

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Translated from the critical edition of

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and edited by

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SPIRITUAL CANTICLE

POEMS

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stability of a betrothal. Wherefore the Bride adds these words :

There I promised him to be his Bride.

5. For even as a maiden that is betrothed sets not her love upon another than her Spouse, nor directs her thoughts¹ or her actions to any other, even so the soul in this estate has no longer any affections of the will or acts of knowledge of the understanding, nor any thought or action which is not wholly turned to God, together with its desires. It is, as it were, Divine and deified, so that in even its first movements it has² naught whereto the will of God is opposed, in so far as it can understand. For even as in an imperfect soul its first movements at least, according to the understanding and according to the will and memory and desires, are as a general rule inclined³ to evil and imperfection, even so, the soul in this estate, according to the understanding and will and memory and desires, in its first movements, is as a general rule moved and inclined to God, through the great help and stability which it already has in God and through its perfect conversion to that which is good. All this David clearly explained when he said, speaking of his soul in this estate : Shall not my soul perchance be subject to God ? Yea, for from Him cometh my salvation, and He is my God and my Saviour ; my receiver, I shall not be any more moved.⁴ By saying 'my receiver', he means that, because his soul is received in God and united in Him, as we say here, he could not be moved any more against God.

STANZA XIX

My soul has employed⁵ itself And all my possessions in his service:

Now I guard no flock nor have I now other office, For now my exercise is in loving alone.

EXPOSITION

1. Inasmuch as the soul has said in the last stanza (or, rather, the Bride has said) that she has given herself wholly

¹ [*Lit.*, 'her care.']

² Md adds : 'ordinarily.'

³ Br, V, Vd have an erroneous reading here [*indignados* for *inclinados*].

⁴ Psalm lxi, 2 [A.V., lxii, 1-2].

⁵ G, V, Gr : 'surrendered.' [Cf. the first words of §2, below.]

to the Spouse, and has reserved naught for herself, she now, in this stanza, sets forth the manner and mode wherein she accomplishes this. She says that her soul and her body and her faculties and all her abilities are occupied, no longer in the things which concern herself, but in those which pertain to the service of her Spouse. And that for this reason she no longer goes about seeking her own gain, nor pursues her own tastes, nor busies herself in other things, and in intercourse that has naught to do with God, and is alien to Him. And that even with God Himself she has no other style or manner of intercourse save the exercise of love, inasmuch as she has changed and bartered that earlier mode of intercourse which she had with Him into love, even as she will now say :

My soul has employed itself

2. In saying that her soul has employed itself, the Bride refers to the surrender of herself which she made to the Beloved in that union of love wherein her soul, with all its faculties, understanding, will and memory, was dedicated and subjected to His service. Her understanding she employs in the understanding of those things that pertain most nearly to His service in order to do them ; her will, in loving all that pleases God and in having affection of the will for God in all things ; and her memory, in caring for that which pertains to His service and will be most pleasing to Him. And she says further :

And all my possessions in his service.

3. By all her possessions she here understands all that pertains to the sensual part of the soul, which things, she says, are employed in His service, even as is the rational or the spiritual part whereof we have just spoken in the last line. In this sensual part is included the body with all its senses and faculties, both interior and exterior. In this line is understood also all ability of the nature and the reason, as we have said—namely, the four passions, the natural and spiritual desires, and the other possessions of the soul, all of which things, she says, are now employed in His service. For she now orders the body according to God, rules and governs the inward and outward senses according to God and directs their actions towards Him ; and all the four passions likewise she keeps bound¹ to God ; because she

¹ Lch : 'ordered.'

neither has enjoyment save from God, neither has hope save in God, nor fears any save God, neither does she grieve save according to God ; and likewise her desires are directed wholly to God, with all her cares.

4. All these possessions are now employed in God, in such manner that all the parts thereof which we have described tend,¹ in their first movements, without the soul's being conscious of it, to work in God and through God. For the understanding, the will and the memory go straightway to God ; and the affections, the senses, the desires and appetites, hope, enjoyment and the rest of the soul's possessions are inclined to God from the first moment, even though, as I say, the soul may not realize that it is working for God. Wherefore the soul in such case very frequently works for God, and is intent upon Him and the things that pertain to Him without thinking or remembering that it is doing aught for Him : for the use and habit which it has acquired in this manner of procedure deprives it of all observation and care, and even of the fervent acts² which it was wont to have at the beginning. And since all these possessions are employed in God after the manner aforesaid, the soul must needs likewise have that which it describes in the line following, namely :

Now I guard no flock.

5. Which is as much as to say : Now I go no longer after my tastes and desires ; for, having set them upon God and given them to Him, the soul no longer pastures them nor guards them for herself. And not only does she say that she no longer guards a flock, but she says further :

Nor have I now other office.

6. Many offices, and unprofitable ones, has the soul before she succeeds in making this gift and surrender of herself and of her possessions to the Beloved ; for all the habits and imperfections that she had may be described as so many occupations, which may have respect to speaking and thinking and acting, and she was accustomed not to behave in these things as is meet and fitting for perfection. With respect to this a soul is ever inclined to some vicious employment which it never completely conquers until it truly

¹ Md adds : ' ordinarily.'

² Md adds : ' of sensible devotion.'

employs its possessions in the service of God ; and, as we have said, all its words and thoughts and actions are then of God, and it no longer occupies itself in murmuring, nor in any other imperfection, whether of speech or of the other faculties ; and thus it is as though she were to say : I am no longer occupied or busied in other commerce or pastimes or things of the world.

For now my exercise is in loving alone.

7. This is as though she had said : All these faculties and all these possessions with which my soul and my body are provided, which aforetime I employed to some extent upon other useless things, I have set in the exercise of love. This is that which David says : *Fortitudinem meam ad te custodiam*.¹ Which signifies that all the ability of my soul and body is moved through love, that all that I do I do through love, and all that I suffer I suffer for love's sake.

8. Here it is to be noted that, when the soul attains to this estate, all its exercise, both of its spiritual part and of its sensual part,² be it in doing or in suffering, after whatsoever manner it be, causes it ever greater love and greater delight in God ;³ and even the very exercise of prayer and converse with God which it was frequently wont to have in considerations of a different kind and in other ways, is now wholly the exercise of love. So that, whether its commerce be with temporal things, or whether its exercise be concerning spiritual things,⁴ a soul in this case can ever say : For now my exercise is in loving alone.

9. Happy life and happy estate and happy the soul that arrives thereat, where all is now substance of love to it, and joy and delight of betrothal ; wherein the Bride may indeed say to the Divine Spouse those words which she addresses to Him out of pure love in the Songs :⁵ *Omnia poma nova, et vetera, servavi tibi*.⁶ Which is as if she should say : My Beloved, I desire for Thy sake to have all that is hard and

¹ This sentence is a marginal addition of the Saint's [cf. *Cántico*, etc., *ed. cit.*, II, p. 7], not found in Br, Md, or the codices, which read : ' . . . in the exercise of love ; which signifies that all . . . , etc.'

² Bz, 8654, Gr, Lch, Bj, Md : ' both that of its spiritual part, which is the soul, and that of its sensual part, which is the body.'

³ Bz, 8654, Gr, Lch, Bj, Md : ' in the Beloved.'

⁴ Bz, 8654, Gr, Lch, Bj, Md add : ' and commerce with God.'

⁵ Bz, 8654, Gr, Lch, Md : ' in the Divine Songs.'

⁶ Canticles vii, 13.

sings here of the end of the fatigues of the Bride and the fulfilment of her desires, saying that at last the turtle-dove has found the mate of her desire upon the green banks. This is to say that she now sits upon the green bough, delighting in her Beloved ; and that she now drinks the clear water of lofty contemplation and wisdom of God, water which is cold, signifying the refreshment that she has in Him ; and likewise settles beneath the shade of His protection and favour, which she had so greatly desired, wherein she is comforted and refreshed after a delectable and Divine manner, even as she declares joyously in the Songs, saying : *Sub umbra illius, quem desideraveram, sedi, et fructus ejus dulcis gutturi meo.*¹ Which is to say : I sat down under the shade of him that I had desired, and his fruit is sweet to my taste.

STANZA XXXIV

In solitude she lived And in solitude now has built her nest,
And in solitude her dear one alone guides her, Who likewise in
solitude was wounded by love.

EXPOSITION

1. Continuing, the Spouse describes the contentment which He derives from the solitude experienced by the soul before she reached this union, and that which He has from the solitude with respect to all fatigues and trials and hindrances which now is hers, since she has made a tranquil and delectable abode in her Beloved, and is free and far withdrawn from all things and the trouble which they bring. Likewise He manifests His pleasure that this solitude which the soul now possesses should have been a means whereby she could indeed be guided and moved by the Spouse, which could not be aforetime, since she had not then made her nest in solitude—that is, had not attained a habit of perfection and tranquillity² of solitude whereby she is now moved and guided to the Divine things of the Spirit of God. He says not only that He now guides her in this solitude, but that³

¹ Canticles ii, 3.

² 'Tranquillity' (*quietud*) is the Saint's emendation for 'virtue' (*virtud*), which was the word originally used in the Sanlúcar Codex and is in all the others, except Gr. Br and Md also have 'virtue.'

³ Lch omits all that stands between 'tranquillity of solitude' and 'but that.'

He does it alone, communicating Himself to her without other means—either of angels, or men, or images, or forms ;¹ and that, even as she has fallen in love with Him, so is He wounded with love for her in this solitude and liberty of the spirit which comes to her through the solitude aforementioned. For this solitude He greatly loves, and says thus :

In solitude she lived

2. The little turtle-dove aforementioned, which is the soul, lived in solitude before it found the Beloved in this estate of union. For the soul that desires God is in no wise comforted or satisfied by any company soever ; all things make and cause within it ever greater solitude until it find Him.

And in solitude now has built her nest,

3. The solitude wherein the soul lived aforesaid was its desire to be without all the blessings of the world, for the sake of its Spouse, even as we have said of the turtle-dove. It strove to become perfect, and to acquire perfect solitude, wherein the soul attains to union with the Word, and consequently to all refreshment and rest. It is this that is signified by the nest which is here spoken of—namely, rest and repose. And it is thus as though He were to say : In this solitude wherein aforesaid she lived, working therein with labour and anguish, because she was not perfect, she has now set her rest and refreshment, since she has now acquired this solitude perfectly in God. Of this David, speaking spiritually, says : *Etenim passer invenit sibi domum, et turtur nidum ubi reponat pullos suos.*² Which signifies : The bird³ has indeed found a house for herself, and the turtle-dove a nest wherein to rear her young. That is, an abode in God where she may satisfy her desires and faculties.

And in solitude . . . guides her.

4. This signifies : In that solitude which the soul has with respect to all things and wherein she is alone with God, He guides and moves her and raises her to Divine things—that

¹ Md adds : 'apart from the kinds of knowledge (*las inteligencias*) mentioned in the second line of stanza thirty-three' (in this edition stanza thirty-two).

² Psalm lxxxiii, 4 [A.V., lxxxiv, 3]. G, Br, Vd, Lch also give this text.

³ See p. 88, n. 2, above.

is to say, He raises her understanding to Divine intelligence, since it is now alone and detached from all other strange and contradictory intelligence ; and He moves her will freely to the love of God, for it is now alone and free from other affections ; and He fills her memory with Divine knowledge, since it, too, is now alone and emptied of other imaginings and fancies. For as soon as the soul disencumbers these faculties and voids them of all lower things and of all attachment to higher things, leaving them in solitude, with naught else, God at once uses them for the invisible and Divine, and it is God Who guides the soul in this solitude, even as S. Paul says concerning the perfect : *Qui spiritu Dei aguntur*, etc.¹ That is : They are moved by the Spirit of God ; which is the same as saying : In solitude there guides her . . .

. . . Her dear one alone.

5. This signifies that not only does He guide her in her solitude, but that it is He Himself alone Who works in her, using no other intermediary. For it is the characteristic of this union of the soul with God in the Spiritual Marriage that God works in her and communicates Himself to her alone, not now by means of angels, as aforetime, neither by means of her natural ability. For the outward and inward senses, and all creatures, and even the soul herself, have very little to do with the receiving of these great and supernatural favours which God grants in this estate : they belong not to the ability and natural working and diligence of the soul—He alone works them in her.² And the reason for this is that He finds her alone, as has been said, and thus He will give her no other company, nor will He have her profit by any other or trust any other save Himself only. And it is also fitting that, since the soul has now left all things and passed through all intermediaries, soaring above them all to God, God Himself should be her guide and the intermediary to Himself. Now that the soul has soared above everything, and is withdrawn from everything, none of these things is now of any profit or service to her that she may soar higher, save the Word Himself, which is the Spouse. And He is so greatly enamoured of her that it is He alone Who desires to work these things. And so He next says :

Who likewise in solitude was wounded by love.

¹ Romans viii, 14.

² Md adds : ' and with her.'

6. For, now that the soul has remained alone and is withdrawn from all things through love of Him,¹ He becomes greatly enamoured of her in that solitude, even as she also was enamoured of Him in solitude, being wounded within herself by love for Him ; and thus He will not leave her alone, but, being in His turn wounded with love for her, through the solitude which she is experiencing because of Him, He alone guides her alone, causing her to surrender to Him, and fulfilling her desires, which He would not do in her had He not found her in solitude. Wherefore the same Spouse says of the soul through the prophet Hosea : *Ducam illam in solitudinem, et loquar ad cor eius.*² Which signifies : I will guide her to solitude and will there speak to her heart. He says that He will speak to her heart, meaning that He will give Himself to her, for to speak to the heart is to satisfy the heart, which is not satisfied with less than God.

STANZA XXXV

BRIDE³

Let us rejoice, Beloved, And let us go to see ourselves in thy beauty,
To the mountain or the hill where flows the pure water ; Let us enter farther into the thicket.

EXPOSITION

1. Now that the perfect union of love is made between the soul and God, the soul desires to employ and exercise herself in the properties which pertain to love, and thus it is she who speaks in this stanza with the Spouse, praying Him for three things which belong to love. First, she desires to receive the joy and sweetness of love, and for this she prays Him when she says : ' Let us rejoice, Beloved.' The second desire is that she may become like to the Beloved, and for this she prays Him when she says : ' Let us go to see ourselves in thy beauty.' And the third desire is to delve into the things and secrets of the same Beloved, and to know

¹ In the margin the Saint has written here : ' How, although the soul rejoices in company, it desires (*apetece*) solitude.'

² Hosea ii, 14.

³ The Saint himself inserts this word, which is not copied by Br, Md or the MSS.

and similitudes, they allow something of that which they feel to overflow, and utter secret mysteries from the abundance of their spirits rather than explain these things rationally. These similitudes, if they be not read with the simplicity of the spirit of love and understanding embodied in them, appear to be nonsense rather than the expression of reason, as may be seen in the Divine Songs of Solomon and in other books of the Divine Scripture, where, since the Holy Spirit cannot express¹ the abundance of His meaning in common and vulgar terms, He utters² mysteries in strange figures and similitudes.³ Whence it follows that no words of holy doctors, despite all they have said and may yet say, can ever expound these things fully, neither could they be expounded in words of any kind. That which is expounded of them, therefore, is ordinarily the least part of that which they contain.

2. Since these stanzas, therefore, have been composed under the influence of a love which comes from abounding mystical knowledge, they cannot be fairly expounded, nor shall I attempt so to expound them, but only to throw upon them some general light⁴ (since Your Reverence has so desired).⁵ And this I think to be best, for the sayings of love are better expounded⁶ in their fullness, so that everyone may pluck advantage from them according to the manner and to the measure of his spirit, than abbreviated to make sense to which not every taste can accommodate itself. And thus, although they are expounded after a certain manner, there is no reason why anyone should be bound to this exposition. For mystical wisdom (which comes through love, whereof the present stanzas treat) needs not to be comprehended distinctly in order to produce love and affection in the soul; it is like to faith, whereby we love God without comprehending Him.⁷

3. I shall therefore be very brief, although I shall be unable to refrain from extending myself in certain places where the matter requires it, and where occasion offers to expound and treat certain points and effects of prayer, for

¹ B: 'since the Holy Spirit desires not to express . . .'

² S: 'the Holy Spirit utters . . .'

³ A abbreviates: 'in vulgar terms and similitudes, it follows thence that no words . . .' etc.

⁴ A, Av, B, Bz, S: 'some light of a general kind.'

⁵ S omits the words in brackets.

⁶ Bz, S: 'better left.'

⁷ S adds: 'clearly.'

since there are many such in the stanzas I cannot refrain from treating of some. But I shall leave aside the commonest of them, and treat briefly the most extraordinary which come to pass in those that, by the favour of God, have left behind the beginners' state. And this for two reasons : the one, that there are so many things written for beginners ; the other, that I speak herein with Your Reverence by your command, and to Your Reverence Our Lord has granted the favour of drawing you forth from these beginnings and leading you¹ farther onward to the bosom of His Divine love. Thus I trust that, although I may write here of certain points of scholastic theology concerning the interior commerce of the soul with its God, it may not be in vain to have talked somewhat after the manner of pure spirit ; for though Your Reverence may lack² the practice of scholastic theology wherein are comprehended Divine verities, yet you lack not that of mystical theology, which is the science of love, and wherein these verities are not only known but also experienced.

4. And to the end that all I say (which I desire to subject to better judgement, and to submit entirely to that of Holy Mother Church) may be the better received, I think not to affirm aught that is mine,³ trusting to my own experience, or to that of other spiritual persons⁴ whom I have known, or to that which I have heard from them (although I purpose to profit by both) unless it be confirmed and expounded by the authorities from the Divine Scripture, at the least in those things which appear to be⁵ the most difficult of comprehension. Wherein I shall follow this manner—to wit, that first I shall set down the texts in their Latin and then shall expound them with respect to the subject which they illustrate. And first I shall set down all the stanzas together, and then in order shall set down each one separately with intent to expound it ; whereof I shall expound each line, setting it down at the beginning of its exposition.

END OF THE PROLOGUE

¹ S modifies : ' that I speak herein with persons to whom Our Lord has granted the favour of having drawn them forth from these beginnings and led them farther onward . . . ' etc.

² S : ' for though some may lack . . . they lack not . . . ' etc.

³ S omits ' that is mine.'

⁴ Av, Bz : ' other particular spiritual persons.'

⁵ S : ' which are.'

touched with fear and inward grief of heart at so great perdition and peril, and renounces all things, ceases from all business and delays not a day neither an hour. Then, with yearning and sighs that come from the heart, wounded now with love for God, she begins to invoke her Beloved, and says :

STANZA THE FIRST

Whither hast thou hidden thyself, And hast left me, O Beloved,
to my sighing ?
Thou didst flee like the hart, having wounded me :¹ I went out
after thee, calling, and thou wert gone.²

EXPOSITION

2. In this first stanza, the soul that is enamoured³ of the Word, the Son of God, her Spouse, desiring to be united with Him through clear and essential vision,⁴ sets forth her love's anxiety, reproaching Him for His absence, the more so because, since He has pierced and wounded⁵ her with love for Him, for the which she has abandoned all created things, yea even herself, she has still to suffer the absence of her Beloved and is not yet loosed⁶ from her mortal flesh that she may be able to have fruition of Him in the glory of eternity. And thus she says :

Whither hast thou hidden thyself ?

3. It is as though she said : O Word, my Spouse, show me the place where Thou art hidden ; wherein she begs Him to manifest His Divine Essence ; for the place where the Son of God is hidden is, as S. John⁷ says, ' the bosom of the Father,' which is the Divine Essence, the which is removed from every mortal eye and hidden from all human understanding. For this cause Isaiah, speaking with God, said : ' Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself.'⁸ Hence it is to be noted that, however lofty are the communications

¹ G, Ej : ' leaving me wounded.'

² G : ' and thou wert already gone.' Ej, S : ' thou wert already gone.'

³ Ej, G, S : ' that is already wounded and enamoured.'

⁴ Bg : ' union.'

⁵ *herido y llagado*. Cf. pp. 54, 224-5, above and below. Jaén alone omits *y llagado*. Bg has : ' . . . and wounded her by His hand.'

⁶ Sg : ' is not yet killed, taken away and loosed.' Ej : ' is not yet taken away and loosed.'

⁷ S. John i, 18.

⁸ Isaiah xlv, 15.

of a soul with God in this life, and the revelations of His presence, and however high and exalted is its knowledge of Him, they are not God in His Essence, nor have aught to do with Him. For in truth He is still hidden from the soul, and therefore it ever becometh the soul, amid all these grandeurs, to consider Him as hidden, and to seek Him as One hidden, saying : ' Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself ? ' For neither is a sublime communication of Him or a sensible revelation of His presence a sure testimony of His gracious presence, nor is aridity or the want of all these things in the soul a testimony of His absence¹ from it. For which cause says the Prophet Job : If He comes to me I shall not see Him ; and if He goes away, I shall not understand Him.²

4. Wherein is to be understood that if the soul should experience any great communication or spiritual knowledge or feeling it must not for that reason persuade itself that that feeling is to possess or see God clearly and essentially, or that it is to possess God more completely or be more deeply in God, however profound it may be ;³ and that if all these sensible and spiritual communications fail, and it remains in aridity, darkness and desolation, it must not think that for that reason God is failing it in one estate more than in another. For in reality the one estate can give no assurance to a soul that it is in His grace, neither can the other, that it is without it. As the Wise Man says :⁴ No man can know if he be worthy of grace or of abomination before God. So that the principal intent of the soul in this line is not merely to beg for sensible and affective devotion, wherein there is neither certainty nor evidence of the possession of the Spouse in this life by grace, but also to beg for the clear presence and vision of His Essence, wherewith it desires to be given assurance and satisfaction in the next.

5. This same thing was signified by the Bride in the Divine Songs when, desiring to be united with the Divinity of the Word her Spouse, she begged the Father for it, saying : Tell me where thou feedest, and where thou dost rest at noon.⁵ For to entreat Him to show her where He fed was to beg that she might be shown the Essence of the Divine

¹ Sg had *presence*, which was emended to *absence*. Bz : ' . . . in the soul the less clear testimony of His presence.'

² Job ix, 11.

³ Bg : ' . . . that that feeling is to possess God truly, or to be in God, however profound such experiences may be, to fear [*temer* for *tener*, an evident slip] God more.'

⁴ Ecclesiastes ix, 1.

⁵ Canticles i, 6.

Word, His Son, for the Father feeds not upon aught else than upon His only Son,¹ since He is the glory of the Father. And to beg Him to show her the place where He rested was to beg that selfsame thing, since the Son alone is the delight of the Father,² Who rests not neither is present in any place save in His beloved Son, in Whom He rests wholly, communicating to Him all His Essence—‘at noon,’ which is in Eternity, where He ever begets Him and has begotten Him. It is this pasture, then, of the Word-Spouse³ where the Father feeds in infinite glory, and this flowery bed,⁴ where with infinite delight of love He rests profoundly hidden from every mortal eye and from every creature, that the Bride-Soul entreats⁵ when she says: ‘Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?’

6. And, to the end that this thirsty soul may come to find her Spouse, and be united with Him through union of love in this life, so far as she may, and allay her thirst,⁶ with this drop that can be tasted of Him in this life, it will be well, since the soul asks this of her Spouse, that we should take her hand on His behalf and answer her by showing her the surest place where He is hidden, so that she may surely find Him there with the perfection and pleasure that is possible in this life,⁷ and thus may not begin to roam about vainly in the tracks of her companions. To the which end it is to be observed that the Word, the Son of God, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is hidden, in essence and in presence, in the inmost being of the soul. Wherefore, the soul that would find Him must issue forth from all things according to the affection and will, and enter within itself in deepest recollection,⁸ so that all things are to it as though they were not. Hence S. Augustine, speaking with God in the Soliloquies,⁹ said:

¹ G, S: ‘only begotten Son.’ Ej: ‘on aught else save on the Word His Son.’ ² A, without apparent motive, omits several lines here.

³ S: ‘This pasture, then, is the Word-Spouse.’

⁴ S: ‘[which] is the flowery bed.’

⁵ S: ‘... every creature, and this the Bride-Soul entreats.’

⁶ Jaén reads ‘being,’ by a slight slip [*ser* for *sed*].

⁷ Ej: ‘so that she may there see that which is sure with the perfect possession and pleasure that is possible in this life.’ G has ‘read’ [*lea*] for ‘see’ [*vea*].

⁸ Bg: ‘be united within itself in recollection.’ A, B: ‘enter within itself in recollection.’

⁹ *Soliloquies*, Chap. xxxi: ‘Misi nuntios meos omnes sensus exteriores, ut quærerem te; et non inveni, quia male quærebam. Video enim, lux mea Deus qui illuminasti me, quia male te per illos quærebam, quia es tu intus.’

'I found Thee not, O Lord, without, because I erred in seeking Thee without that wert within.'¹ God, then, is hidden within the soul, and there the good contemplative must seek Him with love, saying : 'Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

x 7. Come, then, thou soul, most beautiful of all the creatures, that so greatly desirest to know the place where thy Beloved is, in order to seek Him and be united with Him; now thou art told that thou thyself art the lodging wherein He dwells, and the closet and hiding-place wherein He is hidden. Thus it is a matter of great contentment and joy for thee to see that all thy good and thy hope are so near thee as to be within thee, or, to speak more exactly, so near that thou canst not be without them. Behold, says the Spouse, the kingdom of God is within you.² And His servant the apostle S. Paul says : Ye are the temple of God.³

8. A great contentment for the soul is it to understand that God is never absent from the soul,⁴ although it be in mortal sin,⁵ and still less from the soul in grace. What more desirest thou, O soul, and what more seekest thou without thyself, since within thyself thou hast thy riches, thy delights, thy satisfaction, thy fullness and thy kingdom, which is thy Beloved, Whom thy soul desires and seeks? Rejoice thou and be glad in thy inward recollection with Him, since thou x hast Him so near. There desire Him, there adore Him, and go thou not to seek Him outside thyself, for so shalt thou be wearied and distracted; and thou shalt neither find Him nor rejoice in Him more surely or more quickly or more intimately than within thyself. There is but one thing to be remembered—that, although He be within thee, He is hidden. But it is a great thing to know the place where He is hidden in order to seek Him there with certainty. And this is that which thou also entreatest here, O soul, when with affection of love thou sayest : 'Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

x 9. But yet thou sayest : If He Whom my soul loves is within me, how is it that I find Him not, neither feel Him? The reason is that He is hidden and that thou hidest not thyself likewise that thou mayest find Him and feel Him;

¹ G, Ej, Sg end : 'wert within me.'

² S. Luke xvii, 21.

³ 2 Corinthians vi, 16.

⁴ A, Sg, G, Ej : 'from it.'

⁵ Sg has a marginal addition : 'giving to it and preserving in it its natural being.'

for he that has to find some hidden thing must enter very secretly¹ even into that same hidden place where it is, and, when he finds it, he too is hidden like that which he has found. Since, then, thy beloved Spouse is the treasure hidden in the field of thy soul, for the which treasure the wise merchant gave all that he had,² it will be fitting that, in order to find it, thou forget all that is thine, withdraw thyself from all creatures, hide in the interior closet of thy spirit,³ and, shutting the door upon thee (that is to say, shutting thy will upon all things), pray to thy Father Who is in secret.⁴ Thus, remaining secretly with Him, shalt thou then experience His presence in secret, and shalt love Him and have fruition of Him in secret, and shalt delight in Him in secret—that is to say,⁵ beyond all that is attainable by tongue and sense.

10. Come, then, beauteous soul, since now thou knowest that the Beloved of thy desire dwells hidden within thy bosom, strive to be securely hidden with Him, and in thy bosom thou shalt embrace Him and experience His presence with affection of love. And see, He bids thee to that hiding-place, through Isaiah, saying : Come, enter thou into thy chambers, shut thy doors about thee (that is, shut all thy faculties upon all creatures), hide thyself a little for a moment⁶—that is, for this moment of temporal life. For if in this brief space of life, O soul, thou keepest thy heart with all diligence, as says the Wise Man,⁷ without any doubt God will give thee that which later He describes, through Isaiah, in these words : I will give thee the hidden treasures and I will reveal to thee the substance and mysteries of the secrets.⁸ This substance of the secrets is God Himself, for God is the substance of faith and the conception thereof, and faith is the secret and the mystery. And when this that faith keeps secret and concealed from us is revealed and made manifest, which is, as S. Paul says,⁹ the perfection of

¹ [*Lit.*, 'very hiddenly.']

² S. Matthew xiii, 44.

³ S. Matthew vi, 6.

⁴ [*Lit.*, 'is hidden.' So, to the end of the sentence, the word (*escondido*) translated 'secret' for the sake of the English is that which above is rendered 'hidden,' because of its connection with *esconder*, 'to hide.']

⁵ Av modifies : 'pray to thy Father Who is in secret, and thou shalt have delight in Him and shalt feel Him and love Him and have fruition of Him in secret, that is to say . . .' A reads similarly.

⁶ Isaiah xxvi, 20. [The word rendered 'chambers' is translated 'closet(s)' in the last paragraph.]

⁷ Proverbs iv, 23.

⁸ Isaiah xlv, 3.

⁹ 1 Corinthians xiii, 10.

God,¹ then shall the substance and mysteries of the secrets be revealed to the soul ; but, in this mortal life, although the soul will not attain to them so purely as in the next, however deeply it hide itself, yet if it hide itself, like Moses,² in the cleft of the rock, which is the true imitation of the perfection of the life of the Son of God, Spouse of the soul, protected by God³ with His right hand, it will merit being shown the ' back parts ' of God, which is to attain to such perfection in this life as to be united and transformed through love in the said Son of God its Spouse. And this in such wise that it will feel itself so closely united with Him and so fully instructed and learned in His mysteries that, so far as the knowledge of Him in this life is concerned, it will no longer need to say : ' Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself ? '

11. Thou hast been told, O soul, what method thou art to follow in order to find the Spouse in thy hiding-place ; but, if thou wilt hear it again, hear a word full of substance and unapproachable truth : it is that thou seek Him in faith and in love, without desiring to find satisfaction in aught, or to taste or understand more than that which it is well for thee to know ; for these two⁴ are the guides⁵ of the blind, which will lead thee, by a way that thou knowest not, to the hidden place of God. Because faith, which is the secret that we have mentioned, is like the feet wherewith the soul journeys to God, and love is the guide that directs it ; and if it continues to discourse and meditate upon⁶ these mysteries and secrets of faith it will merit the revelation to it by love of that which faith holds within itself, which is the Spouse Whom it desires in this life through especial grace⁷ of Divine union with God, as we have said, and in the next life through essential glory, having fruition of Him face to face, and in no way secretly. But meanwhile, although the

¹ A reads : ' for God is the substance of faith, which is the perfection of God,' omitting all that is between these two phrases in the text.

² Exodus xxxiii, 22.

³ Ej, G : ' which is the true imitation of the Passion of Jesus Christ and perfection of His most holy life, protected by God . . . etc.' Sg reads similarly. ⁴ [i.e. faith and love.]

⁵ [lit., ' the blind man's youths,' *los mozos del ciego*]. B has *los mozos del cielo*, ' the youths of heaven,' and Bg, *los modos del cielo*, ' the manners of heaven,' substituting for the following phrase : ' whereby thou wilt not be able to find the hidden place of God.'

⁶ [*manoseando*, lit., ' touching frequently.'] S has *manejando*, ' handling.'

