many are the afflictions of the just.	
"	22,	ii.	60.	The death of the wicked is very evil.	
xxxiv.	3,	ii.	27.	I am thy salvation.	
"	10,	ii.	244.	Lord, who is like to Thee.	
xxxv.	9,	ii.	27, 138, 201.	Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure.	
xxxvi.	4,	i.	439.	Delight in the Lord.	
xxxvii.	5,	i.	29.	My iniquities . . . are become heavy upon me.	
"	9,	i.	400.	I am afflicted and humbled.	
"	11,	ii.	53.	The light of my eyes itself is not with me.	
xxxviii.	3,	i.	364.	I was dumb.	
"	4,	i.	411 ; ii. 112, 135.	My heart waxed hot within me.	
"	7,	i.	220.	Surely man passeth as an image.	
"	12,	i.	383.	Thou hast corrected man for iniquity.	
xxxix.	6,	i.	176.	There is no one like to Thee.	
"	13,	i.	29.	My iniquities have overtaken me.	
xli.	1,	i.	438 ; ii. 66, 262.	As the hart panteth after the fountains of water.	
"	3,	i.	357.	My soul has thirsted after the strong living God.	
"	8,	ii.	290.	Deep calleth on deep.	
xlili.	23,	ii.	299.	Arise, why sleepest thou.	
xliv.	10,	ii.	162, 302.	The queen stood on Thy right hand.	
xlv.	5,	ii.	256.	The stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful.	
"	11,	i.	114, 290.	Be still, and see that I am God.	
xlviii.	17,	i.	245, 253.	Be not thou afraid when a man shall be made rich.	
xliv.	11,	ii.	126.	With Me is the beauty of the field.	
"	16,	i.	318.	Why dost thou declare my justice.	
"	1,	12,	i.	409.	Create a clean heart in me, O God.
"	19,	i.	369.	A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit.	
liii.	5,	ii.	33.	The mighty have sought after my soul.	
lvii.	5,	i.	263.	The deaf asp that stoppeth her ears.	
"	9,	i.	30.	Fire hath fallen upon them, and they have not seen the sun.	
"	10,	i.	31.	Before your thorns could know the briar.	
lviii.	5,	i.	438.	Without iniquity have I run.	
"	10,	i.	37, 240, 407 ; ii. 153.	I will keep my strength to Thee.	
"	15,	i.	24.	They shall suffer hunger like dogs.	
lxi.	2,	ii.	149.	Shall not my soul be subject to God.	
"	11,	i.	244, 254 ; ii. 31.	If riches abound set not your heart upon them.	
lxii.	2,	i.	407 ; ii. 91.	For Thee my soul hath thirsted.	
"	3,	i.	290, 363.	In a desert land.	
lxiii.	7, 8,	i.	290.	Man shall come to a deep heart, and God shall be exalted.	

PSALMS—*continued.*

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- lxvii. 10, I. 434. Thou didst send Thine inheritance a free rain.
 „ 14, II. 63. Ye shall be as a dove.
 „ 16, II. 189. The mountain of God is a rich mountain.
 „ 34, I. 199, 317; II. 79. He will give to His voice the voice of power.
- lxviii. 2, I. 387; II. 112. Save me, O God.
- lxx. 20, II. 248. Thou hast multiplied Thy magnificence.
- lxxi. 8, I. 138. He shall rule from sea to sea.
 „ 12, I. 138. He shall deliver the poor from the mighty.
- lxxii. 8, I. 219. They have thought and spoken wickedness.
 „ 21, II. 22, 143. My heart hath been inflamed.
 „ 22, I. 79, 356, 394. I am brought to nothing and I knew not.
 „ 7, I. 251. They have passed into the affection of the heart.
- xxvi. 3, I. 367. My soul refused to be comforted.
 „ 6, II. 250. I had in my mind the eternal years.
 „ 14, I. 82. Thy way, O God, is in the holy place.
 „ 19, I. 430. Thy lightnings enlightened the world.
- lxxvii. 30, I. 19. He slew the fat ones among them.
 31, I. 150. As yet the meat was in their mouth.
- lxxxiii. 2, I. 437; II. 263. My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.
 „ 3, II. 212, 222, 234. My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God.
 „ 4, II. 183. The sparrow hath found herself a house.
 „ 6, I. 431. Blessed is the man whose help is from Thee.
- lxxxiv. 9, I. 352; II. 270. He will speak peace unto His people.
- lxxxv. 8, I. 82, 228. There is none among the gods like unto Thee, O Lord.
- lxxxvii. 6, I. 385. Like the slain sleeping in the sepulchres.
 „ 9, I. 385. Thou hast put away my acquaintance far from me.
 „ 16, I. 13. I am poor and in labours from my youth.
- lxxxix. 4, II. 232. A thousand years in Thy sight are as yesterday.
 „ 9, II. 231. Our years shall be considered as a spider.
- xcvi. 2, I. 382; II. 67. Clouds and darkness are round about Him.
 ci. 8, I. 110; II. 85. I am become as a sparrow on the housetop.
 „ 27, I. 258. They shall perish, but Thou remainest.
 cii. 5, I. 416. Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's.
 ciii. 32, II. 241. He looketh upon the earth and maketh it tremble.
 civ. 4, I. 434. Seek ye the Lord.
 cvi. 10, II. 259. Sitting in darkness and the shadow of death.
 cx. 1, I. 435. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.
 cxii. 7, I. 362. Lifting up the poor out of the dunghill.
 cxiii. 8, I. 14. Let them that make them become like unto them.
 cxv. 15, II. 59, 230. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.
- cxvii. 12, I. 27. They surrounded me like bees.
 „ 32, I. 438; II. 133. I have run the way of Thy commandments.

