

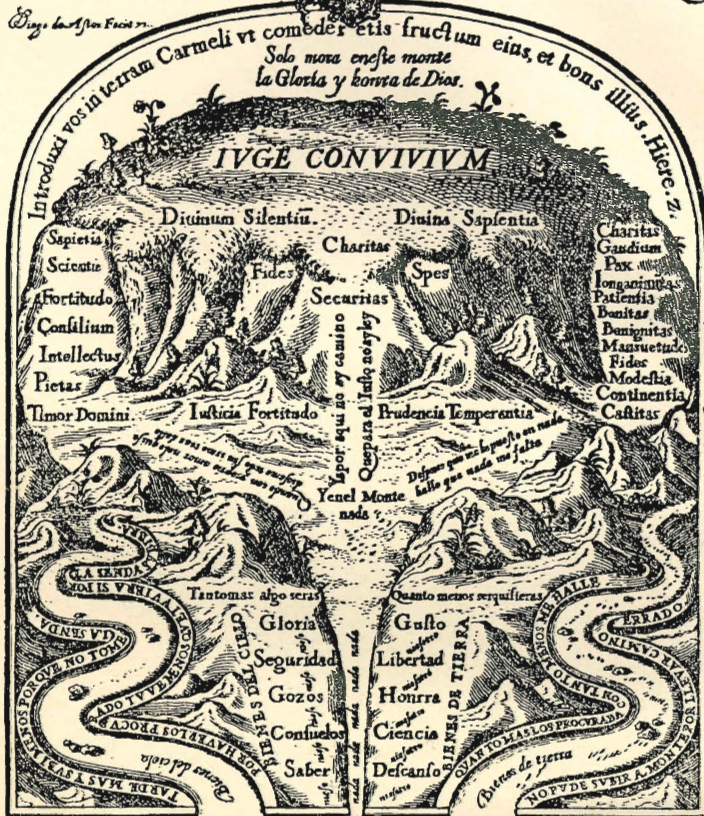
OAGVLATVS.

MONS INQVO

Primo deus per se

MONS DEI MONS PINGVIS. MONS

BENEPLACIVM EST DEO HABITARE INEO.



Camino de spiritu imperfecto

Senda estrecha de la
perfection
*Arcta est uia quae ducit
ad uitam*

Camino de spiritu errado

Psalm.

LXVII.

Los Versillos siguientes declaran el modo de subir por la senda al Monte de perfection, y dan aviso para no ir por los dos caminos torcidos

Modo para venir
al todo.

Para venir a lo que no sabes
as de is por donde no sabes
Para venir a lo que no gustas
as de is por donde no gustas
Para venir a lo que no puedes
as de is por donde no puedes
Para venir a lo que no tienes
as de is por donde no tienes

Modo de tener
al todo

Para venir a saberlo todo
no quieras saber algo en nada
Para venir a gustarlo todo
no quieras gustar algo en nada
Para venir a poseerlo todo
no quieras poseer algo en nada
Para venir a verlo todo
no quieras ver algo en nada

Modo para no impedir
al todo.

Quando reparas en algo
deja de arrojarte al todo.
Porque para venir de todo al todo
as de cosas de todo al todo.
Quando lo uenies todo a tener
as de tenerlo sin nada a tener.
Porque si quieres tener algo en todo
no tienes puesto en Dios tu tesoro.

Indicio de que se
tiene todo.

En esta desnudez halla el
spiritu quietud, y descanso,
porque como nada codicia, nada
le impide hacia arriba, y nada
le oprime hacia abajo, que esta
en el centro de su humildad.
Que quando algo codicia
en algo mismo se fatiga

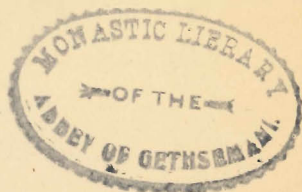
✓✓✓✓✓
**THE COMPLETE WORKS OF
SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS**

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Translated from the critical edition of
P. SILVERIO DE SANTA TERESA, C.D.
and edited by
E. ALLISON PEERS

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VOLUME I
GENERAL INTRODUCTION
ASCENT OF MOUNT CARMEL
DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL



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TO THE
DISCALCED CARMELITES OF CASTILE,
WITH ABIDING MEMORIES OF THEIR HOSPITALITY AND KINDNESS
IN MADRID, AVILA AND BURGOS,
BUT ABOVE ALL OF THEIR DEVOTION TO
SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS,
I DEDICATE THIS NEW TRANSLATION.

CONTENTS

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE	PAGE xvii
AN OUTLINE OF THE LIFE OF S. JOHN OF THE CROSS . . .	xxv
GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKS OF S. JOHN OF THE CROSS	xxxii

ASCENT OF MOUNT CARMEL

INTRODUCTION	I
ARGUMENT	9
PROLOGUE	II

BOOK I

CHAPTER I.—Sets down the first stanza. Describes the differences between two nights through which spiritual persons pass, according to the two parts of man, the lower and the higher. Expounds the stanza which follows	17
CHAPTER II.—Explains the nature of this dark night through which the soul says that it has passed on the road to union . . .	19
CHAPTER III.—Speaks of the first cause of this night, which is that of the privation of the desire in all things, and gives the reason for which it is called night	21
CHAPTER IV.—Wherein is declared how necessary it is for the soul truly to pass through this dark night of sense, which is mortification of desire, in order that it may journey to union with God.	24
CHAPTER V.—Wherein the aforementioned subject is treated and continued, and it is shown by passages and figures from Holy Scripture how necessary it is for the soul to journey to God through this dark night of the mortification of desire in all things	29
CHAPTER VI.—Wherein are treated two serious evils caused in the soul by the desires, the one evil being privative and the other positive	34
CHAPTER VII.—Wherein is shown how the desires torment the soul. This is proved likewise by comparisons and quotations . . .	38
CHAPTER VIII.—Wherein is shown how the desires darken and blind the soul	41
CHAPTER IX.—Wherein is described how the desires defile the soul. This is proved by comparisons and quotations from Holy Scripture	45

CONTENTS

CHAPTER X.—Wherein is described how the desires weaken the soul in virtue and make it lukewarm	PAGE 49
CHAPTER XI.—Wherein it is proved necessary that the soul that would attain to Divine union should be free from desires, howsoever small	51
CHAPTER XII.—Which treats of the answer to another question, explaining what the desires are that suffice to cause the evils aforementioned in the soul	56
CHAPTER XIII.—Wherein is described the way and manner which the soul must observe in order to enter this night of sense	59
CHAPTER XIV.—Wherein is expounded the second line of the stanza	63
CHAPTER XV.—Wherein are expounded the remaining lines of the aforementioned stanza	65

BOOK II

CHAPTER I	66
CHAPTER II.—Which begins to treat of the second part or cause of this night, which is faith. Proves by two arguments how it is darker than the first and than the third	68
CHAPTER III.—How faith is dark night to the soul. This is proved with arguments and quotations and figures from Scripture	70
CHAPTER IV.—Treats in general of how the soul likewise must be in darkness, in so far as this rests with itself, to the end that it may be effectively guided by faith to the highest contemplation	73
CHAPTER V.—Wherein is described what is meant by union of the soul with God, and a comparison is given	78
CHAPTER VI.—Wherein is described how it is the three theological virtues that perfect the three faculties of the soul, and how the said virtues produce emptiness and darkness within them	84
CHAPTER VII.—Wherein is described how strait is the way that leads to eternal life and how completely detached and disencumbered must be those that will walk in it. We begin to speak of the detachment of the understanding	87
CHAPTER VIII.—Which describes in a general way how no creature and no knowledge that can be comprehended by the understanding can serve as a proximate means of Divine union with God	93
CHAPTER IX.—How faith is the proximate and proportionate means to the understanding whereby the soul may attain to the Divine union of love. This is proved by passages and figures from Divine Scripture	98
CHAPTER X.—Wherein distinction is made between all apprehensions and types of knowledge which can be comprehended by the understanding	100
CHAPTER XI.—Of the hindrance and harm that may be caused by apprehensions of the understanding which proceed from what is supernaturally represented to the outward bodily senses; and how the soul is to conduct itself therein	101

CONTENTS

xi

	PAGE
CHAPTER XII.—Which treats of natural imaginary apprehensions. Describes their nature and proves that they cannot be a proportionate means of attainment to union with God. Shows the harm which results from inability to detach oneself from them	109
CHAPTER XIII.—Wherein are set down the signs which the spiritual person will find in himself and whereby he may know at what season it behoves him to leave meditation and reasoning and pass to the state of contemplation	114
CHAPTER XIV.—Wherein is proved the fitness of these signs, and the reason is given why that which has been said about them is necessary to progress	117
CHAPTER XV.—Wherein is explained how it is sometimes well for progressives who are beginning to enter upon this general knowledge of contemplation to profit by natural meditation and the work of the natural faculties	127
CHAPTER XVI.—Which treats of the imaginary apprehensions that are supernaturally represented in the fancy. Describes how they cannot serve the soul as a proximate means to union with God	130
CHAPTER XVII.—Wherein is described the purpose and manner of God in His communication of spiritual blessings to the soul by means of the senses. Herein is answered the question which has been referred to	138
CHAPTER XVIII.—Which treats of the harm that certain spiritual masters may do to souls when they direct them not by a good method with respect to the visions aforementioned. Describes also how these visions may cause deception even though they be of God	144
CHAPTER XIX.—Wherein is expounded and proved how, although visions and locutions which come from God are true, we may be deceived about them. This is proved by quotations from Divine Scripture	149
CHAPTER XX.—Wherein is proved by passages from Scripture how the sayings and words of God, though always true, do not always rest upon stable causes	158
CHAPTER XXI.—Wherein is explained how at times, although God answers the prayers that are addressed to Him, He is not pleased that we should use such methods. It is also proved how, although He condescend to us and answer us, He is oftentimes wroth	163
CHAPTER XXII.—Wherein is solved a question, namely, why it is not lawful, under the law of grace, to ask anything of God by supernatural means, as it was under the ancient law. This solution is proved by a passage from S. Paul	172
CHAPTER XXIII.—Which begins to treat of the apprehensions of the understanding that come in a purely spiritual way, and describes their nature	185
CHAPTER XXIV.—Which treats of two kinds of spiritual vision that come supernaturally	187
CHAPTER XXV.—Which treats of revelations, describing their nature and making a distinction between them	193

CHAPTER XXVI.—Which treats of the intuition of naked truths in the understanding, explaining how they are of two kinds and how the soul is to conduct itself with respect to them . . .	PAGE 194
CHAPTER XXVII.—Which treats of the second kind of revelation, namely, the disclosure of hidden secrets. Describes the way in which these may assist the soul toward union with God, and the way in which they may be a hindrance; and how the devil may deceive the soul greatly in this matter . . .	204
CHAPTER XXVIII.—Which treats of interior locutions that may come to the spirit supernaturally. Says of what kinds they are	207
CHAPTER XXIX.—Which treats of the first kind of words that the recollected spirit sometimes forms within itself. Describes the cause of these and the profit and the harm which there may be in them . . .	209
CHAPTER XXX.—Which treats of the interior words that come to the spirit formally by supernatural means. Warns the reader of the harm which they may do and of the caution that is necessary in order that the soul may not be deceived by them	215
CHAPTER XXXI.—Which treats of the substantial words that come interiorly to the spirit. Describes the difference between them and formal words, and the profit which they bring and the resignation and respect which the soul must observe with regard to them . . .	218
CHAPTER XXXII.—Which treats of the apprehensions received by the understanding from interior feelings which come supernaturally to the soul. Describes their cause, and the manner wherein the soul must conduct itself so that they may not obstruct its road to union with God . . .	221

BOOK III

CHAPTER I	225
CHAPTER II.—Which treats of the natural apprehensions of the memory and describes how the soul must be voided of them in order to be able to attain to union with God according to this faculty	226
CHAPTER III.—Wherein are described three kinds of evil which come to the soul when it enters not into darkness with respect to knowledge and reflections in the memory. Herein is described the first	234
CHAPTER IV.—Which treats of the second kind of evil that may come to the soul from the devil by way of the natural apprehensions of the memory	236
CHAPTER V.—Of the third evil which comes to the soul by way of the distinct natural knowledge of the memory	238
CHAPTER VI.—Of the benefits which come to the soul from forgetfulness and emptiness of all thoughts and knowledge which it may have in a natural way with respect to the memory . . .	239
CHAPTER VII.—Which treats of the second kind of apprehension of the memory—the imaginary—and of supernatural knowledge .	241