⁷ Jaén, A, Sg omit the following ' of.' S has ' through spiritual grace.' The remaining versions read as in the text.

soul attains to this said union¹ (which is the loftiest estate that it can reach in this life), inasmuch as He is still hidden from it in the bosom of the Father, as we have said, which is the way in which it desires to have fruition of Him in the life to come, the soul says ever : ' Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself ? ' ²

12. Right well doest thou, O soul, to seek Him ever in His hiding-place, for greatly dost thou magnify God, and closely dost thou approach Him, when thou holdest Him to be far more lofty and profound than all that thou canst reach ; remain thou not, therefore, either partly or wholly, in that which thy faculties can comprehend. I mean, be thou never willingly satisfied with that which thou understandest of God,³ but rather with that which thou understandest not of Him ; and do thou never rest in loving and having delight in that which thou understandest or feelest concerning God, but do thou love and have delight in that which thou canst not understand and feel concerning Him ; for this, as we have said, is to seek Him in faith. Since God is unapproachable and hidden, as we have likewise said, however much it seem to thee that thou findest and feelest and understandest Him, thou must ever hold Him as hidden, and serve Him after a hidden manner, as One that is hidden. And be thou not like many ignorant persons who hold a low conception of God, understanding God to be farther off and more completely hidden when they understand Him not and have no consciousness or experience of Him ; the truth being rather the contrary, that, the less clearly⁴ they understand Him, the nearer they are approaching to Him,⁵ for, as says the prophet David,⁶ He made darkness His hiding-place. Thus, when thou drawest near to Him, thou must perforce be conscious of darkness because of the weakness of thy sight. Well doest thou, then, at all times, whether of adversity or of temporal or spiritual prosperity, to hold God

¹ Thus Av, Bz, Jaén. The rest read : ' this Divine union.'

² Ej omits or alters a great part of the passage ' Because faith . . . hidden Thyself.' G also has some variations, but very slight ones.

³ Ej omits the words ' of God . . . understandest not.' G reads : ' . . . of God, but love and have delight in that which thou canst not understand or feel concerning Him ; for this is . . .,' etc.

⁴ S omits ' clearly.'

⁵ This is the reading of G, Ej, Sg. Jaén, B, Bg, A, Av read thus : ' that, the more clearly they understand Him, the nearer they are approaching to Him '—a manifest error, since this is not the thought of the Saint.

⁶ Psalm xvii, 12. [A.V., xviii, 11.]

to be hidden and thus to cry to Him, saying : ' Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself ? '

And hast left me, O Beloved, to my sighing ?

13. The Bride calls Him ' Beloved,' in order the more to move and incline Him to her prayer, for, when God is loved, He responds to the petitions of His lover with great readiness.¹ And this He says through S. John, in these words : If ye abide in Me, ye shall ask all that ye will and it shall be done.² Wherefore the soul can then in truth call Him Beloved when it is wholly with Him and has not its heart set on aught that is outside Him and thus has its thought habitually upon Him. For want of this Delilah asked Samson how he could say that he loved her when his spirit was not with her.³ In this spirit are included the thought and the affection. Some, therefore, call the Spouse ' Beloved ' when He is not in truth their Beloved because they have not their heart wholly with Him ; and thus their petition is of less effect before God ; wherefore they are not at once granted their petition until they persevere in prayer and, at the same time, come to have their spirit more continuously with God, and their heart more wholly with Him in affection of love, for naught is obtained of God save by love.

14. In the words which she then says : ' And hast left me to my sighing,' it is to be observed that the absence of the Beloved causes in the lover a continual sighing, because apart from Him she loves naught, rests in naught and finds relief in naught ; whence a man who indeed loves God will be known by this, namely, if he be content with naught that is less than God. But why do I say ' be content ' ? For although⁴ he have all things at once he will not be content, but rather the more he has, the less satisfied will he be ;⁵ for satisfaction of the heart is not found in the possession of things, but in detachment from them all and in poverty of spirit. Since perfection of love wherein God is possessed with a very intimate⁶ and individual grace consists in this, the soul in this life, when it has attained thereto, lives with

¹ *facilidad*. Ej, Sg, *fielidad*, ' fidelity.' G, ' with grace of fidelity.'

² S. John xv, 7.

³ Judges xvi, 15.

⁴ Ej, G, Sg : ' But why do I say " be content " ? Rather he " occupies himself," for although . . . '

⁵ A : ' but rather, the more he has [of] these, the more satisfied will he be.'

⁶ Av, B, Bg, Bz, G, Ej, Sg : ' united.'

a certain satisfaction, but not with fullness thereof, for David, with all his perfection, expected fullness only in heaven, saying : When Thy glory appears I shall be filled.¹ And thus the peace and tranquillity and satisfaction of heart to which the soul may attain in this life suffice not for it to have within it no more sighing (albeit peaceful and not painful sighing) in the hope of obtaining that which it lacks. For the sighing is connected with the hope.² Such sighing the Apostle declared that he and others had, though they were perfect, saying : We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of sons of God.³ This sighing, then, the soul in this stanza has within herself, in the heart enkindled with love ; for where love wounds, there is the sighing of the wounded soul, crying ever in sorrow for the absence of her Beloved,⁴ above all when, having enjoyed some kind of sweet and delectable communion with the Spouse, He absents Himself and she is left of a sudden dry and alone. Wherefore she says next :

Thou didst flee like the hart.

15. Here it is to be observed that in the Songs the Bride compares the Spouse to the hart and the mountain goat, saying : My Beloved is like to the goat, and to the young of the harts.⁵ And this not only because He is strange and solitary and flees from companions,⁶ like the hart, but also because of the swiftness wherewith He hides and reveals Himself, as He is wont to do in the visits which He makes to devout souls, to refresh them and give them courage, and in the withdrawals and absences which He makes them experience after such visits, in order to prove them⁷ and humble them and teach them. In this way He makes them to grieve the more bitterly for His absence, as the soul now declares in that which follows, saying :

Having wounded me

16. And this is as though she had said : Not only were the sorrow and grief which I suffer ordinarily in Thy absence insufficient for me, but Thou didst wound me yet

¹ Psalm xvi, 15. [A.V., xvii, 15.]

² A, B, Bg : 'with the hope of obtaining that which it lacks.'

³ Romans viii, 23.

⁴ [The text omits 'of her Beloved.']

⁵ Canticles ii, 9.

⁶ Ej, B, G have *compañías*, 'those who keep Him company' ; Bg : *campañas*, 'countries.'

⁷ Ej, G : 'to keep them.'

more, by love, with Thy arrow ; and, increasing my passion and desire for the sight of Thee, Thou dost flee with the swiftness of the hart and allowest not Thyself to be in the very smallest degree comprehended.

17. For the further exposition of this line we must know that beside many other different kinds of visit¹ which God makes to the soul, wounding it and upraising it in love,² He is wont to bestow on it certain hidden touches³ of love, which like a fiery arrow strike and pierce the soul and leave it wholly cauterized⁴ with the fire of love ; and these are properly called the wounds of love, whereof the soul here speaks. So greatly do these wounds enkindle the will, and its affection, that the soul finds itself burning in the fire and flame of love, so much so that it appears to be consumed in that flame which causes it to issue forth from itself and be wholly renewed and enter upon another mode of being ; like the phoenix, that is burned up and afterwards re-born. Of this David speaks and says : My heart was kindled and my reins were changed and I reduced myself to naught and I knew not.⁵

18. The desires and affections, which the Prophet here describes as reins, are all stirred and in that enkindlement of the heart change into Divine affections, and the soul through love is reduced to naught, and knows naught save love. And at this season there takes place the stirring⁶ of these reins, which is much like to a torture, and a yearning to see God—so much so that the rigour wherewith love treats the soul seems to it intolerable ; not because it has been wounded thereby (for aforesaid it held such wounds to be health)⁷ but because it is left thus grieving in love, and has not been wounded more severely, even to the point of death, in which case it would see and unite itself with Him⁸ in a life of perfect love. Wherefore the soul magnifies or describes her pain, and says : ‘ Having wounded me.’

19. That is to say : ‘ Leaving me wounded thus, dying with wounds of love for Thee, Thou hast hidden Thyself with such great swiftness, like to the hart.’ This grief that

¹ Jaén : ‘ many other differences and visits.’ Bg : ‘ many other differences or visits.’ ² S : ‘ wounding it with love.’

³ A, Av, Bz, Bg, B, Sg : ‘ enkindling touches.’

⁴ Sg : ‘ wholly as if taken captive.’

⁵ Psalm lxxii, 21. [A.V., lxxiii, 21–2.]

⁶ *conmutación*. G : *comunicación*, ‘ communication.’

⁷ Av, Ej, G, S, Sg : ‘ to be its health.’

⁸ S : ‘ would be united and joined with Him.’

is so great comes to pass thus because when God inflicts that wound of love upon the soul the affection of the will rises with sudden celerity to the possession of the Beloved, Whose touch it has felt. With equal celerity it feels His absence and its inability to possess Him here¹ as it desires, and thus it is conscious at one and the same time that it is sighing at this same absence, for these visits are not like others wherein God refreshes and satisfies the soul, for these visits He makes only to wound rather than to heal, and to afflict rather than to satisfy, since they serve to quicken the knowledge and increase the desire, and, consequently, the pain and yearning to see God. These are called spiritual wounds of love, and are to the soul most delectable and desirable ; for which cause it would fain be ever dying a thousand deaths from these lance-thrusts, for they cause it to issue forth from itself and enter into God. This the Bride expresses in the line following, saying :

I went out after thee, calling, and thou wert gone.²

20. There can be no medicine for the wounds of love save that which comes from him that dealt the wounds. For this cause this wounded soul went out, in the strength of the fire³ caused by her wound, after her Beloved that had wounded her, calling to Him that He might heal her. It must be known that this going out is here understood spiritually according to two ways of going after God : the one, a going forth from all things, which she does by abhorring and despising⁴ them ; the other, a going forth from herself, by forgetting herself, which she does for love of God ; for, when this love touches the soul with the quickness whereof we are here speaking, it raises her up in such wise that it makes her to go out not only from herself through forgetfulness of herself, but even from her judgement⁵ and the ways and inclinations natural to her, and she calls for God. And thus it is as though she said :⁶ By this Thy touch and wound of love, my Spouse,⁷ Thou hast drawn forth

¹ Ej, G, Sg : ' to possess Him here in this life.'

² Jaén has a slip here [*eres* for *eras*, reading] ' Thou art gone.'

³ [In the context of the earlier version (p. 36, above) it was necessary to translate 'the violence of the burning'; the Spanish phrases are identical.] ⁴ G : ' by knowing and despising.'

⁵ See p. 36, n. 4, above.

⁶ Ej omits : ' which she does by love of God . . . calls for God.'

⁷ Bg : ' by this that is Thine and [this] wound of love.'

my soul, not only from all things, but likewise hast drawn it forth and made it to go out from itself (for truly it seems that He draws it from its very flesh) and hast raised it up to Thyself, so that it cries for Thee, loosed from all things that it may bind itself to Thee. 'And Thou wert gone.'

21. As though she had said : At the time when I desired to possess Thy presence I found Thee not, and I remained detached from the one thing yet not attached to the other, buffeted woefully by¹ the gales of love and finding support neither in myself nor in Thee. This going forth in order to go to seek the Beloved, as the soul here terms it, is called by the Bride in the Songs to 'rise,' where she says : 'I will rise and seek him whom my soul loveth, going about the city, in the streets and in the broad ways. I sought him (she says) and I found him not,² and they wounded me.'³ The rising of the Bride-Soul is here understood, speaking spiritually, as of an ascent from the low to the high, which is the same as the going out from oneself, whereof the soul speaks here—that is, from one's own low way of life and love of self to the high love of God. But the Bride there says that she was wounded because she found him not ; and here the soul says likewise that she is wounded by love and has been left thus ; wherefore one that is enamoured⁴ lives ever in affliction during the absence of the Beloved, for he is already surrendered to Him, and has expectation to be paid for the surrender which he has made, which payment is the surrender to him of the Beloved, and this is not yet granted him ; and being already lost to all things, and to himself, for the Beloved, he has found no gain to compensate him for his loss, for he lacks the possession of him whom his soul loves.⁵

22. This affliction and sorrow for the absence of God is wont to be so great in those that are approaching the estate of perfection, at the time of these Divine wounds, that if the Lord provided not for them they would die. For, as they have kept the palate of the will healthy and the spirit clean and well prepared for God, and as in that experience whereof we have spoken He gives them to taste something of the sweetness of love, for which they yearn above all

¹ See p. 37, n. 1, above.

² Canticles iii, 2.

³ Canticles v, 7.

⁴ S : 'And this is because he that is enamoured . . .'

⁵ B adds : 'Such are the signs of him that goes about afflicted for God, —that he has given himself to God and that he loves Him.'

things, therefore do they likewise suffer above all things. For there is shown to them in glimpses an immense good, and it is not granted to them; wherefore their affliction and torment are unspeakable.¹

STANZA II

Shepherds, ye that go Yonder, through the sheepcotes, to the hill,
If perchance ye see him that I most love, Tell ye him that I languish, suffer and die.

EXPOSITION

1. In this stanza the soul seeks to make use of intercessors and intermediaries with her Beloved, begging them to tell Him of her pain and affliction; for it is a characteristic of the lover, when she cannot commune with her Beloved in His presence, to do so by the best means that she may. And so at this point the soul would fain use her desires, affections and sighs as messengers, who are so well able to make known to her Beloved the secrets of her heart. And thus she exhorts them to go, saying:

Shepherds, ye that go

2. Calling her desires, affections and sighs shepherds, inasmuch as they feed the soul on spiritual good things. For shepherd² signifies 'one who feeds,' and by their means God communicates Himself to her and gives her Divine pasture, which without them He does but little. And she says: 'Ye that go.' Which is as much as to say, Ye that go forth from pure love; because not all the affections and desires go to Him, but those only that go forth from true love.

Yonder, through the sheepcotes, to the hill,

3. By the 'sheepcotes' she means the hierarchies and choirs of the angels, by whose ministry, from choir to choir, our sighs and prayers travel to God: Whom she here calls 'the hill,' because God is the greatest of all heights; and because in Him, as on the hill, are spied out³ and seen all

¹ Ej, G: 'therefore do they suffer very greatly; for in glimpses there is shown to them an immense good and it is hidden from them; wherefore exceeding great is their affliction and torment.'

² [The Spanish word is *pastor*, which is more appropriate here than 'shepherd.']

³ [See p. 38, n. 2, above.]

things, and the higher and the lower sheepecotes. To Him go our prayers, which the angels offer Him, as we have said ; according as the angel said to holy Tobias in these words : When thou didst pray with tears and when thou didst bury the dead, I offered thy prayer¹ unto God.² We can likewise understand by these shepherds the angels themselves, for not only do they bear our messages to God, but they also bear those of God to our souls, feeding our souls, like good shepherds, with sweet communications and inspirations from God, which He also creates by means of them. And they protect and defend us³ from the wolves, who are the evil spirits. Yet whether these shepherds be taken to mean the affections, or whether they be taken to mean the angels, the soul desires them all to be her help and intermediaries with her Beloved, and thus she says to them all :

If perchance ye see . . .

4. This is as much as to say : If my good fortune and happiness are such that ye reach His presence so that He sees you and hears you. Here it is to be observed that, although it is true that God knows and understands all things, and sees and observes even the very thoughts of the soul,⁴ as Moses says,⁵ yet He is said to see our necessities and prayers, or to hear them, when He relieves them or fulfils them ; for not all necessities and petitions reach such a point that God hears them in order to fulfil them, until in His eyes they arrive at a proper season and time and the number of them is sufficient.⁶ And then He is said to see them or to hear them, as may be seen in the book of Exodus, where, after the four hundred years during which the children of Israel had been afflicted in the bondage of Egypt, God said to Moses : I have seen the affliction of My people and I am come down to deliver them,⁷ though He had ever seen them. Even so said S. Gabriel to Zacharias⁸ that he was not to fear, since God had already heard his prayer in

¹ S : ' thy prayers.' Sg : ' thy heart.'

² Tobit xii, 12.

³ G, Ej, Sg add : ' like good shepherds.'

⁴ Ej, G : ' even the thoughts and motions,' omitting ' of the soul.'
Sg : ' even the motions and thoughts of the soul.'

⁵ Deuteronomy xxxi, 21.

⁶ [*Lit.*, ' they arrive at a sufficient time and season and number.']
Ej, G : ' at a sufficient and just time and season.' Sg : ' at a sufficient and just season and time and number.'

⁷ Exodus iii, 7, 8.

⁸ S. Luke i, 13.

giving him now the son for which he had been begging many years ;¹ yet He had ever heard him. And thus it is to be understood by every soul that, albeit God hearkens not at once to its necessity and prayer, yet it follows not that He will not so hearken at a fitting time—He Who is,² as David says, a helper at opportune times and in trouble,³ if the soul faint not and cease to pray.⁴ This, then, is signified here by the soul when she says, ' If perchance ye see . . . ' That is : ' If by good fortune the time has arrived at which He sees fit to grant my petitions.'

. . . him that I most love.

5. That is to say : more than all things. Which is true when naught comes before the soul that daunts her from doing and suffering aught wherein she may serve Him ; and when the soul can truly say that which she says here, in the line following, it is a sign that she loves Him above all things. The line, then, is :

Tell ye him that I languish, suffer and die.

6. Herein the soul represents three kinds of need, to wit : languor, suffering and death ; for the soul that truly loves God with a love⁵ having any degree of perfection suffers ordinarily from His absence in three ways, according to the three faculties of the soul, which are the understanding, the will and the memory. She says that she languishes in the understanding, because she sees not God, Who is the health of the understanding, even as God says, through David : ' I am thy health.'⁶ She says that she suffers as to the will, because she possesses not God,⁷ Who is the refreshment⁸ and delight of the will, even as David says likewise, in these words : With the torrent⁹ of Thy delight Thou shalt satisfy them.¹⁰ She says that she dies as to the memory, because, remembering that she lacks all the blessings of the understanding, which are the sight of God, and the delights of the will, which are the possession of Him, and that it is likewise

¹ Ej, G : ' . . . heard his prayer which he had been making for many days.' So Sg, except that this has ' years ' for ' days.'

² S : ' For He is.'

³ Psalm ix, 10. [A.V., ix, 9.]

⁴ [lit., ' and cease.']

⁵ Ej, G, Sg : ' with a hunger.'

⁶ Psalm xxxiv, 3. [A.V., xxxv, 3.]

⁷ Sg omits : ' because she possesses not God.'

⁸ Bz : ' refuge.'

⁹ Ej, G, Sg : ' With the current.'

¹⁰ Psalm xxxv, 9. [A.V., xxxvi, 8.] Jaén, Bg, B, Bz, Av, S have : ' satisfy us.'

very possible to be deprived of Him for ever among the perils and chances of this life, she suffers at this remembrance a grief after the manner of death, for she can see that she lacks the certain and perfect possession¹ of God, Who is the life of the soul, even as Moses says in these words: Of a surety He is thy life.²

7. These three kinds of need Jeremiah likewise represented to God in the Lamentations, saying: Remember my poverty and the wormwood and the gall.³ The poverty refers to the understanding, because to it belong the riches of the wisdom of the Son of God, in Whom, as S. Paul says, are hid all the treasures of God.⁴ The wormwood, which is a herb most bitter, refers to the will, for to this faculty belongs the sweetness of the possession of God: lacking which, the soul keeps its bitterness. And that the bitterness belongs spiritually⁵ to the will is made clear in the Apocalypse, when the angel speaks to S. John, saying that he should eat that book and it should make his belly bitter,⁶ by the belly being understood the will. The gall refers not only to the memory, but to all the faculties and powers of the soul, for the gall signifies the death of the soul, even as Moses writes in Deuteronomy, when he speaks of the damned, saying: Their wine will be the gall of dragons and the incurable poison of asps,⁷ which signifies there the lack of God, ~~Who~~ ^{which.} is the death of the soul. These three needs and afflictions are founded upon the three theological virtues—faith, charity and hope—which relate to the three faculties aforementioned in the order here set down: understanding, will and memory.

8. And it is to be observed that in the line aforementioned the soul does no more than represent her need and affliction to the Beloved. For one that loves discreetly has no care to beg for that which he lacks and desires, but only shows forth his need, so that the Beloved may do that which seems good to Him. As when the Blessed Virgin spake to the beloved Son at the wedding of Cana of Galilee, not begging Him directly for wine, but saying to Him: They have no wine.⁸

¹ B, Bg: 'and direct possession.'

² Deuteronomy xxx, 20.

³ Lamentations iii, 19.

⁴ Colossians ii, 3.

⁵ A: 'belongs especially.'

⁶ Revelation x, 9.

⁷ Deuteronomy xxxii, 33. A, B, Bg. Jaén have *insaciable* ('insatiable') for *insanable* ('incurable').

⁸ S. John ii, 3. Av has: 'not begging Him but representing to Him the need: Wine they have not.'

And when the sisters of Lazarus sent to Him, not to say that He should heal their brother, but to tell Him to see how he whom He loved was sick.¹ And this for three reasons. First, because the Lord knows better than we that which befits us ; second, because the Beloved has the greater compassion when He sees the necessity of him that loves Him, and his resignation ; third, because the soul is on surer ground with respect to her own love and the propriety of representing a need than if she begs Him for that whereof she believes herself to have need. It is precisely this that the soul does here, where she represents her three necessities. And it is as though she were to say : ' Tell my Beloved this : Since I languish and He alone is my health, may He give me my health ; and since I suffer and He alone is my joy,² may He give me my joy ; and since I die, and He alone is my life, may He give me life.'³

STANZA III

Seeking my loves, I will go o'er yonder mountains and banks ;
I will neither pluck the flowers nor fear the wild beasts ; I will
pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers.

EXPOSITION

1. When the soul sees that, in order to find the Beloved, sighs and prayers suffice not, nor yet the aid of good intercessors, such as those that she had in the first and the second stanza, and forasmuch as the desire wherewith she seeks Him is genuine and her love is great, she is unwilling to leave unmade any effort that is within her power ; for the soul that of a truth loves God is not slothful in doing its utmost to find the Son of God, its Beloved ; and even after it has done everything it is still not satisfied and thinks it has done nothing. And thus in this third stanza, wherein the soul desires to seek Him in deed, she describes the method which she has to employ in order to find Him,⁴ namely this : she must practise virtues and perform spiritual exercises in the active and the contemplative life ; and to

¹ S. John xi, 3. Av : ' And the sisters of Lazarus said not : Come, Lord, to heal our brother, but only : He whom Thou lovest is sick.'

² B, Bg, A : ' glory.' Bz : ' and since He alone is my glory.'

³ A, Av, Bz, Bg, B, G, Sg : ' may He give me my life.'

⁴ Ej, G, Sg : ' in order to do it.'

this end she must accept no favours or delights ; nor must all the powers and snares of the three enemies of the soul—which are world, devil and flesh—suffice to detain and hinder her. So she says :

Seeking my loves,

2. That is, my Beloved. The soul clearly declares here that, to find God in truth, it suffices not to pray with the heart and with the tongue alone, nor yet to make use of the help of others ; but, together with this, it is needful also to do ourselves that which is in our power ; for God is wont to esteem more highly one thing done by a person himself than many things¹ done for that person by others. Wherefore the soul, remembering here the saying of the Beloved which runs ' Seek and ye shall find,'² determines to go forth herself, after the manner that we have described above, to seek Him in very deed, and not to rest until she finds Him, as do many who desire not that God shall cost them more than words, and even those badly put together, and will scarcely do anything for Him if it costs them anything. And some, for His sake, would not even rise from a place which is to their pleasure and liking unless by their doing so the sweetness of God came to their mouths and hearts without their moving a step and mortifying themselves by losing any of their useless desires, consolations and pleasures. But, until they leave these in order to seek Him, they will not find Him, however much they cry to Him ; for thus did the Bride seek Him in the Songs and found Him not until she went forth to seek Him. And this she says in these words :³ By night on my bed I sought Him Whom my soul loveth : I sought Him and I found Him not. I will rise and go about the city ; in the streets and in the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth.⁴ And after passing through certain trials she says here that she found Him.

3. He, therefore, who seeks God desiring to have pleasure and rest in Him seeks Him by night and therefore finds Him not. But he that seeks Him in the practice and performance of the virtues, and abandons the bed of his pleasures and delights, such a one seeks Him by day and thus will find

¹ Bg : ' than many things together.'

² S. Luke xi, 9.

³ A : ' for thus did the Bride seek Him and found Him not, as is said in the Songs in these words.'

⁴ Canticles iii, 1-2. Ej quotes the Latin text and not the vernacular version.

And herein she says that she will not pluck the flowers that she may find on the way, whereby she understands all the pleasures and satisfactions and delights which may be offered her in this life and which might obstruct her road if she should desire to pluck or accept them. These things are of three kinds : temporal, sensual and spiritual. And because they all occupy the heart, and, if the soul should pay heed to them or abide in them, are an impediment to its attainment of such detachment of spirit as is needful in order to follow the straight road to Christ, she says that in seeking Him she will not pluck all these things¹ aforementioned. And thus it is as if she had said : I will not set my heart upon the riches and good things which the world offers, nor will I accept the satisfactions and delights of my flesh, neither will pay heed to the pleasures and consolations² of my spirit, in such manner as to be kept from seeking my Beloved over the mountains of virtues and trials. This she says because she has accepted the counsel which the prophet David has given to those that go by this road, saying : *Divitiæ si affluent, nolite cor apponere.*³ That is : If riches increase, apply not your heart to them. This, too, she understands also of sensual pleasures, as also of the majority of temporal blessings and spiritual consolations. Here it is to be observed that not only do temporal blessings and corporal delights hinder and turn one aside from the road to God, but likewise spiritual delights and consolations, if we attach ourselves to them or seek after them, obstruct the road to the Cross of our Spouse Christ. Wherefore it behoves him that will go forward not to turn aside⁴ and pluck these flowers. And not only so, but it behoves him also to have the courage and the fortitude to say :

. . . Nor fear the wild beasts ;
I will pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers.⁵

6. In these lines the Bride speaks of the three enemies of the soul, which are world, devil and flesh, and these are they that war upon her and make her way difficult. By the 'wild beasts' she understands the world ; by the 'mighty,' the devil ; and by the 'frontiers,' the flesh.

¹ Ej, G, Sg : ' these flowers.'

² Av : ' to the joys, pleasures and consolations.'

³ Psalm lxi, 11. [A.V., lxii, 10.]

⁵ Ej, G, Sg omit the following paragraph.

⁴ S : ' not to stop.'

7. She calls the world¹ 'wild beasts' because to the imagination of the soul that sets out upon the road to God the world seems to be represented after the manner of wild beasts, which threaten her cruelly,² and this principally in three ways. First, the favour of the world will leave her, and she will lose friends, credit, reputation and even property. Secondly—a wild beast no less terrifying—she must be able to bear the renunciation for ever of worldly satisfaction and delight, and of all that the world offers. Thirdly—and this is greater still—the tongues of men will rise up against her, and will mock her, and will proffer many sayings and gibes against her and will set her at naught. These things are wont to prejudice certain souls in such a way that it becomes supremely difficult for them, not only to persevere against these wild beasts, but even to be able³ to set out upon the road at all.

8. But a few generous souls are wont to meet other wild beasts, which are more interior and spiritual, difficulties and temptations, tribulations and trials of many kinds through which they must needs pass. Such God sends to those whom He will raise to high perfection, by proving and examining them as gold in the fire, even as in one place David says : *Multe tribulationes justorum*.⁴ That is : Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord will deliver them out of them all. But the soul that loves indeed, that prizes her Beloved above all things and that trusts in His love and favour, finds it not hard to say :⁵ 'Nor will I fear the wild beasts.'

I will pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers.

9. Evil spirits, who are the second enemy, she calls the mighty, because with a great display of strength they endeavour to seize the passes of this road ; likewise because their temptations and wiles⁶ are stronger and harder to overcome,⁷ and more difficult to penetrate, than those of the world and the flesh, and furthermore because they reinforce themselves with these other two enemies, the world

¹ S : 'The world she calls.'

² Sg omits this phrase ; Ej, G also omit it and substitute 'and spiritually' for 'and this principally.'

³ Ej, G, Sg : 'but they even think they will be unable.'

⁴ Psalm xxxiii, 20. [A.V., xxxiv, 19.]

⁵ Bg : 'fears not greatly to say.'

⁶ Bz : 'their wily temptations.' A : 'the temptations are stronger.'

⁷ Ej, G, Sg omit : 'and harder to overcome.'

delight. This S. Paul sets clearly before us, saying : *Si spiritu facta carnis mortificaveritis, vivetis.*¹ That is : If ye through the spirit do mortify the inclinations of the flesh and the desires, ye shall live.² This, then, is the procedure which the soul says in this stanza that she must needs follow in order to seek her Beloved along this road. Briefly, she must have constancy³ and resolution not to stoop to pluck the flowers, courage not to fear the wild beasts and strength to pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers, and she must determine only to go over the mountains and banks, which are the virtues, after the manner already expounded.

STANZA IV

O woods and thickets Planted by the hand of the Beloved !
O meadow of verdure, enamelled with flowers, Say if he has
passed by you.

EXPOSITION

1. After the soul has described the way wherein she will prepare herself for setting out upon this road, in order not to turn aside after delights and pleasures, and fortitude⁴ to conquer temptations and difficulties, wherein consists the practice of self-knowledge, which is the first thing that the soul must achieve in order to come to the knowledge of God, she now, in this stanza, sets out upon her road, through consideration and knowledge of the creatures, to the knowledge of her Beloved, their Creator. For, after the practice of self-knowledge, this consideration of the creatures is the first thing in order upon this spiritual road to the knowledge of God ; by means of them the soul considers His greatness and excellence, according to that word of the Apostle where he says : *Invisibilia enim ipsius a creatura mundi, per ea quæ facta sunt, intellecta, conspiciuntur.*⁵ Which is as if she said : The invisible things of God are known by the soul through

¹ Romans viii, 13.

² Sg : 'the carnal desires and inclinations.' Ej, G add after the Latin text : '*Hoc est* : the carnal desires, inclinations and temptations.'

³ [*Lit.* : 'which, in short, is constancy.'] Ej, G : 'wherein, in short, is constancy.' S : 'which, in short, is to have constancy.'

⁴ S : 'and the fortitude which she must have.' [This addition is necessary to the sense, unless we read as in the first redaction, p. 46, above.]

⁵ Romans i, 20. Ej, G have only '*Invisibilia Dei*, the soul speaking then, etc.'

the invisible and created visible things.¹ The soul, then, speaks in this stanza with the creatures, asking them for news of her Beloved. And it is to be observed that, as S. Augustine says,² the question that the soul puts to the creatures is the meditation that she makes by their means upon their Creator. And thus in this stanza is contained a meditation on the elements and on the other lower creatures, and a meditation upon the heavens and upon the other creatures and material things that God has created therein, and likewise a meditation upon the celestial spirits. She says :

O woods and thickets

2. She describes as 'woods' the elements, which are earth, water, air and fire ; for, like the most pleasant woods, they are peopled thickly with creatures,³ which here she calls 'thickets' by reason of their great number and the wide difference which there is between them in each element. In the earth, innumerable varieties of animals and plants ; in the water, innumerable differences between the fish ; and in the air, a great diversity of birds ; while the element of fire concurs with all in animating and preserving them ; and thus each kind of animal lives in its element, and is set⁴ and planted therein as in its own wood and region where it is born and nurtured. And in truth, God so commanded when He created them :⁵ He commanded the earth to produce plants and animals ; and the sea and the waters, fish ; while He made the air the dwelling-place of birds. Wherefore when the soul sees that thus He commanded and thus it was performed, she says as in the line that follows :

Planted by the hand of the Beloved !

3. In this line is the following consideration⁶—namely, that these varieties and wonders could be made and nurtured only by the hand of the Beloved, God. Here it is to be

¹ Av : 'by the created visible things.' Sg : 'by the visible things, created and sensible.'

² *Confessions*, Bk. X, Chap. vi.

³ S : 'because even as the most pleasant woods are planted and peopled with thick plants and groves, even so are the elements [peopled] thickly with creatures.'

⁴ Av : 'lodged' ; S : 'placed.'

⁵ Genesis i.

⁶ S : 'In which line this is the consideration.'

observed that she says intentionally 'by the hand of the Beloved'; for albeit God performed many other things by the hand of another, as by angels and men, He never performed the act of creation, neither performs it, save by His own hand. And thus the soul is greatly moved to love her Beloved, God, by the consideration of the creatures, seeing that these are things that have been made by His own hand. And she says furthermore :

O meadow of verdure,

4. This consideration is upon heaven, which she calls meadow of verdure, because the things that are created therein have ever unfading greenness and neither perish nor wither with time; and in them, as among fresh verdure, the righteous take their pleasure and delight;¹ in the which consideration likewise is comprehended all the diversity of the beauteous stars and other celestial planets.