PSALMS—*continued.*

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| cxviii. | 61, | I. | 27. | The cords of my sins have encompassed me. |
| " | 81, | I. | 434. | My soul hath fainted for Thy salvation. |
| " | 131, | II. | 112. | I opened my mouth and panted. |
| " | 140, | II. | 221. | Thy word is a vehement fire. |
| cxix. | 4, | II. | 275. | He shall neither slumber nor sleep that keepeth Israel. |
| cxix. | 2, | I. | 443. | As the eyes of the handmaid. |
| cxix. | 1, | II. | 275. | Unless the Lord build the house. |
| cxix. | 6, | I. | 82. | The Lord is high and looketh on the low. |
| cxix. | 11, | I. | 60, 227; | II. 209. Night shall be my light in my pleasures. |
| " | 12, | I. | 390; | II. 67, 248. The darkness and the light are alike to Thee. |
| cxlii. | 7, | I. | 434. | My spirit hath fainted away. |
| cxliv. | 10, | II. | 38. | Thou openest Thy hand. |
| " | 18, | I. | 314. | The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him. |
| cxlvii. | 17, | I. | 127, 374. | He sendeth His crystals like morsels. |

PROVERBS.

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|--------|-----|-----|----------------|--|
| ii. | 4, | II. | 54. | If thou shalt seek her as money. |
| iv. | 23, | II. | 18. | With all watchfulness keep thy heart. |
| viii. | 4, | I. | 17. | O ye men, to you I call. |
| " | 15, | II. | 298. | By me kings reign. |
| " | 18, | I. | 17. | With me are riches and glory. |
| " | 31, | II. | 100, 127, 223. | My delights were to be with the children of men. |
| ix. | 10, | I. | 181. | The knowledge of the holy is prudence. |
| x. | 24, | I. | 141. | To the just their desire shall be given. |
| xv. | 15, | II. | 116. | A secure mind is like a continual feast. |
| xvi. | 1, | II. | 275. | It is the part of man to prepare the soul. |
| " | 9, | II. | 275. | The Lord must direct his steps. |
| xviii. | 12, | I. | 432. | Before destruction the heart of a man is exalted. |
| xxiii. | 31, | I. | 262. | Look not upon the wine when it is yellow. |
| xxiv. | 16, | I. | 40. | A just man shall fall seven times and shall rise again. |
| xxv. | 27, | II. | 300. | He shall be overwhelmed by glory. |
| xxvii. | 19, | I. | 181. | The hearts of men are laid open to the prudent. |
| xxx. | 2, | II. | 142. | I am the most foolish of men. |
| " | 15, | I. | 38. | The horse leech hath two daughters that say, Bring, bring. |
| xxxi. | 30, | I. | 15, 257. | Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain. |

ECCLESIASTES.

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| i. | 14, | I. | 245. | All is vanity and vexation of spirit. |
| ii. | 2, | I. | 246. | Laughter I counted error. |

ECCLESIASTES—*continued.*

- Ch. Ver. Vol. Page
- ii. 2, i. 258. Why art thou vainly deceived.
- ,, 10, i. 32. Whatsoever my eyes desired I refused them not.
- ,, 26, i. 245. Riches a fruitless solicitude of the mind.
- iii. 12, i. 220. There is no better thing than to rejoice.
- iv. 10, i. 162. Woe to him that is alone.
- v. 1, i. 145. God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few.
- ,, 9, i. 245. He that loveth riches shall reap no fruit from them.
- ,, 12, i. 245, 252. Riches kept to the hurt of the owner.
- vii. 1, i. 187. What needeth a man to seek things that are above him.
- ,, 3, i. 247. It is better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting.
- ,, 4, i. 247. Anger is better than laughter.
- ,, 5, i. 246. The heart of the wise is where there is mourning.
- viii. 4, i. 199. The Word of God is full of power.
- ix. 1, ii. 14. Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred.
- ,, 17, ii. 287. The words of the wise are heard in silence.
- x. 1, i. 279. Dying flies spoil the sweetness of the ointment.
- ,, 4, ii. 247. Care will make the greatest sins to cease.
- xii. 7, ii. 231. And the spirit return to God who gave it.

CANTICLE OF CANTICLES.

- i. 1, i. 439, 451. Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth.
- ,, 3, ii. 133, 162, 266. Draw me, we will run after Thee.
- ,, 4, i. 440; ii. 177, 251. I am black but beautiful.
- ,, 6, ii. 15. Shew me where Thou feedest.
- ,, 10, ii. 63. We will make thee chains of gold.
- ,, 11, ii. 303. While the king is at his repose.
- ,, 11, ii. 99. My spikenard sent forth the odour thereof.
- ,, 15, ii. 127. Our bed is of flowers.
- ii. 1, ii. 126, 166. I am the flower of the field.
- ,, 3, ii. 181. I sat down under His shadow.
- ,, 4, i. 94; ii. 140. He brought me into the cellar of wine.
- ,, 5, ii. 165. Stay me with flowers.
- ,, 6, ii. 138. His left hand is under my head.
- ,, 9, ii. 21. My beloved is like a roe.
- ,, 10, ii. 206, 229. Arise, make haste, my love.
- ,, 11, ii. 122. Winter is now past.
- ,, 13, ii. 193, 206. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come.
- ,, 14, ii. 79, 207. Let thy voice sound in my ears.
- ,, 15, ii. 93. Catch us the little foxes.
- ,, 16, ii. 252. My Beloved to me, and I to Him.
- iii. 1, i. 434, 439, 454; ii. 30. In my bed by night I sought Him.