CONTENTS

xiii

CHAPTER VIII.—Of the evils which may be caused to the soul by the knowledge of supernatural things, if it reflect upon them. Says how many these evils are	PAGE 242
CHAPTER IX.—Of the second kind of evil, which is the peril of falling into self-esteem and vain presumption	243
CHAPTER X.—Of the third evil that may come to the soul from the devil, through the imaginary apprehensions of the memory	245
CHAPTER XI.—Of the fourth evil that comes to the soul from the distinct supernatural apprehensions of the memory, which is the hindrance that it interposes to union	247
CHAPTER XII.—Of the fifth evil that may come to the soul in supernatural imaginary forms and apprehensions, which is a low and unseemly judgement of God	247
CHAPTER XIII.—Of the benefits which the soul receives through banishing from itself the apprehensions of the imagination. This chapter answers a certain objection and describes a difference which exists between apprehensions that are imaginary, natural and supernatural	249
CHAPTER XIV.—Which treats of spiritual knowledge in so far as it may concern the memory	255
CHAPTER XV.—Which sets down the general method whereby the spiritual person must govern himself with respect to this sense	256
CHAPTER XVI.—Which begins to treat of the dark night of the will. Makes a division between the affections of the will	258
CHAPTER XVII.—Which begins to treat of the first affection of the will. Describes the nature of joy and makes a distinction between the things in which the will can rejoice	261
CHAPTER XVIII.—Which treats of joy with respect to temporal blessings. Describes how joy in them must be directed to God	262
CHAPTER XIX.—Of the evils that may befall the soul when it sets its rejoicing upon temporal blessings	266
CHAPTER XX.—Of the benefits that come to the soul from its withdrawal of joy from temporal things	271
CHAPTER XXI.—Which describes how it is vanity to set the rejoicing of the will upon the good things of nature, and how the soul must direct itself, by means of them, to God	274
CHAPTER XXII.—Of the evils which come to the soul when it sets the rejoicing of its will upon the good things of nature	276
CHAPTER XXIII.—Of the benefits which the soul receives from not setting its rejoicing upon the good things of nature	280
CHAPTER XXIV.—Which treats of the third kind of good thing whereon the will may set the affection of rejoicing, which kind pertains to sense. Indicates what these good things are and of how many kinds, and how the will has to be directed to God and purged of this rejoicing	282
CHAPTER XXV.—Which treats of the evils that afflict the soul when it desires to set the rejoicing of its will upon the good things of sense	285

CHAPTER XXVI.—Of the benefits that come to the soul from self-denial in rejoicing as to things of sense, which benefits are spiritual and temporal	PAGE 287
CHAPTER XXVII.—Which begins to treat of the fourth kind of good—namely, the moral. Describes wherein this consists, and in what manner joy of the will therein is lawful	290
CHAPTER XXVIII.—Of seven evils into which a man may fall if he set the rejoicing of his will upon moral good	293
CHAPTER XXIX.—Of the benefits which come to the soul through the withdrawal of its rejoicing from moral good	297
CHAPTER XXX.—Which begins to treat of the fifth kind of good thing wherein the will may rejoice, which is the supernatural. Describes the nature of these supernatural good things, and how they are distinguished from the spiritual, and how joy in them is to be directed to God	299
CHAPTER XXXI.—Of the evils which come to the soul when it sets the rejoicing of the will upon this kind of good	301
CHAPTER XXXII.—Of two benefits which are derived from the renunciation of rejoicing in the matter of the supernatural graces	306
CHAPTER XXXIII.—Which begins to treat of the sixth kind of good wherein the soul may rejoice. Describes its nature and makes the first division under this head	307
CHAPTER XXXIV.—Of those good things of the spirit which can be distinctly apprehended by the understanding and the memory. Describes how the will is to behave in the matter of rejoicing in them	309
CHAPTER XXXV.—Of the delectable spiritual good things which can be distinctly apprehended by the will. Describes the kinds of these	309
CHAPTER XXXVI.—Which continues to treat of images, and describes the ignorance which certain persons have with respect to them	313
CHAPTER XXXVII.—Of how the rejoicing of the will must be directed, by way of the images, to God, so that the soul may not go astray because of them or be hindered by them	316
CHAPTER XXXVIII.—Continues to describe motive good. Speaks of oratories and places dedicated to prayer	318
CHAPTER XXXIX.—Of the way in which oratories and churches should be used, in order to direct the spirit to God	321
CHAPTER XL.—Which continues to direct the spirit to interior recollection with reference to what has been said	322
CHAPTER XLI.—Of certain evils into which those persons fall who give themselves to pleasure in sensible objects and who frequent places of devotion in the way that has been described	323
CHAPTER XLII.—Of three different kinds of place of devotion and of how the will should conduct itself with regard to them	324
CHAPTER XLIII.—Which treats of other motives for prayer that many persons use—namely, a great variety of ceremonies	327

CONTENTS

XV

CHAPTER XLIV.—Of the manner wherein the rejoicing and strength of the will must be directed to God through these devotions	PAGE 328
CHAPTER XLV.—Which treats of the second kind of distinct good, wherein the will may rejoice vainly	331

DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

INTRODUCTION	335
PROLOGUE	347

BOOK I

CHAPTER I.—Sets down the first line and begins to treat of the imperfections of beginners	350
CHAPTER II.—Of certain spiritual imperfections which beginners have with respect to the habit of pride	352
CHAPTER III.—Of some imperfections which some of these souls are apt to have, with respect to the second capital sin, which is avarice, in the spiritual sense	356
CHAPTER IV.—Of other imperfections which these beginners are apt to have with respect to the third sin, which is luxury	358
CHAPTER V.—Of the imperfections into which beginners fall with respect to the sin of wrath	363
CHAPTER VI.—Of imperfections with respect to spiritual gluttony	364
CHAPTER VII.—Of imperfections with respect to spiritual envy and sloth	368
CHAPTER VIII.—Wherein is expounded the first line of the first stanza, and a beginning is made of the explanation of this dark night	371
CHAPTER IX.—Of the signs by which it will be known that the spiritual person is walking along the way of this night and purgation of sense	373
CHAPTER X.—Of the way in which these souls are to conduct themselves in this dark night	378
CHAPTER XI.—Wherein are expounded the three lines of the stanza	381
CHAPTER XII.—Of the benefits which this night causes in the soul	384
CHAPTER XIII.—Of other benefits which this night of sense causes in the soul	389
CHAPTER XIV.—Expounds this last verse of the first stanza	394

BOOK II

CHAPTER I.—Which begins to treat of the dark night of the spirit and says at what time it begins	398
CHAPTER II.—Describes other imperfections which belong to these proficients	400

	PAGE
CHAPTER III.—Annotation for that which follows	402
CHAPTER IV.—Sets down the first stanza and the exposition thereof	404
CHAPTER V.—Sets down the first line and begins to explain how this dark contemplation is not only night for the soul but is also grief and purgation	405
CHAPTER VI.—Of other kinds of pain that the soul suffers in this night	409
CHAPTER VII.—Continues the same matter and considers other afflictions and trials of the will	412
CHAPTER VIII.—Of other pains which afflict the soul in this state	418
CHAPTER IX.—How, although this night brings darkness to the spirit, it does so in order to illumine it and give it light	422
CHAPTER X.—Explains this purgation fully by a comparison	429
CHAPTER XI.—Begins to explain the second line of the first stanza. Describes how, as the fruit of these rigorous afflictions, the soul finds itself with the vehement passion of Divine love	433
CHAPTER XII.—Shows how this horrible night is purgatory, and how in it the Divine wisdom illumines men on earth with the same illumination that purges and illumines the angels in Heaven	436
CHAPTER XIII.—Of other delectable effects which are wrought in the soul by this dark night of contemplation	440
CHAPTER XIV.—Wherein are set down and explained the last three lines of the first stanza	445
CHAPTER XV.—Sets down the second stanza and its exposition	447
CHAPTER XVI.—Explains how, though in darkness, the soul walks securely	448
CHAPTER XVII.—Explains how this dark contemplation is secret	455
CHAPTER XVIII.—Explains how this secret wisdom is likewise a ladder	460
CHAPTER XIX.—Begins to explain the ten steps of the mystic ladder of Divine love, according to S. Bernard and S. Thomas. The first five are here treated	463
CHAPTER XX.—Wherein are treated the other five steps of love	467
CHAPTER XXI.—Which explains this word 'disguised,' and de- scribes the colours of the disguise of the soul in this night	470
CHAPTER XXII.—Explains the third line of the second stanza	475
CHAPTER XXIII.—Expounds the fourth line and describes the wondrous hiding-place wherein the soul is set during this night. Shows how, although the devil has an entrance into other places that are very high, he has none into this	476
CHAPTER XXIV.—Completes the explanation of the second stanza	483
CHAPTER XXV.—Wherein is expounded the third stanza	485

find in them great delight and consolation, and to act with order and discretion.

8. These things that have been said, if they be faithfully put into practice, are quite sufficient for entrance into the night of sense ; but, for greater completeness, we shall describe another kind of exercise which teaches us to mortify the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which, says S. John,¹ are the things that reign in the world, from which all the other desires proceed.²

9. First, let the soul strive to work in its own despite, and desire all to do so.³ Secondly, let it strive to speak in its own despite and desire all to do so.⁴ Third, let it strive to think humbly of itself, in its own despite, and desire all to do so.⁵

10. In concluding these counsels and rules, it is well to set down here those lines which are written in the Ascent of the Mount,⁶ which is the figure that is at the beginning of this book ; the which lines are instructions for mounting it, and thus reaching the summit of union. For, although it is true that that which is there spoken of is spiritual and interior, there is reference likewise to the spirit of imperfection according to sensual and exterior things, as may be seen by the two roads which are on either side of the path of perfection. It is in this way and according to this sense that we shall understand them here ; that is to say, according to that which is sensual. Afterwards, in the second part of this night, they will be understood according to that which is spiritual.⁷

11. The lines are these :

In order to arrive at having⁸ pleasure in everything,
Desire to have pleasure in nothing.

¹ [1 S. John ii, 16.]

² E.p. abbreviates : ' which teaches us to mortify truly the desire for honour, whence originate many other [desires]. '

³ A, B, e.p. : ' others to do so. ' A, B add : ' and this is against the concupiscence of the flesh. '

⁴ A, B add : ' and this is against the concupiscence of the eyes. '

⁵ A, B add : ' likewise against it ; and this is against the pride of life. '

⁶ A, B, C, D, e.p. have ' figure ' for ' ascent. ' The reference is to the diagram which is reproduced as the frontispiece to this volume. Cf. also p. xxxiv, above.

⁷ The Saint does not, however, allude to these lines again. The order followed below is that of Alc., which differs somewhat from that followed in the diagram.

⁸ E.p. : ' to have. '

In order to arrive at possessing everything,
Desire to possess nothing.¹

In order to arrive at being everything,
Desire to be nothing.

In order to arrive at knowing everything,
Desire to know nothing.

In order to arrive at that wherein thou hast no pleasure,
Thou must go by a way wherein thou hast no pleasure.

In order to arrive at that which thou knowest not,
Thou must go by a way that thou knowest not.

In order to arrive at that which thou possessest not,
Thou must go by a way that thou possessest not.

In order to arrive at that which thou art not,
Thou must go through that which thou art not.

THE WAY NOT TO IMPEDE THE ALL

12. When thou thinkest upon anything,
Thou ceaseest to cast thyself upon the All.

For, in order to pass from the all to the All,
Thou hast to deny thyself² wholly³ in all.

And, when thou comest to possess it wholly,
Thou must possess it without desiring anything.

For, if thou wilt have anything in all,
Thou hast not thy treasure purely in God.