5. This name of verdure the Church gives likewise to heavenly things when, praying to God for the souls of the faithful departed, and speaking to them, she says: *Constituat vos Dominus inter amena virentia*. This signifies: May God set you among the delectable verdure.² And she says also that this meadow of verdure is likewise

Enamelled with flowers.

6. By these flowers she understands the angels and the holy souls, wherewith that place is adorned³ and beautified like a graceful and costly enamel upon an excellent vase of gold.

Say if he has passed by you.

7. This question is the consideration spoken of above, and it is as if she said: Say what excellences He has created in you.

¹ S omits 'and delight.'

² S: 'Which signifies: May Christ, Son of the living God, set you among the ever delectable verdure of His Paradise. The soul says also that this meadow of verdure is . . .,' etc. Ej, G give the text as: *Constituat vos Dominus in prata virentia*, and continues: 'Among the delectable verdure may God place you.'

³ Jaén, A, B, Bz: 'is ordered.'

STANZA V

Scattering a thousand graces, He passed through these groves in
haste,
And, looking upon them as he went, Left them, by his glance
alone, clothed with beauty.¹

EXPOSITION

1. In this stanza the creatures make answer to the soul, which answer, as S. Augustine says also in that same place,² is the testimony which in themselves they bear to the soul concerning the greatness and excellence³ of God, and for which the soul asked in its meditation. And thus that which is contained in this stanza is in substance that God created all things with great facility and brevity⁴ and in them left some trace of Who He was ; not only did He give them being out of nothing, but He even endowed them with innumerable graces and virtues, making them beauteous with marvellous orderliness and unfailing⁵ interdependence,⁶ and doing all this through His Wisdom⁷ whereby He created them, which is the Word, His Only-begotten Son. She says, then, thus :

Scattering a thousand graces,

2. By these thousand graces which she says He scattered as He went is understood the innumerable multitude of the creatures. She sets down here the greatest number, which is a thousand, in order to denote their multitude. She calls them graces, by reason of the many graces wherewith He endowed the creatures ; and, scattering them—that is to say, peopling the whole world—

He passed through these groves in haste.

3. To pass through the groves is to create the elements, which here she calls groves. Through these she says He passed, scattering a thousand graces, because He adorned them with all the creatures, which are full of grace. And, moreover, He scattered among them the thousand graces,

¹ B, Ej, G, Sg : ' with his beauty.'

² *Confessions*, Bk. X, Chap. vi.

³ Av omits ' with great facility and brevity.'

⁴ B, Bg : ' beauty.'

⁵ A, Ej, G, Sg : ' indifferent' [i.e. ' unchanging'].

⁶ Ej, G, Sg : ' mutual correspondence.'

⁷ S : ' with His wisdom.'

giving them virtue that they might be able to contribute to the generation and conservation of them all. And she says that He passed, because the creatures are, as it were, traces of the passing of God, whereby are revealed His greatness, power, wisdom and other Divine virtues. And she says that this passing was in haste, because the creatures are the lesser works of God, Who made them as it were in passing. The greater works, wherein He revealed Himself most clearly and which He wrought most lovingly, were those of the Incarnation of the Word and the mysteries of the Christian faith, in comparison wherewith all the rest were wrought as it were in passing, and in haste.

And, looking upon them as he went, Left them, by his glance¹ alone, clothed with beauty.

4. According to S. Paul, the Son of God is the brightness of His glory and the image of His substance.² It must be known, then, that God looked at all things in this image of His Son alone, which was to give them their natural being, to communicate to them many natural gifts and graces, and to make them finished and perfect, even as He says in Genesis, in these words: God saw all the things that He had made and they were very good.³ To behold them and find them very good was to make them very good in the Word, His Son. And not only did He communicate to them their being and their natural graces when He beheld them, as we have said, but also in this image of His Son alone He left them clothed with beauty, communicating to them supernatural being. This was when He became man, and thus exalted man in the beauty of God, and consequently⁴ exalted all the creatures in him, since in uniting Himself with man He united Himself with the nature of them all. Wherefore said the same Son of God: *Si ego exaltatus a terra fuero, omnia traham ad me ipsum.*⁵ That is: I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things unto Me. And thus, in this lifting up of the Incarnation of His Son, and in the glory of His resurrection according to the flesh, not alone

¹ See p. 26, n. 7, above.

² Hebrews i, 3.

³ Genesis i, 31. Ej, G: '... in these words: *Vidit Deus cuncta, etc.* And they were very good.'

⁴ Bg: 'exalted the Humanity of Christ, and consequently ...'

⁵ S. John xii, 32. G copies the Latin text only. Ej omits the Latin, and has 'bring' for 'draw.'

did the Father beautify the creatures¹ in part, but we can say that He left them all clothed with beauty and dignity.²

ANNOTATION OF THE STANZA FOLLOWING³

1. But, over and above all this, speaking now according to the sense and the affection of contemplation, it is to be known that in the vivid contemplation and knowledge of the creatures the soul sees that there is in them such abundance of graces and virtues and beauty wherewith God endowed them, that, as it seems to her, they are all clothed with marvellous natural virtue and beauty, wondrously derived from and communicated by⁴ that infinite supernatural beauty of the image⁵ of God, Whose beholding of them clothes the world and all the heavens with beauty and joy; just as does also the opening of His hand, whereby, as David says,⁶ He fills every animal with blessing. And therefore the soul, being wounded in love by this trace of the beauty of her Beloved which she has known through the creatures, yearns to behold that invisible⁷ beauty which was caused by this visible beauty,⁸ and speaks as in the stanza following.⁹

STANZA VI

Ah, who will be able to heal me ! Surrender thou thyself now completely.¹⁰

From to-day do thou send me now no other¹¹ messenger, For they cannot tell me what I wish.

EXPOSITION

2. As the creatures have given the soul signs of her Beloved by revealing to her in themselves traces of His

¹ Bg : 'not alone does the Father cause the creatures to be reborn.'

² Sg : 'and divinity.'

³ A, B, Bg, Bz omit this heading.

⁴ Ej, G, Sg : 'supernatural and communicated by.' S : 'with marvellous supernatural virtue and beauty, derived from and communicated by.'

⁵ *figura*. Bg : 'beauty.' Ej, G, Sg : 'sight.'

⁶ Psalm cxliv, 16. [A.V., cxlv, 16.]

⁷ A : 'insatiable.'

⁸ Av : 'by that invisible beauty.' G : 'by this other visible [beauty].'

S : 'to behold that beauty, which is the cause of this other visible beauty.'

Ej omits 'which was . . . beauty.'

⁹ Av : 'wherefore she utters the present stanza.' Ej : 'and says thus.'

¹⁰ B inserts an additional 'now.'

¹¹ Sg : 'no longer any other.'

beauty and excellence, her love has increased, and in consequence the pain which she feels at His absence has grown (for the more the soul knows God, the more grows her desire and anguish to see Him) ; and when she sees that there is naught that can cure her pain save the presence and sight of her Beloved, she mistrusts any other remedy, and in this stanza begs Him to surrender to her the possession of His presence, entreating Him from that day forth to entertain her with no other knowledge¹ and communications from Himself and traces of His excellence, since these increase her yearning and pain, rather than satisfy her will and desire ;² the which will is contented and satisfied with naught less than the sight and presence³ of Him. Wherefore, she says, let Him be pleased to surrender Himself to her in truth in complete and perfect love, and thus she says :

Ah, who will be able to heal me !

3. As though she had said : Among all the delights of the world⁴ and the satisfaction of the senses, and the pleasures and sweetness of the Spirit, naught of a truth will be able to heal me, naught will be able to satisfy me. And since this is so :

Surrender thou thyself now completely.⁵

4. Here it is to be noted that any soul that truly loves cannot wish to gain satisfaction and contentment until it truly possess God. For not only do all other things fail to satisfy it, but rather, as we have said, they increase its hunger and desire to see Him as He is. And thus each sight⁶ that the soul obtains of the Beloved, whether it be of knowledge, or feeling, or any other communication soever (which are like messengers that communicate to the soul some knowledge of Who He is, increasing and awakening the desire⁷ the more, even as crumbs increase a great hunger) makes it grieve at being entertained with so little, and the soul says : 'Surrender thou thyself now completely.'

5. Since all that can be known of God in this life, much though it be, is not true knowledge, for it is knowledge in

¹ Bg : 'caresses.'

² S : 'increase her yearning and the pain of being without the presence which satisfies her will and desire.'

³ Ej : 'of the Beloved.'

⁴ S omits 'and presence.'

⁵ Av, B, Sg have 'visit [*visita*] . . . from' for 'sight [*vista*] . . . of.'

⁶ Ej, G : 'the desire and yearning.'

part and very far off, while to know Him essentially is true knowledge, which the soul begs here, therefore she is not content with these other communications, and says next :

From to-day do thou send me now¹ no other messenger.

6. As though she were to say : Permit me not henceforward to know Thee thus imperfectly through these messengers—to wit, by the knowledge and the feelings that I am given of Thee, so far distant and removed from that which my soul desires of Thee. For to one who grieves for Thy presence, well knowest Thou, my Spouse, that the messengers bring an increase of affliction : for the one reason, because with the knowledge of Thee that they give they re-open the wound ; for the other, because they seem but to delay Thy coming. Wherefore from this day forth do Thou send me no more of such far distant knowledge, for if until now I could make shift with it, since I neither knew Thee nor loved Thee much, now the greatness of the love that I have² cannot be satisfied with this earnest of knowledge : wherefore do Thou surrender Thyself completely. It is as if she said more clearly : This thing, O Lord my Spouse, that Thou art giving of Thyself in part to my soul, do Thou now give completely and wholly. And this thing that Thou art showing as in glimpses, do Thou now show completely and clearly³. And this that Thou art communicating through intermediaries, which is like to communicating Thyself in mockery, do Thou now communicate completely and truly, giving Thyself through Thyself. For at times in Thy visits it seems that Thou art about to give the jewel of the possession of Thyself, and, when my soul regards it well, she finds herself without it ; for Thou hidest it from her, which is as it were to give it in mockery. Surrender Thyself, then, completely, giving Thyself wholly to the whole of my soul, that it wholly may have Thee wholly, and be Thou pleased to send me no other messenger.⁴

For they cannot tell me what I wish.

7. As though she were to say : I wish for Thee wholly, and they are unable and know not how to speak to me of

¹ A omits ' now.'

² Ej, G, S, Sg add : ' to Thee.'

³ Av lacks the sentences following ('And this . . . no other messenger').

⁴ S adds : ' from to-day.'

Thee wholly ; for naught on earth or in heaven can give the soul the knowledge which she desires to have of Thee, and thus they cannot tell me what I wish. In place of these messengers,¹ therefore, be Thou messenger and messages both.

STANZA VII

**And all those that serve² Relate to me a thousand graces of thee,
And all wound me the more And something that they are stam-
mering leaves me dying.**

EXPOSITION

1. In the last stanza the soul has described herself as being sick or wounded with love for her Spouse, by reason of the knowledge of Him that the irrational creation has given her ; and in this present stanza she describes herself as wounded with love by reason of a loftier knowledge of the Beloved that she receives through the rational creation—namely, angels and men, who are nobler than the former. And, furthermore, she says that not only is this so, but likewise that she is dying of love because of a wondrous immensity that is revealed to her through these creatures ; yet she attains not to a complete revelation thereof, for she calls it here a ‘something,’ since she cannot describe it, save that it is such that it makes the soul to be dying of love.³

2. From this we may infer that in this business of loving there are three kinds of pain which come to the soul from the Beloved, corresponding to three kinds of knowledge that can be had of Him. The first is called a wound ; this is the slightest of the three and passes the most briefly, as does a wound, because it is born of the knowledge that the soul receives from the creatures, which are the lowest works of God. And of this wound, which here we likewise call sickness, the Bride speaks in the Songs, saying : *Adjuro vos, filiæ Jerusalem, si inveneritis dilectum meum, ut nuntietis ei, quia amore langueo.*⁴ Which signifies : I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of love—understanding by the daughters of Jerusalem the creatures.

¹ S adds : ‘from to-day.’

² *vagan*. Ej has *vacan* [cf. §6, below] ; A, *bajan*, ‘go down’ [an evident error, *b* and *v* being identically pronounced and frequently confused in writing, in Spanish].

³ S, Sg omit ‘of love.’

⁴ Canticles v, 8. Ej, G omit the translation which follows.

4. As if she had said : And, apart from what I have said, how canst thou persevere in the body, since the touches of love (this she understands by 'arrows') which the Beloved inflicts upon thy heart suffice alone to deprive thee of thy life? These touches make the soul and the heart so fruitful in understanding and love of God that it may well be said that she has conception of God,¹ according to what is said in the line which follows, namely :

From the conceptions of the Beloved which thou formest within thee ?

5. That is to say, of the greatness, beauty, wisdom, grace and virtues that thou understandest of Him.

ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

1. As the hart, when it is wounded with a poisoned arrow,² has no ease and rest, but seeks remedies here and there,³ now plunging into these waters, now into those ; and as, each time, despite all the remedies that it applies, the poison⁴ takes ever stronger hold upon it, till it strikes the heart and causes death ; even so the soul that goes about pierced by the poisoned arrow⁵ of love,⁶ as does she of whom we are here treating, never ceases to seek remedies for her pain, and not only does she not find them, but rather all that she thinks, says and does becomes to her an occasion of⁷ further pain. And she, knowing that this is so, and that she has no other remedy, save to come and place herself in the hands of Him that wounded her, that He may give her relief⁸ and slay her outright through the power of love, turns to her Spouse, Who is the cause of all this,⁹ and addresses to Him the following stanza.¹⁰

¹ G, V : ' that she receives it of God.'

² [*lit.*, 'wounded with poison.']

³ Ej, G, Sg : 'seeks remedies in this place and in that.'

⁴ Ej, G : 'the wound.'

⁵ [*lit.*, 'the poison.'] Ej, G : 'the wound.'

⁶ Av : 'of the love of God.' Bg : 'of the touch of love.'

⁷ B, Bg, Ej, G, Sg : 'serves her for.'

⁸ Ej, G : 'that He may wound her.'

⁹ A : 'of all her pain.' Av omits 'Who is the cause of all this.'

¹⁰ A : 'and says [as in] the following stanza.'

STANZA IX

Since thou hast wounded this heart,¹ Wherefore didst thou not
heal it ?

And wherefore, having robbed me of it, hast thou left it thus
And takest not the prey that thou hast spoiled ?

EXPOSITION

2. In this stanza, then, the soul speaks yet once more with the Beloved, making complaint of her pain,² for love that is impatient, such as the soul here reveals, allows itself no rest nor gives any respite to its grief, setting forth its yearnings in every wise until it find a remedy. And as the soul sees herself wounded³ and alone, having no healer, nor any other medicine, save her Beloved, Who it was that wounded her, she asks Him why, since He wounded her heart with the love that comes from knowledge of Him, He has not healed her with the vision of His presence. And why (she asks further) since He has robbed her of her heart, through the love wherewith He has enamoured her, drawing her forth from her own power, has He left her thus, namely, drawn forth from her own power,⁴ (for one that loves possesses his heart no longer, but has given it to the Beloved) and has not placed her truly in His power, taking her to Himself in complete and perfect transformation of love in glory.⁵ She says, then :

Since thou hast wounded this heart,⁶ Wherefore didst thou not
heal it ?

3. She makes not complaint because He has wounded her, for the more deeply the enamoured soul is wounded, the greater is her joy ; but because, having wounded her heart, He did not heal it, by slaying it wholly ; for so sweet and so delectable are the wounds of love that if they succeed not in slaying they cannot satisfy, but they are so delectable⁷ that she would fain have them wound her even till they have wholly slain her,⁸ wherefore she says this : ' Since

¹ Ej, G : ' this heart of mine.'

² Bg : ' of her love.'

³ Sg : ' favoured.'

⁴ B, Ej, G, Sg omit the words ' has He left . . . her own power.'

⁵ Av : ' and perfect transformation of glory.'

⁶ Ej, Sg : ' this heart of mine.'

⁷ Sg omits the words ' that if they . . . so delectable.'

⁸ Ej, G, Sg : ' till they had ended her life.' Bg reads [*llagar* for *liagar*, an almost certain error] : ' she would fain have them attain even to slaying her wholly.'

Thou hast wounded this heart, wherefore didst Thou not heal it?' As though she had said: 'Wherefore, since Thou hast wounded it even to the point of leaving a sore in it, dost Thou not heal it by slaying it outright with love? Since Thou art the cause of its wound in affliction of love, be Thou the cause of its health in death of love;¹ for after this manner the heart that is wounded with the pain of Thy absence will be healed with the delight and glory of Thy sweet presence.' And she adds:

And wherefore, having robbed me of it, hast thou left it thus . . .

4. To rob is naught else than for a robber to dispossess an owner of that which is his and to take possession thereof himself. This plaint, then, the soul sets forth here to the Beloved, enquiring of Him why, since He has robbed her heart and taken it out of her power and possession, He has abandoned it thus, without taking it truly into His own possession and keeping it for Himself, as the robber does to the spoils that he has robbed, by carrying them off with him.

5. Wherefore he that has fallen in love is said to have his heart robbed or raped² from him by the object of his love, because it wanders far away from him and is set upon the object of his love, and thus he has no heart of his own, for it belongs to the person whom he loves. Wherefore the soul may know well³ if it loves God purely or no; for, if it loves Him, it will have no heart for itself, nor for regarding its pleasure and profit, but only for the honour and glory of God and for giving Him pleasure, for, the more of its heart it has for itself, the less it has for God.

6. And whether or no the heart has indeed been stolen by God can be determined by one of two things: by whether it has yearnings for God, and cares for naught else save for Him, as the soul here declares. The reason is because the heart cannot be in peace and rest without any possession, and, when its affections are well set, it has possession neither of itself nor⁴ of aught beside; and if,⁵ furthermore, it possesses not completely that which it loves, its weariness⁶ cannot fail to be as great as its loss until it

¹ Av omits: 'be Thou . . . love.' Bg reads: 'certain is the cause . . .'

² Av, Bz, Ej, Sg omit 'or raped.' [Cf. also p. 61, n. 3, above.]

³ S: 'very well.'

⁴ A reads: 'without some possession, either of itself or', etc.

⁵ Thus Ej, G, Sg. The other MSS. and editions read: 'And so.'

⁶ A, S: 'wherefore its weariness.'

possess it and be satisfied ; for until then the soul is like to an empty vessel waiting to be filled, like to the hungry man that desires food, like to the sick man sighing for health, and like to one that is suspended in the air and has no place whereon to find a foothold. In that case is the heart of one that has truly fallen in love, and it is this that the soul by experience feels¹ here, saying : ' Wherefore hast thou left it thus ? ' Which is to say, empty, hungry, lonely, wounded, in pains of love, suspended in the air.

.And takest not the prey that thou hast spoiled ?

7. Which is to say : Why takest Thou not the heart that Thou hast spoiled through love, in order to fill it and satisfy it and accompany it and heal it,² giving it perfect rest and a perfect abode in Thyself ? However great the agreement between it and the Beloved, the loving soul cannot fail to desire the recompense and wages of its love, for the sake of which recompense it serves the Beloved ; and otherwise its love would not be true ; for the wages and recompense of love are naught else, nor can the soul desire³ aught else, than greater love, until it attains to perfection of love ; for love confers no payment save of itself, according as the prophet Job declared, when, speaking with the same yearning and desire which the soul here possesses, he says : Even as the servant⁴ earnestly desireth the shadow, and as the day-labourer looketh for the end of his work, so I had empty months and counted the nights wearisome for myself. If I sleep I shall say : ' When will come the day when I shall arise ? ' And then I shall await the evening once again, and shall be full of pains till the darkness of night.⁵ So, then, the soul that is enkindled in the love of God desires the fulfilment and perfection of love in order to find complete refreshment there ; as the servant wearied with the summer desires the refreshment of the shadow, and as the hireling awaits the end of his work, so does the soul await the end of hers. Here it is to be noted that the prophet Job said not that the hireling awaited the end of his labour, but the end of his work, in order to convey the idea that we are

¹ Sg reads ' understands, ' and Ej, G read ' understands well ' for ' feels. '

² Sg : ' and satisfy it and protect it and love it. '

³ B reads ' ask ' for ' desire. '

⁴ Bz and S follow the Scriptural authority correctly thus. The other MSS. and editions read *ciervo* (' hart ') for *siervo* (' servant ').

⁵ Job vii, 2-4.

expressing—namely, that the soul that loves awaits not the end of its labour, but the end of its work. For its work is to love, and of this work, which is to love, the soul awaits the end and termination, which is the perfection and fulfilment of loving God. Until this is fulfilled for it, the soul is ever in the form described to it by Job in the passage aforementioned, holding the days and the months as empty and counting the nights as wearisome and tedious for itself. In that which has been said it is signified how the soul that loves God must not claim¹ or hope for any other guerdon for its services save the perfection of loving God.

ANNOTATION OF THE STANZA FOLLOWING²

1. The soul, then, being at this stage of love, is like a sick man greatly wearied, who, having lost taste and appetite, is nauseated by all food and troubled and annoyed by everything; but in all that presents itself to his thought or sight³ he has before him one longing⁴ and desire alone, which is that of his health; and all that conduces not thereto is wearisome and oppressive to him. Wherefore this soul, having reached this pain⁵ of love for God, has these three characteristics, namely: that, in all things which present themselves to her and with which she has to do, she has ever before her that concern⁶ for her health, which is her Beloved; and thus, although she may occupy herself with these things, because she cannot do otherwise, she has her heart ever with Him. Hence comes the second characteristic, which is that she has lost her taste for all things. And hence likewise follows the third, that all these things are wearisome to her and every kind of thing that she does is oppressive and grievous.

2. The reason for all this, deduced from that which we have said, is that, since the palate of the will of the soul has tasted and savoured this food of the love of God, therefore, whatsoever thing or treatment is offered to it, the will is immediately inclined, without taking into account any other liking or consideration, to seek and to enjoy its Beloved therein. Even so was it with Mary Magdalene, when with

¹ S reads 'wish,' and A 'ask,' for 'claim.'

² Ej includes the preceding sentence in this Annotation.

³ A, S: 'thought and feeling or sight.'

⁴ [*lit.*, 'appetite.']

⁵ Ej, G: 'sickness and pain.'

⁶ [Most expressively in the original: 'that "ah!" because of her health.']

ardent love she went about the garden in search of Him, and, thinking that He was the gardener, said to Him, without any reason or reflection : ' If thou hast borne Him hence, tell me, and I will take Him away.'¹ Since this soul has such a yearning to find Him in all things, and finds Him not as soon as she desires—but rather quite the contrary—not only do these things not please her, but they are even a torment to her, and sometimes a very great one ; for such souls suffer much in their commerce with men and in other business, since they are disturbed thereby rather than helped in their aspiration.

3. These three characteristics the Bride clearly declares that she possessed when she sought her Spouse in the Songs, saying : ' I sought him and found him not. But they that go about the city found me and wounded me, and the keepers of the walls took away my cloak from me.'² For they that go about the city are the affairs of the world, who, when they find the soul that seeks God, deal her many wounds, which are griefs, pains and displeasures ;³ for not only does she fail to find in them that which she seeks, but they even hinder her. And they that guard the wall of contemplation that the soul may not enter therein, which are the evil spirits and the affairs of the world, take away the cloak of the peace and tranquillity of loving contemplation. From all this the soul that is enkindled in love for God receives a thousand displeasures and annoyances ; and seeing that, for as long as she is in this life without sight of God, she cannot free herself⁴ from them either to a great or to a small degree, she continues her entreaties with her Beloved, and says as in the stanza following :

STANZA X

**Quench thou my griefs, Since none suffices to remove them,
And let mine eyes behold thee, Since thou art their light and for
thee alone I wish to have them.**

EXPOSITION

4. The soul continues, then, in the present stanza, entreating the Beloved to be pleased now to set an end to her

¹ S. John xx, 15.

² Canticles v, 6-7.

³ Jaén : ' wounds, griefs, pains and displeasures.'

⁴ S : ' she cannot find alleviation.'

yearnings and afflictions, since there is none other that suffices to do this save only He ; and she entreats Him to do it in such a way that her eyes may behold Him, since He alone is the light by which they see and she desires to use them for naught else save for Him only. She says :¹

Quench thou my griefs.

5. The concupiscence of love,² then, has this one property, as has been said, that all that is not done and said in agreement with that which the will loves wearies, fatigues and grieves it, and makes it fretful, when it sees not the fulfilment of that which it desires ; and this and the weariness which she has to see God the Bride here calls 'griefs,' to remove which naught else suffices but the possession of the Beloved. Wherefore she entreats Him to quench them with His presence, and to refresh them all, as cool water refreshes one that is wearied with the heat. For this reason she here uses this word 'quench,' to signify that she is suffering from the fire of love.

Since none suffices to remove them,

6. In order the better to move and persuade the Beloved to fulfil her petition, the soul says that, since none other than He suffices to satisfy her need, it must be He that shall quench her griefs. Whence it is to be noted that God is very ready to comfort the soul and satisfy her in her needs and afflictions when she neither has nor seeks to have any other satisfaction and comfort than Himself ; and thus the soul that can find pleasure in naught apart from God cannot remain for long without a visitation from the Beloved.

And let mine eyes behold thee

7. That is, let me see Thee³ face to face with the eyes of my soul.

Since thou art their light

8. Over and above the fact that God is supernatural light to the eyes of the soul, without which it is in darkness, she calls Him here, through her affection, 'light of her eyes,' in the way wherein the lover is wont to call the person whom

¹ Ej, G, Sg : 'to use them for naught else, and thus says :'

² Ej, G, Sg : 'of the soul.'

³ A : 'That is, let mine eyes see Thee.'

denotes a certain affective presence which the Beloved has communicated, of Himself, to the soul. This was so lofty that it seemed to the soul that there was an immense hidden being there, of which she was conscious, and out of which God has communicated to her certain semi-obscure glimpses of His Divine beauty ; and these produce such effect upon the soul that they cause her to conceive a great aspiration and to faint in desire for that which she feels to be hidden there¹ in that presence, which is like to that which David felt when he said : My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.² For at this time the spirit faints with the desire to immerse itself in that supreme good which it feels to be present and hidden ; although it be hidden, the soul is very deeply conscious of the good and the delight that are therein. And therefore the soul is attracted to this good, and carried away by it, with greater violence than that wherewith a natural object is attracted to its centre. And the soul, having that great longing and heartfelt desire, can no longer contain herself,³ and says : ' Reveal Thy presence.'

5. The same thing happened to Moses on Mount Sinai. Being there in the presence of God, he was enabled to obtain such lofty and profound glimpses of the loftiness and beauty of the hidden divinity of God⁴ that, being unable to bear it, he twice entreated God to reveal His glory to him, saying to God : Thou sayest that Thou knowest me by my own name and that I have found grace before Thee. Now, therefore, if I have found grace in Thy presence, show me Thy face,⁵ that I may know Thee and may find in Thine eyes the perfect grace that I desire⁶ (which is, to attain to the perfect love of the glory of God). But the Lord answered him, saying : Thou wilt not be able to see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live.⁷ Which is as if He were to say : It is a difficult thing that thou askest of Me, Moses, for such is the beauty of My face and the joy of the vision of My Being, that thy soul will be unable to bear it in this manner of life that is so weak. And thus the soul, knowing this truth (whether because of the words wherein God here answered Moses, or whether also because, as we have said,

¹ G omits the passage : ' of which she was conscious . . . hidden there.'

² Psalm lxxxiii, 1. [A.V., lxxxiv, 2.]

³ Av : ' can no longer stop.' A, B : ' can no longer be content.'

⁴ Ej : ' profound glimpses of the loftiness and dignity of God.' So Sg. but with ' divinity' for ' dignity.'

⁵ Av : ' show me Thy glory.'

⁶ Exodus xxxiii, 12-13.

⁷ Exodus xxxiii, 20.

Which is to say : We desire not to be 'unclothed' of the flesh, but to be 'clothed upon' with glory. But, seeing that it is impossible to live in glory and in mortal flesh together, as we say, he says to the Philippians that he desires to be loosed and to see himself with Christ.¹ But here there arises one question, and it is this : Why did the children of Israel in olden times flee from God and fear to see Him lest they should die, as Manoah said to his wife,² and yet this soul desires to die at the sight of God ? To this the answer is that the causes are two. The one, because, at that time, although they died in the grace of God, they would not see Him until Christ came, and it was far better for them to live in the flesh, increasing their merits and enjoying their natural life, than to be in limbo, incapable of earning merit, and suffering from darkness and the spiritual absence of God ; for the which cause they held it then to be a great favour and benefit of God to live many years.

10. The second cause arises from love ; for, since in those days men were not so completely confirmed in love, neither had they attained so nearly to God by love, they feared to die at the vision of Him ; but now that, under the law of grace, when the body dies the soul may see God, it is healthier³ to desire to live but little and to die at the vision of Him. And, even were this not so, the soul that loves God as this soul loves Him would not fear to die at the vision of Him, for true love receives all that comes to it from the Beloved, be it adversity or prosperity, and even chastisements, as being that which He wills to work in it, with complete indifference, and in one and the same manner, and they become to it joy and delight. For, as S. John says, perfect love casteth out all fear.⁴ To the soul that loves, death cannot be bitter, for it finds therein all the sweetnesses and all the joys of love ; the remembrance thereof cannot cause it sadness, since it finds joy therein ; nor can it be heavy and grievous, since it is the termination of all its griefs and afflictions and the beginning of all its good. Death it holds as its friend and bride, and with the thought thereof it joys as upon the day of its betrothal and marriage ; and it desires that day and that hour, wherein its death is

¹ Philippians i, 23.

² Judges xiii, 22. Bg adds : ' Manoah is the name of the father of Samson.'

³ A : ' may see God by love, I say that it is healthier . . . '

⁴ 1 S. John, iv, 18.

to come,¹ more than the kings of the earth desired kingdoms and principalities.² For of this kind of death the Wise Man says : O death ! Good is thy sentence for the man that feels himself needy.³ If this is good for the man who feels in need of things here below, when it supplies not his needs, but rather strips him of that which he had, how much better will its sentence be for the soul that (like this soul) is in need of love, and is calling for more love, since not only will it strip it of that which it had, but it will also be to it a cause of the fulfilment of the love which it desired, and satisfaction for all its needs ? The soul, then, acts rightly in venturing to say without fear : Let the vision of thee and thy beauty slay me ; since she knows that, at that same moment when the vision comes to her, she will be rapt away by the same beauty and absorbed in the same beauty, and transformed in the same beauty, and will become beautiful like the same beauty, and will be provisioned and enriched by the same beauty.⁴ For this reason David says that the death of the saints is precious in the presence of the Lord.⁵ Which would not be if they had not a part in His own grandeurs ; for before God there is naught precious save that which He is in Himself ; wherefore the soul, when it loves, fears not to die, but rather desires to do so. But the sinner ever fears to die, for he suspects that death will take from him all good things and will give him all evil things ; for, as David says, the death of sinners is very evil.⁶ Wherefore, as the Wise Man says, the remembrance thereof is bitter to them,⁷ for, because they have a great love for the life of this world, and they love that of the next but little, they fear death greatly. But the soul that loves God lives in the next life rather than in this, for the soul lives where it loves rather than where it breathes, and thus it holds this temporal life as of small account. Wherefore the Bride says : ' Let the vision of Thee and Thy beauty slay me.'

Behold, the affliction of love is not cured Save by thy presence and thy form.

¹ A : ' wherein it has to live its death.'

² Ej, G, Sg : ' kingdoms and primacies.'

³ Ecclesiasticus xli, 2.

⁴ Ej, G abbreviate this passage thus : ' she will be rapt away and absorbed in the same beauty, and transformed therein, and will be like the same beauty.'

⁵ Psalm cxv, 15. [A.V., cxvi, 15.]