CANTICLE OF CANTICLES—*continued.*

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- iii. 2, i. 414; ii. 24. I will seek Him whom my soul loveth.
- .. 4, i. 434, 453; ii. 30. When I had passed by them I found Him.
- i. 439. I held Him and will not let Him go.
- .. 5, i. 203; ii. 117, 155, 279. I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
that you stir not up.
- .. 6, ii. 211. Who is she that goeth up by the desert.
- ii. 266. As a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices.
- .. 7, i. 448; ii. 131. Behold threescore valiant ones.
- .. 9, ii. 130. King Solomon hath made himself a litter.
- .. 10, i. 444. The seat of gold, the going up of purple.
- .. 11, ii. 118, 163. Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King
Solomon.
- iv. 1, ii. 178, 179. Behold thou art fair, O my love, thy eyes are dove's
eyes.
- .. 4, ii. 131. Thy neck is as the tower of David.
- .. 6, ii. 188. I will go to the mountain of myrrh.
- .. 9, i. 413; ii. 42, 169. Thou hast wounded my heart.
- .. 12, i. 215; ii. 117. My spouse is a garden enclosed.
- .. 15, ii. 256. A well of living waters.
- .. 16, ii. 99. Blow through my garden.
- v. 1, ii. 121. I am come into my garden.
- .. 2, i. 110. I sleep and my heart watcheth.
- .. 4, ii. 134. My Beloved put His hand through the keyhole.
- .. 6, ii. 140, 222. My soul melted when He spoke.
- ii. 51. I sought Him and found Him not.
- .. 7, ii. 24. They struck me and wounded me.
- .. 8, i. 414, 433; ii. 42. Tell Him that I languish with love.
- .. 14, ii. 194. His belly is of ivory set with sapphires.
- vi. 2, ii. 160. I to my Beloved, and my Beloved to me.
- .. 3, ii. 178. Behold Thou art fair, my Beloved.
- ii. 165. Terrible as an army set in array.
- .. 4, i. 192, 351; ii. 82. Turn away thy eyes from me.
- .. 9, ii. 115. Who is she that cometh forth as the morning.
- ii. 300. Terrible as an army set in array.
- .. 10, i. 449. I went down into the garden of nuts.
- .. 11, i. 110, 427; ii. 143. I knew not.
- ii. 93. My soul troubled me for the chariots of Aminadab.
- vii. 1, ii. 165. How beautiful are thy steps in shoes.
- .. 2, ii. 256. Thy belly is like a heap of wheat set with lilies.
- .. 13, ii. 154. The new and the old I have kept for Thee.
- viii. 1, i. 417, 451; ii. 122, 128. Who shall give Thee to me for my
brother.
- .. 2, ii. 140, 195. I will give Thee a cup of spiced wine.
- .. 5, ii. 211, 228. Leaning upon her Beloved.
- .. 5, ii. 124. Under the apple tree I raised thee up.

CANTICLE OF CANTICLES—*continued.*

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 viii. 6, I. 231, 234, 436; II. 65. Put Me as a seal upon thy heart.
 „ „ II. 255, 257. The lamps thereof are fire and flames.
 „ „ II. 66. Love is strong as death.
 „ 8, II. 107. Our sister is little.

WISDOM.

- i. 5, I. 219, 264. The Holy Ghost will withdraw Himself from thoughts that are without understanding.
 „ 7, II. 88. The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world.
 iii. 6, I. 387. As gold in the furnace He hath proved them.
 iv. 10, II. 233. He pleased God, and was beloved.
 „ 12, I. 249; II. 291. The bewitching of vanity obscureth good things.
 vi. 13, II. 30. Wisdom is glorious and never fadeth away.
 vii. 11, I. 403. All good things came to me with her.
 „ 21, I. 180, 210. Wisdom, which is the worker of all things, taught me.
 „ 22, I. 274. Which nothing hindereth, beneficent.
 „ 23, I. 250. They all love bribes.
 „ 24, I. 396; II. 226, 299. Wisdom reacheth everywhere by her purity.
 „ 26, II. 261. The brightness of eternal light.
 „ 27, II. 299. She reneweth all things.
 viii. 1, II. 242. She reacheth from end to end mightily.
 „ „ I. 122; II. 1. Wisdom ordereth all things sweetly.
 ix. 15, I. 374. II. 104, 210, 240. The corruptible body is a load upon the soul.
 xi. 17. I. 152. By what things a man sinneth, by the same also is he tormented.
 xvi. 20, I. 19, 397; II. 272. Having in it the sweetness of every taste.
 „ 21, I. 350, 397. Serving every man's will.
 „ 25, I. 327. Even then it was transformed into all things.
 xviii. 14, I. 453. While all things were in quiet silence.

ECCLESIASTICUS.

- v. 5, II. 174. Be not without fear about sin forgiven.
 ix. 14, II. 137. Forsake not an old friend.
 „ 15, II. 136. A new friend is as new wine.
 xi. 10, I. 244. If thou be rich, thou shalt not be free from sin.
 „ 34, I. 42. Of one spark cometh a great fire.
 xiii. 1, I. 33. He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled with it.
 xix. 1, I. 42. He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little.

ECCLESIASTICUS—*continued.*

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 xxiii. 6, i. 38. Take from me the greediness of the belly.
 xxxiv. 9, i. 371. What doth he know that hath not been tried.
 „ 11, ii. 245. He that hath not been tried, what doth he know.
 xxxv. 21, i. 109. The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds.
 xli. 1, ii. 60. O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee.
 „ 3, ii. 59. O death, thy sentence is welcome.
 li. 29, i. 403. My entrails were troubled in seeking her.
 „ 26, i. 410. ii. 289. He hath enlightened my ignorances.

ISAIAS.

- ii. 2, ii. 188. In the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared.
 „ 3, ii. 188. Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord.
 iii. 12, i. 259. They that call thee blessed deceive thee.
 „ 14, ii. 280. You have devoured the vineyard.
 v. 20, i. 223. Darkness for light, and light for darkness.
 „ 30, i. 424. The light is darkened with the mist thereof.
 vi. 2, i. 73. Upon it stood the seraphim.
 „ 4, i. 115. The Lord showed His glory in the seraphim.
 vii. 9, i. 59. If you will not believe you shall not understand.
 viii. 6, ii. 285. The waters of Siloe that go with silence.
 ix. 6, ii. 298. The government is upon His shoulder.
 „ 20, i. 26. He shall turn to the right hand and shall be hungry.
 xi. 3, ii. 139. He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.
 xix. 14, i. 153, 370. The Lord hath mingled in the midst thereof the spirit of giddiness.
 xxiv. 16, ii. 230. From the ends of the earth we have heard praises.
 „ „ ii. 83. My secret to myself.
 xxvi. 9, i. 408. My soul hath desired Thee in the night.
 „ 17, i. 400. So are we become in Thy presence.
 „ 20, ii. 17. Hide Thyself a little for a moment.
 xxviii. 9, i. 136, 362; ii. 271. Whom shall He teach knowledge?
 „ 19, i. 362. Vexation alone shall make you understand.
 xxix. 8, i. 25. Faint with thirst and his soul is empty.
 xxx. 1, 2, i. 156. Woe to you . . . who walk to go down into Egypt.
 xxxi. 9, ii. 226. His furnace in Jerusalem.
 xl. 17, ii. 232. All nations are as if they had no being at all.
 „ 18, i. 83. To whom then have you likened God?
 „ 31, i. 438. They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength.
 xliii. 3, ii. 178. I have given Egypt for thy atonement.
 „ 4, ii. 176. Since thou becamest honourable in My eyes.
 „ 21, ii. 296. This people have I formed for Myself.
 xlv. 3, ii. 18. I will give thee hidden treasures.