13. In this detachment the spiritual soul finds its quiet and repose ; for, since it covets nothing, nothing wearies it when it is lifted up, and nothing oppresses it when it is cast down, for it is in the centre of its humility ; since, when it covets anything, at that very moment it becomes wearied.⁴

CHAPTER XIV

*Wherein is expounded the second line of the stanza.*⁵

Kindled in love with yearnings.

1. Now that we have expounded the first line of this stanza, which treats of the night of sense, explaining what

¹ [This line, like ll. 6, 8 of the paragraph, reads more literally : ' Desire not to possess (be, know) anything in anything.' It is more emphatic than l. 2.]

² Thus Alc., A, B, C, D. E.p. repeats : ' cast thyself.'

³ [There is a repetition here which could only be indicated by translating ' all-ly.' So, too, in the next couplet.]

⁴ A, B add : ' and tormented.'

⁵ E.p. : ' of the above-mentioned stanza.'

BOOK THE SECOND

OF THE 'ASCENT OF MOUNT CARMEL'¹

*Wherein is treated the proximate means of ascending to union with God, which is faith; and wherein is therefore described the second part of this night, which, as we said, belongs to the spirit, and is contained in the second stanza, which is as follows.*²

STANZA THE SECOND

CHAPTER I³

In darkness and secure, By the secret ladder, disguised—oh, happy chance !—

In darkness and in concealment, My house being now at rest.

1. In this second stanza the soul sings of the happy chance which it experienced in stripping the spirit of all spiritual imperfections and desires for the possession of spiritual things. This was a much greater happiness to it, by reason of the greater difficulty that there is in putting to rest this house of the spiritual part, and of being able to enter this interior darkness, which is spiritual detachment from all things, whether sensual or spiritual, and a leaning on pure faith⁴ alone⁵ and an ascent thereby to God. The soul here calls this a 'ladder,' and 'secret,' because all the rungs and parts of it⁶ are secret and hidden from all sense and understanding. And thus the soul has remained in darkness as to all light⁷ of sense and understanding, going forth beyond all limits of

¹ So both codices and e.p.

² E.p. abbreviates: 'Treats of the proximate means of attaining to union with God, which is faith, and of the second night of the spirit, contained in the second stanza.' It should be observed that the Saint calls this Second Book 'the second (spiritual) night' (e.g., on p. 78 below, and elsewhere).

³ The chapter-headings vary considerably in the codices and editions. B. treats this chapter as an exposition and numbers from the next onward.

⁴ E.p.: 'on living faith.'

⁵ In parenthesis e.p. adds: 'and of this I am ordinarily speaking because I treat with persons who journey to perfection.'

⁶ [*Lit.*, 'all the steps and articles that it has.']

⁷ E.p.: 'all natural light.'

nature and reason in order to ascend by this Divine ladder of faith, which attains¹ and penetrates even to the heights² of God. The soul says that it was travelling 'disguised,' because it wears its garments and vesture³ and natural condition changed into the Divine, as it ascends by faith. And this disguise was the cause of its not being recognized or impeded, either by time or by reason or by the devil; for none of these things can harm one that journeys in faith. And not only so, but the soul travels in such wise concealed and hidden and is so far from all the deceits of the devil that in truth it journeys (as it also says here) 'in darkness and in concealment'—that is to say, hidden from the devil, to whom the light of faith is more than darkness.

2. And thus the soul that journeys through this night, we may say, journeys in concealment and in hiding from the devil, as will be more clearly seen hereafter. Wherefore the soul says that it went forth 'in darkness and secure'; for one that has such happiness as to be able to journey through the darkness of faith, taking faith for his guide, like to one that is blind,⁴ and going forth from all phantasms of nature and reasonings of the spirit, journeys very securely, as we have said. And so the soul says furthermore that it went forth through this spiritual night, its 'house being now at rest'—that is to say, its spiritual and rational part. When, therefore, the soul attains to union with God, it has both its natural faculties at rest, and likewise its impulses and yearnings of the senses,⁵ as to the spiritual part. For this cause the soul says not here that it went forth with yearnings, as in the first night of sense. For, in order to journey in the night of sense, and to strip itself of that which is of sense, it needed yearnings of sense-love so that it might go forth perfectly; but, in order to put to rest the house of its spirit, it needs no more than denial⁶ of all faculties and pleasures

¹ [*Lit.*, 'climbs': the verb (*escala*) is identical with the noun 'ladder' (*escala*).] ² [*Lit.*, 'to the depths.']

³ Only Alc. has: 'vesture.'

⁴ [The literal translation is shorter, *viz.* 'taking faith for a blind man's guide.'] ⁵ Alc. omits: 'of the senses.'

⁶ [*Lit.*, negation.] This is the reading of Alc. 'Affirmation' is found in A, B, C, D, e.p. Though the two words are antithetical, they express the same underlying concept. [The affirmation, or establishment, of all the powers and desires of the spirit upon pure faith, so that they may be ruled by pure faith alone, is equivalent to the denial, or negation, of those powers and desires in so far as they are not ruled by pure faith.]

and desires of the spirit in pure faith. This attained, the soul is united with the Beloved in a union of simplicity and purity and love and similitude.

3. And it must be remembered that the first stanza, speaking of the sensual part, says that the soul went forth upon 'a dark night,' while here, speaking of the spiritual part, it says that it went forth 'in darkness.' For the darkness of the spiritual part is by far the greater, even as darkness is a greater obscurity than that of night. For, however dark a night may be, something can always be seen, but in true darkness nothing can be seen ; and thus in the night of sense there still remains some light, for the understanding and reason remain, and are not blinded. But this spiritual night, which is faith, deprives the soul of everything, both as to understanding and as to sense. And for this cause the soul in this night says that it was travelling 'in darkness and secure,' which it said not in the other. For, however little the soul may work with its own ability, it journeys more securely, because it journeys more in faith. And this will be expounded gradually, at length, in this second book, wherein it will be necessary for the devout reader to proceed attentively,¹ because there will be said herein things of great importance to the person that is truly spiritual.² And, although they are somewhat obscure, some of them will pave the way to others, so that I believe they will all be quite clearly understood.

CHAPTER II

Which begins to treat of the second part or cause of this night, which is faith. Proves by two arguments how it is darker than the first and than the third.

1. There now follows the treatment of the second part of this night, which is faith ; this is the wondrous means³ which, as we said, leads to the goal, which is God, Who, as we said, is also to the soul, naturally, the third cause or part of this night. For faith, which is the means, is compared with midnight. And thus we may say that it is darker for the soul either than the first part or, in a way, than the third ;

¹ So e.p. The clause 'wherein . . . attentively' is omitted in A, B, C, D. Alc. reads : 'wherein I request the benevolent attention of the devout reader.'

² A, B end the chapter here.

³ E.p. has 'manner' for 'means.'

for the first part, which is that of sense, is compared to the beginning of night, or the time when sensible objects are no longer visible, and thus it is not so far removed from light as is midnight. The third part, which is the period preceding the dawn, is quite close to the light of day, and it, too, therefore, is not so dark as midnight ; for it is now close to the enlightenment and illumination of the light¹ of day, which is compared with God. For, although it is true, if we speak after a natural manner, that God is as dark a night to the soul as is faith, still, when these three parts of the night are over, which are naturally night to the soul, God begins to illumine the soul by supernatural means with the rays of His Divine light ;² which is the beginning of the perfect union that follows, when the third night is past, and it can thus be said to be less dark.³

2. It is likewise darker than the first part, for this belongs to the lower part of man, which is the sensual part, and, consequently, the more exterior ; and this second part, which is of faith, belongs to the higher part of man, which is the rational part, and, in consequence, more interior and more obscure, since it deprives it of the light of reason, or, to speak more clearly, blinds it ;⁴ and thus it is aptly compared to midnight, which is the depth of night and the darkest part thereof.

¹ So Alc. A, B, e.p. : ' of the brightness.'

² E.p. adds these words, which occur in none of the codices : ' and in a loftier, higher and more experimental manner.'

³ A, B : ' to be dark.'

⁴ This was another of the propositions which were cited by those who denounced the writings of S. John of the Cross to the Holy Office. It is interpretable, nevertheless, in a sense that is perfectly true and completely in conformity with Catholic doctrine. The Saint does not, in these words, affirm that faith destroys nature or quenches the light of human reason (S. Thomas, *Summa*, Pt. I, q. 1, a. 8, *et alibi*) ; what he endeavours to show is that the coming of knowledge through faith excludes a simultaneous coming of natural knowledge through reason. It is only in this way that, in the act of faith, the soul is deprived of the light of reason, and left, as it were, in blindness, so that it may be raised to another nobler and sublimer kind of knowledge, which, far from destroying reason, gives it dignity and perfection. Philosophy teaches that the proper and connatural object of the understanding, in this life, is things visible, material and corporeal. By his nature, man inclines to knowledge of this kind, but cannot lay claim to such knowledge as regards the things which belong to faith. For, as S. Paul says in a famous verse : *Fides est sperandarum substantia rerum, argumentum non apparientium* (Hebrews xi, 1). This line of thought is not confined to S. John of the Cross, but is followed by all the mystics and is completely in agreement with theological doctrine. Cf. *Respuesta* [Reply] of P. Basilio Ponce de León and *Dilucidatio*, Pt. II, Chap. ii, and also the following chapter in this present book.

3. We have now to prove how this second part, which is faith, is night to the spirit, even as the first part is night to sense. And we shall then describe also the things that are contrary to it, and how the soul must prepare itself actively to enter therein. For, concerning the passive part, which is that which God works in it, when He brings it into that night, we shall speak in its place, which I intend shall be the third book.¹

CHAPTER III

*How faith is dark night to the soul. This is proved with arguments and quotations and figures from Scripture.*²

1. Faith, say the theologians, is a habit of the soul, certain and obscure. And the reason for its being an obscure habit is that it makes us believe truths revealed by God Himself, which transcend all natural light, and exceed all human understanding, beyond all proportion.³ Hence it follows that, for the soul, this excessive light of faith which is given to it is thick darkness, for it overwhelms that which is great and does away with that which is little, even as the light of the sun overwhelms all other lights whatsoever, so that when it shines and disables our powers of vision they appear not to be lights at all. So that it blinds it and deprives it of the sight that has been given to it, inasmuch as its light is great beyond all proportion and surpasses the powers of vision. Even so the light of faith, by its excessive greatness, oppresses and disables that of the understanding;⁴ for the latter, of its own power, extends only to natural knowledge, although it has a faculty⁵ for the supernatural, when Our

¹ Here end Alc. and e.p. A, B add: 'as we have already spoken and promised to speak of the passive [part] of the first [night] in the second [book].'
² A, B omit this sentence.

³ E.p. omits: 'beyond all proportion.'

⁴ E.p.: 'by its excessive greatness and by the way wherein God communicates it, transcends that of our understanding.'

⁵ E.p.: 'an obediencial faculty' [*potencia obediencial*]: this phrase is borrowed from the Schoolmen. Among the various divisions of the faculty are two, natural and obediencial. The first is that which is directed towards an act within the power of nature; the second is directed towards an act which exceeds these powers, by God, Who is outside the laws of nature and can therefore work outside the natural domain. This obediencial faculty (called also 'receptive' or 'passive') frequently figures in mystical theology, since it is this that disposes the faculties of the soul for the supernatural reception of the gifts of grace, all of which exceed natural capacity.

Lord may be pleased to bring it to a supernatural action.

2. Wherefore a man can know nothing by himself, save after a natural manner,¹ which is only that which he attains by means of the senses. For this cause he must have the phantasms and the figures² of objects present in themselves and in their resemblances ;³ otherwise it cannot be, for, as philosophers say : *Ab objeto et potentia paritur notitia*. That is : From the object that is present and from the faculty, knowledge is born in the soul. Wherefore, if one should speak to a man of things which he has never been able to understand, and whose likeness he has never seen, he would have no more illumination from them whatever than if naught had been said of them to him. I take an example. If one should say to a man that on a certain island there is an animal which he has never seen, and give him no idea of the appearance of that animal, that he may compare it with others that he has seen, he will have no more knowledge or imagination of it than he had before, however much is being said to him about it. And this will be better understood by another and a clearer example. If they should describe to a man that was born blind, and has never seen any colour, what is meant by a white colour or by a yellow, he would understand it but indifferently, however much they might describe it to him ; for, as he has never seen such colours or anything like them by which he may judge them, only their names would remain with him ; for these he would be able to comprehend through his hearing, but not their forms or figures, since he has never seen them.