⁶ Psalm xxxiii, 22. [A.V., xxxiv, 21.]

⁷ Ecclesiasticus xli, 1.

11. The reason that love's sickness has no other cure save the presence and the form of the Beloved, as is here said, is that, even as the pain of love differs from other sicknesses, so its medicine differs likewise. For in other sicknesses, according to sound philosophy, contraries are cured by contraries ; but love is not cured save by things that are in harmony with love. The reason is that the health of the soul is the love of God, and thus, when it has not perfect love, it has not perfect health, and is therefore sick, for sickness is naught else than lack of health ; so that, when the soul has no degree of love, it is dead ; but, when it has any degree of love for God,¹ howsoever small this may be, it is at least alive, though very weak and infirm by reason of the little love² that it has ; and the more its love continues to increase, the more health it will have ; so that, when it has perfect love, its health will be complete.

12. Here it must be known that love never attains to a state of perfection until the lovers are on so complete a level of equality that they are transfigured the one in the other, and then love has perfect health. And because the soul here feels herself to have, as it were, the shadow of love,³ which is the affliction whereof she here speaks, desiring that it may be perfectly formed, by means of the Form to Whom the shadow belongs, which is her Spouse, the Word, the Son of God, Who, as S. Paul says, is the brightness of His glory and the form of His substance,⁴ because this form is that which the soul here understands, and wherein she desires to be transformed through love, she says : ' Behold, the affliction of love is not cured, save by Thy presence and Thy form.'

13. Rightly is love that is not perfect called affliction, since, even as the sick man is too enfeebled to work, even so the soul that is weak in love is also too weak to work the heroic virtues.⁵

14. Likewise it may here be understood that in one that feels in himself affliction of love—that is, lack of love—it is a sign that he has some love, for it is by comparison with

¹ S omits the words 'degree of love for God.'

² S : 'the little love for God.'

³ [*lit.*, 'feels herself with a certain outline (*dibujo*) of love.' The related verb *dibujar* is translated 'outlined' in the final line of the following stanza.]

⁴ Hebrews i, 3.

⁵ Bg : 'is not also weak in loving the heroic virtues.' [This should probably read : 'is also too weak,' etc. The change involves only the substitution of *lo* for *no*.]

that which he has that he is able to realize that which he lacks ; but the fact that one feels not this is a sign either that he has none or that he has perfection thereof.

ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

1. At this season, the soul feels within itself such a vehement desire to journey to God that it is like a stone that is approaching ever nearer to its centre. Or, again, it feels like the wax that has begun to receive the impression of the seal and has not perfectly received its form. Again, it knows itself to be like the image of a first sketch and outline,¹ and cries out to Him that outlined it that He will complete its painting and formation. For its faith is so enlightened here that it causes it to trace² very clearly a certain Divine likeness³ of the majesty of its God. It knows not what to do save to turn to faith itself, as to that which encloses and conceals within itself the form and beauty of its Beloved, from which it likewise receives the said shadows⁴ and pledges of love. The soul, then, speaks to faith, and says as in the next stanza.

STANZA XII

**O crystalline fount, If on that thy silvered surface⁵
Thou wouldst of a sudden form the eyes desired Which I bear
outlined in my inmost parts !⁶**

EXPOSITION

2. As with so great a desire the soul desires union with the Spouse, and sees that in all the creatures there is no means to that end, neither any relief, she speaks again to Faith as to the one who shall give her the most vivid light from her Beloved,⁷ and considers her as a means to that end ; for indeed there is no other way whereby a soul may come to the true union⁸ and spiritual betrothal with God, according as He declares through Hosea, saying : I will betroth Me unto thee in faithfulness.⁹ And with the desire¹⁰

¹ *dibujo*. Cf. p. 244, n. 3, above.

² Av, G : ' to seek.' Bg : ' to make out.'

³ *semblantes*. See p. 65, n. 2, above.

⁴ *semblantes*.

⁵ Ej, G, Sg : ' shall speak to her most vividly of her Beloved.'

⁶ Ej, G, Sg : ' to perfect union.'

⁷ Hosea ii, 20.

⁸ A : ' with the so great desire ' ; B, Bg : ' with the great desire.'

⁹ *dibujos*.

¹⁰ See p. 65, n. 3, above.

wherein she burns she says as follows, which is the sense of the stanza : O Faith of Christ my Spouse ! If thou wouldst but show forth clearly the truths concerning my Beloved which, obscurely and darkly concealed, thou hast infused into my soul¹ (for faith, as the theologians say, is an obscure habit), so that that which thou communicatest to me in dark and unformed knowledge thou mightest discover and reveal in a moment, withdrawing thyself from those truths (since faith is the covering and veil² of the truths of God), suddenly, formally and completely, and turning them into a manifestation of glory ! The line, then, says :

O crystalline fount,

3. She calls faith 'crystalline' for two reasons : the first, because it is from Christ³ her Spouse, and the second, because it has the properties of crystal in being pure in its truths, and strong, and clear and free from errors⁴ and natural forms. And she calls it 'fount,' because from it there flow to the soul the waters of all spiritual blessings. Hence Christ our Lord, speaking with the Samaritan woman, called faith a fount, saying that in those that believed in Him He would make a fount whose water should spring up into everlasting life.⁵ And this water was the spirit which they that believed on Him should receive in their faith.⁶

If on that thy silvered surface

4. The propositions and articles which faith sets before us she calls a silvered surface. For the understanding of this and of the other lines it must be known that faith is compared to silver with respect to the propositions it teaches us, and the truths and substance which they contain in themselves are compared to gold ; for that same substance which now we believe, clothed and covered with the silver of faith, we shall behold and enjoy in the life to come, fully revealed, with the gold of the faith laid bare. Wherefore David, speaking thereof, says thus : If ye sleep between the two lots, the feathers of the dove shall be silvered, and the hinder parts of her back shall be of the colour of gold.⁷

¹ Ej, G, Sg : 'wherewith . . . thou hast informed my soul.'

² A : 'the curtain and veil.'

³ [See p. 65, n. 5, above.]

⁴ Sg : 'free from truths and errors.'

⁵ S. John iv, 14.

⁶ S. John vii, 39.

⁷ Psalm lxvii, 14. [A.V., lxviii, 13. Cf. p. 66, n. 4, above.]

He means : If we close the eyes of the understanding to things both above and below (which he calls to 'sleep between') we shall remain in faith, which he calls a dove, whose feathers, which are the truths that it tells us, will be silvered, because in this life faith sets them forth to us darkly and obscured by a veil, for which reason the Bride calls them here a silvered surface. But when this faith shall have come to an end, which will be when it is perfected through the clear vision of God, then the substance of the faith will remain, stripped of this veil of silver, and in colour as gold. So that faith gives and communicates to us God Himself, but covered with the silver of faith ; but it fails not for that reason to give Him to us in truth, even as one may give a silvered vessel, which is also a vessel of gold, for, though covered with silver, it is none the less a golden vessel that he gives. Wherefore when the Bride in the Songs desired this possession¹ of God, He promised it to her, so far as in this life may be, saying that He would make her earrings of gold, but enamelled with silver.² In these words He promised to give Himself to her veiled by faith. The soul, then, now says to Faith : Oh, if on that thy silvered surface . . . , by which she means the articles aforementioned wherewith thou hast covered the gold of the Divine rays, which are the ' eyes desired,' whereof she next speaks, saying :

Thou wouldst of a sudden form the eyes desired

5. By the eyes she understands, as we said, the Divine truths and rays ; the which, as we have likewise said, are set forth to us by faith in its unformed and hidden articles. And thus it is as if she were to say : Oh that Thou wouldst but give me these truths which Thou teachest me formlessly and darkly, and which are veiled in Thy articles of faith, clearly and formally revealed in them according to the entreaty of my desire ! And she calls these truths ' eyes ' by reason of the greatness of the presence of the Beloved which she feels, so that it seems to her that she is ever gazing at it. Wherefore she says :

Which I bear outlined in my inmost parts !

6. She says that she bears these truths outlined in her inmost parts—that is to say, in her soul according to the

¹ Ej, G, Sg : ' this presence.'

² Canticles i, 10.

understanding and the will ; for according to the understanding she has these truths infused into her soul by faith. And, because her knowledge of them is not perfect, she says that they are outlined ; for even as the outline is not a perfect painting, so the knowledge of faith is not perfect knowledge. Wherefore the truths that are infused into the soul through faith are as it were in outline, and when they are in clear vision they will be in the soul as a perfect and finished painting, according to the words of the Apostle, where he says : *Cum autem venerit quod perfectum est, evacuabitur quod ex parte est.*¹ Which signifies : When that which is perfect is come (that is, clear vision) then that which is in part² (namely, the knowledge of faith) shall be done away.

7. But besides this outline of faith there is another outline in the soul of the lover, which is of love, and this is according to the will ; wherein the image of the Beloved is outlined in such manner, and so completely and vividly pictured, when there is union of love, that it is truth to say that the Beloved lives in the lover and the lover in the Beloved ; and such manner of likeness does love make in the transformation of the two that are in love that it may be said that each is the other and that both are one. The reason for this is that in the union and transformation of love the one gives possession of itself to the other, and each one gives and abandons itself³ to the other and exchanges itself for the other. Thus each lives in the other, and the one is the other, and both are one through the transformation of love. It is this that S. Paul meant when he said : *Vivo autem, jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus.*⁴ Which signifies : I live, yet not I,⁵ but Christ liveth in me. For in saying ' I live, yet not I,'⁶ he meant that, although he lived, his life was not his own, because he was transformed in Christ and his life was Divine rather than human. Wherefore he says that it is not he that lives but Christ that lives in him.

8. So that, according to this likeness of transformation, we can say that his life and the life of Christ were one life through union of love, which in Heaven will be perfectly accomplished in the Divine life in all those who shall merit being in God ; for, being transformed in God, they will

¹ 1 Corinthians xiii, 10.

² Sg : ' that which is temporal.'

³ A, Av, B, Bg, Bz, Sg : ' abandons and gives itself.'

⁴ Galatians ii, 20.

⁵ S : ' but yet not I.'

⁶ S : ' but yet not I.'

live the life of God, and not their own life, and yet it will be their own life, for the life of God will be their own life. And then they will say in truth : We live, yet not we, for God liveth in us. This may come to pass in this life, as in the case of S. Paul—not, however, in a complete and perfect way, although the soul may reach such a transformation of love as to be in the spiritual marriage, which is the highest estate that can be attained in this life ; for everything may be called an outline of love by comparison with that perfect image of transformation in glory. But when this outline of transformation is attained in this life it is a great and good happiness, because the Beloved is greatly pleased with it. For this reason, desiring that the Bride should grave Him upon her soul as an outline, He said to her in the Songs : Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm.¹ The heart here signifies the soul, whereupon God is set in this life as the seal of an outline of faith, even as was said above ; and the arm signifies the strong will, wherein it is as the seal of an outline of love,² as we have just now said.

9. After such manner walks the soul at this time that, albeit briefly, I will not fail to say something thereof, although by words it cannot be explained. For it appears to the soul that its bodily and its spiritual substance are dried up by thirst after this living fount of God ; for its thirst is like to that which David had when he said : As the hart desireth the fountains of waters, so my soul desireth Thee, O God.³ My heart was thirsty for God, the living fount. When shall I come and appear before the face of God ?⁴ And this thirst wearies it so that it would think naught of breaking through the midst of the Philistines, as did the mighty men of David to fill his vessel of water at the well⁵ of Bethlehem,⁶ which was Christ ; it would think naught of enduring all the difficulties of the world and the furies of evil spirits and the pains of hell in order to immerse itself in this fathomless⁷ fount of love. For with respect to this it is said in the Songs : Love is strong as death and its

¹ Canticles viii, 6. Av, Bz omit : 'as a seal upon thy heart.' Ej, G : 'Set me as a seal of the outline of faith.'

² S : 'as a seal outlined with love.' Sg : '... the soul, for in this life God is a seal of the outline of love.'

³ A, Av, Ej, S : 'my God.'

⁴ Psalm xli, 3. [A.V., Psalm xlii, 1-2.]

⁵ Ej, G, Sg : 'to take his vessel of water to the well.'

⁶ 1 Paralipomenon xi, 18. [A.V., 1 Chronicles xi, 18.]

⁷ Sg : 'voluminous.'

importunity is hard as hell.¹ For it cannot be believed how vehement is the yearning and the grief which the soul feels when it sees that it is gradually approaching the fruition of that blessing, yet that this is not granted to it ; for the nearer one sees that which one desires, the greater are the grief and the torment caused thereby.² Wherefore Job says with this spiritual intent : Before I eat, I sigh, and the roaring and raging of my soul are like the avenues of the waters³—that is, through my longing for food, by food being here understood God. Because, according to the yearning of the soul for this food, and the knowledge which it has thereof, even so is the grief which it has on account of it.

ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

1. The reason that the soul suffers so much at this time is that, the nearer it comes to union with God, the more keenly it feels within itself its emptiness of God, and⁴ the direst⁵ darkness, together with spiritual fire which dries and purges it, so that, when it is purified, it may be united with God. For inasmuch as God sends not into it⁶ any ray of supernatural light from Himself, God is intolerable darkness to it, when He is near it according to the spirit, since supernatural light darkens natural light with its excess.⁷ All this David expressed when he said : Clouds and darkness are round about Him ; fire goeth before His presence.⁸ And in another psalm he says : He made darkness His hidden and secret place, and His tabernacle round about Him was dark water in the clouds of the air ; through His great brightness in His presence there are clouds, hailstones and coals of fire,⁹ that is to say, to the soul that is attaining. For the nearer the soul attains to Him, the more it feels within itself all that has been said, until God draws it into His Divine brightness through transformation of love. And meanwhile¹⁰ the soul is ever like to Job, saying : Who will

¹ Canticles viii, 6.

² Sg : ' so great is the pain and greater is the torment caused thereby.'

³ Job iii, 24.

⁴ [*Lit.*, 'and within its soul.']

⁵ Bz, Ej, G : 'greatest.'

⁶ A, Av, Bz, Sg [use a stronger word, very similarly pronounced and written—*derriba* for *deriva*—best translated] 'overcomes it not with.'

⁷ G : 'any ray of supernatural light, He darkens the natural light with its excess.'

⁸ Psalm xcvi, 3. [A.V., xcvi, 2-3.] Sg has 'snow' [*nieve*] for 'cloud' [*nube*].

⁹ Psalm xvii, 13. [A.V., xviii, 11-12.]

¹⁰ S omits : 'And meanwhile.'

grant me to know Him and to find Him and to come even to His throne?¹ But through the boundless pity² of God the consolations and favours that He gives are proportionate to the darknesses and emptinesses of the soul, for *sicut tenebræ ejus, ita et lumen ejus*;³ for in exalting and glorifying souls He humbles and wearies them.⁴ And in this way He has sent the soul, in the midst of its seasons of weariness, certain Divine rays⁵ from Himself, with such glory and strength of love⁶ that He has stirred up its whole being and changed its whole nature;⁷ and thus with great natural fear and affright the soul speaks to the Beloved at the beginning of this following stanza, while the Beloved Himself⁸ continues for the remainder of it.

STANZA XIII

Withdraw them, Beloved, for I fly away.

SPOUSE :

Return thou, dove,
For the wounded hart appears on the hill At the air of thy flight,
and takes refreshment.

EXPOSITION

2. In the great desires and fervent affections of love which the soul has revealed in the preceding stanzas, the Beloved is wont to visit His Bride, in a way most chaste, most delicate⁹ and most loving and with great strength of love. For ordinarily the favours and visits of God to the soul are wont to be great in proportion to the fervour of the affections and yearnings of love which have preceded them. And, as the soul has just now desired these Divine eyes with such great yearning, even as she has just said in the foregoing stanza, the Beloved has revealed to her some rays of His greatness and divinity, as she has desired. These rays were

¹ Job xxiii, 3.

² Bg, S: 'the boundless goodness.' Ej, G: 'the goodness and pity.'

³ Psalm cxxxviii, 12. [A.V. cxxxix, 12.]

⁴ S adds 'likewise.'

⁵ B: 'certain rays of glory.'

⁶ B: 'with such strength of love.'

⁷ [The Spanish word, *desencajó*, means literally 'disjointed,' 'dis-articulated.'] ⁸ Bz: 'the Lover Himself.'

⁹ A, B, Bg, Bz, S, Sg: 'in a way most lofty, most delicate.' Ej, G abbreviate: 'in a way most lofty and most loving, according to the greatness of the fervours, etc.'

communicated with such loftiness and such power that the soul was made to issue forth from herself in rapture and ecstasy, which at the first is accompanied by great suffering and natural fear. And thus the soul, being unable to suffer excess in so frail a mortal form, says in the present stanza : 'Withdraw them, Beloved.' That is to say : Withdraw these Thy Divine eyes, for they make me to soar aloft, issuing forth from myself in highest contemplation above that which my physical nature can bear. This she says because it seemed to her that her soul was flying out of her body, which is what she desired : for this reason she begged Him to withdraw His eyes—that is, to communicate them no longer to her in the flesh since in this wise she could neither bear them nor enjoy them as she would desire, but to communicate them to her in the flight which she was about to make from out of the flesh. But this desire and flight the Spouse prevented, saying : Return, dove, for the communication which thou art now receiving from Me belongs not yet to that estate of glory to which thou now aspirest. But return thou to Me, for it is I Whom thou seekest, wounded as thou art by love. And I also, Who am like to the hart wounded by thy love, now begin to reveal Myself to thee in thy lofty contemplation, and take recreation and refreshment in the love of thy contemplation. Wherefore the soul says to the Spouse :

Withdraw them, Beloved.

3. According as we have said, the soul, as befitted the great desires which she had¹ for the Divine eyes, which signify Divinity, received inwardly from the Beloved such communication and knowledge of God that it compelled her to say : 'Withdraw them, Beloved.' For such is the wretchedness of our physical nature in this life, that that which is truest life to the soul and which she desires with such great desire—namely, the communication and knowledge of her Beloved, when they come and are given to her—she cannot receive without its almost costing her her life, so that when those eyes which she sought with so much solicitude and yearning, and by so many ways, are revealed to her, she may come to say :² 'Withdraw them, Beloved.'

¹ Ej, G, Sg : 'according to the degrees of love and desire which it had.'

² A : 'so that, when she finds those eyes . . . yearning, she may come to say.'

brought her into the ark of his charity and love ;¹ and this was at the time when, in the stanza that we have just expounded, the Spouse said : ' Return thou, dove.' In the which recollection the soul, finding all that she has desired and more than she can express, begins to sing praises to her Beloved, relating the great things which she feels and enjoys in this union in Him in the two following stanzas, saying :

STANZAS XIV AND XV

**My Beloved, the mountains, The solitary, wooded valleys,
The strange islands, the sonorous rivers, The whisper of the
amorous breezes,**

**The tranquil night, At the time of the rising of the dawn,
The silent music, the sounding solitude, The supper that recreates
and enkindles love.**

ANNOTATION

2. Before we enter upon the exposition of these stanzas it is necessary to explain, for the better intelligence thereof and of the stanzas which follow them, that by this spiritual flight which we have just described is denoted a lofty estate and union of love wherein after much spiritual exercise God is wont to place the soul,² which is called spiritual betrothal with the Word, the Son of God. And at the beginning, when this is done for the first time, God communicates to the soul great things concerning Himself, beautifying it with greatness and majesty, decking it with gifts and virtues, and clothing it with knowledge and honour of God, just as if it were a bride on the day of her betrothal. And upon this happy day, not only is there an end of the soul's former vehement yearnings and complaints of love, but, being adorned with the good things which I am describing, she enters into an estate of peace and delight and sweetness of love, as is described in the present stanzas,³ wherein she does naught else but relate and sing the wonders of her Beloved, which she knows and enjoys in Him, by means of the aforementioned union of the betrothal. And thus, in the remainder

¹ Ej, G : ' into the ark of his breast and love.' [Genesis viii, 9.]

² A, B, Bg abbreviate : ' that in this spiritual flight God is wont to place the soul.'

³ Av : ' in the following stanzas.'

of the stanzas following,¹ she speaks not of pains or yearnings as she did aforetime, but of the communication and exercise of sweet and peaceful love with her Beloved, since in this estate all those other things are now ended. And it is to be noted that in these two stanzas is contained the most that God is wont to communicate to a soul² at this time ; but it is not to be understood that to all such as arrive at this estate He communicates all that is expounded in these two stanzas, nor that He does so according to one single way and degree of knowledge and feeling. For to some souls He gives more and to others less ; to some after one manner and to others after another ; though souls belonging to either category can be in this estate of the spiritual betrothal. But we set down here the highest that is possible because in this is comprehended all else. And the exposition follows.

EXPOSITION OF THE TWO STANZAS

3. And it is to be noted that, even as in the Ark of Noah, as the Divine Scripture tells us, there were many mansions for many different kinds of animal, and every kind of food which they could eat, even so, in this flight³ which it makes to this Divine Ark of the bosom of God, the soul not only sees therein the many mansions which His Majesty described in S. John,⁴ saying that they were in His Father's house, but sees and knows that all kinds of food are there—that is, all the grandeurs which can please the soul, which are all the things that are contained in the two stanzas above-mentioned, and are signified by these words used in common parlance, which in substance are as follows.

4. In this Divine union the soul sees and tastes abundance, inestimable riches, finds all the rest and the recreation that it desires and understands strange kinds of knowledge and secrets of God, which is another of those kinds of food that it likes best. It feels likewise in God an awful power and strength which transcends all other power and strength : it tastes a marvellous sweetness⁵ and spiritual delight, finds true rest and Divine light and has lofty experience of the

¹ A omits ' following.'

² Ej, G, Sg add : ' by way of betrothal.'

³ Ej, G, Sg : ' in this Divine flight.'

⁴ S. John xiv, 2.

⁵ Sg : ' marvellous subtlety.'

knowledge of God, which shines forth in the harmony of the creatures and the acts of God. Likewise it feels itself to be full of good things and far withdrawn from evil things and empty of them; and, above all, it experiences, and has fruition of, an inestimable feast of love, which confirms it in love, and this is the substance of that which is contained in the two stanzas aforementioned.

5. In these stanzas the Bride says that her Beloved is all these things, both in Himself and also for her;¹ for in that which God is wont to communicate in such excesses² the soul feels and knows the truth of that saying which S. Francis³ uttered, namely: 'God mine, and all things.' Wherefore, since God is all things to the soul, and the good of them all, the communication of this excess is explained by the similitude of the goodness of the things in the said stanzas,⁴ which we shall expound line by line. Herein must be understood that all that is expounded here is in God in an eminent and an infinite manner, or, to express it better, each of these grandeurs which are spoken of is God, and they are all of them God; for, inasmuch as in this case the soul is united with God,⁵ it feels that all things are God, even as S. John felt when he said: *Quod factum est, in ipso vita erat.*⁶ That is to say: That which was done in Him was life. It is not to be understood that, in that which the soul is here said to feel, it is, as it were, seeing things in the light or creatures in God, but that in that possession the soul feels that all things are God to it.⁷ Neither is it to be understood that because the soul has such lofty feelings concerning God in that which we are saying, it sees God essentially and clearly, for this is no more than a powerful and abundant communication, and a glimpse of that which He is in Himself, wherein the soul feels this goodness concerning the things which we shall expound in these lines as follows:

My Beloved, the mountains,⁸

¹ *y lo es para ella.* Jaén, A, Av, Bg, Bz, Sg read: *y lo espera ella* ['and she awaits Him' (or 'it')].

² A: 'in such exercises.'

³ Av: 'which the seraphic father S. Francis.'

⁴ Ej, G, Sg: 'by the similitude of the will of the things and of their goodness in these stanzas.'

⁵ Ej, G, Sg: 'is united with God in one simple being.'

⁶ S. John 1, 4. Cf. p. 58, n. 3, above.

⁷ Ej, G, Sg omit: 'but that . . . to it.'

⁸ G, Sg: 'My beloved to the mountains.'

6. The mountains have height ; they are abundant, extensive and beautiful, graceful, flowery and fragrant. These mountains my Beloved is to me.

The solitary, wooded valleys.

7. The solitary valleys are quiet, pleasant, cool, shady, abounding in fresh water ; and by the variety of their groves and the sweet song of the birds they greatly recreate and delight the senses, in their solitude¹ and silence giving refreshment and rest. These valleys my Beloved is to me.

The strange islands.

8. The strange islands are girt around by the sea, and are far away over the sea, withdrawn and aloof from the communications of men. Thus there are produced and bred in them things very different from those in our own experience, of very strange kinds and with virtues never seen by men, so that they cause great surprise and wonder in those that see them. And thus, by reason of the great and marvellous wonders and the strange knowledge, far removed from the knowledge of every day, that the soul has in God, He is here called strange islands. There are two reasons for calling a man strange : either because he lives in retirement from men or because he is excellent and singular among other men in his deeds and works. For both these reasons the soul here speaks of God as strange ; for not only has He all the strangeness of islands which have never been seen, but likewise His ways, counsels² and works are very strange and new and marvellous to men. And it is no marvel if God is strange to men who have never seen Him, since He is strange also to the holy angels and the souls who see Him ; for they cannot see Him perfectly, nor shall they so see Him, and until the last day of judgement they will continually be seeing in Him so many things that are new according to His profound judgements, concerning the works of mercy and justice, that they will wonder continually and marvel ever more. So that not men alone, but likewise angels, can speak of Him as of strange islands ;

¹ Bg : 'in gentleness.' Ej, G, Sg omit 'and rest.'

² Bg : 'His ways, His rich counsels.'

only to Himself is He not strange, neither to Himself is He new.

The sonorous rivers.

9. Rivers have three properties : the first is that they assail and submerge all that they meet ;¹ the second, that they fill up all the low and hollow places that are in their path ; the third, that their sound is such as to drown and take the place of all sounds else. And because in this communication of God which we are describing the soul feels in herself these three properties most delectably, she says that her Beloved is the sonorous rivers. With respect to the first property that the soul feels, it must be known that she feels herself to be assailed by the torrent of the Spirit of God in this case, in such a manner, and taken possession of thereby with such force, that it seems to her that all the rivers of the world are coming upon her and assailing her, and she feels that all her actions are whelmed thereby, and all the passions which she had aforetime. Yet though this is an experience of such violence, it is not for that reason an experience of torment ; for these rivers are rivers of peace, even as God declares through Isaiah, saying concerning this assault upon the soul : *Ecce ego declinabo super eam quasi fluvium pacis et quasi torrentem inundantem gloriam.*² Which is to say : Take note and be warned that I will come down upon her (that is to say, upon the soul) and assail her like a river of peace and like a torrent which overflows with glory as it advances. And thus this Divine assault which God makes³ upon the soul, resembling the assault of sonorous rivers, fills it wholly with peace and glory. The second property which the soul feels is that this Divine water at this time fills the low places of its humility and fills the empty places of its desires, even as S. Luke says : *Exaltavit humiles. Esurientes implevit bonis.*⁴ Which is to say : He hath exalted them of low degree, and hath filled the hungry with good things. The third property that the soul feels in the sonorous rivers of the Beloved is a spiritual voice and noise⁵ which is above all sounds and voices, the which voice drowns every other voice and its sound exceeds all

¹ S : 'all into which they enter.'

² Isaiah lxvi, 12.

³ Bz : 'Thus at this time this assault of God fills the low and empty places—[this assault] which God makes, etc.'

⁴ S. Luke i, 53.

⁵ Ej, G : 'is a spiritual voice and sonorous sound.' Sg : 'is a spiritual voice and sound.' Bz : 'is a spiritual voice and river.'

the sounds in the world. And in the exposition hereof we must occupy ourselves for some little space.

10. This voice or sonorous sound of these rivers which the soul here describes is a fulfilment¹ so abundant that it fills the soul with good things, and a power so powerful that it possesses the soul and appears to her not merely as the sound of rivers but as most powerful thunderings. But this voice is a spiritual voice and is unaccompanied by those physical sounds, and by the pain and trouble of them, but is accompanied rather by grandeur, strength, power, delight and glory ; and thus it is as an immense and inward sound and voice, which clothes the soul with power and strength. This spiritual voice² and sound was heard in the spirits of the Apostles at the time when the Holy Spirit, in a vehement torrent (as is said in the Acts of the Apostles), descended upon them ; when in order that the spiritual voice³ that was speaking to them from within might be made manifest, this sound was heard from without as a vehement wind, in such wise that it was heard by all who were in Jerusalem :⁴ whereby, as we say, was denoted that which the Apostles received inwardly, which was, as we have said, a fulfilment of power and strength. And likewise, when the Lord Jesus was praying to the Father in the peril and anguish which were caused Him by His enemies, as is said in S. John,⁵ there came to Him an inward voice from Heaven, strengthening Him according to His humanity, which sound the Jews heard from without, and so solemn was it, and so mighty, that some said it had thundered, and others, that some angel from Heaven had spoken to Him ; and by that voice which was heard from without was denoted and signified the strength and power given to Christ, according to His humanity, within ; yet by this it is not to be understood that the soul fails to receive in this spirit the sound of the spiritual voice. It must be noted that the spiritual voice is the effect⁶ which the voice makes upon the soul, even as the physical voice impresses its sound upon the ear and its intelligence upon the spirit. This was in the mind of David when he said : *Ecce dabit voci sue vocem virtutis.*⁷ Which signifies : See that God will give to His voice a voice of

¹ Ej, G : 'is an accumulation.'

² A has *gozo* ['joy'] for *voz* ['voice'].

³ Ej, G, Sg have 'the interior voice', and omit 'from within.'

⁴ Acts ii, 2.

⁵ S. John xii, 28.

⁶ Bg : 'is the fruit.'

⁷ Psalm lxvii, 34. [A.V., lxviii, 33.]

virtue, the which virtue is the voice within. When David said that He would give His voice a voice of virtue he meant that¹ to the outward voice, which is heard in outward wise, He would give a voice of such virtue that it would be heard within. By this it must be understood that God is an infinite voice, and that, communicating Himself to the soul after the said manner, He produces the effect of an immense voice.

11. This voice S. John heard in the Apocalypse, and he says of the voice that he heard from Heaven : *Erat² tanquam vocem aquarum multarum*, and, *tanquam vocem tonitruui magni*.³ Which is to say : That the voice which he heard was as a voice of many waters and as the voice of a great thunder. And that it may not be inferred that this voice, because it was so great, was harsh and disagreeable, he adds at once that this same voice was so soft that *erat sicut citharedorum citharizantium in citharis suis*.⁴ Which signifies : It was as of many harpers who harped upon their harps. And Ezekiel says that this sound as of many waters was *quasi sonum sublimis Dei*,⁵ which is to say : as a sound of the Most High God. That is, that He communicated Himself therein after a manner most high and likewise most gentle. This voice is infinite, for, as we said, it is God Himself Who communicates Himself, speaking in the soul : but He limits Himself by the capacity of each soul, uttering a voice of such strength as befits its limitations ; and He produces in the soul great delight and grandeur. For which cause the Bride said in the Songs : *Sonet vox tua in auribus meis, vox enim tua dulcis*.⁶ Which signifies : Let thy voice sound in my ears, for thy voice is sweet. The line continues :

The whisper of the amorous breezes.

12. Of two things the soul makes mention in this present line, namely, of breezes and of a whisper. By the amorous breezes are here understood the virtues and graces⁷ of the Beloved, which, by means of the said union of the Spouse, assail the soul, communicate themselves most lovingly and touch it in its substance. And by the whisper of these

¹ Av abbreviates : ' . . . the voice within ; which is as much as to say that, etc.'

² S : ' that he heard from Heaven, that it was,' etc.

³ Revelation xiv, 2.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Ezekiel i, 24.

⁶ Canticles ii, 14. Ej, G omit the rest of the paragraph.