ISAIAS —continued.

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- xl. 15, II. 14. Verily Thou art a hidden God.
- xlvi. 18, I. 216. Thy peace had been as a river.
- lv. 1, I. 28. All you that thirst come to the waters.
- lvii. 20, I. 26. The wicked are like the raging sea which cannot rest.
- lviii. 10, I. 362; II. 186. Then My light shall rise up in darkness.
- lix. 10, I. 33. We have stumbled at noon as if in darkness.
- lxiv. 4, I. 63, 83, 229, 265, 398; II. 199. Eye hath not seen, O God, besides Thee.
- lxv. 24, II. 54. Before they call I will hear.
- lxvi. 12, II. 78. I will bring upon her a river of peace.
- „ „ II. 147. They shall caress you.

JEREMIAS.

- i. 6, I. 428. Ah, Lord God!
- „ 11, I. 115. A rod watching.
- ii. 2, I. 437. I have remembered thee.
- „ 13, I. 23. My people have done two evils.
- „ „ I. 251. They have forsaken me.
- „ 14, II. 101. Is Israel a bondman?
- „ 24, I. 26. He snuffed up the wind of his love.
- „ 25, I. 26. Keep thy foot from being bare.
- iv. 10, I. 137. You shall have peace, and behold the sword reacheth even unto the soul.
- „ 23, I. 14. I beheld the earth and lo, it was void and nothing.
- viii. 15, I. 137. We looked for peace, and no good came.
- xii. 5, II. 246. If thou hast been wearied with running with footmen.
- xx. 7, I. 146. I am become a laughing-stock all the day.
- xxiii. 21, I. 286. I did not send prophets, yet they ran.
- „ 28, I. 201. What hath the chaff to do with the wheat.
- „ 29, II. 221. Are not My words as a fire.
- „ 32, I. 286. They cause My people to err by their lying.
- xxx. 18, I. 371. II. 245. Thou hast chastised me.
- xl. 2, I. 183. God revealed to Jeremias the weakness of Baruch.
- xl. 16, I. 281. Thy arrogancy hath deceived thee.

LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAS.

- i. 13, I. 409; II. 245. From above He hath sent fire into my bones.
- iii. 1, I. 389. I am the man that see my poverty.
- „ 8, I. 393. He shutteth out my prayer.
- „ 9, I. 393. He hath shut up my ways with square stones.
- „ 17, I. 400, 401. My soul is repelled off from peace.
- „ 19, II. 27. Remember my poverty.

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- iii. 20, I. 220; II. 263. I will be mindful and remember.
 „ 29, I. 393, 444. He shall put his mouth in the dust.
 „ 44, I. 393. Thou hast set a cloud before Thee.
 „ 47, I. 146. Prophecy is become to us a fear.
 iv. 1, I. 261. How is the gold become dim.
 „ 7, I. 34. Her Nazarites were whiter than snow.
 „ 8, I. 34. Their face is now made blacker than coals.

BARUCH

- iii. 11, II. 101. Thou art grown old in a strange country.
 „ 22, II. 242. It hath not been heard of in the land of Chanaan.
 „ 23, I. 84. The way of Wisdom they have not known.
 „ 31, I. 430. There is none that is able to know her ways.

EZECHIEL.

- i. 5, II. 260. The likeness of four living creatures.
 „ 8, I. 242. They had faces and wings on the four sides.
 „ 24, II. 79, 260. The voice of the Most High God.
 ii. 1, II. 261. The vision of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.
 viii. 10, I. 35. All the idols of the house of Israel were painted on the walls.
 „ 14, I. 35. Behold women sat there mourning for Adonis.
 „ 16, I. 36. Five and twenty men having their backs to the temple of the Lord.
 xiv. 7, I. 154. If he come to the prophet to enquire of me.
 „ 9, I. 154. And when the prophet shall err . . .
 xvi. 5, II. 124. Thou wast cast out upon the face of the earth.
 xxviii. 22, II. 174. I will not remember all his iniquities.
 xxiv. 10, I. 387. Heap together the bones.
 „ 11, I. 387. Set it empty on burning coals.
 xxxiv. 2, II. 282. Woe to the shepherds of Israel.
 xxxvi. 25, II. 257. I will pour upon you clean water.

DANIEL.

- ix. 22, I. 196. I am now come forth to teach thee.
 „ 27, I. 261. There shall be in the temple the abomination of desolation.
 x. 11, I. 439. Daniel, stand upright.
 „ 16, II. 84. At the sight of thee my joints are loosed.

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- ii. 14, I. 215; II. 181, 270, 279. I will lead her into the wilderness.
 „ 20, I. 377, 442; II. 62. I will espouse thee to me in faith.
 xiii. 9, I. 420. Perdition is thine own.
 „ 14, II. 251. O death, I will be thy death.

JONAS.

- ii. 4, I. 386. Thou hast cast me forth unto the deep.
 iii. 4, I. 143. Yet forty days and Ninive shall be destroyed.
 iv. 2, I. 146. Therefore I went before to flee unto Tharsis.
 „ 11, I. 32. They know not how to distinguish between their right hand and their left.

MICHEAS.

- vii. 3, I. 280. The evil of their hands they call good.

NAHUM.

- i. 9, II. 174. There shall not rise a double affliction.

HABACUC.