3. Even so⁴ is faith with respect to the soul ; it tells us of things which we have never seen or understood, either in themselves, or in aught that resembles them, since they resemble naught at all.⁵ And thus we have no light of natural

¹ E.p. : 'a natural manner which has its beginning in the senses.' Here the Saint expounds a principle of scholastic philosophy summarized in the axiom : *Nihil est in intellectu quin prius non fuerit in sensu*. This principle, like many other great philosophical questions, has continually been debated. S. John of the Cross will be found as a rule to follow the philosophy most favoured by the Church and is always rigidly orthodox.

² E.p. : 'the phantasms and senses.'

³ E.p. uses *semejanzas*, the abstract noun ; the codices have *semejantes* [a word which can be either abstract or concrete, in the latter case with the sense of 'fellow-creatures'].

⁴ E.p. adds in parenthesis : 'though not equivalent in every way.'

⁵ E.p. : 'or in aught that resembles them, which might bring us to a knowledge of them without revelation.'

knowledge concerning them, since that which we are told of them has no relation to any sense of ours ; we know it by the ear alone, believing that which we are taught, bringing our natural light into subjection and treating it as if it were not.¹ For, as S. Paul says, *Fides ex auditu*.² As though he were to say : Faith is not knowledge which enters by any of the senses, but is only the consent given by the soul to that which enters³ through the hearing.

4. And faith greatly surpasses even that which is suggested by the examples given above. For not only does it give no knowledge and science,⁴ but, as we have said, it deprives us of all other knowledge and science, and blinds us to them, so that they cannot judge it well.⁵ For other sciences can be acquired by the light of the understanding ; but the science that is of faith is acquired without the illumination of the understanding, which is rejected for faith ; and in its own light it is lost, if that light be not darkened. Wherefore Isaiah said : *Si non credideritis, non intelligetis*.⁶ That is : If ye believe not, ye shall not understand. It is clear, then, that faith is dark night for the soul, and it is in this way that it gives it light ; and the more it is darkened, the greater light comes to it. For it is by blinding that it gives light, according to this saying of Isaiah : For if ye believe not, ye shall not (he says) have light.⁷ And thus faith was foreshadowed by that cloud which divided the children of Israel and the Egyptians when the former were about to enter the Red Sea, whereof Scripture says that : *Erat nubes tenebrosa, et illuminans noctem*.⁸ This is to say that that cloud was full of darkness and gave light by night.

5. A wondrous thing it is that, though it was dark, it should give light by night. This was in order that faith, which is a black and dark cloud to the soul (and likewise is night, since in the presence of faith the soul is deprived of its

¹ [*Lit.*, 'submitting and blinding our natural light.']

² Romans x, 17.

³ E.p. : 'but is superior light which enters.'

⁴ E.p. : 'no evidence or science.'

⁵ E.p. : 'but, as we have said, it surpasses and transcends any other knowledge and science, so that we may only judge of it in perfect contemplation.'

⁶ Isaiah vii, 9. So Alc. The passage seems to be taken from the Septuagint.

⁷ [*Lit.*, 'If ye believe not, that is, ye shall not have light.'] E.p. evidently found this not clear, for it expands the sentence thus : For if ye believe not—that is, if ye blind not yourselves—ye shall not understand—that is, ye shall not have light and knowledge both lofty and supernatural.'

⁸ Exodus xiv, 20.

or in darkness as to its own light,¹ so that it may allow itself to be guided by faith to this high goal of union. But, in order that the soul may be able to do this, it will now be well to continue describing, in somewhat greater detail, this darkness which the soul must have, in order that it may enter into this abyss of faith. And thus in this chapter I shall speak of it in a general way ; and hereafter, with the Divine favour, I shall continue to describe more minutely the way in which the soul is to conduct itself that it may neither stray therein nor impede this guide.

2. I say, then, that the soul, in order to be effectively guided to this state by faith, must not only be in darkness with respect to that part that concerns the creatures and temporal things, which is the sensual and the lower part (whereof we have already treated), but that likewise it must be blinded and darkened according to the part which has respect to God and to spiritual things, which is the rational and higher part,² whereof we are now treating. For, in order that one may attain supernatural transformation, it is clear that he must be set in darkness and carried far away from all that is contained in his nature,³ which is sensual and rational. For the word supernatural means that which soars above the natural ; so that the natural self remains beneath. For, although this transformation and union is something that cannot be comprehended by human ability and sense, it must completely and voluntarily void itself of all that can enter into it,⁴ whether from above or from below,—I mean according to the affection and will—so far as this rests with itself. For who shall prevent God from doing that which He will in the soul that is resigned, annihilated and detached ? But the soul must be voided of all such things as can enter⁵ its capacity, so that,⁶ however many supernatural things it may have, it will ever remain as it were detached from them and in darkness. It must be like to a blind man, leaning upon dark faith, taking it for guide and light, and leaning upon none of the things that he understands, experiences, feels and imagines. For all these

¹ A, e.p. : 'its own natural light.'

² Alc. alone reads : 'the reason and the higher part.'

³ E.p. : 'all that belongs to his nature.'

⁴ So Alc. The other authorities have : 'that can be contained in it.'
[The difference is slight : *caer* for *caber*.]

⁵ The variant of the preceding note is repeated here.

⁶ E.p. abbreviates : 'But the soul must be voided of all things, so that.'

are darkness, which will cause him to stray ; and faith is above all that he understands and experiences and feels and imagines. And if he be not blinded as to this, and remain not in total darkness,¹ he attains not to that which is greater—namely, that which is taught by faith.

3. A blind man, if he be not quite blind, refuses to be led by a guide ; and, since he sees a little, he thinks it better to go in whatever happens to be the direction which he can distinguish, because he sees none better ; and thus he can lead astray a guide who sees more than he, for after all it is for him to say where he shall go rather than for the guide.² In the same way a soul may lean upon any knowledge of its own, or any feeling or experience of God, yet, however great this may be, it is very little and far different from what God is ; and, in going along this road, a soul is easily led astray or forced to halt, because it will not remain in faith like one that is blind, and faith is its true guide.

4. It is this that was meant by S. Paul when he said : *Accedentem ad Deum oportet credere quod est.*³ Which signifies : He that would journey towards union with God must needs believe in His being. As though he had said : He that would attain to being joined in one union with God must not walk by understanding, neither lean upon experience or feeling or imagination, but he must believe in His Being,⁴ which is not perceptible to the understanding, neither to the desire nor to the imagination nor to any other sense, neither can it be known⁵ in this life at all. Yea, in this life, the highest thing that can be felt and experienced concerning God is infinitely remote from God and from the pure possession of Him. Isaiah and S. Paul say : *Nec oculus vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quæ præparavit Deus iis, qui diligunt illum.*⁶ Which signifies : That which God hath prepared for them that love Him neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart or thought of man. So, however greatly the soul aspires to be perfectly united through grace in this life with that to which it will be united through glory in the next (which, as S. Paul here

¹ A, B, e.p. add : ' with respect to it.'

² E.p. : ' . . . lead astray his guide, because he acts as if he saw and it is for him to say where he shall go rather than for the guide.'

³ Hebrews xi, 6.

⁴ E.p. : ' but he must believe in the perfection of the Divine Being.'

⁵ E.p. : ' known as it is.'

⁶ Isaiah lxiv, 4 ; 1 Corinthians ii, 9.

says, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man in the flesh¹) it is clear that, in order perfectly to attain to union in this life through grace and through love, a soul must be in darkness with respect to all that can enter through the eye, and to all that can be received through the ear, and can be imagined with the fancy, and understood with the heart, which here signifies the soul. And thus a soul is greatly impeded from reaching this high estate of union with God when it clings to any understanding or feeling or imagination or appearance or will or manner of its own, or to any other act or to anything of its own, and cannot detach and strip itself of all these. For, as we say, the goal which it seeks is beyond all this, yea, beyond even the highest thing that can be known or experienced ; and thus a soul must pass beyond everything to unknowing.

5. Wherefore, upon this road, to enter upon the road is to leave the road ; or, to express it better, it is to pass on to the goal and to leave one's own way,² and to enter upon that which³ has no way, which is God. For the soul that attains to this state has no longer any ways or methods, still less is it attached to such things or can be attached to them. I mean ways of understanding, or of experience, or of feeling ; although it has within itself all ways, after the way of one that possesses nothing, yet possesses all things. For, if it have courage to pass beyond its natural limitations, both interiorly and exteriorly, it enters within the limits of the supernatural,⁴ which has no way, yet in substance⁵ has all ways. Hence for the soul to arrive at these limits is for it to leave these limits, in each case going forth out of itself a great way, from this lowly state to that which is high above all others.

6. Wherefore, passing beyond all that can be known and understood, both spiritually and naturally,⁶ the soul will desire with all desire to come to that which in this life cannot be known, neither can enter into its heart. And, leaving behind all that it experiences and feels, both temporally and

¹ A, B : ' heart of the flesh.'

² [The word translated ' way ' is *modo*, which, in the language of scholastic philosophy, would rather be translated ' mode. ']

³ A, B : ' to enter upon the goal which . . . '

⁴ E.p. : ' it enters, without any limit, into the supernatural.'

⁵ E.p. has ' eminently ' for ' in substance.'

⁶ E.p. : ' and temporally.'

spiritually,¹ and all that it is able to experience and feel in this life, it will desire with all desire to come to that which surpasses all feeling and experience. And, in order to be free and void to that end, it must in no wise lay hold upon that which it receives, either spiritually or sensually, within itself² (as we shall explain presently, when we treat this in detail), considering it all to be of much less account. For the more emphasis the soul lays upon what it understands, experiences and imagines, and the more it esteems this, whether it be spiritual or no, the more it loses of the supreme good, and the more it is hindered from attaining thereto. And the less it thinks of what it may have, however much this be, in comparison with the highest good, the more it dwells upon that good and esteems it, and, consequently, the more nearly it approaches it. And in this wise the soul approaches a great way towards union, in darkness, by means of faith, which is likewise dark, and in this wise faith wondrously illumines it. It is certain that, if the soul should desire to see, it would be in darkness much more quickly,³ with respect to God, than would one who opens his eyes to look upon the great brightness of the sun.

7. Wherefore, by being blind in its faculties upon this road, the soul will see the light, even as the Saviour says in the Gospel, in this wise : *In iudicium veni in hunc mundum : ut qui non vident, videant, et qui vident, cæci fiant.*⁴ That is : I am come into this world for judgement ; that they which see not may see, and that they which see may become blind. This, as it will be supposed, is to be understood of this spiritual road, where the soul that is in darkness,⁵ and is blinded as to all its natural and proper lights, will see supernaturally ; and the soul that would depend upon any light of its own will become the blinder and will halt upon the road to union.

8. And, that we may proceed with less confusion, I think it will be necessary to describe, in the following chapter, the nature of this that we call union of the soul with God ; for, when this is understood, that which we shall say hereafter

¹ Thus Alc. A, B have 'spiritually' only ; e.p. : 'both spiritually and sensually.'

² [*Lit.*, 'either spiritually or sensually, in its soul.']

³ A, B : 'it would be in much greater darkness.'

⁴ S. John ix, 39.

⁵ E.p. omits the quotation and its exposition, abbreviating thus : 'the soul will see the light, so that the soul that is in darkness . . .'

divisions of this union, nor of its parts,¹ for I should never end if I were to begin now to explain what is the nature of union of the understanding, and what is that of union according to the will, and likewise according to the memory; and likewise what is transitory and what permanent in the union of the said faculties; and then what is meant by total union, transitory and permanent, with regard to the said faculties all together. All this we shall treat gradually in our discourse—speaking first of one and then of another. But here this is not to the point in order to describe what we have to say concerning them; it will be explained² much more fittingly in its place, when we shall again be treating the same matter, and shall have a striking illustration, together with the present explanation, so that everything will then be considered and explained and we shall judge of it better.