⁷ Bg : ' and grandeurs.'

in the understanding the whisper of knowledge. And it is called a whisper, because even as the whisper which is caused by the air enters subtly¹ into the organ of hearing, even so this most subtle and delicate knowledge enters with marvellous sweetness and delight into the inmost substance of the soul, which is a far greater delight than any other. The reason is that substance of understanding is given to it, stripped of accidents and imaginary forms, for it is given to the understanding that is called by philosophers 'passive' or 'possible,' because it receives it passively, doing naught on its own behalf; which is the principal delight of the soul, because it is in the understanding, wherein, as theologians say, consists fruition, which is to see God. Since this whisper signifies the said substantial knowledge, some theologians think that our father² Elias saw God in that gentle whisper of the breeze which he felt on the mount at the mouth of his cave. The Scripture calls it a gentle whisper of the breeze, because from the subtle and delicate communication of the Spirit knowledge³ was born to it in the understanding; and the soul here calls it a 'whisper of amorous breezes,'⁴ because from the amorous communication of the virtues of her Beloved it overflows into her understanding, wherefore she calls it a 'whisper of amorous breezes.'

15. This Divine whisper, which enters by the ear of the soul, is not only substance which I have called that of understanding, but likewise it is the manifestation of truths concerning the Divinity and the revelation of His hidden secrets; for ordinarily when⁵ some communication of God is found in the Divine Scriptures, and is said to enter by the ear, it is found to be a manifestation of these naked truths in the understanding, or a revelation of the secrets of God, which are purely spiritual visions or revelations, given to the soul alone, without the help and aid of the senses, and so, when it is said that God communicates by the ear, that expression describes a very lofty and a very certain fact. Thus when S. Paul wished to describe the loftiness of his revelation he said not, *Vidit arcana verba*, still less *Gustavit arcana verba*, but *Audivit arcana verba, quæ non licet homini*

¹ B, Bg: 'enters lovingly and subtly.'

² A, B, Bg omit 'our father.'

³ A has 'the communication' for 'knowledge.'

⁴ Ej omits the rest of the paragraph.

⁵ A, Av, B, Bg, Bz, Ej, G, S, Sg: 'whensoever.'

loqui.¹ Which is as though he had said : I heard secret words which it is not lawful for a man to utter. As to this it is thought that he saw God as did our father² Elias, in that whisper. For even as faith, as S. Paul says likewise, comes by bodily hearing, even so that which faith teaches us, which is the substance of understanding, comes by spiritual hearing. This was clearly expressed by the Prophet Job, when he spoke with God, Who had revealed Himself to him, saying : *Auditu auris audiui te, nunc autem oculus meus videt te*.³ That is to say : I heard Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherein it is clearly declared that to hear Him with the ear of the soul is to see Him with the eye of passive understanding whereof we spoke. Wherefore he says not : I heard Thee with the hearing 'of my ears,' but 'of my ear'; nor : I saw Thee 'with mine eyes,' but 'with mine eye,' which is the understanding. Wherefore this hearing of the soul is seeing with the understanding.

16. And it is not to be understood that, because this which the soul understands is naked substance, as we have said, it is perfect and clear fruition, as in Heaven ; for although it is free from accidents, it is not for that reason clear, but rather it is dark, for it is contemplation, which, as S. Dionysius says, is in this life a ray of darkness ;⁴ wherefore we can say that it is a ray and image of fruition,⁵ inasmuch as it is in the understanding, wherein consists fruition. This substance of understanding, which the soul here calls a whisper, is the 'desired eyes,' whereof the soul said, when the Beloved revealed them to her (because she could not bear the perception of them) : 'Withdraw them, Beloved.'

17. And, as I think that in this place a passage in Job is very much to the point, as affirming a great part of that which I have said of this rapture and betrothal, I will relate it here,⁶ although it may delay us a little longer, and I will expound the parts of it that are to our purpose. And first I will give it wholly in Latin and then wholly in the vulgar tongue, and afterwards I will briefly expound that part of it which concerns our purpose ;⁷ and having ended this I

¹ 2 Corinthians xii, 4.

² A, B, Bg omit 'our father.'

³ Job xlii, 5.

⁴ *De Mystica Theologia* : Migne, *Patrologia Græca*, iii, 999.

⁵ Jaén has : 'ray of image of fruition.' [P. Silverio adopts this reading.]

⁶ B, Bg omit the following passage : ('although . . . next Stanza').

⁷ Av, Sg omit 'And first . . . concerns our purpose.'

will continue the exposition of the lines of the next Stanza. Eliphaz the Temanite, then, in the Book of Job, speaks after this manner : *Porro ad me dictum est verbum absconditum, et quasi furtive suscepit auris mea venas susurri eius. In horrore visionis nocturnæ, quando solet sopor occupare homines, pavor tenuit me, et tremor, et omnia ossa mea perterrita sunt : et cum spiritus, me præsentem, transiret, inhorruerunt pili carnis meæ : stetit quidam, cujus non agnoscebam vultum, imago coram oculis meis, et vocem quasi auræ lenis audiui.*¹ Which in the vulgar tongue signifies : In truth a hidden word was spoken to me, and mine ear received as it were by stealth the veins of its whisper. In the horror of the vision of the night, when sleep is wont to occupy men, I was occupied by fear and trembling, and all my bones shook ; and, as the spirit passed before my presence, the skin² of my flesh stood up ; and there came before me One Whose face I knew not, an image before mine eyes, and I heard a voice of a gentle breeze. In this passage is contained almost all that we have here said, concerning this rapture, from the twelfth stanza,³ which says : ‘ Withdraw them, Beloved,’ up to this point. For in that which Eliphaz the Temanite says, namely, that a hidden word was spoken to him, is signified that hidden thing which was given to the soul, the greatness whereof it could not suffer, so that it said : ‘ Withdraw them, Beloved.’

18. In saying that his ear received, as it were by stealth, the veins of its whisper, is signified the naked substance which, as we have said, is received by the understanding : for veins here denote inward substance and the whisper signifies that communication and touch⁴ of the virtues from which the said substance of understanding is communicated to the understanding. And the soul here calls it a whisper, because this communication is very gentle, even as in that other place she calls it ‘ amorous breezes,’ because it communicates itself amorously. He says that he received it as it were by stealth, because even as that which is stolen belongs to another, even so that secret did not belong to man, speaking after the manner of nature : for he received

¹ Job iv, 12-16. Ej, G, Sg, omitting the Latin text, have : ‘ Leaving aside the Latin, that which he means in the vulgar tongue is.’ Av substitutes for the Latin text ‘ *Porro a me dictum est usque lenis audiui.*’

² S : ‘ the hairs.’ [Cf. Job iv, 15, A.V.]

³ It is really from the thirteenth stanza, but only Ej, G, Sg give it correctly.

⁴ A has for ‘ touch ’ (*toque*) ‘ intercourse,’ ‘ commerce ’ (*trato*).

that which was not according to his nature, wherefore it was not lawful for him to receive it,¹ as it was not lawful for S. Paul to repeat that which he had heard. Wherefore the other prophet said twice: My secret unto myself.² And when Eliphaz speaks of the horror of the vision of the night, when sleep is wont to occupy man, and says that he himself has been occupied by fear and trembling, he refers to the fear and trembling which is caused naturally in the soul by that communication of rapture which we said human nature could not suffer in the communication of the Spirit of God. For this prophet declares here that, as at the time when men go to rest they are wont to be oppressed and terrified by a vision which they call a nightmare, which comes to them between sleep and waking—the point when sleep begins—even so at the time of this spiritual transit from the sleep of natural ignorance to the vigil of supernatural knowledge, which is the beginning of rapture or ecstasy, the spiritual vision which is then communicated to them fills them with fear and trembling.³

19. And he adds further that all his bones were terrified, or shaken. Which is as though he had said that they were moved and dislocated⁴ from out of their places: wherein is described the great dislocation of the bones which, as we have said, is suffered at this time. This was clearly expressed by Daniel, when he saw the angel, and said: *Domine, in visione tua dissolutæ sunt compages meæ.*⁵ That is: Lord, in Thy vision the joints of my bones have become loosed. And in that which he then says, which is: 'And as the spirit passed before my presence'—that is to say, when He made my spirit pass beyond its limits and natural ways by means of the rapture whereof we have spoken—'the skin⁶ of my flesh shrank,' he describes that which we have said concerning the body, which in this transit is frozen so that the flesh shrinks like that of a dead man.

20. The passage continues: 'There was One Whose face I knew not, an image before mine eyes.' This One Who

¹ Above these words, in Av, a corrector has written: 'to say it.'

² Isaiah xxiv, 16. Ej, G actually give the phrase twice.

³ A: 'the spiritual union which is then communicated to them makes them to tremble and fear.'

⁴ [The word used here, *desencajaron*, is rather stronger than that of Av and the first redaction: *descasaron*. A has *descansaron* ('rested') [an evident slip].

⁵ Daniel x, 16.

⁶ S: 'the hairs.'

no definite colour ; even so is the perfect spirit, which in this excess not only has no colour¹ of sensual affection and love of self, but has not even any particular consideration of things above or below, neither can it speak thereof in any method or manner, for that which possesses it is the fathomless knowledge of God, even as we have said.

The silent music,²

25. In that aforesaid tranquillity and silence of the night, and in that knowledge of the Divine light, the soul is able to see a marvellous fitness and disposition of the wisdom of God in the diversities of all His creatures and works, all and each of which are endowed³ with a certain response to God, whereby each after its manner testifies to that which God is in it, so that it seems to hear a harmony of sublimest music surpassing all concerts and melodies of the world. The Bride calls this music silent because, as we have said, it is a tranquil and quiet intelligence, without sound of voices ; and in it are thus enjoyed both the sweetness of the music and the quiet of the silence. And so she says that her Beloved is this silent music, because this harmony of spiritual music is known and experienced in Him. Not only so but likewise He is

The sounding solitude,

26. Which is almost the same as silent music, for although that music is silent to the senses and the natural faculties, it is a most sounding solitude to the spiritual faculties ; for when these are alone and empty of all natural forms and apprehensions they can readily receive the spiritual sound⁴ most sonorously in the spirit of the excellence of God, in Himself and in His creatures, according to that which, as we said above, S. John saw in spirit in the Apocalypse—namely, when he heard the voice of many harpers who harped upon their harps. This was in the spirit : he speaks not of material harps, but of a certain knowledge which he had of the praises of the blessed, which each one, according to his own degree of glory, makes to God

¹ So Av, Ej, G, S, Sg. Jaén and certain other authorities omit 'no,' thus clearly reversing the Saint's meaning.

² Ej, G, Sg omit the commentary on this line.

³ Thus Av, Bg. Other versions read : *de todas* ('of all') for *dotadas* ('endowed').

⁴ Thus B, Bz, Ej, G. A, Av, Bg, Jaén, S read : 'the spiritual sense.'

continually. And this is like music, for as each one possesses the gifts of God in a different degree, even so does each one sing the praises of God in a different degree, yet all make one harmony of love, just as in music.

27. After this same manner the soul is able to see, in that tranquil wisdom, how of all the creatures—not the higher creatures alone, but also the lower, according to that which each of them has received in itself from God—each one raises its voice in testimony to that which God is. She sees that each one¹ after its manner exalts God, since it has God in itself according to its capacity;² and thus all these voices make one voice of music, extolling the greatness of God and His marvellous knowledge and wisdom. And it is this that the Holy Spirit signifies in the Book of Wisdom, where He says: *Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum, et hoc quod continet omnia, scientiam habet vocis.*³ Which is to say: The Spirit of the Lord filleth the round world, and this world, which containeth all things that He hath made, hath knowledge of the voice. This is that sounding solitude which, as we say, the soul knows here, which is the testimony that all things give in themselves concerning God. And inasmuch as the soul receives this sounding music, not without solitude and withdrawal from all outward things, she calls them the silent music and the sounding solitude. This, she says, is her Beloved. And He is further

The supper that recreates and enkindles love.

28. To those that are loved⁴ suppers bring recreation, satisfaction and love. And because these three things are caused by the Beloved in the soul in this sweet communication, the Bride here calls Him the supper that recreates and enkindles love. It is to be known that in Divine Scripture this word 'supper' is understood of the Divine vision; for as supper is the end of the day's work and the beginning of the night's rest, so this knowledge which we have called tranquil gives to the soul a realization of the sure termination of things evil and the possession⁵ of things that are good, whereat it is more enkindled with love for God than it was before. Wherefore God is to the soul the

¹ Ej, G, Sg: '... each one raises its voice as to that which God is. And in testimony hereof each one,' etc.

² Ej, G, Sg add: 'and virtue.'

⁴ S: 'that are in love.'

³ Wisdom i, 7.

⁵ Sg: 'position.'

supper which recreates it by being the termination of its evils, and enkindles it in love, by being to it the possession¹ of all things that are good.

29. But in order that it may be the better understood of what kind is this supper of the soul—the which supper, as we have said, is her Beloved—it is fitting here to observe that which the same Beloved, the Spouse, says in the Apocalypse, namely : I stand at the door and knock ; if any man open to Me, I will come in, and will sup with him and he with Me.² Whereby He indicates that He brings with Him the supper, which is naught else than His own sweetness and the delights whereof He Himself has fruition ; which, when He unites Himself with the soul, He communicates to her, so that she has fruition thereof likewise ; for this is what is meant by : ‘ I will sup with him and he with Me.’ And thus in these words is described the effect of the Divine union of the soul with God, in the which union God shares with the Bride-Soul the same good things which are proper to Him, for, as we have said, He communicates them to her, graciously and bounteously. And thus He is Himself for her the supper which recreates and enkindles love, for by His bounteousness to her He recreates it and by His graciousness to her He enkindles it within her.

30. Before we enter into the exposition of the other stanzas it is meet to observe here that, although we have said that the soul in this estate of betrothal enjoys all tranquillity, and that all the other things that are possible in this life are communicated to her, it is not for that reason to be understood that the tranquillity is only according to the higher part,³ because the sensitive part never, until the estate of the spiritual marriage, completely loses its imperfections, neither is its strength completely subdued, as will be said hereafter. That which is here communicated to it is the most that is possible in the estate of betrothal ; for in the spiritual marriage its profit is much greater. In the betrothal, although in the visits of the Spouse the Bride-Soul enjoys these great blessings which we have described,

¹ S : ‘ the beginning of possession.’

² Revelation iii, 20. Sg omits the following sentence.

³ S : ‘ all the other things that it is possible to communicate in this life are communicated to her, it is not for that reason to be understood that it is in her whole being, but that this tranquillity is according to the higher part.’ The Toledo edition follows this reading [which it seems to me almost obligatory to follow on grounds of sense].

4. The vineyard here spoken of is the nursery of all the virtues which is in this holy soul, the which virtues give it a wine of sweet savour. This vineyard of the soul is flowering thus when the soul is united with the Spouse according to the will and in the same Spouse is rejoicing according to all these virtues together. At certain times, as we have said, there are wont to resort to the memory and fancy many and various¹ forms of imagination, and in the sensual part of the soul there rise up many and various² motions and desires. These are of so many and such various kinds that, when David was drinking this delectable wine of the spirit with great thirst for God, feeling the hindrance and vexation which they caused him, he said : My soul thirsted for Thee, and in how many ways has my flesh thirsted for Thee !³

5. All this chorus of desires and motions of the senses the soul here calls foxes, because of the great similarity which at this time they have to them. For even as the foxes feign sleep that they may capture their prey when they go hunting,⁴ so all these desires and powers of the senses are at rest and asleep until these flowers of the virtues spring up in the soul and open and burst forth ; and then it seems that in its sensual part its flowers, of the desires and powers of the senses, awaken and spring up in their attempt to resist the spirit and to reign. Even to this point comes the lust which, as S. Paul says, the flesh has against the spirit ;⁵ for, its inclination towards the senses being strong, that which is wholly carnal finds weariness and distaste when it tastes of the spirit ; wherein these desires cause great vexation to the sweetness of the spirit ; wherefore the Bride says : ' Drive us away the foxes.'

6. But the malicious evil spirits for their part trouble the soul here in two ways. For they excite and stir up these desires with vehemence,⁶ and with them, and with other imaginations, etc., they make war upon this flourishing⁷ and peaceful kingdom of the soul. And in the second place (and this is worse) when they cannot act in this way they assail

¹ Ej, G, Sg : ' and very various.'

² Ej, G, Sg : ' and very various.'

³ Psalm lxii, 2. [A.V., lxiii, 1.] [The word ' thirsted ' is omitted in Spanish.] Av has : ' in how many ways does my flesh desire Thee ! ' Ej, G add the Latin text.

⁴ S : ' when the game comes out.' [The two expressions are very similar in Spanish, *caza* meaning either ' hunting ' or ' game. ']

⁵ Galatians v, 17.

⁶ A, Ej, G, Sg : ' with great vehemence.'

⁷ [The Spanish word is *florido*, translated ' flowering ' in the text and notes above.]

the soul with bodily noises and torments in order to cause it distraction. And, what is worst of all,¹ they do battle against it with spiritual horrors and fears, amounting at times to terrible torment ; which they can do very effectively at this time, if they are given permission, for, when the soul becomes very greatly detached in spirit in order to perform this spiritual exercise, the devil can readily appear to it, since he is likewise a spirit. At other times he makes other assaults upon the soul by means of horrors before it begins to enjoy these sweet flowers, when God is beginning to draw it forth to some extent from the house of its senses so that it may enter upon the said inward exercise in the garden of the Spouse ; for he knows that, if once the soul enters into this recollection, it is so well protected that, do what he may, he cannot harm it. And often, when the devil goes out to intercept the soul, it will very quickly become recollected in the deep hiding-place of its inmost being, and then those terrors² which it suffers are so far away and so greatly removed that not only do they cause it no fear, but they make it to be glad and to rejoice.

7. Of these terrors the Bride made mention in the Songs, saying : My soul troubled me by reason of the chariots of Aminadab.³ By Aminadab she there understands the devil, and calls his assaults and attacks upon the soul 'chariots,' because of the great vehemence and the confusion and noise that accompany them. Afterwards the soul says here :⁴ 'Drive us away the foxes.' This the Bride also entreats in the Songs, to the same purpose, saying : Drive us away the little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyard is in flower.⁵ And she says not : Drive me away, but, Drive us away,⁶ for she speaks of herself and of the Beloved, since they are at one and are enjoying the flower of the vineyard. The reason of her saying here that the vineyard is in flower, and not in fruit, is that the fruition of the virtues in the soul in this life, although it be in such perfection as in this soul of whom we speak, is, as it were, of flower ; only in the next life will it be as of fruit. And she says next :

While we make a bunch of roses.

¹ Av : 'And what is worse.' ² Ej, G, Sg : 'torments.'

³ Canticles vi, 11. [A.V., vi, 12.]

⁴ S : 'And the soul says, even as here.'

⁵ Canticles ii, 15. Sg has *ha fallecido* ('has failed,' 'has died') for *ha florecido* ('is in flower').

⁶ Ej, G : 'but says it in the plural.'

8. For at this season when the soul is enjoying the flower of this vineyard and taking her delight upon the breast of her Beloved, it comes to pass that the virtues of the soul stand out clearly to view, as we have said, and are at their best, revealing themselves to her and bestowing upon her great sweetness and delight. These virtues the soul feels to be in herself and in God, so that they seem to her to be a pleasant vineyard, full of flower, belonging to them both, wherein they both pasture and have their delight. Then the soul gathers together all these virtues, and in each one of them and in all of them together she makes most delectable acts of love ; all these she offers to the Beloved with great tenderness of love and sweetness ; and the Beloved Himself aids her herein, for without His favour and aid she could not thus gather together and offer the virtues to her Beloved. Wherefore she says : We make a nosegay—that is to say, the Beloved and I.

9.¹ She calls this gathering together of virtues a cone or nosegay,² because even as a pine-cone is strong, and contains within itself many pieces, strong and closely bound together,³ which are the pine-kernels, even so this cone or nosegay of virtues which the soul makes for her Beloved is one single piece of the soul's perfection, which firmly and in an ordered manner⁴ embraces and contains within itself many perfections and virtues which are very strong, and gifts which are very precious, for all the perfections and virtues are ordered⁵ and contained in one firm perfection of the soul. Inasmuch as this perfection is being formed through the practice of the virtues, and, when formed, is being offered to the Beloved by the soul⁶ in the spirit of love after the manner which we are describing, it is fitting, then, that the foxes aforementioned be driven away so that they hinder not the said interior communication between the two. And not only does the soul in this stanza make this request alone that she may be well able to fashion the nosegay, but likewise she desires⁷ that which ensues in the line following, namely :

And let none appear upon the hill.⁸

¹ [This paragraph and the preceding are both numbered '8' by P. Silverio, and paragraphs 10 and 11 are numbered by him 9 and 10.]

² [See p. 129, n. 7, above.]

³ S adds : 'among themselves.'

⁴ A, E, G, Sg have : *ordinariamente* ['habitually'] for *ordenadamente* ['in an ordered manner'].

⁵ Av omits several lines here [destroying the sense].

⁶ Jaén reads : 'to the Beloved by the Beloved'—an evident error.

⁷ Av : 'desires to do.'

⁸ Av, Bz : 'upon the countryside.'

10. This Divine interior exercise also requires withdrawal and detachment from all things that might present themselves to the soul, whether from the lower part of a man, which is that of the senses, or¹ from the higher part, which is that of the reason, in the which two parts are comprised the entire harmony of the faculties and senses of a man, which harmony the Bride here calls a hill, because all the knowledge and the desires of nature dwell and are situated thereon, as quarry on the hill, and the devil is wont to pursue and capture these desires and this knowledge to the detriment of the soul. She begs that none may appear on this hill—that is to say, that no representation and form of any object that pertains² to any of these faculties or senses whereof we have spoken may appear before the soul and the Spouse. It is thus as though she were to say: In all the spiritual faculties of the soul—namely the understanding, the memory and the will—let there be no other knowledge or private affections or considerations of any kind; and in all the senses and faculties of the body, both inward and outward, such as the imagination, the fancy, etc., and seeing, hearing, etc., let there be no other digressions and forms,³ and images and figures, neither representations of objects to the soul, nor other natural operations.

11. This the soul says here since, in order to have perfect fruition of this communication with God, it is fitting that all the senses and faculties, whether interior or exterior, be empty and idle, and at rest from their own operations and objects; for, at such a time, the more they exercise themselves of their own accord, the more they disturb the soul. For when the soul attains to some manner of interior union of love, the spiritual faculties no longer work in it, still less do the bodily faculties; inasmuch as the work of the union of love is already wrought and made, and the soul is moved in love, and thus the faculties have ceased to work, for when they reach their goal all medial operations come to an end. Thus that which the soul does at this time is to wait lovingly upon God, which is to love in continuation of unitive love. Let none, then, appear upon the hill; let the will alone appear, waiting upon the Beloved in

¹ Av omits: 'from the lower . . . senses or.'

² Ej, Sg: 'that is pertinent'; G: 'that is impertinent.'

³ A, B, Bg modify thus: '. . . and faculties of the body, such as the imagination, fancy, etc.; seeing and hearing, both inward and outward, let there be no other digressions and forms.'

the surrender of itself and of all the virtues after the manner which has been described.

ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

1. For a further knowledge of the stanza which follows, it is meet here to observe that the absences of her Beloved which the soul suffers in this estate of spiritual betrothal are very afflicting,¹ and some are of such a kind that there is no grief to be compared with them. The cause of this is that, since the love which the soul has to God in this estate is great and vehement, she is greatly and vehemently tormented in His absence. And to this grief is added the vexation² which comes to the soul at this time from any kind of intercourse or communication with the creatures, which is very great. For, as she is experiencing the great vehemence of her fathomless desire for union with God, any kind of intercourse is most grievous and vexatious to her; just as, when a stone with great impetus and velocity goes rushing towards its centre, anything which it may meet and which detains it in that void will cause it a violent shock.³ And, as the soul has already experienced the taste of these sweet visits, they are more desirable to her than gold and all beauty.⁴ Wherefore the soul, greatly fearing to be deprived of so precious a presence, even for a moment, addresses herself to aridity,⁵ and to the spirit of her Spouse, saying in this stanza :⁶

STANZA XVII

Stay thee, dead north wind. Come, south wind, that awakenest love ;

Breathe through my garden and let its odours⁷ flow, And the Beloved shall pasture⁸ among the flowers.

EXPOSITION

2. In addition to that which we have said in the last stanza, spiritual dryness is a cause whereby is kept from the

¹ B, Bg, Ej, Sg have *afectivas* ('affective') for *aflictivas* ('afflicting').

² Bg: 'the absence.'

³ B, Bg: 'will be very vexatious to it.'

⁴ A: 'and all other beauties.'

⁵ *sequedad*: translated 'dryness' in the following paragraphs.

⁶ S: 'says the words of the following stanza.'

⁷ [P. Silverio here takes the reading of p. 189, n. 7, above.]

⁸ A: 'shall appear.' [*Parecerá* for *pacera*.]

soul the substance¹ of inward sweetness whereof we have spoken² above ; and the soul, fearing this herself, does two things in this stanza. First, she keeps out dryness, shutting the door upon it by means of continual prayer and devotion. The second thing that she does is to invoke the Holy Spirit, for it is He that has to drive out this dryness from the soul, that sustains and increases her love for the Spouse, and that will lead³ the soul to the interior practice of the virtues—all this to the end that the Son of God, her Spouse, may have greater rejoicing and delight in her, for her whole aim⁴ is to please the Beloved.

Stay thee, dead north wind.

3. The north wind is a very cold wind⁵ which dries up and withers the flowers and plants, or at least makes them to shrink and close up⁶ when it strikes them. And because spiritual dryness and the realization of the Beloved's absence⁷ cause this same effect in the soul which experiences them, quenching in her⁸ the substance and savour and fragrance of the virtues which she tasted, she calls it the north wind ; because all the virtues and the affective exercises which the soul practised are mortified in her, wherefore the soul says : 'Stay thee, dead north wind.' This saying of the soul is to be understood of an act and deed of prayer, and of spiritual exercises, which she performs so that this dryness may be stayed. But, because in this estate the things that God communicates to the soul are so intimate that by no exercise of her faculties can the soul of herself put them into practice and experience them if the Spirit of the Spouse cause not this motion of love within her, she next invokes Him, saying :

Come, south wind, that awakenest love.

4. The south wind is another wind, which is commonly called *abrego* ;⁹ this peaceful breeze causes rain and makes grass and plants to grow and flowers to open and scatter their fragrance ; its effects are contrary to those of the

¹ [*jugo*, the sap or pith of a plant.]

² S : 'have treated.'

³ [The Spanish text changes abruptly here from indicative to subjunctive in a way that cannot be exactly expressed in English.]

⁴ Sg : 'her whole perfection.'

⁵ A : 'is a dry and cold wind.'

⁶ Bg : 'and dry up.'

⁷ [*lit.*, 'and the affective absence of the Beloved.']

⁸ S : 'exhausting in her.'

⁹ [See p. 134, n. 5, above.]

north wind.¹ And thus by this breeze the soul denotes the Holy Spirit, Who, as she says, awakens love ; for, when this Divine breeze assails the soul, it enkindles it wholly and refreshes it and revives it and awakens the will and upraises² the desires which aforetime had fallen and were asleep, to the love of God, in such manner that it may well be said thereof that it awakens the love both of the Spouse and of the Bride ; and that which she begs of the Holy Spirit³ is that which she says in the line following :

Breathe through my garden . . .

5. This garden is the soul ; for, just as the soul called herself above a vineyard in flower, because the flower of the virtues which are in her gives her a wine of sweet savour, so here she calls herself a garden⁴ because there are planted within her, and are born and grow, the flowers of perfections and virtues whereof we have spoken. And here it is to be noted that the Bride says not ' Breathe in my garden,' but ' Breathe through my garden,' for there is a great difference between the breathing of God into the soul and His breathing through the soul.⁵ To breathe into the soul is to infuse into it grace, gifts and virtues ; and to breathe through the soul is for God to touch and set in motion the virtues and perfections which have already been given to it, refreshing them and moving them so that they may diffuse into the soul wondrous fragrance and sweetness. This is just as when aromatic spices are shaken ; for, as soon as they are set in motion, they shed the abundance of their odour, which formerly was not present or was not perceived to so high a degree. For the virtues that the soul has in itself, whether acquired or infused, it is not always actually feeling and enjoying ; because, as we shall say later, they are present in the soul during this life like flowers enclosed in the bud,⁶ or like aromatic spices covered over, the fragrance whereof is not perceived until they are opened and shaken, as we have said.⁷

¹ S modifies : ' and scatter their fragrance ; and in fact this breeze has the contrary effects to those of the north wind.'

² Sg : ' and awakens.'

³ Ej, G : ' of the Spouse.'

⁴ A omits the next four lines, continuing : ' for there is. . .'

⁵ S : ' the breathing of God into the soul or through the soul' ; Ej, Sg : ' . . . into the soul and the breathing of God through the soul.'

⁶ S : ' in the shoot or in the bud.'

⁷ Ej, G omit the following paragraph.

And thus with great desire the soul His Bride desires all this—namely, that the north wind may depart, that the south wind may come and that it may breathe through the garden, for herein¹ the soul gains many things together. She gains the fruition of the virtues which have been brought to the highest point of delectable exercise, as we have said. She gains the fruition of the Beloved in them, since by their means, as we have just said, He communicates Himself within her in more intimate love, granting her more special favours than before. She also gains this, that the Beloved delights in her far more through this actual exercise of the virtues, and it is this that pleases her most, namely that her Beloved is pleased with her. She also gains the continuance and duration of this fragrance and sweetness of the virtues, which continues in the soul for as long as the Spouse is present within her after this manner, and the Bride is giving Him sweetness in her virtues, even as she says in the Songs after this wise: While the King was in his reclining-chamber—that is to say, in the soul—my flowering and fragrant little tree gave forth fragrance of sweetness.² By this fragrant little tree is here understood³ the soul itself, which from the flowers of the virtues that it has within itself gives forth fragrance of sweetness to the Beloved Who dwells within her in this kind of union.

9. Wherefore this Divine breath of the Holy Spirit is greatly to be desired, and likewise that every soul should pray that He may breathe through its garden so that the Divine odours of God may flow. And because this is so necessary, and of such great glory and good for the soul, the Bride desired it and prayed for it in the Songs in the same terms as here, saying: Rise up hence, north wind, and come, south-west wind,⁴ and breathe through my garden; and its fragrances and precious spices shall flow.⁵ And all this the soul desires, not for the delight and glory which comes to her thereby, but because she knows that her Spouse delights therein. This is⁶ a preparation and pre-diction for the Son of God to come and take His delight in her; wherefore she says next:

And the Beloved shall pasture among the flowers.

¹ So all the MSS. except Jaén, which reads: 'for then.'

² Canticles i, 11. [A.V., i, 12.]

³ S: 'she here gives to be understood.'

⁴ [ábrego.]

⁵ Canticles iv, 16.

⁶ S adds: 'all.'

7. So that, in conjuring the lions, the Spouse restrains the impetuosit¹ies¹ and excesses of wrath ; and in conjuring the harts, He strengthens² the concupiscible faculty with respect to the cowardice and feebleness of mind which aforetime caused it to shrink ; and in conjuring the leaping does, He satisfies and subdues the desires and appetites which aforetime roamed restlessly about, leaping like does from one thing to another in order to satisfy that concupiscence which is now satisfied by the pleasant lyres, whose sweetness it enjoys, and by the sirens' song, upon the delight whereof it pastures. And it is to be noted that it is not wrath and concupiscence which the Spouse conjures here, for these faculties are never wanting in the soul, but their troublesome and disorderly acts, which are denoted by the lions, harts and leaping does ; it is necessary in this estate that these should cease.

Mountains, valleys, banks,

8. By these three names are denoted the vicious and disorderly acts of the three faculties of the soul, which are memory, understanding and will, which acts are disorderly and vicious when they are carried to a high extreme, and likewise when they are at a low and defective extreme, or even when they are not at either extreme, but tend thereto in one direction ; and thus by the mountains, which are very high, are signified acts which are extreme in being over-disorderly ;³ by the valleys, which are very low, are signified the acts of these three faculties, which are less extreme than is fitting. And by the banks, which are neither very high nor very low, yet, since they are not flat,⁴ participate somewhat of the one extreme and of the other, are signified the acts of the faculties when these to some extent exceed or fail to reach that mean and level height of what is just. These acts, though not disorderly in the extreme,⁵ as they would be if they amounted to mortal sin, are nevertheless partially so, since they are either venial sins or imperfections,⁶ however slight, in the understanding, the memory and the will. All these acts which exceed what is

¹ Ej, G, Sg : ' the appetites.'