- ii. 1, I. 234. 363. II. 271. I will stand upon my watch.
 iii. 6, II. 241. The mountains are crushed in pieces.

SOPHONIAS.

- i. 12, II. 13. I will search Jerusalem with lamps.

ZACHARIAS.

- ii. 8, II. 54. He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of my eye.

II. MACHABEES.

- i. 22, II. 257. Jeremias commanded them to take the fire.
 ii. 1, II. 257. There was a great fire kindled.

S. MATTHEW.

- iv. 8, I. 172. The devil showed our Lord all the kingdoms of the world.
 v. 3, I. 282. Blessed are the poor in spirit.
 „ 8, I. 440. Blessed are the clean in heart.

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- v. 26, II. 13. Thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing.
- vi. 2, I. 277, 278. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward.
- „ 3, I. 278, 447. Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth.
- „ 6, I. 316. When thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber.
- „ „ II. 17. Pray to thy Father in secret.
- „ 7, I. 315. When ye pray, speak not much.
- „ 10, II. 229. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.
- „ 24, I. 207; II. 158. No man can serve two masters.
- „ 33, I. 314. Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice.
- vii. 3, I. 329. Why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye.
- „ 6, I. 24. Give not that which is holy to dogs.
- „ 13, II. 283. Enter ye in at the narrow gate.
- „ 14, I. 74, 325, 345, 359. How narrow is the gate.
- „ „ II. 12. Strait is the way that leadeth to life.
- „ 22, I. 164, 284. Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name.
- „ 23, I. 164. I never knew you.
- viii. 20, I. 78. The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.
- x. 33, II. 158. He that shall deny Me before men.
- „ 36, I. 417. A man's enemies shall be they of his own household.
- xi. 28, I. 29. Come to Me all you that labour and are burdened.
- „ 36, I. 77. My yoke is sweet, and My burden light.
- xii. 30, I. 42. He that gathereth not with Me scattereth.
- xiii. 12, II. 177. He that hath, to him shall be given.
- „ 22, I. 244. Thorns . . . the deceitfulness of riches.
- „ 31, II. 239. The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed.
- „ 44, II. 17, 149. The treasure hidden in a field.
- „ 53, I. 299. He wrought not many miracles there, because of their unbelief.
- xv. 8, I. 303, 304. This people honoureth Me with their lips.
- „ 14, I. 30, 129. If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit.
- „ 26, I. 24. It is not good to take the bread of children.
- xvi. 24, I. 263. If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself.
- „ 25, I. 344; II. 159. He that shall lose his life for My sake shall find it.
- „ 26, I. 245. What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world.
- xvii. 6, I. 157. This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.
- xviii. 20, I. 161. Where there are two or three gathered together in My name.
- xix. 23, I. 244. A rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.
- „ 29, I. 256, 271. A hundredfold reward even in this life.
- xxi. 9, I. 303. The multitudes cried Hosanna to the Son of David.
- xxii. 13, I. 304. Cast him into the exterior darkness.

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| „ | 15, | I. | 246. | You go round about the sea and the land to make one proselyte. |
| „ | 24, | I. | 329. | Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. |
| xxiv. | 19, | I. | 38. | Woe unto them that are with child. |
| xxv. | 8, | I. | 331. | Give us of your oil. |
| „ | 21, | I. | 94. | Because thou hast been faithful over a few things. |
| „ | 28, | II. | 177. | Take ye away the talent from him. |
| xxvi. | 39, | I. | 316. | Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt. |
| xxvii. | 46, | I. | 79. | My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me. |
| xxviii. | 10, | I. | 289. | Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee. |

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| viii. | 34, | I. | 75. | If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself. |
| „ | 35, | I. | 77. | Whosoever will save his life shall lose it. |
| ix. | 38, | I. | 318. | Do not forbid him. |
| xiii. | 11, | I. | 288. | Take no thought beforehand what you shall speak. |

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| i. | 13, | II. | 26. | Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard. |
| „ | 35, | II. | 259. | The power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. |
| „ | 52, | II. | 78. | He hath exalted the humble. |
| ii. | 25, | II. | 139. | A just man full of fear. |
| iv. | 24, | I. | 299. | No prophet is accepted in his own country. |
| vii. | 37, | I. | 413. | Behold a woman that was in the city, a sinner. |
| viii. | 12, | I. | 282. | They by the wayside are they that hear. |
| ix. | 54, | I. | 286. | Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven. |
| x. | 20, | I. | 285, 290. | Rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you. |
| „ | 42, | II. | 154. | One thing is necessary. |
| xi. | 1, | I. | 315. | Teach us to pray. |
| „ | 5, | I. | 72. | Friend, lend me three loaves. |
| „ | 9, | II. | 29. | Seek and you shall find. |
| „ | 26, | I. | 95. | He taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself. |
| „ | 52, | II. | 283. | Woe to you lawyers. |
| xii. | 20, | I. | 245, 256. | Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee. |
| „ | 35, | I. | 38. | Let your loins be girt. |
| „ | 37, | II. | 147. | He will gird himself and make them sit down to meat. |

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- „ 33, I. 19, 72, 222. Every one of you that doth not renounce all.
- xv. 5, II. 118. When he hath found it, lay it on his shoulders rejoicing.
- „ 9, II. 118. Rejoice with me.
- xvi. 8, I. 251. The children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light.
- „ 10, I. 253. He that is faithful in that which is least.
- „ 19, I. 268. The rich man feasted sumptuously every day.
- xvii. 21, I. 307; II. 16. The kingdom of God is within you.
- xviii. 1, I. 316. We ought always to pray and not to faint.
- „ 11, I. 225, 277, 329. O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men.
- xix. 41, I. 303. Christ wept over Jerusalem.
- xxii. 8, II. 98. Go and prepare for us the pasch.
- „ 26, I. 16. He that is greater among you, let him become as the younger.
- xxiv. 6, I. 289. He is not here, but is risen.
- „ 21, I. 139. We hoped that it was He who should have redeemed Israel.
- „ 25, I. 139. O foolish, and slow of heart.
- „ 26, I. 289. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things.