2. Here I treat only of this permanent and total union according to the substance of the soul and its faculties with respect to the obscure habit of union: for with respect to the act, we shall explain later, with the Divine favour, how there is no permanent union in the faculties, in this life, but a transitory union only.

3. In order, then, to understand what is meant by this union whereof we are treating, it must be known that God dwells and is present substantially in every soul, even in that of the greatest sinner in the world. And this kind of

the Cross. Had all his commentators understood that fact, some of them would have been saved from making ridiculous comparisons of him with Gnostics, Illuminists or even the Eastern seekers after Nirvana. Actually, this Saint and Doctor of the Church applies the tenets of Catholic theology to the union of the soul with God, presenting them in a condensed and vigorous form and keeping also to strict psychological truth, as in general do the other Spanish mystics. This is one of his greatest merits. In this chapter he is speaking, not of essential union, which has nothing to do with his subject, but (presupposing the union worked through sanctifying grace received in the substance of the soul, which is the source of the infused virtues, such as faith, hope and charity, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit) of active actual union, after which we can and should strive, so that we may will what God wills and abhor what He abhors. Though not the only kind of union, it is this which chiefly concerns the soul; and, when once this is attained, God readily grants all other mystical gifts. Cf. S. Teresa's *Mansions* (Fifth Mansions, Chap. iii).

¹ Only Alc., A, B have: 'nor of its parts.'

² E.p. abbreviates: 'And it is not now our intention to explain in detail what is the union of the understanding, what is that of the will, and what likewise is that of the memory; and what is transitory and what permanent in the said faculties, for this we shall treat hereafter and it will be explained . . .'

union¹ is ever wrought between God and all the creatures, for in it He is preserving their being ; so that if union of this kind were to fail them, they would at once become annihilated and would cease to be. And so, when we speak of union of the soul with God, we speak not of this substantial union which is continually being wrought,² but of the union and transformation of the soul with God,³ which is not being wrought continually, but only when there exists that likeness that comes from love ; we shall therefore term this the union of likeness, even as that other union is called substantial or essential. The former is natural ; the latter supernatural. And the latter comes to pass when the two wills—namely that of the soul and that of God—are conformed together in one, and there is naught in the one that is repugnant to the other. And thus, when the soul rids itself totally of that which is repugnant to the Divine will and conforms not with it, it is transformed in God through love.

4. This is to be understood of that which is repugnant, not only in action, but likewise in habit, so that not only do the voluntary acts of imperfection cease, but the habits of those imperfections, whatever they be, are annihilated.⁴ And since no creature whatsoever, or any of its actions or abilities, can conform or can attain to that which is God, therefore must the soul be stripped of all things created, and of its own actions and abilities—namely, of its understanding, liking and feeling—so that, when all that is unlike God and unconformed to Him is cast out, the soul may receive the likeness of God ; and nothing will then remain in it that is not the will of God and it will thus be transformed in God. Wherefore, although it is true that, as we have said, God is ever in the soul, giving it, and through His presence preserving within it its natural being, yet He does not always communicate supernatural being to it. For this is communicated only by love and grace, which not all souls possess ; and all those that possess it have it not in the same degree ; for some have attained more degrees of love and others fewer. Wherefore God communicates Himself most to that soul that has progressed farthest in love ; namely, that has its will in closest conformity with

¹ E.p. adds : ' or presence (which we may call that of the order of nature).'

² E.p. : ' we speak not of this presence of God which ever exists in all the creatures.'

³ E.p. adds : ' through love.'

⁴ E.p. abbreviates : ' but also the habits.'

6. In order that both these things may be the better understood, let us make a comparison. A ray of sunlight is striking a window. If the window is in any way stained or misty, the sun's ray will be unable to illumine it and transform it into its own light, totally, as it would if it were clean of all these things, and pure ; but it will illumine it to a lesser degree, in proportion as it is less free from those mists and stains ; and will do so to a greater degree, according as it is cleaner from them,¹ and this will not be because of the sun's ray, but because of itself ; so much so that, if it be wholly pure and clean, the ray of sunlight will transform it and illumine it in such wise that it will itself seem to be a ray and will give the same light as the ray. Although in reality the window has a nature distinct from that of the ray itself, however much it may resemble it, yet we may say that that window is a ray of the sun or is light by participation. And the soul is like this window, whereupon is ever beating (or, to express it better, wherein is ever dwelling) this Divine light of the Being of God according to nature, which we have described.

7. In thus allowing God to work in it, the soul (having rid itself of every mist and stain of the creatures, which consists in having its will perfectly united with that of God, for to love is to labour to detach and strip itself for God's sake of all that is not God) is at once illumined and transformed in God, and God communicates to it His supernatural Being, in such wise that it appears to be God Himself, and has all that God Himself has. And this union comes to pass when God grants the soul this supernatural favour,² that all the things of God and the soul are one in participant transformation ; and the soul seems to be God rather than a soul, and is indeed God by participation ; although it is true that its natural being, though thus transformed, is as distinct from the Being of God as it was before, even as the window has likewise a nature distinct from that of the ray, though it is illumined by it.

8. This makes it clearer that the preparation of the soul for this union, as we said, is not that it should understand or experience or feel or imagine anything, concerning either God or aught else, but that it should have purity and love—that is, perfect resignation and detachment from everything

¹ E.p. omits : ' and will . . . from them.'

² A, B, C, e.p. have : ' this sovereign favour.'

for God's sake alone ;¹ and, as there can be no perfect transformation if there be not perfect purity, and as the enlightenment, illumination and union of the soul with God will be according to the proportion of its purity, in greater or in less degree ; yet the soul will not be perfect, as I say, if it be not wholly and perfectly² bright and clean.

9. This will likewise be understood by the following comparison. A picture is most perfect, with many and most sublime beauties and delicate and subtle brilliance, and some of its beauties are so fine and subtle that they cannot be completely realized because of their delicacy and excellence. Less beauty and delicacy will be seen in this picture by one whose vision is less clear and refined ; and he whose vision is somewhat more refined will be able to see in it greater beauties and perfections ; and, if another person has a vision still more refined, he will see still greater perfection ;³ and finally, he who has the clearest and purest faculties will see⁴ the greatest beauties and perfections of all ; for there is so much to see in the image that, however far one may attain, there will ever remain higher degrees of attainment.

10. After the same manner we may describe the condition of the soul with respect to God in this enlightenment or transformation. For, although it is true that a soul, according to its greater or smaller capacity, may have attained to union, yet not all do so in the same degree, for this depends upon what the Lord desires to grant to each one. It is in this way that souls see God in Heaven ; some more, some less ;⁵ but all see Him, and all are content,⁶ for their capacity is satisfied.

11. Wherefore, although in this life here below we find certain souls enjoying equal peace and tranquillity in the state of perfection, and each one of them satisfied, yet some of them may be many degrees higher than others. All, however, will be equally satisfied, because the capacity of each

¹ E.p. modifies : ' that the preparation for this union is purity and love—that is, perfect resignation and total detachment, for God's sake alone.'

² [*Lit.*, ' wholly perfect and . . . ']

³ E.p. : ' and he whose vision is more refined will be able to see greater beauties ; and, if another person has a vision still more refined, he will be able to see still greater perfection.'

⁴ E.p. : ' will be able to see.'

⁵ E.p. : ' some more perfectly, some less so.'

⁶ E.p. : ' content and satisfied.'

one is satisfied.¹ But the soul that attains not to such a measure of purity as is in conformity with its capacity² never attains true peace and satisfaction, since it has not attained to the possession of that detachment and emptiness in its faculties which is required for simple union.³

CHAPTER VI

*Wherein is described how it is the three theological virtues that perfect the three faculties of the soul, and how the said virtues produce emptiness and darkness within them.*⁴

1. Having now to endeavour to show how the three faculties of the soul—understanding, memory and will—are brought into this spiritual night, which is the means to Divine union, it is necessary first of all to explain in this chapter how the three theological virtues—faith, hope and charity—which have respect to the three faculties aforesaid as to their proper supernatural objects, and⁵ by means whereof the soul is united with God according to its faculties, produce the same emptiness and darkness, each one with regard to its faculty. Faith, in the understanding ; hope, in the memory ; and charity, in the will. And afterwards we shall go on to describe how the understanding is perfected in the darkness of faith ; and the memory in the emptiness of hope ; and likewise how the will must be buried in⁶ the withdrawal and detachment of the affection that the soul may journey to God. This done, it will be clearly seen how necessary it is for the soul, if it is to walk securely on this spiritual road, to travel through this dark night, leaning upon these three virtues, which empty it of all things and make it dark with respect to them. For, as we have said, the soul is not united with God in this life through understanding, nor through enjoyment, nor through the imagination, nor through any sense whatsoever ; but only through

¹ E.p. : 'equally satisfied, each one according to his preparation and the knowledge that he has of God.'

² E.p. : 'to such a measure of purity as seems to be demanded by the enlightenment and vocation [that have been granted it] from God.'

³ A, B : 'simple union with God.'

⁴ E.p. adds : 'To this purpose are quoted two passages, one from S. Luke and the other from Isaiah.'

⁵ E.p. omits : 'which have . . . objects, and'.

⁶ So Alc., B ['enterrar']. A, e.p. have ['entrar,' which changes the reading to] 'must enter into.'

Theological virtues perfect powers of soul in respect to supernatural objects: understanding then in respect to other objects in darkness in darkness of understanding.

faith, according to the understanding ; and through hope, according to the memory ; and through love, according to the will.¹

2. These three virtues, as we have said, all cause emptiness in the faculties : faith, in the understanding, causes an emptiness and darkness with respect to understanding ; hope, in the memory, causes emptiness of all possessions ; and charity causes emptiness in the will and detachment from all affection and from rejoicing in all that is not God. For we see that faith tells us what cannot be understood with the understanding.² Wherefore S. Paul spoke of it *ad Hebræos* after this manner : *Fides est sperandarum substantiarum, argumentum non apparentium.*³ This we interpret as meaning that faith is the substance of things hoped for ; and, although the understanding may be consenting thereto, firmly and certainly, they are not things that are revealed to the understanding ; for, if they were revealed to it, there would be no faith. So faith, although it brings certainty to the understanding, brings it not clearness, but obscurity.

3. Then, as to hope, there is no doubt but that it renders the memory empty and dark with respect both to things below and to things above. For hope has always to do with that which is not possessed ; for, if it were possessed, there would be no more hope. Wherefore S. Paul says *ad Romanos* : *Spes, quæ videtur, non est spes : nam quod videt quis, quid sperat ?*⁴ That is to say : Hope that is seen is not hope ; for what a man seeth—that is, what a man possesseth—how doth he hope for it ?⁵ This virtue, then, makes emptiness also, for it has to do with that which is not possessed and not with that which is possessed.

4. Similarly, charity causes emptiness in the will with respect to all things, since it obliges us to love God above them all ; which cannot be unless we withdraw our affection from them all in order to set it wholly upon God. Wherefore Christ⁶ says, through S. Luke : *Qui non renuntiat omnibus*

¹ E.p. : ' and through hope, which may be attributed to the memory (although it is in the will) with respect to the emptiness and forgetfulness of every other temporal and fleeting thing which it causes, the soul keeping itself entirely for the supreme good for which it hopes ; and through love, according to the will.'

² E.p. adds : ' according to its natural light and reason.'

³ Hebrews xi, 1.

⁴ Romans viii, 24.

⁵ A, B : ' for if a man possesseth what he seeth, how doth he hope for it ?'

⁶ A, B : ' Christ Our Lord,' as in several other places below.

are the means and preparation for the union of the soul with God.

7. In this method is found all security against the crafts of the devil and against the efficacy¹ of self-love and its ramifications, which is wont most subtly to deceive and hinder spiritual persons on their road, when they know not how to become detached and to govern themselves according to these three virtues ; and thus they are never able to reach the substance and purity of spiritual good, nor do they journey by so straight and short a road as they might.

8. And it must be noted that I am now speaking particularly to those who have begun to enter the state of contemplation, because as far as this concerns beginners it must be described somewhat more amply,² as we shall note in the second book, God willing, when we treat of the properties of these beginners.