² Ej, G : ' He restrains.'

³ S : ' which are at an excessive extreme ; and by,' etc.

⁴ S : ' not very flat.'

⁵ Ej, G : ' though not to a disorderly extent extreme.'

⁶ S : ' partially so, fringing venial sins or imperfections.'

just He conjures likewise, by the pleasant lyres and the aforementioned song, that they cease ; the which lyres and song have brought the three faculties of the soul to such perfection of efficiency that they are completely occupied in the just operation which pertains to them, and this to such an extent that they avoid not only every extreme but also every tendency thereto. There follow the remaining lines :

. . . Waters, breezes, heats, And terrors that keep watch by night.

9. By these four things, again, are understood¹ the affections of the four passions, which, as we said, are grief, hope, joy and fear. By the waters are understood the affections of grief which afflict the soul ; for they enter the soul like water, wherefore David said to God in speaking of them : *Salvum me fac Deus, quoniam intraverunt aque usque ad animam meam.*² That is : Save me, my God, for the waters are come in into my soul. By the breezes He understands the affections of hope, for like the breezes they fly to desire that which is absent and is hoped for. Wherefore David says likewise : *Os meum aperui, et attraxi Spiritum, quia mandata tua desiderabam.*³ As though he were to say : I opened the mouth of my hope and drew in the breath of my desire, for I desired and hoped for Thy commandments. By the heat are understood the affections of the passion of joy, which enkindle the heart like fire ; wherefore the same David says : *Concaluit cor meum intra me, et in meditatione mea exardescet ignis.*⁴ Which signifies : My heart was hot within me and in my meditation fire shall be enkindled, which is as much as to say : In my meditation shall joy be enkindled. By the terrors that keep watch by night are understood the affections of the other passion, which is fear ; which affections in spiritual persons that have not yet reached this estate of the Spiritual Marriage whereof we are speaking are wont to be very great. At times they come from God, when He desires to grant such persons certain favours, as we have said above, and is wont to bring fear and affright to their spirits, and likewise⁵ a shrinking to their flesh and senses, since they have not fortified and perfected their nature and habituated it to these favours. At times, again,

¹ S : 'are signified.'

² Psalm lxxviii, 1. [A.V., lxix, 1.]

³ Psalm cxviii, 131. [A.V., cxix, 131.]

⁴ Psalm xxxviii, 4. [A.V., xxxix, 3.]

⁵ S omits 'likewise.'

they come from the devil, who, when God grants the soul recollection and sweetness in Himself, becomes very envious and greatly afflicted because of that blessing and peace which have come to the soul, and contrives to set horror and fear in its spirit, to hinder it from obtaining that blessing ; sometimes he even threatens it within its very spirit.

And when he sees that he cannot reach the inmost part of the soul, since it is greatly recollected and closely united with God, he then attacks it from without, in its sensual part, and sets¹ there distraction and inconstancy and sensible perils and pains and horror,² if haply by this means he may harry the Bride in her marriage-chamber. These things the Spouse calls³ terrors of the night,⁴ because they all come from evil spirits, and because by their means the devil tries to diffuse darkness in the soul by obscuring the Divine light wherein it rejoices. He says of these fears that they keep watch, because their effect is to cause the soul to watch and to awaken it from its sweet⁵ inward sleep, and likewise because the evil spirits that cause them are ever watching to produce these fears, which, coming from God, or from the devil, as I have said, are infused passively into the spirits of those⁶ who are already spiritual ; and I treat not here of other fears which are temporal or natural, because it is not for spiritual people to have such fears, whereas to have the spiritual fears aforementioned is proper to spiritual people.⁷

10. So the Beloved likewise conjures all these four manners of affection of the four passions of the soul, making them to cease and be at rest, since He now gives to the Bride in this estate riches and strength and satisfaction in the pleasant lyres of His sweetness and the sirens' song of His delight, so that not only can these things not reign within her but they cannot even cause her the least degree of displeasure. For the grandeur and stability of the soul in this estate are so complete that, if formerly there reached the soul the waters of any grief soever, even those of its own

¹ S : ' he contrives to [*procura*] set.' Cf. also p. 149, n. 1, above.

² Sg : ' inconstancy and appetites and sensible horror.'

³ S : ' And the Spouse calls them.'

⁴ Ej, G, Sg : ' calls terrors that keep watch.'

⁵ Ej, G, Sg : ' its sublime.'

⁶ S modifies thus : ' . . . watching to produce them. These fears, which come passively from God or from the devil, as I have said, are infused into the souls—I mean into the spirits—of those . . . ' etc.

⁷ S modifies thus : ' because to have them belongs not to spiritual people, as it does to have the other fears aforementioned.'

sins or of the sins of some other person, which is what spiritual persons habitually feel the most, now,¹ although it still realizes their importance, they cause it neither pain nor sorrow;² and it no longer feels compassion,³ though it performs the works of compassion and has the perfection thereof; for in this estate the soul has no longer that part of its virtues which was weak; but there remains to it that which was strong, constant and perfect in them; for in this transformation of love the soul⁴ is made like to the angels, who apprehend perfectly things that are grievous, without feeling grief, and practise works of mercy without feeling compassion;⁵ although occasionally and at certain seasons God acts differently toward the soul, making it then to feel things and suffer that it may grow in merit, and become more fervent in love, even as He did with the Virgin Mother, and with S. Paul and others;⁶ but this estate⁷ does not carry this condition necessarily.

11. Neither is the soul afflicted by the desires of hope, for, being now satisfied with this union of God, in so far as is possible in this life, it has naught to hope for with respect to the world, and naught to desire with respect to that which is spiritual, since it sees and feels itself to be full of the riches of God, and thus, in life and in death, is conformed and reconciled⁸ to God's will, saying according to the sensitive and spiritual part: *Fiat voluntas tua*, without being impelled by any other desire and appetite; and thus the desire to see God which it experiences is without affliction. Likewise the affections of joy, which were wont to be felt by the soul, to a greater or a lesser degree, seem to be in no way diminished, nor does their abundance cause it surprise. For its rejoicing is habitually so great⁹ that, like the sea, it¹⁰ is not diminished by the rivers that flow from it, neither is it increased by those that enter it; for it is within

¹ [The MSS. here read *y* ('and') for the *ya* ('now') of the first redaction. P. Silverio follows them, but, as the sense of the passage is destroyed by this reading, I prefer the first redaction.]

² S: 'neither grief nor anguish of sorrow.'

³ Sg: 'composition.'

⁴ Sg: 'the Beloved.'

⁵ Sg: 'composition.'

⁶ Sg: 'with the Magdalen and with S. Paul and others.'

⁷ Sg: 'but this affection.'

⁸ S modifies: '... riches of God, although it may grow in charity, and thus in death and life it is conformed and reconciled.' Sg reads: *ajuntada* ['united'] for *ajustada* ['reconciled'].

⁹ S: 'for, so great is the abundance which it habitually enjoys,'

¹⁰ S: 'that it is like the sea, which.'

this soul that there is made that spring, the water whereof, as Christ says, through S. John, springs up to eternal life.¹

12. And since I have said that the soul in this case receives nothing new in this estate of transformation, wherein it seems to lose accidental joys, which are granted even to the glorified, it must be known that, although such a soul is not without those accidental sweetnesss and joys²—nay, rather, those which it habitually has are innumerable—it has no increase³ as to the substantial communication of the spirit, for the reason that all that is capable of coming to it anew it has already had; and thus that which it has in itself is greater than that which comes to it anew. Therefore, whenever things of joy and gladness⁴ present themselves to such a soul—be they exterior, or spiritual and interior—the soul at once turns to rejoice in the riches that it already has in itself, and has far greater joy and delight in them than⁵ in those which come to it anew, because in some manner it has gained herein possession of God; Who, though He delights in all things, delights in them less than in Himself, because in Himself He has good which is eminent above them all. And thus all new joys and pleasures which this soul receives serve it rather as reminders⁶ to rejoice in what it already has and feels within itself than in these new acquisitions,⁷ for, as I say, it is greater than they.

13. And it is natural that, when a thing causes the soul joy and contentment, if the soul has something else that it prizes more highly and that gives it more pleasure, it should remember this immediately and set its pleasure and joy upon it.⁸ And thus the accidental character of these new spiritual acquisitions, and the new experiences that they bring to the soul, are so little by comparison with that substantial communication which it already has within itself

¹ S. John iv, 14.

² Ej, G, Sg: 'although such a soul be not without these accidental joys.'

³ S adds: 'of joy.' A reads: 'it rises for naught.'

⁴ Ej reads: 'of joy and riches—I mean delight,' and omits several clauses following. G reads: 'whenever things of joy and riches—I mean delight therein—present themselves to such a soul, those which come to it anew . . .' [Neither reading preserves the sense, or the thought, of the text above.]

⁵ [The original has 'and,' but the sense is clearly as in the text above.]

⁶ Sg reads *sertan* for *sirven*: 'would rather be to it reminders.'

⁷ S: 'than in the same new acquisitions.'

⁸ Ej modifies: '. . . that when the soul has in itself something of joy and contentment that it greatly prizes, if another and a lesser thing comes to it, it should remember this immediately and set its pleasure upon it.'

all things else and entered into her God, where she has fruition of all peace, tastes all sweetness, and delights in all delight, according as the condition and estate of this life allow. For of the soul in such a case is understood that which the Wise Man says, namely : The peaceful and quiet¹ soul is as a continual feast.² For even as at a feast there is the savour of all kinds of meat and the sweetness of all kinds of music, even so in this feast which the soul now enjoys in the bosom of her Spouse, she rejoices in all delight and tastes all sweetness. And what we have said, and indeed all that words can express, is so small a part of what comes to pass here that no more than the smallest part could ever be described of the experience of the soul that reaches this happy estate. For, if the soul is enabled to reach the peace of God, which, as the Church says,³ surpasses all that is of sense,⁴ then all that is of sense will remain mute and bereft in speaking thereof. There follows the first line of the second stanza.

By the pleasant lyres And by the sirens' song, I conjure you.

16. We have already explained that by the pleasant lyres the Spouse here signifies the sweetness diffused by the soul in this estate, whereby He causes all its troubles whereof we have spoken to cease. For, even as the music of the lyres fills the soul⁵ with sweetness and refreshment, and absorbs and enraptures it so as to detach it from distresses and afflictions, even so this sweetness keeps the soul so completely within itself that no grievous thing reaches it.⁶ And thus it is as though He were to say : By the sweetness that I set in the soul, let all things that are not sweet to the soul cease. It has likewise been said that the sirens' song signifies the habitual delight which the soul possesses. And this delight He calls the sirens' song because, even as (so they say) the sirens' song is so delectable and delicious as to enrapture and enamour one who hears it and thus to make him as forgetful as one that is borne away from all things, even so the delight of this union absorbs⁷ the soul in itself and

¹ Ej, G, Sg read : 'secure' for 'quiet.'

² Proverbs xv, 15.

³ S : 'as S. Paul says.'

⁴ [i.e., 'passeth all understanding.'] Philippians iv, 7.

⁵ A number of authorities read : 'the spirit.'

⁶ Bg : 'so as to detach it from itself, without savour of distresses or troubles ; thus this distress [*sic*] keeps the soul within itself so completely that no grievous thing wounds it.'

⁷ B, Bg : 'darkens.'

in the last stanzas) which is the proper disposition and means for the perfection of this estate : it now remains to treat, in this stanza, of this estate, wherein the Spouse now speaks to the soul, calling her His Bride, and says two things. He says, first, that the soul, having issued forth victoriously, has now attained to this delectable estate of the Spiritual Marriage which both He and she had so greatly desired. The second thing that He does is to enumerate the properties of the said estate, of which properties the soul now has fruition in Him, and these are, for her to rest at her pleasure, and for her neck to recline upon the gentle arms of the Beloved, even as we shall now go on to show in our exposition.

The Bride has entered

3. In order to expound the arrangement of these stanzas the more openly, and to describe the soul's habitual progress ere it reach this estate of the Spiritual Marriage, which is the highest of those that, by Divine favour, we are now to describe, it is to be noted that, ere the soul reaches this estate, it exercises itself first of all in the trials and bitter-nesses of mortification and in meditation upon spiritual things, as the soul said at the beginning from the first stanza down to that which says : ' Scattering a thousand graces.' And afterward it enters upon the contemplative way,¹ wherein it passes through the ways and straits of love which have been described in the stanzas following,² as far as that which says ' Withdraw them, Beloved,' wherein was made the Spiritual Betrothal. And over and above this it goes along the unitive way, wherein it receives many and very great communications and visits and gifts and jewels from the Spouse, even as does an affianced bride, and continually increases in knowledge and perfection in His love,³ as it has described from the said stanza wherein this betrothal was made and which says ' Withdraw them, Beloved,' even to this present one which begins : ' The Bride has entered. . . ' It has remained now for the said Spiritual Marriage to be made between the soul aforementioned and the Son of God. This is without comparison far greater than the Spiritual

within 1.
previous
Mayer

¹ B, Bg, Ej, G have : *vida* [' life '] for *via* [' way '].

² S : ' in the progress of the stanzas. '

³ Bz, Ej, Sg : ' and is continually entering into His love and increasing in perfection thereof. '

Betrothal¹ because it is a total transformation² in the Beloved, wherein on either side there is made surrender by total possession of the one to the other with a certain consummation³ of union of love, wherein the soul is made Divine and becomes God by participation, in so far as may be in this life. And thus I think that this estate is never attained without the soul being confirmed in grace therein ; for the faithfulness of both is confirmed, that of God being confirmed in the soul ; wherefore this is the loftiest estate which in this life is attainable. For even as in the consummation⁴ of marriage according to the flesh the two become one flesh, as says the Divine Scripture,⁵ even so, when this Spiritual Marriage between God and the soul is consummated, there are two natures in one spirit and love, even as says S. Paul, making this same comparison and saying : He that is joined unto the Lord is made one spirit with Him ;⁶ even as when the light of the star or of the candle is joined and united with that of the sun, so that that which shines is not the star or the candle but the sun, which has absorbed the other lights in itself. And of this estate the Spouse treats in the present line, saying : 'The Beloved has entered'—that is to say, has gone out from all that is temporal and from all that is natural,⁷ and from all spiritual manners and modes and affections, and having left behind and forgotten all temptations, disturbances,⁸ griefs, anxiety⁹ and cares, is transformed in this lofty embrace. Of this the following line goes on to treat, namely :

Into the pleasant garden of her desire

4. This is as though she were to say : She has been transformed in God, Who it is that is here called a pleasant garden, by reason of the delectable and sweet repose which the soul finds in Him. The soul does not come to this garden of complete transformation (which is the joy and delight and glory of the Spiritual Marriage) without first passing through the Spiritual Betrothal¹⁰ and through the mutual and loyal

¹ B, Bg omit the words : ' between the soul . . . Spiritual Betrothal.'

² A : ' a total spiritual transformation.'

³ B : ' with a certain communication.'

⁴ B, Bg : ' in the communication.'

⁵ Genesis ii, 24.

⁶ 1 Corinthians vi, 17.

⁷ Ej, G, Sg omit : ' and from all that is natural.'

⁸ Ej, G, Sg omit : ' disturbances.'

⁹ [sic. Cf. p. 140, n. 6.] ¹⁰ Ej, G, Sg : ' through the Betrothal.'

love of those that are betrothed. For, after the soul has been for some time the Bride of the Son of God, in love which is sweet and perfect, God calls her and sets her in this His flowering garden for the consummation of this most happy estate of marriage with Him, wherein is effected such union of the two natures and such communication¹ of the Divine nature to the human, that, while neither of them changes its being, each of them appears to be God. Although in this life this thing cannot come to pass perfectly, yet it surpasses everything that can be described or conceived.

5. This is very clearly expressed by the Spouse Himself in the Songs, where He invites the soul, now made His Bride, to this estate, saying : *Veni in hortum meum soror mea sponsa, messui myrrham meam cum aromatibus meis.*² Which signifies : Come and enter my garden, my sister, my spouse, for I have now gathered my myrrh with my fragrant spices.³ He calls her sister and spouse because this she was in the love and surrender of herself which she had made to Him before He called her⁴ to this estate of the Spiritual Marriage, where He says that He has now gathered⁵ His fragrant myrrh and aromatic spices, which are the fruits of the flowers, now ripe and made ready for the soul, the which fruits are the delights and grandeurs⁶ which He Himself communicates to her in this estate—that is, He communicates them to her in Himself ; for the which cause He is to her the pleasant garden of her desire. For the whole desire and aim of the soul, and that of God in all the works⁷ of the soul, is the consummation⁸ and perfection of this estate, wherefore the soul never rests until she reaches Him ; for in this estate she finds much greater abundance and fullness of God, and a peace more sure and stable, and a sweetness more perfect⁹ without compare than in the Spiritual Betrothal, since she is now placed in the arms of such a Spouse, Whose close spiritual embrace the soul habitually feels—a true embrace, by means whereof the soul lives the

¹ Ej, G, Sg : 'and such consummation.'

² Canticles v, 1.

³ Ej omits the vernacular of this quotation.

⁴ Ej, G : 'before He brought her near.'

⁵ Ej : 'watered' [*regada* for *segada*].

⁶ G : 'delights and graces' ; Sg : 'delights and graces and grandeurs.'

⁷ Ej, G : 'in all the things and works.'

⁸ B, Bz, G : 'is the communication.'

⁹ A : 'more secure.'

life of God. For in this soul is fulfilled that which S. Paul says : I live, yet not I, for Christ liveth in me.¹ Wherefore, since the soul now lives a life so happy and glorious as this life of God, let each one consider, if he can, how delectable a life will be that which the soul lives, wherein neither can God perceive aught that is displeasing to Him, nor can the soul perceive it, but the soul enjoys and perceives the delight of the glory of God in its very substance, which is now transformed in Him. Wherefore the next line continues :

And at her pleasure rests, Her neck reclining². . .

6. Here the neck signifies the strength of the soul, by means whereof, as we have said, is wrought this embrace and union between the soul and the Spouse ; for the soul could not bear so close an embrace if it were not already very strong. And because in this strength the soul laboured and practised the virtues, and conquered the vices, therefore it is just that, after it has conquered and laboured, it should take its repose with its neck reclining

. . . On the gentle arms of the Beloved.

7. For the neck to recline upon the arms of God is for it to have its strength now united—or rather, its weakness—in the strength of God ;³ for the arms of God signify the strength of God ;⁴ wherein our weakness, reclining upon Him and transformed in Him, has now the strength of God Himself. Wherefore it is very convenient to denote this estate of the Spiritual Marriage by this reclining of the neck upon the gentle arms of the Beloved, since God is now both the strength and the gentleness of the soul, in Whom it is defended and protected from all evils and in Whom it savours all good things.⁵ Hence the Bride in the Songs, being desirous of this estate, said to the Spouse : Who would give thee to me, my brother, that thou mightest suck the

¹ Galatians ii, 20. S has: '*I live, but yet . . .*' [with the emphatic form of the pronoun].

² Ej, G omit the commentary on these lines.

³ Bg: '*its weakness upon the arms of God and upon His strength.*'

⁴ S omits this clause.

⁵ Ej, G, Sg: '*and favoured in all good things.*'

breasts of my mother, so that I might find thee alone without and might kiss thee,¹ and none would then despise me?² By calling Him her brother, she denotes the equality which there is in the betrothal of love between the two before they attain to this estate. By saying 'that thou mightest suck the breasts of my mother,' she means, that Thou mightest quench and dry up in me the desires and passions, which are the breasts and the milk of Mother Eve³ in our flesh, and are the hindrance to this estate. And thus, she continues, when this is done, 'I might find thee alone without'—that is : I might go out from all things, even from myself, in solitude and detachment of spirit, when once the aforementioned desires are dried up ; and there I, being alone, might kiss Thee Who art alone—that is to say : My nature, now that it is alone and detached from all impurity, temporal, natural and spiritual, might be united with Thee alone,⁴ with Thy nature alone, and without any other intermediaries,⁵ which alone comes to pass in the Spiritual Marriage,⁶ which is the kiss of God by the soul, where none despises it or assaults it ; for in this estate neither devil nor flesh nor world nor desires molest it. For herein is fulfilled that which is said in the Songs : The winter is past and the rain has gone and the flowers have appeared upon our earth.⁷

ANNOTATION OF THE STANZA FOLLOWING

1. In this high estate of the Spiritual Marriage the Spouse reveals His wondrous secrets to the soul, as to His faithful consort, with great readiness and frequency, for true and perfect love⁸ can keep nothing hidden from the person loved. He communicates principally to it sweet mysteries⁹ concerning His Incarnation and the ways and manners of human redemption, which is one of the highest works of God, and is thus most delectable to the soul. For this reason, although He communicates to it many other mysteries, the Spouse makes mention in the stanza

¹ Bg : 'and might care for thee.'

² Canticles viii, 1.

³ S : 'of our mother Eve.'

⁴ S adds : '—that is.'

⁵ S adds : 'save love.'

⁶ Sg omits : 'and without any . . . Marriage.'

⁷ Canticles ii, 11.

⁸ Ej, G, Sg : 'because in truth true love.'

⁹ Ej : 'great mysteries and sweet.'

following of His Incarnation only, as being the most important of all; and thus He speaks to her and says :

STANZA XXIII

**Beneath the apple-tree,¹ There wert thou betrothed to me ;
There did I give thee my hand² And thou wert redeemed where
thy mother had been corrupted.³**

EXPOSITION

2. The Spouse sets forth to the soul in this stanza the wondrous manner and plan of His redemption of her and of His betrothal of her to Himself, using the same terms as to describe the corruption and ruin of the human race, and saying that, even as by means of the forbidden tree of Paradise she was ruined and corrupted in her human nature through Adam, even so upon the tree of the Cross she was redeemed and restored, by His giving her the hand of His favour and mercy,⁴ through His death and passion, and raising the barriers⁵ that came from⁶ original sin between the soul and God. And thus she says :

Beneath the apple-tree,

3. That is, beneath the favour of the tree of the Cross, which is here understood by the apple-tree, whereon the Son of God redeemed human nature, and, in consequence, betrothed it to Himself,⁷ and consequently betrothed to Himself every soul, giving it for this purpose grace and pledges thereof in the Cross. And thus He says :

**. . . There wert thou betrothed to me ;
There did I give thee my hand . . .**

¹ Bg has 'an' for 'the.'

² A : 'There did I stretch forth my hand.'

³ Bg has 'was' for 'had been.'

⁴ Ej, G : 'favour and friendship.'

⁵ [*Lit.*, 'the truces.'] Av : 'the surrenders.' A note by the copyist indicates that he was doubtful as to the true form of the word. A : 'attaining the truces.'

⁶ Ej, G, Sg have 'through' for 'from.'

⁷ S : '. . . the Son of God won victory, and, in consequence, betrothed human nature to Himself.'

4. This is to say, the hand of My favour and help, raising thee up from thy low estate¹ to be My companion and My betrothed.

And thou wert redeemed where thy mother had been corrupted.

5. For thy mother, human nature, was corrupted in thy first parents beneath the tree, and there likewise wert thou redeemed—namely, beneath the tree of the Cross. So that if thy mother put thee to death beneath the tree, I gave thee life beneath the tree of the Cross. After this manner God continues to reveal to the soul the ordinances and dispositions of His wisdom ; since He is able so wisely and beautifully to bring good from evil, and to ordain to our greater good that which was the cause of evil. That which is literally contained² in this stanza is said by the same Spouse to the Bride in the Songs, where He says : *Sub arbore mal suscitavi te : ibi corrupta est mater tua, ibi violata est genitrix tua.*³ Which signifies : I raised thee up under the apple-tree ; there thy mother was corrupted,⁴ and there was she violated that brought thee forth.

6. This betrothal that was made upon the Cross is not that whereof we are now speaking ; for that is a betrothal which is made once for all⁵ when God gives to the soul the first grace, which comes to every soul in baptism. But this betrothal is after the way of perfection, which takes place only gradually and by stages ; and, although they are both one, the difference is that the one⁶ is wrought at the soul's pace, and so is gradual, while the other is according to God's pace and thus is wrought once and for all. For this betrothal whereof we are treating is that which God describes through Ezekiel, speaking with the soul after this manner : Thou wast cast out upon the earth, in despite of thy soul, on the day that thou wast born. And, passing by thee, I saw thee trodden under foot in thy blood, and I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood : 'Live' ;⁷ and I caused thee to be multiplied like the grass of the field ; thou

¹ S : 'from [a] miserable and low estate.'

² Ej, G, Sg : 'literally understood.'

³ Canticles viii, 5.

⁴ A, B, Bg, Jaén : *extratda* [see p. 145, n. 2, above]. Av : 'corrupt.' S, Sg : 'corrupted.' Bz : 'destroyed.' Ej, G omit the translation of this Latin text.

⁵ S : 'for that is made once for all.'

⁶ S : 'is that the latter.'

⁷ Ej, G, Sg : 'And, passing that way, I saw thee trodden under foot in thy blood ; I lived.' Bz omits : 'when thou wast in thy blood.'

and has become His bride, there are communicated to her the breast and the love of the Beloved, which is for the wisdom and secrets and graces and virtues and gifts of God to be communicated to her, wherewith she becomes so greatly beautified, so rich and so full of delights, that she thinks herself to be upon a bed made of a great variety of sweet and Divine flowers, which delight her as she touches them and refresh her with their fragrance ; for the which cause she very properly¹ calls this bond of love with God a flowery bed ; for so the Bride calls it, where she speaks to the Beloved in the Songs, saying : *Lectulus noster floridus*,² that is : Our flowery bed. And she calls it 'ours,' because the same virtues and the same love (namely, those of the Beloved) are common to both, and the same delight is common to both, even as the Holy Spirit says in the Proverbs, in these words : My delights are with the sons of men.³ She calls it flowery also, because in this estate the virtues are perfected in the soul and put into practice as works which are perfect and heroic, the which thing could not be until the bed had become flowery in perfect union⁴ with God. And so she next sings of the second theme, in the line following, saying :

Encompassed with dens of lions.

4. Understanding by the dens of lions the virtues which the soul possesses in this estate of union with God. The reason is that the dens of lions are very secure and protected⁵ from all other beasts ; since these fear the strength and boldness of the lion that is within, and hence not only dare not to enter, but dare not even to tarry near.⁶ And thus each of the virtues, when the soul at last possesses them in perfection, is to her like a lion's den, wherein Christ the Spouse dwells and is present, united with the soul in that virtue and in each of the other virtues, like a strong lion. And the soul herself, united with Him in these same virtues, is also like a strong lion, for there she is given⁷ the properties⁸ of God. And thus in this case the soul is so well protected

¹ Ej, G, Sg omit : 'very properly.'

² Canticles i, 15 [A.V., i, 16]. Ej, G, Sg omit the following words : 'that is : Our flowery bed.'

³ Proverbs viii, 31.

⁴ Ej, G, Sg : 'in perfection and union.'

⁵ Ej, G, Sg omit : 'and protected.'

⁶ A : 'even to pass near.'

⁷ Ej, G, Sg : 'she resists her opponents and is given.'

⁸ A : 'the same virtues and properties.'

and so strong¹ in each of the virtues and in all of them together, reposing on this flowery bed of union with her God, that not only do the evil spirits not presume to attack her, but they dare not even appear before her, by reason of the great fear which they have of her, when they see her so greatly enlarged, encouraged and emboldened with the perfect virtues in the bed of the Beloved. For, when she is united in transformation of union,² they fear her as much as they fear God Himself and dare not even look upon her : greatly does the devil fear the soul that has perfection.

5. She says likewise that the bed is encompassed with these dens of the virtues³ because in this estate the virtues are linked among themselves, united and strengthened mutually and ordered in the soul's complete perfection, each being supported by others,⁴ in such a way that there is no weak or exposed part of it where the devil can enter, neither can aught in the world, high or low, cause her unrest, disturb her or even move her ; for being now free from all disturbance of the natural passions, and withdrawn and detached from the torture and diversity⁵ of temporal cares, as she is here, the soul has fruition, in security and tranquillity, of the participation of God. This very thing is that which was desired by the Bride in the Songs, where she says : Would that thou mightest be given to me, my brother, to suck the breasts of my mother,⁶ so that I might find thee alone without, and that I might kiss thee and that none might now despise me ?⁷ This kiss is the union whereof we are speaking, wherein⁸ the soul is made equal with God through love. Wherefore she has this desire, asking to be given the Beloved that He may be her brother, which phrase signifies and makes equality ; and that He may suck the breasts of her mother, which signifies the consuming of all the imperfections and desires of her nature which she has from her mother Eve ; and that she may find Him alone without, that is, may be united with Him alone, far away from all things, detached, according to the will and the desire, from them all ; and thus none will despise her, that is to say,

¹ Bg : ' so pure and strong.'

² Av, Bz, Ej, G, S, Sg : ' transformation of love.'

³ Ej, G, Sg : ' with these virtues.'

⁴ Ej, G omit : ' and ordered . . . by others.'

⁵ Ej, G, Sg omit : ' and diversity.'

⁶ Ej, G omit all the rest of this paragraph save the last sentence.

⁷ Canticles viii, 1.

⁸ S adds : ' in a certain manner.'

neither world, nor flesh nor devil¹ will attack her ; for, when the soul is free and purged from all these things and united with God, none of them can annoy her. Hence it is that the soul in this estate enjoys an habitual sweetness and tranquillity which is never lost to her and never fails her.

6. But beside this habitual satisfaction and peace, the flowers of the virtues of this garden whereof we speak are wont to open in the soul and diffuse their fragrance in it after such manner that the soul seems to be, and in fact is, filled with the delights of God. And I said² that the flowers of virtues which are in the soul are wont to open, because, although the soul is full of virtues in perfection,³ it is not always actually enjoying them (although, as I have said, it does habitually enjoy the peace and tranquillity which they cause it) ; for we can say that in this life⁴ they are in the soul as flowers in bud, tightly closed, in a garden—it is a marvellous thing at times to see them all opening, by the work of the Holy Spirit, and diffusing marvellous scent and fragrance in great variety. For it will come to pass that the soul will see in itself the flowers of the mountains whereof we spoke above, which are the abundance and greatness and beauty of God ; with these will be intertwined the lilies of the wooded valleys, which are rest, refreshment and protection ; and then there will be placed among them the fragrant roses⁵ of the strange islands, which, as we say, are the strange kinds of knowledge concerning God ; and likewise it will be assailed by the fragrance of the water-lilies from the sounding rivers,⁶ which we said were the greatness of God that fills the entire soul ; and intertwined and enlaced with these is the delicate scent of the jasmine (which is the whisper of the amorous breezes), whereof we said likewise that the soul has fruition in this estate ; and furthermore the other virtues and gifts⁷ which come, as we said, from tranquil knowledge and silent music and sonorous solitude⁸ and the delectable supper of love. And the enjoyment and perception by the soul of these flowers is at times of such a kind that the soul can say with complete truth : ‘ Our flowery bed, encompassed with dens of lions.’ Happy the soul

¹ S : ‘ neither world, devil nor flesh.’

² S : ‘ And I say.’

³ Ej, G : ‘ in perfection in possession.’

⁴ Ej, G, Sg : ‘ that in this estate.’

⁵ E, Ej, Sg : ‘ the roses.’

⁶ A has *lirios* [‘ lilies ’] for *rios* [‘ rivers ’].

⁷ B, Jaén omit : ‘ and gifts.’