S. JOHN.

- i. 3, II. 297. Without Him was made nothing.
- „ 4, II. 76. In Him was life.
- „ 5, I. 14, 412. The light shineth in darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it.
- „ 12, I. 67; II. 204. He gave them power to be made the sons of God.
- „ 13, I. 67. Born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh . . . but of God.
- „ 16, II. 172, 176. Grace for grace.
- „ 18, I. 82, 229. No man hath seen God at any time.
- „ „ II. 14. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father.
- ii. 3, II. 28. They have no wine.
- iii. 5, I. 68. Unless a man be born again of water and of the Holy Ghost.
- „ 6, I. 272, 338. That which is born of the flesh is flesh.
- iv. 14, II. 62, 114, 256. A fountain of water springing up into life everlasting.
- „ 23, I. 306. The true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth.

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- iv. 24, I. 307. God must be adored in spirit and in truth.
- „ 28, II. 222. The woman left her waterpot.
- „ 34, I. 48. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me.
- „ 48, I. 289. Unless you see signs and wonders you believe not.
- vi. 64, II. 231. The flesh profiteth nothing.
- „ „ II. 221. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.
- „ 67, II. 221. Many of His disciples went back.
- „ 69, II. 222. Thou hast the words of eternal life.
- vii. 38, II. 219. Rivers of living water.
- „ 39, II. 63. The spirit which they should receive who believed in Him.
- ix. 39, I. 65. For judgment I am come into this world.
- x. 9, I. 78. I am the door.
- xi. 3, II. 28. Behold he whom Thou lovest is sick.
- „ 50, I. 139. It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people.
- xii. 16, I. 144. When Jesus was glorified then they remembered that these things were written of Him.
- „ 29, II. 79. An angel spoke to Him.
- „ 32, II. 38. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth.
- xiv. 2, II. 225. In My Father's house there are many mansions.
- „ 6, I. 78. I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.
- „ 17, II. 242. You shall know Him.
- „ 21, I. 179. He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father.
- „ 23, II. 218. We will come to Him and make our abode with Him.
- „ 26, I. 144. He will teach you all things.
- xv. 7, II. 20. You shall ask whatever you will and it shall be done unto you.
- „ 15, II. 151. I have called you friends.
- xvi. 23, I. 440. In that day you shall not ask Me anything.
- xvii. 3, II. 191. Now this is eternal life, that they may know Thee.
- „ 10, II. 187, 294. All My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine.
- „ 20, II. 204. Not for them only do I pray.
- „ 24, II. 204. That they may see My glory.
- „ 26, II. 295. That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them.
- xix. 30, I. 159. It is consummated.
- xx. 2, I. 289. They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre.
- „ 3, I. 289. The two disciples came to see the sepulchre.
- „ 14, I. 434. When she had thus said she turned herself back.
- „ 15, I. 289, 414; II. 51. If thou hast carried Him away, tell me where thou hast laid Him.
- „ 19, I. 215. Peace be unto you.
- „ 29, I. 289. Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed.

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- ii. 2, 11. 78. A sound as of a mighty wind.
- iv. 29, 1. 288. Grant unto Thy servants that with all confidence they may speak Thy word.
- vii. 32, 1. 83, 488. Moses durst not behold.
- viii. 20, 1. 252. Because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.
- xiii. 27, 1. 138. The Jews fulfilled the prophecies when they put the Lord to death.
- „ 46, 1. 80. To you it behoveth us first to speak the word of God.
- xiv. 21, 11. 244. Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.
- xvii. 28, 11. 46, 297. In Him we live, and move, and are.
- „ 29, 1. 99. We must not suppose the Divinity to be like unto gold.
- xix. 15, 1. 318. Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you.
- xxii. 11, 1. 424. I did not see for the brightness of that light.

ROMANS.

- i. 20, 11. 34. For the invisible things of Him are clearly seen.
- „ 22, 1. 16. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.
- „ 28, 1. 253. God delivered them up to a reprobate sense.
- ii. 21, 1. 318. Thou therefore that teachest another teachest not thyself.
- viii. 13, 11. 34, 249. If by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh.
- „ 14, 1. 213; 11. 250. Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.
- „ 23, 11. 21. We ourselves groan within ourselves.
- „ 24, 1. 72, 444. Hope that is seen is not hope.
- „ 26, 11. 1. The Spirit asketh for us with unspeakable groanings.
- x. 17, 1. 59, 186, 289. Faith cometh by hearing.
- xi. 23, 11. 189. How incomprehensible are His judgments.
- xii. 2, 1. 379. Be reformed in the newness of your mind.
- „ 3, 1. 195. Not to be more wise than it behoveth to be wise.
- xiii. 1, 1. 122. Those that are, are ordained of God.

I. CORINTHIANS.

- ii. 1, 1. 319. And I, brethren, when I came to you.
- „ 2, 1. 158. I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

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- ii. 9, I. 63, 83, 229, 265, 398; II. 199. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard.
- „ 10, I. 181; II. 395, 237. The Spirit searcheth all things.
- „ 14, I. 140, 270; II. 143, 278, 291. The sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit.
- „ 15, I. 181; II. 237. The spiritual man judgeth all things.
- iii. 1, 2, I. 128. As little ones in Christ, I gave you milk to drink, not meat.
- „ 16, I. 307. Know you not that you are the temple of God.
- „ 18, I. 16. If any man among you seem to be wise in this world, let him become a fool.
- „ 19, I. 16; II. 142. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.
- vi. 17, I. 120, 209. He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
- vii. 27, I. 247. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.
- „ 29, I. 44, 247. This therefore I say, brethren, the time is short.
- ix. 22, II. 282. I became all things to all men.
- x. 4, II. 192. This rock is Christ.
- xii. 7, I. 283. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit.
- „ 8, I. 180. Diversity of spiritual gifts.
- „ 9, I. 283. Faith, and the grace of healing.
- „ 10, I. 179. The discerning of spirits.
- xiii. 1, I. 284. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels.
- „ 2, II. 72. And have not charity, I am nothing.
- „ 4, II. 73. Charity is patient.
- „ 5, II. 228. Seeketh not her own.
- „ 6, I. 344. Rejoiceth with the truth.
- „ 7, I. 438. Charity believeth all things.
- „ 10, I. 86; II. 18, 64. When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.
- „ 11, I. 125, 378. When I became a man I put away the things of a child.
- „ 12, II. 197. Now I know in part.
- xv. 54, II. 251. Death is swallowed up in victory.