CHAPTER VII

Wherein is described how strait is the way that leads to eternal³ life and how completely detached and disencumbered must be those that will walk in it. We begin to speak of the detachment of the understanding.

1. We have now to describe the detachment and purity of the three faculties of the soul and for this are necessary a far greater knowledge and spirituality than mine, in order to make clear to spiritual persons how strait is this road which, said Our Saviour, leads to life ; so that they may be persuaded hereof and not marvel at the emptiness and detachment to which, in this night, we have to abandon the faculties of the soul.

2. To this end must be carefully noted the words which Our Saviour used, in the seventh chapter of S. Matthew, concerning this road,⁴ as follows : *Quam angusta porta, et arcta via est, quæ ducit ad vitam, et pauci sunt, qui inveniunt eam.*⁵ This signifies : How strait is the gate and how narrow the

¹ E.p. reads 'craft' for 'efficacy.'

² So Alc. A, B end the chapter here. E.p. omits the reference to the 'second book' as being inexact, and adds simply : '[more amply] when we treat of the properties of these beginners.'

³ E.p. omits 'eternal.'

⁴ E.p. adds : 'which [words] we shall now apply to this dark night and lofty road of perfection.'

⁵ S. Matthew vii, 14.

way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it ! In this passage we must carefully note the emphasis and insistence which are contained in that word *Quam*. For it is as if He had said : In truth the way is very strait, more so than you think. And likewise it is to be noted that He says first that the gate is strait, to make it clear that, in order for the soul to enter this gate, which is Christ, and which comes at the beginning of the road, the will must first be straitened and detached in all things sensual and temporal, and God must be loved above them all ; which belongs to the night of sense, as we have said.

3. He next says that the road is narrow—that is to say, the road of perfection—in order to make it clear that, to travel upon the road of perfection, the soul has not only to enter by the strait gate,¹ emptying itself of things of sense, but that it has also to constrain² itself, freeing and disencumbering itself completely in that which pertains to the spirit. And thus we can apply what He says of the strait gate to the sensual part of man ; and what He says of the narrow road we can understand of the spiritual or the rational part ; and, when He says ‘ Few there be that find it,’ the reason of this must be noted, which is that there are few who can enter, and desire to enter, into this complete detachment and emptiness of spirit. For this path ascending the high mountain of perfection leads upward, and is narrow, and therefore requires such travellers as have no burden weighing upon them with respect to lower things, neither aught that embarrasses them with respect to higher things : and as this is a matter wherein we must seek after and attain to God alone, God alone must be the object of our search and attainment.

4. Hence it is clearly seen that the soul must not only be disencumbered from that which belongs to the creatures, but likewise, as it travels, must be annihilated and detached from all that belongs to its spirit. Wherefore Our Lord, instructing us and leading us into this road, gave, in the eighth chapter of S. Mark, that wonderful teaching of which I think it may almost be said that, the more necessary it is for spiritual persons, the less it is practised by them.³ As this teaching is so important and so much to our purpose, I

¹ A alone reads : ‘ by the road of perfection, that is, by the strait gate.’

² [*Lit.*, ‘ to straiten ’ : the Spanish verb is derived from the adjective.]

³ From this point to the Latin text is omitted by A and B.

shall reproduce it here in full, and expound it according to its real and spiritual sense. He says, then, thus : *Si quis vult me sequi, deneget semetipsum : et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me. Qui enim voluerit animam suam salvam facere, perdet eam : qui autem perdidit animam suam propter me . . . salvam faciet eam.*¹ This signifies : If any man will follow My road, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For he that will save his soul shall lose it ; but he that loses it for My sake, shall gain it.

5. Oh, that one might show us how to understand, practise and experience what this counsel is which² our Saviour here gives us concerning the denial of ourselves, so that spiritual persons might see in how different a way they should³ conduct themselves upon this road from that which many of them think proper ! For they believe that any kind of retirement and reformation of life suffices ; and others are content with practising the virtues and continuing in prayer and pursuing mortification ; but they attain not to detachment and poverty or denial or spiritual purity (which are all one), which the Lord here commends to us ; for they prefer feeding and clothing their natural selves with spiritual feelings and consolations,⁴ to stripping themselves of all things, and denying themselves all things, for God's sake. For they think that it suffices to deny themselves worldly things without annihilating and purifying themselves of spiritual attachment. Wherefore it comes to pass that, when there presents itself to them any of this solid and perfect⁵ spirituality, consisting in the annihilation of all sweetness in God, in aridity, distaste and trial, which is the true spiritual cross, and the detachment of the spiritual poverty of Christ, they flee from it as from death, and seek only sweetness and delectable communion with God. This is not self-denial and detachment of spirit, but spiritual gluttony. Herein they become spiritually enemies of the cross of Christ ; for true spirituality seeks for God's sake that which is distasteful rather than that which is delectable ; and inclines itself rather to suffering than to consolation ; and desires to go without all blessings for God's sake rather than to possess them ; and to endure aridities and afflictions rather than to enjoy sweet communications, knowing tha

¹ S. Mark viii, 34-5.

² E.p. : ' what is contained in this so lofty instruction which . . . '

³ A, B, e.p. have ' it behoves them to ' for ' they should.'

⁴ E.p. : ' with consolations.'

⁵ E.p. omits : ' and perfect.'

this is to follow Christ and to deny oneself, and that the other is perchance to seek oneself in God, which is clean contrary to love.¹ For to seek oneself in God is to seek the favours and refreshments of God ; but to seek God in oneself is not only to desire to be without both of these for God's sake, but to incline oneself to choose, for Christ's sake, all that is most distasteful, whether as to God or as to the world ; and this is love of God.

6. Oh that someone could tell us how far Our Lord desires this self-denial to be carried ! It must certainly be like to death and annihilation, temporal, natural and spiritual, in all things that the will esteems, wherein consists all self-denial.² And it is this that Our Lord meant when He said : He that will save his life, the same shall lose it. That is to say : He that will possess anything or seek anything for himself, the same shall lose it ; and he that loses his soul for My sake, the same shall gain it. That is to say : He that for Christ's sake renounces all that his will can desire and enjoy, and chooses that which is most like to the Cross (which the Lord Himself, through S. John, describes as hating his soul),³ the same shall gain it. And this His Majesty taught to those two disciples who went and begged Him for a place on His right hand and on His left ; when, giving them no reply to their request for such glory, He offered them the cup which He had to drink, as a thing more precious and more secure upon this earth than is fruition.⁴

7. This cup is the death of the natural self, which is attained through the soul's detachment and annihilation, in order that the soul may travel by this narrow path, with respect to all that can belong to it according to sense, as we have said ; and according to the spirit,⁵ as we shall now say ; that is, in its understanding and in its enjoyment and in its feeling. And, as a result, not only is the soul detached as to all this, but, having this spiritual help, it is not hindered upon the narrow road, since there remains to it naught else than self-denial (as the Saviour explains), and the Cross, which is the staff whereby one may reach Him,⁶ and whereby

¹ A, B omit this last clause.

² So Alc., A, B, C, D. E.p. has : ' all gain.' The gain, however [says P. Silverio], is rather a result of the complete self-denial of which the Saint is here speaking.

³ S. John xii, 25.

⁴ S. Matthew xx, 22.

⁵ Thus e.p. Alc., A, B [and P. Silverio] read ' soul ' for ' spirit,'

⁶ E.p. : ' the staff whereon to lean,'

the road is greatly lightened and made easy. Wherefore Our Lord said through S. Matthew : My yoke is easy and My burden is light ;¹ which burden is the cross. For if a man resolve to submit himself to carrying this cross—that is to say, if he

them in a great relief upon this road, Yet, if he from God or from each-ment, he in all things ; a narrow pa this

8. I would that this relations no although t beginners needful, w to that wh oneself up hilation. this suffer likewise fi And if a s sum and much war although lofty as th through th and the Li



El. Houvet

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Rep. Int.

CATHEDRALE DE CHARTRES

Portail nord (xiii^e siècle)

Dieu, créant les oiseaux, voit Adam dans sa pensée

even as He Himself says through S. John.⁴ And elsewhere He says : I am the door ; by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved.⁵ Wherefore, as it seems to me, any spirituality that would fain walk in sweetness and with ease, and flees from the imitation of Christ, is worthless.

9. And, as I have said that Christ is the Way, and that this Way is death to our natural selves, in things both of sense and of spirit, I will now explain how we are to die, following the example of Christ, for He is our example and light.

¹ S. Matthew xi, 30.² E.p. omits 'upward.'³ E.p. has 'very lofty' and omits 'as those of the angels,' which is found, however, in all the codices.⁴ S. John xiv, 6.⁵ S. John x, 9.

the road is greatly lightened and made easy. Wherefore Our Lord said through S. Matthew : My yoke is easy and My burden is light ;¹ which burden is the cross. For if a man resolve to submit himself to carrying this cross—that is to say, if he resolve to desire in truth to meet trials and to bear them in all things for God's sake, he will find in them all great relief and sweetness wherewith he may travel upon this road, detached from all things and desiring nothing. Yet, if he desire to possess anything—whether it come from God or from any other source,—with any feeling of attachment, he is not detached and has not denied himself in all things ; and thus he will be unable to walk along this narrow path or to climb upward by it.²

8. I would, then, that I could convince spiritual persons that this road to God consists not in a multiplicity of meditations nor in ways or methods of such, nor in consolations, although these things may in their own way be necessary to beginners ; but that it consists only in the one thing that is needful, which is the ability to deny oneself truly, according to that which is without and to that which is within, giving oneself up to suffering for Christ's sake, and to total annihilation. For the soul that thus denies itself will achieve this suffering and annihilation, and more also, and will likewise find more than suffering and annihilation therein. And if a soul be found wanting in this exercise, which is the sum and root of the virtues, all its other methods are so much wandering about in a maze, and profiting not at all, although its meditations and communications may be as lofty as those of the angels.³ For progress comes not save through the imitation of Christ, Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and no man comes to the Father but by Him, even as He Himself says through S. John.⁴ And elsewhere He says : I am the door ; by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved.⁵ Wherefore, as it seems to me, any spirituality that would fain walk in sweetness and with ease, and flees from the imitation of Christ, is worthless.

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³ E.p. has 'very lofty' and omits 'as those of the angels,' which is found, however, in all the codices.

⁴ S. John xiv, 6.

⁵ S. John x, 9.

10. In the first place, it is certain that He died as to sense, spiritually, in His life ; and also, naturally, at His death. For, as He said, He had not in His life where to lay His head, and, in His death, this was even truer.

11. In the second place, it is certain that, at the moment of His death, He was likewise annihilated¹ in His soul, and was deprived of any relief and consolation, since His Father left Him in² the most intense aridity, according to the lower part of His nature.³ Wherefore He had perforce to cry out, saying : My God ! My God ! Why hast Thou forsaken Me ?⁴ This was the greatest desolation, with respect to sense, that He had suffered in His life.⁵ And thus He wrought herein⁶ the greatest work that He had ever wrought, whether in miracles or in mighty works, during the whole of His life, either upon earth or in Heaven,⁷ which was the reconciliation and union of mankind, through grace, with God. And this was, as I say, at the moment and the time when this Lord was most completely annihilated in everything. That is to say, with respect to human reputation ; since, when they saw Him die,⁸ they mocked Him rather than esteemed Him ; and also with respect to nature, since His nature was annihilated when He died ; and with respect to the spiritual⁹ consolation and protection of the Father, since at that time He forsook Him, that He might pay the whole of man's debt and unite him with God, being thus annihilated and reduced as it were¹⁰ to nothing. Wherefore David says concerning Him : *Ad nihilum redactus sum, et nescivi*.¹¹ This he said that the truly spiritual man may understand the mystery of the gate and of the way of Christ, in order to be united with God, and may know that, the more completely he is annihilated for God's sake, according to these two parts, the sensual and the spiritual, the more completely is he united to God and the greater is the work which he accomplishes. And when he comes to be reduced to nothing, which will be the greatest extreme of humility, spiritual¹² union will be wrought between the soul and God,

¹ E.p. : ' He was likewise forsaken and, as it were, annihilated.'