⁸ Ej, G : ‘ and sonorous sweetness.’

that in this life merits at times to taste¹ the fragrance of these Divine flowers. She says also that this bed is

Hung with purple.²

7. By purple, in the Divine Scripture, is denoted charity ; kings³ are clad in it and use it. The soul says⁴ that this flowery bed is hung with purple, because all virtues, riches and good things are sustained by it, flourish⁵ in it and have fruition only in the charity and love of the King of Heaven, without which love the soul could not enjoy this bed and its flowers. And thus all these virtues in the soul are as it were hung with the love of God, One in Whom they are well preserved ; and they are as it were bathed in love,⁶ because all and each of them are ever enkindling the soul with love for God, and in all things and works they are moved by love to greater love of God. This is to be hung with purple. This is well expressed in the Divine Songs ; for there it is said that the seat or bed that Solomon made for himself he made of the woods of Lebanon, and the pillars of silver, the bottom of gold and the hangings⁷ of purple ; and it says that he ordered it all by means of charity.⁸ For the virtues and gifts⁹ which God places in the bed of the soul, which are denoted by the woods of Lebanon, and the pillars of silver, have their bottom and resting-place of love, which is the gold,¹⁰ for, as we have said, the virtues are grounded and preserved in love ; and all of them, by means of the charity of God and of the soul, are ordered and practised, as we have just said. And she says that this bed is likewise¹¹

Builded in peace.

8. She here sets down the fourth excellence¹² of this bed, which depends in order upon the third, that has just been mentioned ; for the third was perfect love, the property whereof is to cast out all fear, as says S. John ;¹³ and from

¹ Ej, G, S, Sg : 'to enjoy.'

² Bg : 'dyed in purple.'

³ Sg : 'princes and kings.'

⁴ S : 'And therefore the soul says.'

⁵ [Or 'flower.'] Ej, G, Sg omit : 'flourish in it.'

⁶ Ej, G, Sg : 'as it were hung in the love of God.'

⁷ [lit., *subida*, 'the going up.']

⁸ Canticles iii, 9.

⁹ Bz omits : 'and gifts.'

¹⁰ S : 'and resting-place of gold, which is the love.'

¹¹ S : 'And she likewise says that this bed is.'

¹² A : 'the fourth difference.' S begins : 'It is the fourth excellence.'

¹³ 1 S. John iv, 18. All the MSS. have : 'as says Saint Paul.'

this issues the perfect peace¹ of the soul, which is the fourth property of this bed, as we said. For the better understanding of this it must be known that each of the virtues is of itself peaceful, meek and strong; and consequently in the soul that possesses them these three effects come to pass, namely: peace, meekness and strength. And because this bed is flowery, composed of the flowers of virtues, as we have said, and they are all peaceful, meek and strong, hence it comes to pass that the bed is builded in peace, and the soul is peaceful, meek and strong; which are three properties that can be attacked in no war, whether of world, devil or flesh. And the virtues keep the soul so peaceful and secure that it seems to her that she is wholly builded in peace. And she describes the fifth property of this flowering bed, which, besides what has been said, is likewise²

Crowned with a thousand shields of gold.

9. The which shields are here the virtues and gifts of the soul, which, although, as we have said, they are the flowers, etc., of this bed, serve it likewise as a crown and prize, for its work in having gained them. And not only so, but they likewise serve it as a defence, and as strong shields against the vices which by the practice of them it conquered; wherefore this flowery bed of the Bride³ (that is, the virtues, the crown and the defence)⁴ is crowned with them as with the prize of the Bride and defended by them as by a shield. And she says they are of gold, to denote the great worth of these virtues; the virtues are a crown and a defence. This very thing was said by the Bride in the Songs in other words, in this wise: Behold the bed of Solomon, how threescore strong men of the most valiant of Israel are about it; the sword of each upon his thigh⁵ as a defence against the fears of night.⁶ And she says that there are a thousand of them,⁷

¹ Jaén omits: 'from this' [and is therefore not quite clear]. Ej, G: 'was perfect love, and from this, as says Saint Paul, issues . . . ' S: 'was perfect love, and from perfect love, as says Saint Paul, issues . . . '

² S: 'The fifth property of this flowering bed, beyond what has been said, is explained in the line following as being . . . '

³ G, Sg: 'but likewise, as strong shields against the vices, the virtues are a crown and defence, which [vices] it conquered by the practice thereof, and therefore this flowery bed of the Bride . . . '

⁴ Av, Bz omit this parenthesis.

⁵ Ej, G, Sg: 'upon his hand.'

⁶ Canticles iii, 7.

⁷ S: 'And the Bride says here in this line that there are a thousand shields.'

in order to denote the multitude of the virtues, graces and gifts wherewith God endows the soul in this estate ; for He too used the same term in order to signify the number of the virtues of the Bride, which cannot be numbered, saying : Like the tower of David is thy neck, which is builded with defences ; a thousand shields hang upon it, and all the arms of mighty men.¹

ANNOTATION FOR THE FOLLOWING STANZA

1. But the soul that reaches this point² of perfection is not content to magnify and praise the excellences of her Beloved,³ the Son of God, nor to sing and give thanks for the favours that she receives in Him and the delights which she enjoys in Him, but relates also that which He does to other souls ; for both these things the soul is able to see in this blessed union of love. Wherefore, praising Him and giving Him thanks for the said favours⁴ which He grants to other souls, the soul recites this stanza.

STANZA XXV

In the track of⁵ thy footprint The young girls⁶ run along by the way.⁷

At the touch of a spark, at the spiced wine, Flows forth the Divine balsam.

EXPOSITION

2. In this stanza the Bride praises the Beloved for three favours which devout souls receive from Him, whereby they are the more incited⁸ and exalted to love God ; of these, having experienced them in this estate, she here makes mention. The first, she says, is sweetness which He gives them of Himself, and which is of such efficacy that it makes them to run very quickly upon the way of perfection. The second is a visit of love whereby they are suddenly enkindled in love. The third is abundance of charity infused into them, wherewith they are inebriated after such manner

¹ Canticles iv, 4.

² Ej, G, Sg : ' this estate.'

³ Ej, G, Sg have ' grandeurs ' for ' excellences ' and omit ' the Son of God.'

⁴ S : ' and magnifying the many favours.'

⁵ See p. 190, n. 7, above.

⁶ Bg, Sg : ' The youths.'

⁷ Ej, G : ' The youths discover [or " reveal "] the way.'

⁸ Ej, G, Sg : ' the more enamoured.'

that their spirit is as greatly exalted with this inebriation as with the visit of love, so that they send forth praises to God together with the delectable affections of love, saying as follows :

In the track of thy footprint

3. The footprint is the trace of Him whose the footprint is, whereby the soul goes tracking and seeking out Him that made it. The sweetness and knowledge concerning Himself which God gives to the soul that seeks Him is the trace and footprint whereby it knows and seeks Him increasingly. Wherefore the soul says here to the Word¹ its Spouse : ' In the track of Thy footprint '—that is, in the traces of sweetness which Thou imprintest upon them and wherewith Thou inspirest them, and in the fragrance of Thyself which Thou scatterest—

The young girls² run along by the way.³

4. This is to say that the devout souls, with the youthful strength which they have received from the sweetness of Thy footprint, ' run along '—that is, run in many places and after many manners (for this is the meaning of the phrase)⁴ each one in the place and after the manner which God grants to it, according to its spirit and to the estate which it has reached, by means of a great variety of spiritual works and exercises, along the road of eternal life, which is evangelical perfection, on the which road they meet the Beloved in union of love after attaining detachment of the spirit from all things. This sweetness and this trace of Himself which God leaves in the soul lightens it⁵ greatly and makes it to run after Him ; for then the work done by the soul itself towards its journey along this road counts for very little or nothing ;⁶ rather it is moved and attracted by this Divine footprint of God, not only to set forth, but to run along that road after many manners, as we have said. Wherefore the Bride in the Songs entreated the Spouse for this Divine attraction,⁷ saying : *Trahe me : post te curremus in odorem*

¹ Ej, G, Sg : ' Wherefore the soul here says to the Word, the Son of God.' ² A, Bg : ' The youths.'

³ Ej, G, Sg : ' The youths discover [or " reveal "] the way.'

⁴ [See p. 96, n. 1, above.]

⁵ A, B, Bg : ' gladdens it.' Ej, G, Sg : ' alleviates it.'

⁶ Av : ' . . . this road is [done] very gradually or not at all.'

⁷ Ej, G : ' this Divine prayer.'

*unguentorum tuorum.*¹ That is : Draw me after thee and we will run in the fragrance of thine ointments. And after He has given her this Divine fragrance, she says : *In odorem unguentorum tuorum currimus : adolescentulæ dillexerunt te nimis.*² Which is to say : At the fragrance of Thine ointments we run ; the young girls loved Thee greatly. And David says : I ran the way of thy commandments when thou enlargedst my heart.³

At the touch of a spark, at the spiced wine, Flows forth the Divine balsam.

5. In the first two lines we have explained how the souls in the track of the footprint of the Beloved run along by the way by means of exercises and outward works ; now in these last lines the soul describes the exercise which these souls perform inwardly with the will, moved by two other favours and inward visits which the Beloved grants them, which she here calls the touch of a spark and spiced wine ; and the inward exercise of the will which results from these two visits and is caused by them she calls the flowing forth of Divine balsam. With respect to the first point, it must be known that this touch of a spark which she mentions here is a most subtle touch which the Beloved inflicts upon the soul at times, even when she is least thinking of it,⁴ so that her heart is enkindled in the fire of love just as if a spark of fire⁵ had flown out and kindled it. Then, with great rapidity, as when one suddenly awakens, the will is enkindled in loving, desiring, praising, giving thanks, doing reverence, esteeming and praying to God with savour of love. These things she calls the flowing forth of Divine balsam, which, at the touch of the sparks, issue forth from the Divine love⁶ which struck the spark, which is the Divine balsam, that comforts and heals the soul with its fragrance and substance.

6. Concerning this Divine touch the Bride speaks in the Songs after this manner : *Dilectus meus misit manum suam per foramem, et venter meus intremuit ad tactum ejus.*⁷ Which is to say : My Beloved put his hand through the opening and my bowels were moved at his touch. The touch of the

¹ Canticles i, 3-4.

² *ibid.*

³ Psalm cxviii, 32 [A.V., cxix, 32].

⁴ Sg : ' . . . is a most subtle touch ; at times when she is least thinking of it the Beloved inflicts it upon the soul.'

⁵ Ej, G, Sg : ' a spark of living fire.'

⁶ S : ' the burning Divine love.'

⁷ Canticles v, 4.

Beloved is that touch of love which, as we here say, is inflicted upon the soul ; the hand is the favour which He grants therein ; the opening whereby this hand has entered is the manner¹ and way and degree of perfection² which the soul possesses ; for in this wise is the touch wont to be heavier or lighter according to this manner or that of the spiritual quality of the soul. The moving of the bowels whereof she speaks is that of the will whereupon the said touch is inflicted ; and the moving thereof is the rising within her of her desires and affections towards God, the desiring, loving and praising Him, and the other things whereof we have spoken, which are the flowings forth of balsam produced by this touch, even as we said.

The spiced wine.

7. This spiced wine is another and far greater favour³ which God grants at times to souls that have made progress, inebriating them in the Holy Spirit with a wine of love that is sweet, delectable and strong, for the which cause she calls it spiced wine. For even as such wine is prepared⁴ with many and divers spices that are fragrant and strong, so this love, which is the love that God gives to those that are already perfect, is prepared and made ready in their souls, and spiced with the virtues which the soul has already gained. Seasoned with these precious spices, this love infuses into the soul such strength and abundance of sweet inebriation,⁵ in the visits that God makes to her, that with its great efficacy and strength it causes her to send forth to God these emissions or outflowings,⁶ wherein she praises, loves and reverences Him, and so forth, as we are saying here, and this with wondrous desires to work and⁷ suffer for Him.

8. And it must be known that this favour of sweet inebriation⁸ passes not as quickly as the spark, for it is of greater

¹ [See p. 97, n. 3, above.]

² S : 'is the manner and way and perfection, at least, the degree thereof.'

³ Ej : 'which are the flowings forth of the balsam produced by this touch, even as we say. With respect to the second [part of the line], this is another and far greater kind of favour.'

⁴ Sg : 'For even as the spiced wine is spiced and prepared.' Ej : 'For even as the spiced wine is prepared.'

⁵ Bg : 'Spiced with the virtues, this love gives them strength of sweet inebriation.'

⁶ Bg, S : 'or inebriations.' G : 'or envyings.' Ej omits : 'or outflowings.'

⁷ Ej omits : 'work and.'

⁸ S : 'that this sweet inebriation and favour which He works within her.' Ej, G, Sg have 'delectable' for 'sweet.'

duration. The spark touches and is gone,¹ though its effect lasts for some time and occasionally for a very long time, but the spiced wine and its effect are both accustomed to last long,² and this, as I say, is love's sweetness in the soul. Sometimes it lasts for a day, or for two days ; at other times for many days, though not always at the same degree of intensity, since it weakens or increases without the soul's being able to control it. Sometimes, when the soul has done naught in the matter, it feels this sweet inebriation of its spirit and the enkindling³ of this Divine wine,⁴ within its inmost substance,⁵ even as David says in these words : My heart was hot within me and in my meditation a fire will burn.⁶ Sometimes the flowings forth of this inebriation of love last for as long as the inebriation ; at other times, although the inebriation persists in the soul, it does so without the flowings forth aforementioned, and these, when they occur, are of greater or less intensity according as the inebriation is of greater or less intensity. But the flowings forth or the effects of the spark habitually last longer than the spark itself ; it leaves them in the soul, and they are more ardent than those which come from the inebriation, for at times this Divine spark leaves the soul consuming and burning away in love.

9. And as we have spoken of wine that has been prepared, it will be good⁷ at this point to note briefly⁸ the difference between prepared wine, which is called old,⁹ and new wine ; which will be the same as that between old and new lovers,¹⁰ and will provide a little instruction for spiritual persons. In the new wine the lees have not yet been thrown off, and are not settled, wherefore the wine ferments, and its goodness and worth cannot be known until it has well settled on the lees and the fermentation has ceased.¹¹ Until that time there is great likelihood of its going bad ; it has a rough and sharp taste, and to drink much of it is bad for the drinker ;

¹ A : ' passes not as quickly as the spark touches and is gone.'

² S has : [for ' for a very . . . last long '] ' the spiced wine is wont to last rather longer and its effect a long time.'

³ Sg : ' the inebriation.'

⁴ S : ' of this Divine love.'

⁵ Ej, G, Sg : ' its last substance.'

⁶ Psalm xxxviii, 4 [A.V., xxxix, 3].

⁷ S, Sg : ' well ' for ' good'

⁸ Ej, G : ' it will be well here to speak briefly of.'

⁹ Ej, G, Sg : ' spiced ' for ' old.'

¹⁰ S reads : ' new wines and old ' for ' old and new lovers ' [destroying the sense].

¹¹ [Lit., ' until it has well digested the lees and fury of them. ']

its strength is chiefly in the lees.¹ In old wine the lees are digested and settled, so that there is no longer any fermentation going on in it as there is in new wine ; it can be quite well seen that it is good, and it is quite safe from going bad, for that fermentation and bubbling which might cause it to do harm is all over ; and thus it is a marvel if wine that is well prepared goes bad and is spoiled. It has a pleasant flavour, and the strength is in the substance of the wine and no longer in the taste, wherefore a draught of it gives the drinker good health and makes him strong.

10. New lovers are compared to new wine : these are they that are beginning to serve God, for the fermentations of the wine of their love take place wholly without, in their senses, since they have not yet settled on the lees of weak and imperfect sense, and the strength of their love resides only in its sweetness. These lovers ordinarily derive the strength to work from sweetness of sense, and by this sweetness they are moved, so that such love as theirs cannot be trusted until its fermentations and coarse tastes of sense are past. For even as these fermentations and heats of sense can incline the soul to good and perfect love and serve it as a good means thereto, when the lees of its imperfection have settled, even so it is very easy in these beginnings, when these tastes are still new, for the wine of love to fail and for the fervour and sweetness² of new things to be spoiled. And these new lovers always have yearnings and fatigues caused by love, which come from the senses ; it is meet for them to temper their draught,³ for if they are very active while the wine is still fermenting⁴ their natures will be ruined, with these yearnings and fatigues of love—namely, of the new wine, which, as we said, is rough and sharp, and not sweetened as yet by perfect preparation, after which these yearnings of love will cease,⁵ as we shall shortly say.

11. This same comparison is made by the Wise Man in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, where he says : The new friend is as new wine ; let it become old and thou shalt drink it with pleasure.⁶ Wherefore old lovers, which are they that

¹ S omits this sentence.

² A : ' the sweetness and favour.' Sg : ' the fervour.' Ej, G : ' for the wine of love to be corrupted and spoiled in the fervour for new things.'

³ Av : ' to temper the sweetness.' [There are various other readings, of which this alone preserves any sense.]

Av, Sg : ' while the wine still has strength.'

⁵ Ej : ' and not sweetened nor perfectly digestible until these yearnings of love cease.'

⁶ Ecclesiasticus ix, 15 [A.V., ix, 10].

are practised and proved in the service of the Spouse, are like old wine of which the lees have settled, and which has not those fermentations of the senses, or those fires and storms of fermentation¹ from without; the sweetness of the wine of love can be tasted now that its substance is well settled, and has not that savour² of sense as has the love of new lovers, but is settled within the soul in the substance and savour of the spirit and truth³ of action. And such souls desire not to cling to those savours and fermentations of the senses, neither do they desire to experience them, lest they suffer disgust and weariness; for he that gives rein to the desire for any pleasure of sense⁴ has perforce many times to suffer pains and displeasures of sense and of spirit. Wherefore since these old lovers lack the spiritual sweetness which has its roots in sense,⁵ they have no more yearnings or pains of love in sense and spirit; and therefore it is a marvel if these old friends fail God,⁶ for they are already far above that which might make them fail, namely, above sensuality, and in them the wine of love is not only prepared and purged of its lees, but is also (as is said in the line) seasoned with the spices, which, as we said, are virtues in perfection, and allow it not to go bad like new wine. For this reason the old friend is of great esteem in the sight of God and thus the author of Ecclesiasticus says of him: Forsake not the old friend, for the new will not be like him.⁷ In this wine of love, then, well proved and seasoned in the soul, the Divine Beloved⁸ produces the Divine inebriation which we have mentioned, in the strength whereof the soul causes sweet and delectable outpourings to go forth to God. And thus the sense of the last lines is as follows: At the touch of the spark wherewith Thou awakenest my soul, and at the spiced wine wherewith Thou lovingly inebriatest me, my soul sends to Thee its outpourings of the movements and acts of love occasioned by Thee within it.

ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

1. So, then, we shall understand the happy soul to be in this flowery bed, where all these things aforementioned and

¹ ['Storms' is literally 'furies.']

² Ej, G, Sg: 'in that fervour.'

³ Ej, G, Sg: 'spirit and fervour.'

⁴ Ej: 'for he that gives rein to any pleasure of the sensual appetite.' G: 'for he that gives rein to the pleasure, whatever it be, of the sensual appetite.'

⁵ Ej, G: 'which has furies [or 'storms'] in the sense.'

⁶ S: 'in sense or spirit, and thus it is a marvel if they fail God.'

⁷ Ecclesiasticus ix, 14 [A.V., ix, 10].

⁸ G, Sg: 'Divine love.'

of His love, which is the union or transformation of love in God ; and she notes two effects¹ which she has derived therefrom—namely, forgetfulness and withdrawal from all the things of the world, and the mortification of all its tastes and desires.

In the inner cellar

3. In order that I may say aught concerning this cellar, and explain that which the soul desires to say or denote by it, it will be needful that the Holy Spirit shall take my hand and move my pen. This cellar whereof the soul here speaks is the last and most intimate degree² of love to which the soul may attain in this life, wherefore she calls it the inner cellar—that is to say, the innermost. From this it follows that there are others less interior, which are the degrees of love whereby the soul rises to this, the last of all. And we may say that there are seven of these degrees or cellars of love,³ all of which the soul comes to possess when she possesses in perfection the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, in the manner wherein she is able to receive them. And thus, when the soul attains to perfect possession of the spirit of fear, she has likewise in perfection the spirit of love, since that fear, which is the last of the seven gifts, is filial,⁴ and the perfect fear⁵ of a son proceeds from the perfect love of a father. Hence, when⁶ the Divine Scripture desires to call a man perfect in charity,⁷ it speaks of him as fearing God. Wherefore Isaiah, prophesying the perfection of Christ, said : *Replebit eum spiritus timoris Domini.*⁸ Which signifies : He shall fill his spirit with the fear of God. S. Luke also described the holy Simeon as full of fear, saying : *Erat vir justus, et timoratus.*⁹ And this is also true of many others.

4. It must be known that many souls attain to the first cellars and enter therein, each according to the perfection of love which he possesses, but few in this life attain to this last and innermost perfection, for in this there comes to pass

¹ Ej, G, Sg : 'into the inner place of His love, which is union or transformation in God, and she relates two things, and these are two effects, etc.'

² [*Lit.*, 'most narrow degree.'] G, Sg : 'strange degree.' Ej : 'intimate degree.'

³ Ej, G abbreviate thus : ' . . . the degrees of love ; and these cellars of love are seven.'

⁴ Av : 'is most filial.'

⁵ G, Sg : 'the perfect love.'

⁶ Av modifies and adds : 'When fear is most perfect, love is most perfect, and thus when . . .'

⁷ Ej, G : 'in holiness.'

⁸ Isaiah xi, 3 [A.V., xi, 2].

⁹ S. Luke ii, 25.

that perfect union with God which they call the Spiritual Marriage, whereof the soul speaks in this place. And that which God communicates to the soul in this most intimate union is completely ineffable, so that naught can be said thereof, even as naught can be said concerning God Himself which may describe Him ; for it is God Himself Who communicates this to the soul and transforms her into Himself with marvellous glory, so that they are both as¹ we should say the window is with the sun's ray, or coal with the fire, or the light of the stars with that of the sun—yet less essentially and completely so than will come to pass in the next life. And thus, in order to describe that which she receives from God in that cellar of union,² the soul says naught else, nor do I believe that she could say aught more appropriate to express some part thereof, than the following line :

Of my Beloved have I drunk.

5. For even as a draught is diffused and shed through all the members and veins of the body, even so is this communication from God diffused substantially in the entire soul, or, to express it better, the soul is more nearly transformed into God, according to which transformation the soul drinks of its God according to its substance and its spiritual faculties. For according to the understanding it drinks wisdom and knowledge ; according to the will, it drinks sweetest love ; and, according to the memory, it drinks recreation and delight in the remembrance and sense of glory. With respect to the first point, that the soul receives and drinks delight substantially, the Bride herself says this, in the Songs, after this manner : *Anima mea liquefacta est, ut sponsus locutus est.*³ That is : My soul delighted when the Spouse spake. The speaking of the Spouse signifies here⁴ His communicating Himself to the soul.

6. And that the understanding drinks wisdom is declared in the same book by the Bride, where, desiring to attain to this kiss of union and entreating the Spouse for it, she says : There wilt Thou instruct me (namely, in wisdom and knowledge in love) ; and I will give thee a draught of spiced

¹ S : ' transforming her with marvellous glory. And in this estate they are both in one, as . . . '

² Ej, G, S : ' cellar of wine.' Bg : ' cellar of good.'

³ Canticles v, 6.

⁴ S : ' . . . when the Spouse spake to her, the which speaking here signifies.'

wine¹—that is to say, of My love spiced with thine,² or, in other words, transformed into thine.

7. With respect to the third point, which is that the will drinks there of love, the Bride says this also in the said Book of the Songs, in these words: He introduced me into the secret cellar and ordained charity in me; which is as much as to say: He gave me to drink love introduced into His love, or more clearly and properly speaking: He ordained in me His charity, accommodating His own³ charity to me and making it mine: this is the drinking by the soul of the very love of its Beloved, which its Beloved infuses into it.⁴

8. Here it is to be known, with respect to the saying of some that the will cannot love, save what the understanding first understands, that this has to be understood after a natural manner; for in the way of nature it is impossible to love if one understands not first that which one is to love; but in the supernatural way God can readily infuse love and increase it without infusing or increasing distinct knowledge, as is given to be understood in the passage quoted. And this is the experience of many spiritual persons, who oftentimes find themselves burning in the love of God without having a more distinct knowledge of Him than aforetime; for they can understand little and love much, and they can understand much and love little. But habitually those spiritual persons who have not a very excellent understanding concerning God are wont to excel in will; and infused faith suffices them in the stead of intellectual knowledge; by means of which faith God infuses into them charity, and increases it within them, together with the act thereof, which is to love more, even though their knowledge be not increased, as we have said. And thus the will can drink of love without the understanding drinking anew of knowledge, although in the case of which we are speaking, wherein the soul says that she drank of her Beloved, inasmuch as there is union in the inner cellar, which is according to the three faculties of the soul, as we have said, all of them drink together.

9. And with respect to the fourth point—namely, that the soul drinks of its Beloved there according to the memory

¹ Canticles viii, 2.

² S omits the words which follow ('or . . . thine').

³ Ej, G, Sg omit: 'own.'

⁴ Sg: 'this is the drinking by the soul of its Beloved.' Ej, G omit: 'this is . . . into it.'

—it is clear that the soul is enlightened with the light of the understanding in remembering the good things which it is possessing and enjoying in the union of its Beloved.

10. This Divine draught¹ so greatly deifies and exalts the soul and immerses it in God that when it goes forth—

When I went forth . . .

11. That is to say, this favour has completely passed away,² for although the soul be for ever in this high estate of marriage³ after He has placed it therein, yet it is not for ever in actual union according to the said faculties, although it is so according to the substance of the soul. But in this substantial union of the soul the faculties are also very frequently⁴ in union, and drink in this cellar; the understanding by knowledge, the will by love, etc. So, when the soul now says 'When I went forth,' she understands not this of the essential or substantial⁵ union which she now possesses, which is the estate aforementioned, but refers to the union of the faculties, which is not continuous in this life, neither can be so. She says, then, that when she went forth

Over all this meadow,

12. That is to say, over all this expanse of the world,

Then knew I naught.

13. The reason is that that draught of the highest wisdom⁶ of God which there she drank makes her forget all the things of the world, and it seems to the soul that its former knowledge, and even the knowledge of the whole world, is pure ignorance by comparison with this knowledge. And in order to understand this better it must be known that the most usual cause of this the soul's ignorance of things of the world, when it is in this estate, is that it has been informed by supernatural knowledge,⁷ beside which all the natural and political knowledge of the world is not so much knowledge as ignorance. Wherefore the soul that is led into this highest knowledge knows thereby that all

¹ Bg has: 'This Divine wisdom,' and omits the following words: 'deifies and.'

² S: 'That is to say, when this favour had just passed away.'

³ Ej, G, Sg: 'in this spiritual estate.'

⁴ Ej, G: 'very perfectly.'

⁵ Ej, G, Sg omit: 'or substantial.'

⁶ Ej, G: 'highest sweetness.'

⁷ Av, Bz: 'supernatural essence.'

that other knowledge which has naught to do with this is not knowledge but ignorance ; and that it is needless to have any of it ; and the soul declares the truth of the saying of the Apostle, namely, that that which is greatest wisdom in the sight of men is foolishness in God's sight.¹ And therefore the Bride says that she knew naught after drinking of that Divine wisdom ; and this truth—namely, that the wisdom of men and of the whole world is pure ignorance, and that it merits unknowing—cannot be known save when God grants to the soul the favour of being Himself within it,² communicating His wisdom to it, and strengthening it with this draught of love so that it may see it clearly, according as Solomon says, in these words : This is the vision that was seen and spoken of by the man with whom God is, who, being strengthened by the dwelling of God within him, said : ' I am most foolish above all men, and the wisdom of man is not with me.'³ This is because the soul is in that exceeding high wisdom of God and therefore the lowly wisdom of men is ignorance to it ; for the natural sciences themselves, and the very works that are done by God, are as ignorance compared with knowing God, for, where God is not known, naught is known. Wherefore the high places of God are ignorance and foolishness to men, as S. Paul says likewise.⁴ Hence the divinely wise and the worldly wise are ignorant in one another's estimation ; for the latter cannot apprehend the wisdom and science of God, neither can the former apprehend those of the world ; inasmuch as the wisdom of the world, as we have said, is ignorance with respect to the wisdom of God, and that of God with respect to that of the world.

14. But over and above this, that deification and exaltation of the mind in God wherein the soul is as if enraptured, immersed in love and wholly one with God,⁵ allows it not to take notice of aught in the world soever ; and it is withdrawn not only from all other things, but even from itself, and is annihilated, as though it were transformed and dissolved in love, which transformation consists in passing from itself to the Beloved. And thus the Bride in the Songs, after having treated of this her transformation of love in the

¹ 1 Corinthians iii, 19.

² [*Lit.*, 'save by this favour of God's being in the soul.' S : 'save by this truth of God's being in the soul.'

³ Proverbs xxx, 1-2.

⁴ 1 Corinthians ii, 14.

⁵ S : 'and made one God.'

Beloved, describes this unknowing which was hers, in this word : *Nescivi* ; which means : ' I knew not.'¹ The soul in such a condition is in a certain manner as Adam was in the condition of innocence, when he knew not what evil was ; for it is so innocent that it understands not evil nor judges aught as evil ; and it will hear things that are very evil, and will see them with its eyes, and will be unable to understand that they are so,² because it has no habit of evil whereby to judge it, God having rooted out its imperfect habits and ignorance (including the evil of sin), with the perfect habit of true wisdom ; and thus, with respect to this also, it ' knew naught.'

15. The soul in such case will concern itself little with the things of others, since it remembers not even its own things. For the Spirit of God has this characteristic in the soul wherein He dwells, that He forthwith inclines it towards ignorance and unwillingness to know the things of others, especially things that are not to its profit. For the Spirit of God is recollected within the soul itself, and turns to it, rather than He may draw it forth from extraneous things than in order to lead it among them. And thus the soul remains in a complete unknowing with respect to the things that it knew formerly.

16. It is not to be understood that, even if the soul continues in this state of unknowing, it loses therein the habits of the acquired sciences³ which it had ; it is rather that they are perfected with that most perfect habit—namely, the habit of supernatural science—which has been infused within it, although these habits no longer dominate the soul in such a way as to make it necessary that knowledge should come through them, albeit there is no obstacle to this happening occasionally. For in this union of Divine wisdom these habits are united with the highest wisdom of the other sciences,⁴ just as, when a small light unites with another that is great, it is the greater that overwhelms the lesser and gives light, and the smaller is not lost, but rather is perfected, although it gives not the chief light. And this, I suppose, will be the position in Heaven, where the habits of acquired

¹ Canticles vi, 11 [A.V., vi, 12].

² S : ' to understand what they are.'

³ Sg : ' the acquired essences.'

⁴ Sg : ' with the highest wisdom of God, through which the soul chiefly understands the virtues of the other sciences.' So, too, Ej and G, except that they read ' truths' for ' virtues.'

①
Knew
no
evil.

②
General
unknowing

2nd
Gen. habit
of sciences
remains.

knowledge which the righteous bring there will not be destroyed, though they will be of no great importance to the righteous,¹ for they will know more in the Divine wisdom than these habits can teach them.

17. But the kinds of knowledge and the particular forms of things and acts of the imagination, and every other apprehension that has form and figure, are all lost and no longer known in that absorption of love, and this for two reasons. First, because as the soul is actually absorbed and immersed in that draught of love, it cannot actually have to do with aught beside neither take notice thereof. Secondly and chiefly, because that transformation in God makes it conform to the simplicity and purity of God (wherinto enters no imaginary figure or form) after such manner as to leave it clean and pure and empty of all forms and figures which it had aforetime, purged and enlightened with simple contemplation. It is like the sun upon a window, infusing itself therein, and making it bright, so that all the stains and spots which formerly appeared upon it are lost from sight; but when the sun departs again the obscurities and stains appear upon it once more. In the soul, however, since the effect of that act of love to some extent remains with it and endures, there likewise endures that unknowing, so that it cannot take note of anything in particular until the affection of that act of love passes.² For this act, which has enkindled it and changed it in love, has also annihilated it and destroyed it as to all that which was not love. This agrees with what we said above concerning David, namely: For my heart was enkindled and together with it my reins also were changed, and I was dissolved into nothing and I knew naught.³ For the reins to be changed by reason of this enkindling of the heart signifies that the soul is changed in God, as to all its desires and operations in God, into a new manner of life, and that it is destroyed and annihilated, concerning all those old things which it used aforetime; for which reason the Prophet says that he was dissolved into nothing, and that he knew naught, which, as we said, are the two effects caused by the draught from this cellar of God. For not only is all that first knowledge which the soul possessed annihilated, so that everything seems to it as

¹ S: 'to them.'