II. CORINTHIANS.

- i. 7, II. 248. As you are partakers of the sufferings.
- iii. 6, I. 136. The letter killeth, but the Spirit quickeneth.
- iv. 17, I. 272. An eternal weight of glory.
- v. 1, II. 230, 249. We have a building of God.
- „ 4, II. 58. We would not be unclothed, but clothed upon.
- vi. 10, I. 255, 396. As having nothing, and possessing all things.
- „ 14, I. 14. What fellowship hath light with darkness?
- „ 16, II. 16. You are the temple of the living God.
- xi. 14, I. 93, 300. Satan transformeth himself into an angel of light.

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- xii. 2, i. 170. Whether in the body, I know not.
 .. 3, ii. 70. Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell.
 .. 4, i. 176; ii. 82, 105, 106. Secret words which it is not granted to man to utter.
 .. 9, i. 47; ii. 161, 245. Virtue is made perfect in infirmity.

GALATIANS.

- i. 8, i. 159, 186. Though we or an angel from heaven preach to you.
 ii. 2, i. 162. Lest I should run, or had run in vain.
 .. 14, i. 164. When I saw that they walked not uprightly.
 .. 20, ii. 65, 121, 251. I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me.
 iv. 6, ii. 203. God hath sent the spirit of His Son into your hearts.
 v. 17, i. 270; ii. 33, 92. The flesh lusteth against the spirit.
 vi. 17, ii. 241. I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body.

EPHESIANS.

- ii. 15, ii. 123. Making void the law of commandments.
 iii. 17, ii. 190. Being rooted and founded in charity.
 iv. 22, ii. 249. Put off according to former conversation the old man.
 .. 24, i. 379, 416. Put on the new man.
 vi. 11, ii. 33. Put now on the armour of God.

PHILIPPIANS.

- i. 21, ii. 159. To die is gain.
 .. 23, ii. 58. Having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.
 iii. 20, i. 445. Our conversation is in heaven.
 iv. 7, i. 400; ii. 116. The peace of God which surpasseth all understanding.

COLOSSIANS.

- ii. 3, i. 153; ii. 27, 193. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
 .. 9, i. 158. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally.
 iii. 5, i. 251. Avarice, the service of idols.
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 ,, ,, II. 298. Upholding all things by the word of His power
 xi. 1, I. 71, 222. Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for.
 ,, 6, I. 442. Without Faith it is impossible to please God.
 ,, ,, I. 62, 85. He that cometh to God must believe that He is.

S. JAMES.

- i. 17, II. 162, 275. Every perfect gift is from above.
 ,, 26, II. 310. If any man think himself to be religious.
 ii. 20, I. 240. Faith without works is dead.

I. S. PETER.

- i. 12, II. 263. On whom the angels desire to look.
 iv. 18, II. 12. The just man shall scarcely be saved.
 v. 9, I. 442. Whom resist, stedfast in the faith.

II. S. PETER.

- i. 2, II. 205. Grace to you and peace.
 ,, 19, I. 186. We have the more firm prophetic word.

I. S. JOHN.

- iii. 2, I. 440. When He shall appear, we shall be like Him.
 iv. 10, II. 169. Not as though we had loved God.
 ,, 18, II. 59, 130. Perfect charity casteth out fear.

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 ,, 17, II. 200, 244. To him that overcometh I will give the hidden
 manna, and . . . a white counter.
 ,, 26, II. 200. I will give him power over the nations.
 iii. 5, II. 200. He that shall overcome, shall be clothed in white garments.
 ,, 8, I. 347. Behold I have given before thee an opened door.
 ,, 12, II. 200. I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.
 ,, 20, II. 88. Behold I stand at the gate and knock.
 ,, 21, II. 200. To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit in My throne.
 x. 9, II. 28. Take the book and eat it up.
 xii. 4, I. 260. His tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven.