² E.p. : ' left Him without consolation and in.'

³ E.p. omits : ' according to . . . His nature.'

⁴ S. Matthew xxvii, 46.

⁵ E.p. omits this sentence.

⁶ E.p. has ' then ' for ' herein.'

⁷ E.p. omits : ' either upon earth or in Heaven.'

⁸ E.p. adds : ' on a tree.'

⁹ E.p. omits ' spiritual.'

¹⁰ E.p. : ' and as though reduced, as it were.'

¹¹ Psalm lxxii, 22 [A.V., lxxiii, 22].

¹² E.p. omits ' spiritual.'

which in this life is the greatest and the highest state attainable. This consists not, then, in refreshment and in consolations and spiritual feelings, but in a living death of the Cross, both as to sense and as to spirit—that is, both inwardly and outwardly.

12. I will not pursue this subject farther, although I have no desire to finish speaking of it, for I see that Christ¹ is known very little by those who consider themselves His friends : we see them seeking their own pleasures and consolations in Him because of their great love for themselves, but not loving His bitter trials and His death because of their great love for Him. I am speaking now of those who consider themselves His friends ; for such as live far away, withdrawn from Him, great men of letters and of influence, and all others who live yonder, with the world, and are eager about their ambitions and their prelacies, may be said not to know Christ ; and their end, however good, will be very bitter. Of such I make no mention in these lines ; but mention will be made of them on the day of judgement, for to them it was necessary to speak first this word of God,² as to those whom God set up as guides, by reason of their learning and their high position.

13. But let us now address the understanding of the spiritual man, and particularly that of the man whom God has granted the favour of leading him into the state of contemplation (for, as I have said, I am now speaking to these in particular),³ and let us say how such a man must direct himself toward God in faith, and purify himself from contrary things, constraining himself⁴ that he may enter upon this narrow path of obscure contemplation.

CHAPTER VIII

Which describes in a general way how no creature and no knowledge that can be comprehended by the understanding can serve as a proximate means of Divine union with God.

1. Before we treat of the proper and fitting means of union with God, which is faith, it behoves us to prove how

¹ E.p. : ' that Jesus Christ.'

² [The reference seems to be to Acts xiii, 46.]

³ A, B omit the parenthesis.

⁴ E.p. has ' girding ' for ' constraining.'

no thing, created or imagined, can serve the understanding as a proper means of union with God ; and how all that the understanding can attain serves it rather as an impediment than as such a means, if it should desire to cling to it. And now, in this chapter, we shall prove this in a general way, and afterwards we shall begin to speak in detail, treating in turn of all kinds of knowledge that the understanding may receive from any sense, whether inward or outward, and of the inconveniences and evils that may result from all these kinds of inward and outward knowledge,¹ so that it progresses not in dependence upon the proper means, which is faith.

2. It must be understood, then, that, according to a rule of philosophy, all means must be proportioned to the end ; that is to say that they must have some connection and resemblance with the end, such as is enough and sufficient that the desired end may be attained through them. I take an example. A man desires to reach a city ; he has of necessity to travel by the road, which is the means that brings him to the same city and connects² him with it. Another example.³ Fire is to be combined and united with wood ; it is necessary that heat, which is the means, shall first prepare the wood, by conveying to it so many degrees of warmth that it will have great resemblance and proportion to fire. Now if one would prepare the wood by any other than the proper means—namely, with heat—as for example, with air or water or earth, it would be impossible for the wood to be united with the fire, just as it would be equally so to reach the city without going by the road that leads to it.⁴ Wherefore, in order that the understanding may be united with God in this life, so far as is possible,⁵ it must of necessity employ that means that unites it with Him and that bears the greatest resemblance to Him.

3. Here it must be pointed out that, among all the creatures, the highest or the lowest, there is none that comes near to God or bears any resemblance to His Being. For, although it is true that all creatures have, as theologians say, a certain relation to God, and bear a Divine impress (some more and others less, according to what is more or less dominant in their nature), yet there is no essential resemblance or

¹ E.p. : 'kinds of knowledge.'

² [*Lit.*, 'unites.']

³ E.p. adds 'likewise.'

⁴ E.p. omits : 'just as . . . leads to it.'

⁵ E.p. adds : 'in it' [i.e., in this life].

connection between them and God,—on the contrary, the distance between their being and His Divine Being is infinite. Wherefore it is impossible for the understanding to attain to God¹ by means of the creatures, whether these be celestial or earthly ; inasmuch as there is no proportion of resemblance between them. Wherefore, when David speaks of the heavenly creatures, he says : There is none among the gods like unto Thee, O Lord ;² meaning by the gods the angels³ and holy souls. And elsewhere : O God, Thy way is in the sanctuary. What God is there so great as our God ?⁴ As though he were to say : The way of approach to Thee, O God, is a holy way—that is, the purity of faith. For what God can there be so great ? That is to say : What angel will there be so exalted in his being, and what saint so exalted in glory as to be a proportionate and sufficient road by which a man may come to Thee ? And the same David, speaking likewise of earthly and heavenly things both together, says : The Lord is high and looketh on lowly things, and the high things He knoweth afar off.⁵ As though he had said : Lofty in His own Being, He sees that the being of the things here below⁶ is very low in comparison with His lofty Being ;⁷ and the lofty things, which are the celestial creatures, He sees and knows to be very far from His Being. All the creatures, then, cannot serve as a proportionate means to the understanding whereby it may reach God.⁸

4. Just so all that the imagination can imagine and the understanding can receive and understand in this life is not, nor can it be, a proximate means of union with God. For if we speak of natural things, since understanding can understand naught save that which is contained within, and comes under the category of, forms and imaginings of things that are received through the bodily senses, the which things, we have said, cannot serve as means, it can make no use of natural intelligence. And if we speak of the supernatural (in so far as is possible in this life of our ordinary faculties⁹), the understanding in its bodily prison has no preparation or capacity for receiving the clear knowledge of God ; for

¹ E.p. adds ' perfectly.'

² Psalm lxxxv, 8 [A.V., lxxxvi, 8].

³ E.p. : ' the holy angels.'

⁴ Psalm lxxvi, 14 [A.V., lxxvii, 13] [*lit.*, ' in the holy '].

⁵ Psalm cxxxvii, 6 [A.V., cxxxviii, 6].

⁶ E.p. : ' of the things of the earth.'

⁷ B omits this sentence.

⁸ E.p. : ' . . . means for perfectly reaching God.'

⁹ These last four words are found only in Alc.

such knowledge belongs not to this state, and we must either die or remain without receiving it. Wherefore Moses, when he entreated God for this clear knowledge, was told that he could not see Him, in these words¹ : No man shall see Me and remain alive.² Wherefore S. John says : No man hath seen God at any time,³ neither aught that is like to Him. And S. Paul says, with Isaiah : Eye hath not seen Him, nor hath ear heard Him, neither hath it entered into the heart of man.⁴ And it is for this reason that Moses, in the bush, as is said in the Acts of the Apostles,⁵ ventured not to consider while God was present ; for he knew that his understanding could make no such consideration as was fitting concerning God, corresponding to the sense which he had of God's presence.⁶ And of Elijah, our father,⁷ it is said that he covered his face in the Mount in the presence of God,⁸ which signifies the blinding of his understanding, which he wrought there, daring not to lay so base a hand upon that which was so high ; seeing clearly that whatsoever he might consider, or understand with any precision, would be very far from God and most unlike Him.

5. Wherefore no supernatural apprehension or knowledge in this mortal life can serve as a proximate means to the high union of love with God. For all that can be understood by the understanding, that can please the will, and that can be invented by the imagination is most unlike to God and bears no proportion to Him, as we have said. All this Isaiah admirably explained in that most noteworthy passage,⁹ where he says : To what thing have ye been able to liken God ? Or what image will ye make that is like to Him ? Will the workman in iron perchance be able to make a graven image ? Or will he that works gold be able to imitate Him¹⁰ with gold, or the silversmith with plates of silver ?¹¹ By the workman in iron is signified the understanding, the office of which is to form intelligences and strip

¹ E.p. abbreviates : ' . . . receiving it. Wherefore God said to Moses : No man . . . '

² Exodus xxxiii, 20.

³ S. John i, 18. E.p. omits ' neither . . . Him,' which is found in all the codices.

⁴ 1 Corinthians ii, 9 ; Isaiah lxiv, 4.

⁵ Acts vii, 32.

⁶ E.p. : ' . . . concerning God, though this sprang from the profound sense which he had of God's presence.'

⁷ Only Alc., C read : ' our father.'

⁸ 3 Kings [A.V., 1 Kings] xix, 13.

⁹ Alc. alone has : ' in that most noteworthy passage.'

¹⁰ E.p. : ' to figure Him ' [or ' to form Him ']. A, B : ' to make Him.'

¹¹ Isaiah xl, 18-19.

them of the iron of species and images. By the workman in gold is understood the will, which is able to receive the figure and the form of pleasure, caused by the gold of love.¹ By the silversmith, who is spoken of as being unable to form² Him with plates of silver, is understood the memory, with the imagination, whereof it may be said with great propriety that its knowledge and the imaginings that it can invent³ and make are like plates of silver. And thus it is as though he had said : Neither the understanding with its intelligence will be able to understand aught that is like Him, nor can the will taste pleasure and sweetness that bears any resemblance to that which is God, neither can the memory set in the imagination ideas and images that represent Him. It is clear, then, that none of these kinds of knowledge can lead the understanding direct to God ; and that, in order to reach Him, a soul must rather proceed by not understanding than by desiring to understand ; and by blinding itself and setting itself in darkness rather than by opening its eyes in order the more nearly to approach the ray Divine.

6. And thus it is that contemplation, whereby the understanding has the loftiest knowledge of God,⁴ is called mystical theology, which signifies secret wisdom of God ; for it is secret to the very understanding that receives it. For this reason S. Dionysius calls it a ray of darkness. Of this the prophet Baruch says : There is none that knoweth its way, nor any that can think of its paths.⁵ It is clear, then, that the understanding must be blind to all the paths to which it may attain, in order to be united with God. Aristotle says that, even as are the eyes of the bat with regard to the sun, which is total darkness to it, even so is our understanding to that which is greater light in God, which is total darkness to us. And he says further that, the more profound and clear are the things of God in themselves, the more completely unknown and obscure are they to us. This likewise the Apostle affirms, saying : The deepest things of God are the least known unto men.

7. But we should never end if we continued at this rate to quote authorities and arguments to prove and make clear

¹ A, B, e. p. : ' . . . gold of the love wherewith it loves.'

² [All authorities read 'form' (or 'figure') here. Cf. p. 96, n. 10, above.]

³ [This is the word (*fingir*, 'feign'), translated above as 'imitate.' Cf. p. 96, n. 10.]

⁴ So Alc. All other authorities read : ' . . . the understanding is enlightened by God.'

⁵ Baruch iii, 23.

that among all created things, and things that belong to the understanding, there is no ladder whereby the understanding can attain to this high Lord. Rather it is necessary to know that, if the understanding should seek to profit by all of these things, or by any of them, as a proximate means to such union, they would be not only a hindrance, but even an occasion of numerous errors and delusions in the ascent of this mount.

CHAPTER IX

*How faith is the proximate and proportionate means to the understanding whereby the soul may attain to the Divine union of love. This is proved by passages and figures from Divine Scripture.*¹

1. From what has been said it is to be inferred that, in order for the understanding to be prepared for this Divine union, it must be pure and void of all that pertains to sense, and detached² and freed from all that can clearly be perceived by the understanding, profoundly hushed and put to silence, and leaning upon faith, which alone is the proximate and proportionate means whereby the soul is united with God ; for such is the likeness between itself and God that³ there is no other difference, save that which exists between seeing God and believing in Him. For, as God is infinite, so faith sets Him before us as infinite ; and as He is Three and One, it sets Him before us as Three and One ; and as God is darkness to our understanding, even so does faith likewise blind and dazzle our understanding.⁴ And thus, by this means alone, God manifests Himself to the soul in Divine light, which passes all understanding. And therefore, the greater is the faith of the soul, the more completely is it united with God. It is this that S. Paul meant in the passage which we quoted above, where he says : He that will be united with God must believe.⁵ That is, he must walk by faith in his journey to Him, the understanding being blind and in darkness, walking in faith alone ;⁶

¹ This last sentence is found only in Alc. and in e.p.