² Ej, G, Sg omit: 'there likewise . . . act of love passes.'

³ Psalm lxxii, 21 [A.V., lxxiii, 21-2].

nothing, but likewise all its former life and imperfections are annihilated and renewed in the new man ; which is this second effect whereof we are speaking, and which is contained in this line :

And (I) lost the flock which I followed aforetime.

18. This signifies that until the soul attains to this state of perfection whereof we are speaking, however spiritual it may be, there ever remains to it a little flock, as it were, consisting of some of its desires and petty tastes and other of its imperfections—sometimes natural, sometimes spiritual¹—after which it goes, endeavouring to pasture them while following them and satisfying them. For with respect to the understanding there are wont to remain to such a soul certain imperfections concerning the desire to know. With respect to the will, such souls permit themselves to be carried away by certain petty tastes and desires of their own. These may be temporal, like the possession of certain small things, preference for one thing over another, and certain kinds of presumption, esteem and punctilio to which they pay heed, and other little things which still reek and taste of the world. Or they may be natural, like food, drink and a taste² for this rather than for that, and a choosing and desiring of the best. Or, again, they may be spiritual, like the desire for consolations from God and other follies which I might never cease telling, which things are wont to cling to spiritual men who are not yet perfect. And, with respect to the memory, there are many varieties of things and cares and irrelevant reflections, which bear the soul captive after them.

19. Sometimes, again, with respect to the four passions of the soul, there are many useless hopes, joys, griefs and fears, after which the soul goes in pursuit. As to this flock aforesaid, some are attracted by more of such things and others by less, but they continually pursue them, until they enter this inner cellar to drink and lose their flock entirely, becoming, as we have said, wholly turned into love, wherein these flocks—that is, these imperfections of the soul—are consumed more easily than rust³ and mould upon metals are consumed in the fire. So the soul feels itself to be free

¹ A, B, Bg : 'sometimes spiritual, sometimes temporal.'

² B, Bg, S : 'and a liking.'

³ S : 'more easily, after the manner wherein rust.'

from all childish likes and dislikes and follies which it pursued, and it can indeed say : ' I lost the flock which I followed aforetime.'

ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

1. With such great reality¹ of love does God communicate Himself to the soul in this interior union that no affection of a mother who so tenderly caresses her daughter, nor love of a brother, nor affection of a friend is comparable to it. For so great is the tenderness and reality of the love where-with the boundless Father caresses and exalts this humble and loving soul—oh, marvellous thing and worthy of all awe and wonder !²—that in very truth He subjects Himself to it in order to exalt it, as though He were the servant and the soul were His master ; and He is as solicitous in granting it favours as though he were the soul's slave and the soul were His God. So profound is the humility and the sweetness of God ! For in this communication of love He renders the soul in some degree that same service which He says in the Gospel that He will render to His elect in Heaven—that is to say that He will gird Himself, and, passing from one to another, will serve them.³ And even so He is here employed in cherishing and caressing⁴ the soul, as is the mother in serving and caressing her child, and nursing it at her own breasts ; wherein the soul knows the truth of the saying of Isaiah, where he says : To the bosom of God ye shall be brought and upon His knees shall ye be caressed.⁵

2. What, then, will the feelings of the soul be here among such sovereign favours ?⁶ How it will melt in love ! How thankful will it be when it sees this bosom of God opened to it with such wide and sovereign love ! Conscious of being set among so many delights, it surrenders itself to Him wholly and gives Him also the breasts of its own will and love, for it feels it passing in its soul, in the same way as the Bride⁷ felt it in the Songs, where she speaks with her Spouse after this manner : I am my Beloved's and His

¹ Ej, G, Sg : ' With such great truths.'

² Ej, G, Sg : ' and exalts this soul, which is a thing worthy of all power and wonder.'

³ S. Luke xii, 37.

⁴ Ej, G : ' in cherishing, caressing and refreshing.' Sg : ' in cherishing, refreshing and caressing.'

⁵ Isaiah lxvi, 12. S has : ' and upon His knees will He fondle you.'

⁶ Ej, G : ' such delectable favours.'

⁷ S : ' and feeling it and passing by it thus, says to her Beloved that which the Bride felt.'

God,¹ which spiritual men call contemplation—this is most delectable, since it is science through love, the which love is its master and that which makes it to be wholly delectable. And inasmuch as God communicates to the soul this science and knowledge in the love wherewith He communicates Himself to her, it is delectable to her understanding, since it is a science which pertains thereto ; and likewise it is delectable to her will, since it consists in love which pertains to the will.² She says next :

And I gave myself to him indeed, reserving nothing.

6. In that sweet draught of God, wherein, as we have said, the soul is immersed in God, it surrenders itself, most willingly and with great sweetness, to Him wholly, desiring to be wholly His and never again to have aught in itself that is alien from Him. God grants it, in the said union, the purity and the perfection which are necessary for this ; for, inasmuch as He transforms the soul into Himself, He makes it to be wholly His and empties it of all that it possessed and that was alien from God. Wherefore the soul is indeed completely given up to God, reserving naught, not only according to its will, but also according to its works, even as God has given Himself³ freely to the soul. So these two wills⁴ are surrendered, satisfied and given up the one to the other, so that neither shall fail the other, as in the faithfulness and stability of a betrothal. Wherefore the Bride adds these words :

There I promised him to be his Bride.

7. For even as a maiden that is betrothed sets not her love upon another than her spouse, nor directs her thoughts⁵ or her actions to any other, even so the soul in this estate has no longer any affections of the will or acts of knowledge of the understanding, nor any thought or action which is not wholly turned to God, together with its desires. It is, as it were, Divine, deified, so that⁶ in even its first movements it has naught whereto the will of God is opposed, in so far as it can understand. For even as in an imperfect soul its first movements at least, according to the understanding and

¹ Ej, G, Sg : ' which is very delectable and is the secret science of God.,

² S : ' because it is a science that pertains to Him, and is delectable to the will, since it consists in love, which pertains to the will.'

³ A, G, Sg insert here : ' wholly.'

⁴ S : ' both these wills.'

⁵ [Lit., ' her care.']

⁶ S : ' It is, as it were, immersed in God, and thus it behaves so that.'

according to the will and memory and desires, are as a general rule¹ inclined to evil² and also to imperfections, even so, the soul in this estate, according to the understanding, will and memory and desires,³ in its first movements, is as a general rule moved and inclined to God, through the great help and stability which it already has in God and through its perfect conversion to that which is good. All this David clearly explained when he said, speaking of his soul in this estate: Shall not my soul perchance be subject to God? Yea, for from Him cometh my salvation, and He is my God and my Saviour; my receiver, I shall not be any more moved.⁴ By saying: 'my receiver,' he means that, because his soul is received in God and united in Him, even as we say here, he could not be moved any more against God.⁵

8. From what has been said it is to be clearly understood that the soul which has reached this estate of spiritual betrothal knows naught save to love and ever to enjoy the delights of love with the Spouse. For as it has now reached perfection, the form and being whereof, as S. Paul says,⁶ is love—for the more a soul loves the more perfect is it in that which it loves—therefore this soul that is now perfect is wholly love, if it may thus be expressed, and all its actions are love and it employs all its faculties and possessions⁷ in loving, giving all that it has, like the wise merchant,⁸ for this treasure of love which it has found hidden in God. And this treasure is of such great price⁹ in His sight that, when the soul sees that its Beloved prizes nothing and is pleased with nothing beside love, it employs everything, in its desire to serve Him perfectly, in the pure love of God. And not only because He wills it thus,¹⁰ but because likewise the love wherein it is united inclines it, in and through all things, to the love of God. For even as the bee extracts from all plants¹¹ the honey that is in them, and has no use for them

¹ A omits: 'as a general rule.' Jaén, Av, Bz read as in the texts; the remaining authorities: 'as a rule.'

² Ej, G, Sg omit: 'inclined to evil and also to.'

³ Sg omits several lines preceding this word. A adds: 'and imperfections.'

⁴ Psalm lxi, 2 [A.V., lxii, 1-2].
⁵ In Ej and G follows here the word 'Annotation.' S has 'Annotation for the stanza following.' All three omit this heading at the beginning of the next paragraph but one.

⁶ Colossians iii, 14.

⁷ So S. The other authorities have: 'all the possessions of its soul.'

⁸ S. Matthew xiii, 45-6.

⁹ The MSS., except Jaén, read: 'is so precious.'

¹⁰ Ej, G, Sg: 'because she wills it thus.' S: 'because she employs it thus.'

¹¹ B, Bg: 'from all flowers.' Bz, Ej, G, Sg: 'from all things.'

for aught else save for that purpose, even so the soul with great facility extracts the sweetness of love that is in all the things that pass through it ; it loves God in each of them,¹ whether pleasant or unpleasant ; and being, as it is, informed and protected by love, it has neither feeling nor taste nor knowledge of it, for, as we have said, the soul knows naught but love, and its pleasure in all things and occupations is ever, as we have said, the delight of the love of God. And to indicate this the soul utters the following stanza.

ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

1. Since, however, we said that God is pleased with naught save love, it will be well before we expound this stanza to state here the reason for this, which is that all our works and all our labours, though they be as numerous as is possible, are nothing in God's sight, for by them we can give Him nothing, neither can we fulfil His desire, which is solely to exalt the soul. He² desires nothing of this for Himself, since He has no need thereof ; and thus, if anything pleases Him, it is that the soul may be exalted ; and since there is no way wherein He can exalt it so much as by making it equal³ with Himself, for that reason alone He is pleased when the soul loves Him. For the property of love is to make the lover equal with the object of his love. Wherefore, since its love is now perfect, the soul is called Bride of the Son of God, which signifies equality with Him ; in the which equality of friendship all things of both are common to both, as the Spouse Himself said to His disciples, in these words : But I have called you friends ; for all that I heard of My Father I have manifested to you.⁴ The stanza, then, says :

STANZA XXVIII

My soul has employed itself And all my possessions in his service :

Now I guard no flock nor have I now other office, For now my exercise is in loving alone.

EXPOSITION

2. Inasmuch as the soul has said in the last stanza (or, rather, the Bride has said) that she has given herself wholly

¹ *Lit.*, 'it loves God in them.' Ej: 'it loves Him in them.' Ej, G, Sg add: 'and thus all things induce love in it.'

² S adds: 'after a certain manner.'

³ S: 'Because He.'

⁴ S. John xv, 15.

to the Spouse, and has reserved naught for herself, she now, in this stanza, sets forth the manner and mode¹ wherein she accomplishes this. She says that her soul and her body and her faculties and all her abilities are occupied, no longer in other things,² but in those which pertain to the service of her Spouse.³ And that for this reason she no longer goes about seeking her own gain, nor pursues her own tastes,⁴ nor busies herself in other things, and in intercourse that has naught to do with God, and is alien to Him.⁵ And that even with God Himself she has no other style or manner of intercourse save the exercise of love, inasmuch as she has changed and bartered that earlier mode of intercourse which she had with Him into love,⁶ even as she will now say.

My soul has employed itself

3. In saying that her soul has employed itself, the Bride refers to the surrender of herself which she made to the Beloved in that union of love⁷ wherein her soul, with all its faculties, understanding, will and memory, was dedicated and subjected⁸ to His service. Her understanding she employs in the understanding of those things that pertain most nearly to His service in order to do them ; her will, in loving all that pleases God and in having affection of the will for God in all things ; and her memory and care in⁹ that which pertains to His service and will be most pleasing to Him. And she says further :

And all my possessions in his service.

4. By all her possessions she here understands all that pertains to the sensual part of the soul. In this sensual part¹⁰ is included the body with all its senses and faculties,¹¹ both interior and exterior, and all ability of the nature, namely :

¹ S : ' she now, in this stanza to the Beloved, sets forth the manner.'

² [*Lit.*, 'in the things.'] S : 'in all things.'

³ Ej, G : 'and faculties with all sweetness [*sc.*, are occupied] not in aught else save only in those things which are for the service of her Spouse.' Sg : 'and all her abilities [*sc.* are occupied] no longer in aught else save in those things which belong to the service of her Spouse.'

⁴ Ej, G, Sg : 'her own tastes and appetites.'

⁵ Ej, G : 'and in commerce alien to God.'

⁶ A, Bz, S : 'into loving.'

⁷ Sg : 'in that surrender of love in the union of love aforementioned.'

⁸ S omits : 'and subjected.'

⁹ S : 'and her memory in care for . . .'

¹⁰ Ej, G, S : 'in the which part.'

¹¹ B, S : 'with all its faculties.'

the four passions, the natural desires, and the other possessions of the soul, all of which things, she says, are now employed in¹ the service of her Beloved, even as is the rational and spiritual part of the soul whereof we have just spoken in the last line. For the body now works according to God; the inward and outward senses are directed towards Him as to all their operations; and all the four passions of the soul she likewise keeps bound to God, because she neither has enjoyment save from God,² neither has hope in aught save in God, nor fears any save only God, neither does she grieve save according to God; and likewise all her desires and cares are directed to God wholly.

5. And all these possessions are now employed in God and directed toward God in such manner that all the parts thereof which we have described tend,³ in their first movements, without the soul's being conscious of it, to work in God and through God. For the understanding, the will and the memory go straightway to God;⁴ and the affections, the senses, the desires and appetites, hope, enjoyment and the rest of the soul's possessions are inclined to God from the first moment, even though, as I say, the soul may not realize that it is working for God. Wherefore the soul in such case very frequently works for God, and is intent upon Him and the things that pertain to Him without thinking or remembering that it is doing aught for Him; for the use and habit which it has acquired in this manner of procedure causes it neither to observe nor to have any care, and even takes from it the fervent acts which it was wont to have at the beginning. And since all these possessions are employed in God after the manner aforesaid, the soul must needs likewise have that which it describes in the line following, namely:

Now I guard no flock.

6. Which is as much as to say: Now I go no longer after my tastes and desires; for, having set them upon God and given them to Him, the soul no longer pastures them nor guards them for herself.⁵ And not only does she

¹ S: 'all of which she says has now returned to.'

² Sg omits: 'because she . . . save from God.'

³ Ej, G: 'are moved.'

⁴ Ej, G: 'because the understanding moves the will and they go straightway to God.'

⁵ Ej, G, Sg omit: 'nor guards them for herself.'

say that she no longer guards this flock, but she says further :¹

Nor have I now other office.

7. Many offices, and unprofitable ones, has the soul before she succeeds in making this gift and surrender to the Beloved of herself and of her possessions, wherewith she sought to serve her own desire and that of others ; for all the habits² of imperfections³ that she had may be described as so many occupations, the which habits may be likened to the characteristic or office which she had of saying unnecessary things and also of thinking and acting them, instead of behaving herein as is fitting to the soul's perfection. A soul may also have other desires wherewith it serves the desires of others, such as desires for ostentatious actions, compliments, acts of adulation, paying respect, endeavouring to appear well and giving pleasure to people by what it does, and many other useless things, whereby it tries to please people,⁴ employing therein its care and its desire⁵ and its work,⁶ and, in short, all its possessions. All these offices, she says, she has no longer, because all her words and her thoughts and actions are now of God and are directed toward God, and have no longer the imperfections⁷ which they were wont to have. And thus it is as though she were to say : I seek not now to give pleasure to my own desire, nor to that of others, nor do I occupy or busy myself in other useless pastimes⁸ or in things of the world.

For now my exercise is in loving alone.

8. This is as though she had said : For now all these offices are devoted to the practice of the love of God—namely, all the things wherewith my soul and my body are provided : memory, understanding and will, inward and outward senses, desires of the sensual part and of the spiritual part. All these work in love and for the sake of love, so that all that I do I do with love and all that I suffer I suffer with the

¹ S : ' guards it, but that she has no other office.'

² G : ' all the acts.'

³ Sg : ' habits and imperfections.'

⁴ Ej, G, Sg omit : ' and many . . . please people.'

⁵ A, B, Bg, S : ' the care for the desire.'

⁶ Sg : ' and its work and thought.'

⁷ Jaén reads here, by an error, ' the perfections.'

⁸ Bz : ' in thoughts or other pastimes which are useless.' Av : ' nor do I occupy myself in other useless thoughts or devote myself to them.' Bg : ' in other useless thoughts.' Ej, G, Sg : ' pastimes or business.'

pleasure of love. This is what David meant when he said :
I will keep my strength for Thee.¹

9. Here it is to be noted that, when the soul attains to this estate, all its exercise, both of its spiritual part and of its sensual part, be it in doing or in suffering, after whatsoever manner it be, causes it ever greater love and greater delight in God, as we have said ; and even the very exercise of prayer and converse with God, which it was frequently wont to have in considerations of a different kind and in other ways, is now wholly the exercise of love. So that, whether its commerce be with temporal things or whether its exercise be concerning spiritual things, a soul in this case can ever say that its exercise is now in loving alone.

10. Happy life and happy estate and happy the soul that arrives thereat, where all is now substance of love to it and joy and delight² of betrothal ; wherein the Bride may indeed say to the Divine Spouse those words which she addresses to Him out of pure love in the Songs : All the new and the old apples have I laid up for Thee.³ Which is as if she should say : My Beloved, I desire for Thy sake to have all that is hard and wearisome, and all that is sweet and delectable I desire for Thee. But the sense of this line as we have interpreted it is that the soul in this estate of the spiritual betrothal walks habitually in union and love of God, which is the common and habitual presence of the loving will in God.

ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

1. Truly this soul is lost to all things and is gained only to love, its spirit being now occupied in naught else. For this reason it fails even in that which belongs to the active life and in other outward exercises, in order really to fulfil the one thing that the Spouse said was needful, which is to abide with God and to be continually practising His love.⁴ This He prizes and esteems to such a high degree that He reproved Martha because she desired to withdraw Mary from His feet, so as to occupy her in other activities in the Lord's service,⁵ considering that she was doing everything and Mary was doing nothing, since Mary was resting with

¹ Psalm lviii, 10 [A.V., lix, 9].

² S : ' joy of delight.'

³ Canticles vii, 13. A omits the following words : ' Which is . . . desire for Thee.'

⁴ S. Luke x, 42.

⁵ Sg substitutes : ' to the Lord's advantage.'

the Lord, the truth being just the contrary, for there is no better or more necessary work than love. Thus, again, in the Songs He defends the Bride, conjuring all creatures in the world (who are understood here by 'daughters of Jerusalem') not to stir the Bride from her spiritual sleep of love, nor to waken her or let her open her eyes to aught else, till she please.¹

2. Here it is to be noted that, for so long as the soul has not reached this estate of union of love, it must needs practise love, both in the active life and in the contemplative; but when it reaches that estate it befits it not to be occupied in other outward acts and exercises² which might keep it back, however little, from that abiding³ in love with God, although they may greatly conduce to the service of God; for a very little of this pure love is more precious, in the sight of God and the soul, and of greater profit to the Church, even though the soul appear to be doing nothing, than are all these works together. For this reason Mary Magdalene, although she wrought great good with her preaching, and would have continued to do so, because of the great desire that she had to please her Spouse and to profit the Church, hid herself in the desert for thirty years in order to surrender herself truly to this love, since it seemed to her that in every way she would gain much more by so doing, because of the great profit and importance that there is to the Church in a very little of this love.

3. Therefore if any soul should have aught of this degree of solitary love, great wrong would be done⁴ to it, and to the Church, if, even but for a brief space, one should endeavour to busy it in active or outward affairs, of however great moment; for, since God adjures the creatures not to awaken the soul from this love, who shall dare to do so and shall not be rebuked? After all, it was for the goal of this love that we were created. Let those, then, that are great actives, that think to girdle⁵ the world with their outward works and their preachings, take note here that they would bring far more profit to the Church and be far more pleasing to God (apart from the good example which they would give⁶ of themselves) if they spent even half this time in

¹ Canticles iii, 5.

² S adds: 'not being of obligation.'

³ A, Av, Bz, S have: *existencia* ['being,' 'existence'] for *asistencia* ['abiding,' 'presence'].

⁴ Jaén reads: 'was done'; but all the other MSS. as in the text.

⁵ Ej: 'to convert.'

⁶ S: 'which would be given.'

abiding with God in prayer, even had they not reached such a height as this. Of a surety they would accomplish more with one piece of work than they now do with a thousand, and that with less labour, since their prayer would be of such great deserving and they would have won such spiritual strength by it. For to act otherwise is to hammer vigorously and to accomplish little more than nothing, at times¹ nothing at all; at times, indeed, it may even be to do harm. May God forbid that your salt should begin to lose its savour;² and yet although in such a case it may seem superficially that it has some effect, it will have no substantial effect, for it is certain that good works cannot be done save in the strength³ of God.

4. Oh, how much could be written here about this matter! But this is not the place for it. I have said what I have in order to explain this next stanza, for therein the soul herself makes reply to all those that impugn⁴ this her holy leisure and that desire her to be ever working, and making great display and attracting the eye superficially, since they know nothing of the hidden root and source whence the water springs and whence comes all fruit. And thus the stanza says:

STANZA XXIX

If, then, on the common land, From henceforth I am neither
seen nor found,
You will say that I am lost; That, wandering love-stricken, I
lost my way and was found.⁵

EXPOSITION

5. The soul, in this stanza, makes answer to a tacit reproach uttered by those of the world,⁶ which they are wont to direct to such as give themselves truly to God; for they consider them extravagant in their queerness and aloofness⁷ and in their general behaviour, and also say that they are useless in important matters and are lost with respect

¹ S: 'even at times.'

² [*Lit.*, 'to become vain.']

³ Ej, G, Sg: 'in the truth.'

⁴ S omits 'all.' Jaén, A, B make 'those' feminines [with evident reference to 'creatures,' 'daughters'].

⁵ [*Lit.*, *ganada*, 'gained.' Bz, Ej and G, however, read *hallada*, 'found.']

⁶ A: 'by the worldly.'

⁷ Sg: 'and recollectedness and aloofness.'

delight,¹ nor must desire to drink the clear water of any honour and glory of the world, nor must it desire to taste the coolness of any temporal consolation or refreshment,² nor desire to stay beneath the shade of any favour or protection that is of creatures ; desiring in no wise to rest in aught, or to find companionship in other affections, and sighing ever for solitude from all things until it find its Spouse in complete satisfaction.

6. And since the soul in such case, ere it reached this high estate, went about with great love³ seeking its Beloved, and finding no satisfaction in aught save in Him; the same Spouse sings here of the end of the fatigues of the Bride and the fulfilment of her desires, saying that at last the turtle-dove has found the mate of her desire on the green banks. This is as much as to say that the Bride-Soul now sits upon the green bough,⁴ delighting in her Beloved ; and that she now drinks the clear water of most high⁵ contemplation and the wisdom of God, water which is cold, signifying the refreshment and delight that she has in God ; and likewise settles beneath the shade of His protection and favour,⁶ which she had so greatly desired, wherein she is comforted, pastured and refreshed after a delectable and Divine manner, even as she declares joyously in the Songs, saying : I sat down under the shade of him that I had desired, and his fruit is sweet to my taste.⁷

ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

1. Continuing, the Spouse describes the contentment that He derives from the blessing which the Bride has obtained by means of solitude, wherein aforetime she desired to live, which is stability of peace and blessing unchangeable. For, when the soul becomes confirmed in the tranquillity of her single and solitary love for the Spouse, as this soul has done of whom we here speak, she reposes so delectably and so lovingly in God, and God in her, that she has no need of

¹ Sg : 'upon any green tree of delight.'

² Ej, G, Sg : 'nor desire to taste it, or any temporal consolation or refreshment.'

³ Ej, G, Sg add : 'and care.'

⁴ Ej, G, Sg : 'upon the tree.'

⁵ Ej, G : 'most lofty.'

⁶ G, Sg : 'and likewise [settles] beneath the shade of His favour and protection which she has in God.' Ej : 'and likewise sits beneath the shade of His protection, the which [shade] she . . . ' etc.

⁷ Canticles ii, 3.

other means or masters to lead her to God, since God is now her guide¹ and her light. For He fulfils in her that which He promised in Hosea, saying : I will guide her² into solitude and there I will speak to her heart.³ Here He declares that it is in solitude that He communicates and unites Himself to the soul ; for to speak to her heart is to satisfy her heart, which is satisfied with nothing less than with God. And thus the Spouse says :

STANZA XXXV

**In solitude she lived And in solitude now has built her nest,
And in solitude her dear one alone guides her, Who likewise in
solitude was wounded by love.**

EXPOSITION

2. In this stanza the Spouse does two things. The first is to praise the solitude wherein aforetime the soul desired to live, saying that it was a means whereby she might find and enjoy⁴ her Beloved, alone and far removed from all the pains and fatigues which she experienced aforetime, for as she desired to support herself in solitude, far from all pleasure and consolation and aid of the creatures, in order to reach the companionship of her Beloved, and union with Him, she merited to find possession of the peace of solitude in her Beloved, wherein she reposes, alone and far removed⁵ from all the said troubles. The second thing that the Spouse does is to say⁶ that, inasmuch as the soul has desired to be alone,⁷ for the sake of her dear one, and far from all created things, He Himself, being enamoured of her because of this her solitariness, has taken care of her, received her into His arms, pastured her in Himself with all blessings and guided⁸ her spirit to the high places⁹ of God. And He says, not only that He is now her guide, but that He does these things alone, without other means—whether angels or men, or forms or images—inasmuch as the soul, through this solitude,

¹ Jaén alone reads : ' her grace.' A has : ' her light, her guide and her law.' The other authorities all have : ' her guide.'

² S : ' I will bear her.' ³ Hosea ii, 14.

⁴ Ej, G, Sg omit : ' and enjoy.'

⁵ Ej, G, Sg omit : ' removed,' but add : ' now.'

⁶ [*Lit.*, ' the second is to say.']

⁷ Jaén has : ' to give herself, alone.'

⁸ Bg : ' and guarded.' ⁹ [*Lit.*, ' high things.']

has now true liberty of spirit and is not bound¹ to any of these means. And the line says :

In solitude she lived.

3. The little turtle dove aforementioned, which is the soul, lived in solitude before it found the Beloved in this estate of union. For the soul that desires God is in no wise comforted by any company soever, but all things make and cause within it greater solitude until it find Him,

And in solitude now has built her nest.

4. The solitude wherein the soul lived aforetime was its desire to be without all the things and blessings² of the world, for the sake of its Spouse, even as we have said of the turtle dove. It strove to become perfect, and to acquire perfect solitude, wherein the soul attains to union with the Word, and consequently to all refreshment and rest. It is this that is signified by the nest which is here spoken of—namely, rest and repose. And it is thus³ as though He were to say : In this solitude wherein aforetime she lived, working therein with labour and anguish, because she was not perfect, she has now set her rest⁴ and refreshment, since she has now acquired this solitude perfectly in God. Of this David, speaking spiritually, says : The bird has indeed found a house for herself, and the turtle dove a nest wherein to rear⁵ her young.⁶ That is, an abode in God where she may satisfy her desires and faculties.

And in solitude . . . guides her.

5. This signifies : In that solitude which the soul has with respect to all things and wherein she is alone with God, He guides and moves her and raises her to Divine things—that is to say, He raises her understanding to Divine intelligence, since it is now alone and detached from all other strange and contradictory intelligence ; and He moves her will⁷ freely to the love of God, for it is now alone and free from other affections ; and He fills her memory with Divine knowledge, since it, too, is now alone and emptied of other imaginings and fancies. For as soon as

¹ Sg : ' is not tied.'

² Ej, G, Sg : ' all the blessings.'

³ S abbreviates : ' the nest which is spoken of. And it is thus.'

⁴ Ej, G, Sg : ' her nest.'

⁵ Bg : ' wherein to shelter.'

⁶ Psalm lxxxiii, 4 [A.V., lxxxiv, 3].

⁷ A, B, Bg : ' and her will is moved.'

the soul disencumbers these faculties and voids them of all lower things and of all attachment to higher things, leaving them in solitude,¹ with naught else, God at once uses them for the invisible and Divine, and it is God Who guides the soul in this solitude, even as S. Paul says concerning the perfect : *Qui spiritu Dei aguntur*,² etc. They are moved by the Spirit of God, which is the same as saying : In solitude there guides her

. . . Her dear one alone.

6. This signifies that not only does He guide her in her solitude, but that it is He Himself alone Who works in her, using no other intermediary. For it is the characteristic of this union of the soul with God in the Spiritual Marriage that God works in her and communicates Himself to her alone, not now by means of angels, as aforetime, neither by means of her natural ability. For the outward and inward senses, and all creatures, and even the soul herself, have very little to do with the receiving of these great and supernatural favours which God grants in this estate : they belong not to the ability³ and natural working and diligence of the soul—He alone works them in her. And the reason for this is that He finds her alone, as has been said, and thus He will give her no other company, nor will He have her profit by any other or trust⁴ any other save Himself only. And it is also fitting that, since the soul has now left all things and passed through all intermediaries, soaring above them all to God, God Himself should be her guide and the intermediary to Himself. Now that the soul has soared above everything, and is withdrawn from everything, none of these things is now of any profit or service to her that she may soar higher, save the Word Himself, which is the Spouse. And He, because He is so greatly enamoured of her, desires to be alone the One to work the favours aforementioned.⁵ And so He next says :

Who likewise in solitude was wounded by love.

7. That is to say, by the Bride. For not only does the Spouse greatly love the solitude of the soul, but He is most deeply wounded with love for her, because she has desired

¹ Ej, G, Sg : 'leaving them all.'

² Romans viii, 14.

³ S : 'because they are not contained in the ability.'

⁴ S : 'or have her trust.'

⁵ Ej, G, Sg : 'to work these Divine favours.'

to remain alone, and far from all things,¹ inasmuch as she has been wounded with love for Him. And thus He would not leave her alone ; but rather, wounded by her through the solitude wherein for His sake she lives, and seeing that she is content with naught else, He alone guides her to Himself, draws her to Himself and absorbs her in Himself ; which He would not do in her had He not found her in spiritual solitude.

ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

1. A strange characteristic of those that are in love² is this, that they are far more desirous of enjoying each other's society when they are alone together and withdrawn from every creature³ than of doing so in the company of any. For, although they be together, yet if there be any strange company present with them, even though they would not converse and speak together if they were away from them any more than they do in their presence, and though these others speak not neither converse at all, their very presence is sufficient⁴ for the lovers not to have pleasure and enjoyment in each other. The reason for this is that, since love is the union of two only, these two desire to commune alone. And now that the soul has been set upon this summit⁵ of perfection and freedom of spirit in God, and the repugnances and contrarieties of its sensuality have been done away with, it has no longer aught to understand, or any other exercise wherein to employ itself, than the giving of itself up to the delights and joys of intimate love with the Spouse. It is written thus of holy Tobias in his book, where he says⁶ that, after he had passed through the trials of his poverty and temptations, God illumined him, and that he spent all the rest of his days⁷ in rejoicing.⁸ And just so does this soul of which we are speaking spend them, since the blessings which it sees in itself give it such great joy and delight as Isaiah attributes to the soul which, having exercised itself in works of perfection, has arrived at the point of perfection whereof we are speaking.

¹ Ej, G omit the clause : ' because . . . from all things.'

² Ej, G have : ' of the lovers ' ; the other authorities : ' of the beloved.'

³ Sg : ' from every joy.'

⁴ Ej, G, Sg abbreviate : ' . . . converse and speak, their presence is sufficient,' etc.

⁵ Sg has *costumbres* [' custom '] for *cumbre* [' summit '].

⁶ S omits : ' in his book, where he says.'

⁷ S : ' and that he spent all the remainder of his life.'

⁸ Tobit xiv, 4 [A.V., xiv, 2].