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| xvii. | 3, | I. | 261. | I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet coloured beast. |
| xviii. | 7, | I. | 28, 256. | As much as she hath glorified herself, so much torment. |
| xxi. | 23, | II. | 53. | And the city hath no need of the sun. |
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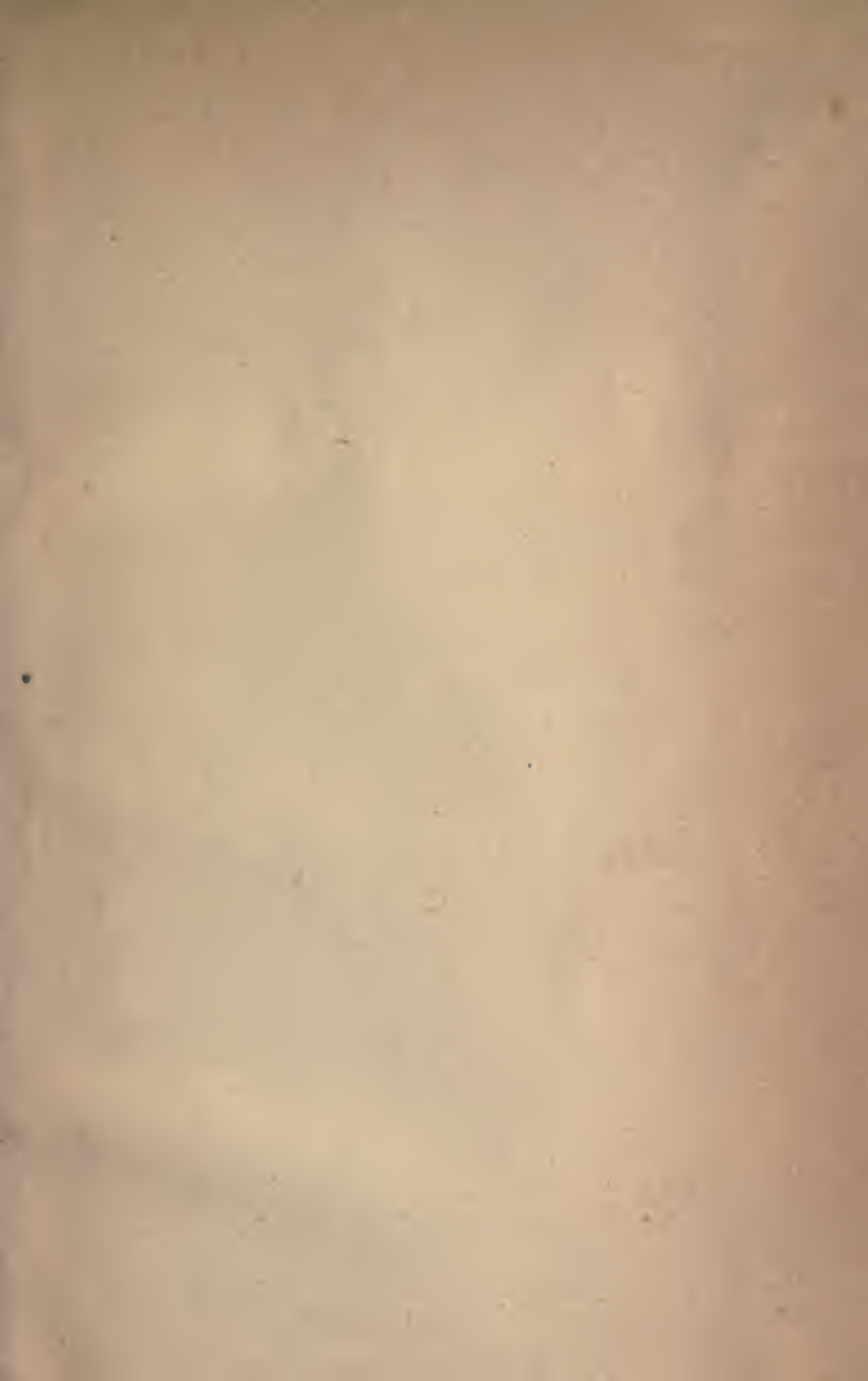
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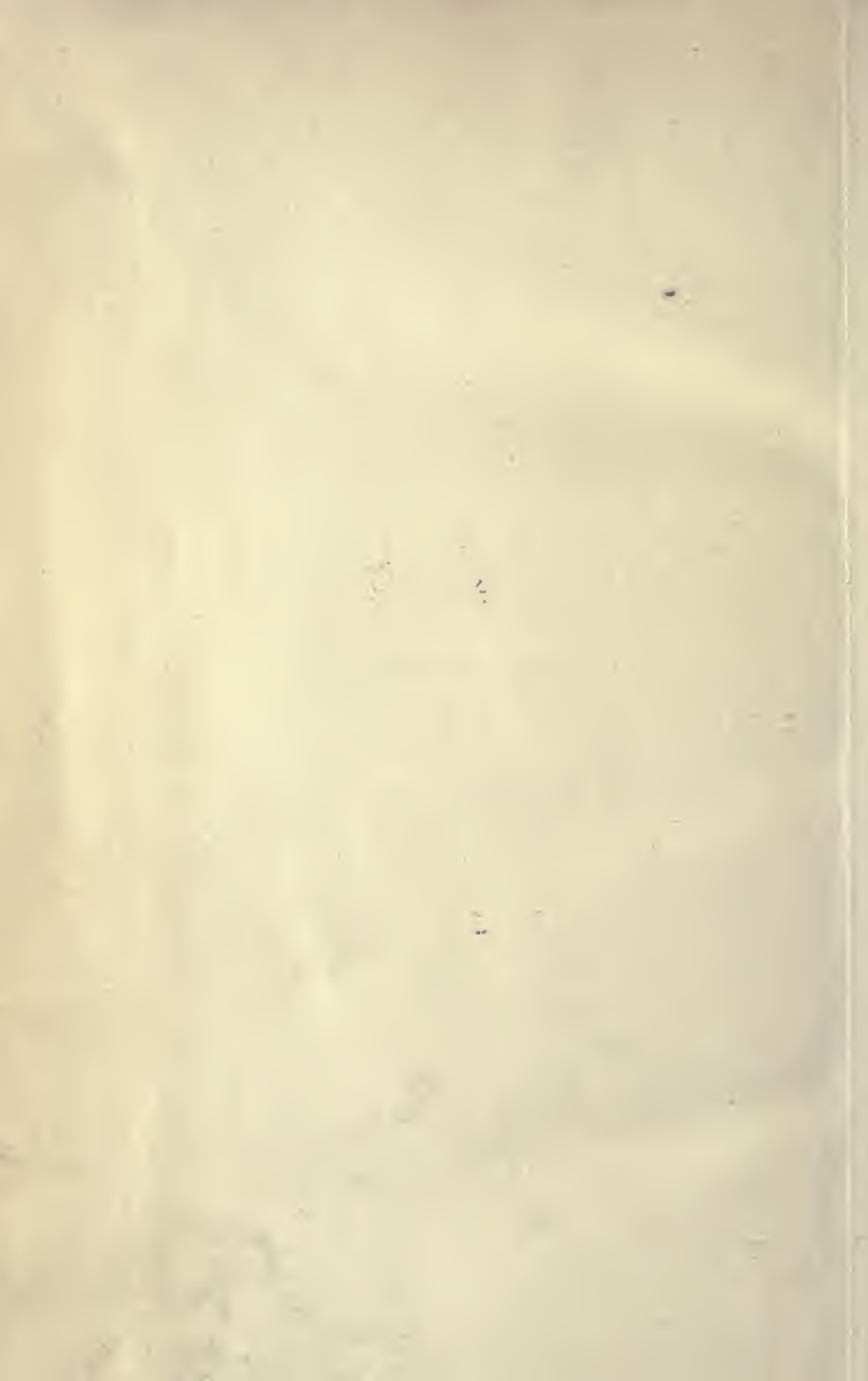
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