² E.p. omits : ' and detached.'

³ E.p. omits : ' such is . . . God that,' which is found in all the Codices.

⁴ This clause (' and as God . . . our understanding ') is omitted from e.p.

⁵ Hebrews xi, 6.

⁶ E.p. omits : ' It is this that S. Paul . . . in faith alone.'

for beneath this darkness the understanding is united with God, and beneath it God is hidden, even as David said in these words : Darkness was under His feet. And He rose upon the cherubim, and flew upon the wings of the wind. And He made darkness His hiding-place and the water dark.¹

2. By his saying that He set darkness beneath His feet, and that He took the darkness for a hiding-place, and that His tabernacle round about Him was in the dark water, is denoted the obscurity of the faith wherein He is concealed. And by his saying that He rose upon the cherubim and flew upon the wings of the winds, is understood His soaring above all understanding. For the cherubim denote those who understand or contemplate. And the wings of the winds signify the subtle and lofty ideas and conceptions of the spirits, above all of which is His Being, and to which none can attain by his own power.

3. This we learn from an illustration in the Scriptures. When Solomon had completed the building of the Temple, God came down in darkness and filled the Temple so that the children of Israel could not see ; whereupon Solomon spoke and said : The Lord hath promised that He will dwell in the thick darkness.² Likewise He appeared in darkness to Moses in the Mount, wherein God was concealed. And whensoever God communicated Himself intimately, He appeared in darkness, as may be seen in Job, where the Scripture says that God spoke with him from the air in darkness.³ All these mentions of darkness signify the obscurity of the faith wherein the Divinity is concealed, when It communicates Itself to the soul ; which will be ended when, as S. Paul says, that which is in part shall be ended,⁴ which is this darkness of faith, and that which is perfect shall come, which is the Divine light. Of this we have a good illustration in the army of Gideon, whereof it is said that all the soldiers had lamps in their hands, which they saw not, because they had them concealed in the dark pitchers ; and, when these pitchers were broken, the light was seen.⁵ Just so does faith, which is foreshadowed by

¹ Psalm xvii, 10 [A.V., xviii, 9-11]. E.p. modifies thus : ' And He made darkness His hiding-place ; round about Him He set His tabernacle, which is dark water, among the clouds of the air.'

² 3 Kings [A.V., 1 Kings] viii, 12.

³ Job xxxviii, 1 ; xl, 1.

⁴ 1 Corinthians xiii, 10.

⁵ Judges vii, 16.

these pitchers, contain within itself Divine light ;¹ which, when it is ended and broken, at the ending and breaking of this mortal life, will allow the glory and light of the Divinity, which was contained in it,² to appear.

4. It is clear, then, that, if the soul in this life is to attain to union with God, and commune directly with Him, it must unite itself with the darkness whereof Solomon spake, wherein God had promised to dwell, and must draw near to the darkness of the air wherein God was pleased to reveal His secrets to Job, and must take in its hands, in darkness, the jars of Gideon, that it may have in its hands (that is, in the works of its will) the light, which is the union of love, though it be in the darkness of faith, so that, when the pitchers of this life are broken, which alone have kept from it the light of faith, it may see God³ face to face in glory.

5. It now remains to describe in detail all the types of knowledge and the apprehensions which the understanding can receive ; the hindrance and the harm which it can receive upon this road of faith ; and the way wherein the soul must conduct itself so that, whether they proceed from the senses or from the spirit, they may cause it, not harm, but profit.

CHAPTER X

Wherein distinction is made between all apprehensions and types of knowledge which can be comprehended by the understanding.

1. In order to treat in detail of the profit and the harm which may come to the soul, with respect to this means to Divine union which we have described—namely, faith—through the notions and apprehensions of the understanding, it is necessary here to make a distinction between all the apprehensions, whether natural or supernatural, that the soul may receive, so that then, with regard to each of them in order, we may direct the understanding with greater clearness into the night and obscurity of faith. This will be done with all possible brevity.

2. It must be known, then, that the understanding can receive knowledge and intelligence by two channels : the

¹ A, e.p. add : ' that is, the truth of that which God is in Himself.'

² E.p. omits : ' which was contained in it.'

³ E.p. omits ' which . . . of faith ' and inserts ' God,' which word is not found in the Codices.

one natural and the other supernatural. By the natural channel is meant all that the understanding can understand, whether by means of the bodily senses or by its own power.¹ The supernatural channel is all that is given to the understanding over and above its natural ability and capacity.

3. Of these kinds of supernatural knowledge, some are corporeal and some are spiritual. The corporeal are two in number : some are received by means of the outward bodily senses ; others, by means of the inward bodily senses, wherein is comprehended all that the imagination can comprehend,² form and conceive.

4. The spiritual supernatural knowledge is likewise of two kinds : that which is distinct and special in its nature, and that which is confused, general and dark. Of the distinct and special kind there are four manners of apprehension which are communicated to the spirit without the aid of any bodily sense : these are visions, revelations, locutions and spiritual feelings. The obscure and general type of knowledge is of one kind alone, which is contemplation that is given in faith. To this we have to lead the soul by bringing it thereto³ through all these other means, beginning with the first and detaching it from them.

CHAPTER XI

Of the hindrance and harm that may be caused by apprehensions of the understanding which proceed from what is supernaturally represented to the outward bodily senses ; and how the soul is to conduct itself therein.

1. The first kinds of knowledge whereof we have spoken in the preceding chapter are those that belong to the understanding and come through natural channels. Of these, since we have treated them already in the first book, where we led the soul into the light of sense, we shall here say not a word, for in that place we gave suitable instruction to the soul concerning them. What we have to treat, therefore, in the present chapter, will be solely those kinds of knowledge

¹ [Lit., 'by itself.'] E.p. adds : 'after these [senses].' A, B read : 'or by the channel of itself.'

² E.p. : 'can apprehend,' which no doubt more exactly expresses the Saint's meaning.

³ Alc. breaks off the chapter here.

and those apprehensions which belong to the understanding and come supernaturally, by way of the outward bodily senses—namely, by seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. With respect to all these there may come, and there are wont to come,¹ to spiritual persons representations and objects of a supernatural kind.² With respect to sight, they are apt to picture figures and forms of persons belonging to the life to come—the forms of certain saints, and representations of angels, good and evil, and certain lights and brightnesses of an extraordinary kind. And with the ears they hear certain extraordinary words, sometimes spoken by these figures³ that they see, sometimes without seeing the person who speaks them. As to the sense of smell, they sometimes perceive the sweetest perfumes with the senses, without knowing whence they proceed. Likewise, as to taste, it comes to pass that they are conscious of the sweetest savours, and, as to touch, they experience great delight⁴—sometimes to such a degree that it is as though all the bones and the marrow rejoice and sing⁵ and are bathed in delight;⁶ this is like that which we call spiritual unction, which in pure souls⁷ proceeds from the spirit and flows into the very members. And this sensible sweetness is quite an ordinary thing with⁸ spiritual persons, for it comes to them from their sensible affection and devotion,⁹ to a greater or a lesser degree, to each one after his own manner.

2. And it must be known that, although all these things may happen to the bodily senses in the way of God, we must never rely upon them or admit them, but we must always fly from them, without trying to ascertain whether they be good or evil; for, the more completely exterior and corporeal they are, the less certainly are they of God.¹⁰ For it is more proper and habitual¹¹ to God to communicate Himself to the spirit, wherein there is more security and profit for the soul, than to sense, wherein there is ordinarily much danger and deception; for bodily sense judges and makes

¹ A, B, e.p. have 'happen' for 'come' both here and in the preceding clause.

² E.p.: 'and objects represented and set before them in a supernatural way.'

³ E.p.: 'these persons.'

⁴ E.p.: 'and, as to touch, of its own kind of enjoyment and sweetness.'

⁵ [Lit., 'and blossom.']

⁶ E.p.: 'are bathed therein.'

⁷ E.p.: 'in simple souls.'

⁸ E.p.: 'is wont to happen to.'

⁹ [Lit., 'from the affection and devotion of the sensible spirit.']

¹⁰ E.p.: 'the less certainty is there of their being of God.'

¹¹ E.p. omits: 'and habitual.'

its estimate of spiritual things by thinking that they are as it feels them to be, whereas they are as different as is the body from the soul and sensuality¹ from reason. For the bodily sense is as ignorant of spiritual things as is a beast of rational things, and even more so.

3. So he that esteems such things errs greatly and places himself in great peril of deception ; and at best will have in himself a complete² impediment to the attainment of spirituality. For, as we have said, between spiritual things and all these bodily things there exists no kind of proportion whatever. And thus it may always be supposed that such things as these are more likely to be of the devil than of God ; for the devil has more influence in that which is exterior and corporeal, and can deceive a soul more easily thereby than by that which is more interior and spiritual.

4. And the more exterior are these corporeal forms and objects in themselves, the less do they profit the interior and spiritual nature, because of the great distance and the little proportion existing between the corporeal and the spiritual. For, although they communicate a certain degree of spirituality, as is always the case with things that come from God, there is much less than there would be if the same things were more interior and spiritual. And thus they very easily become the means whereby error and presumption and vanity grow in the soul ; since, as they are so palpable and material, they stir the senses greatly, and it appears to the judgement of the soul that they are of greater importance because they are more readily felt. Thus the soul goes after them, abandoning faith and³ thinking that the light which it receives from them is the guide and means to its desired goal, which is union with God. But the more attention it pays to such things, the farther it strays from the true way and means, which are faith.

5. And, besides all this, when the soul sees that such extraordinary things happen to it, it is often visited, insidiously and secretly, by a certain complacent idea—namely, that it is of some importance in the eyes of God ; which is contrary to humility. The devil, too, knows how to insinuate into the soul a secret satisfaction with itself, which at times becomes very manifest ; wherefore he frequently represents

¹ [P. Silverio remarks here that] we must understand [as frequently elsewhere] 'sensibility' and not sensuality in the grosser sense.

² E.p. : 'a great.'

³ E.p. omits : 'abandoning faith and.'

these objects to the senses, setting before the eyes the figures of saints and most beauteous lights; and before the ears words well dissembled; and representing also sweetest perfumes, delicious tastes¹ and things delectable to the touch; to the end that, by producing desires for such things, he may lead the soul into much evil. These representations and feelings, therefore, must always be rejected; for, even though some of them be of God, He is not offended by their rejection, nor is the effect and fruit which He desires to produce in the soul by means of them any the less surely received because the soul rejects them and desires them not.

6. The reason for this is that corporeal vision, or feeling in respect to any of the other senses, or any other communication of the most interior kind, if it be of God, produces its effect² upon the spirit at the very moment when it appears or is felt, without giving the soul time or opportunity to deliberate whether it will accept or reject it. For, even as God gives these things supernaturally, without effort³ on the part of the soul, and independently of its capacity, even so likewise, without respect to its effort or capacity, God produces in it the effect that He desires by means of such things; for this is a thing that is wrought and brought to pass in the spirit passively;⁴ and thus its acceptance or non-acceptance consists not in the acceptance or the rejection of it by the will. It is as though fire were applied to a person's naked body: it would matter little whether or no he wished to be burned; the fire would of necessity accomplish its work. Just so is it with visions and representations that are good: even though the soul desire it not,⁵ they work their effect upon it, and in the soul chiefly and especially, rather than in the body. And likewise those that come from the devil (without the consent of the soul) cause it trouble or aridity or vanity or presumption in the spirit. Yet these are not so effective to work evil as are those of God to work good; for those of the devil can only set in action the first movements of the will,⁶ and move it no

¹ [Lit., 'and sweetnesses in the mouth.']

² E.p.: 'its first effect.'

³ E.p.: 'For, even as God begins these things supernaturally, without active effort . . .'

⁴ The 1630 edition adds: 'without its free consent.'

⁵ E.p. omits: 'even . . . not.'

⁶ E.p.: 'for those of the devil stop at the first movements and cannot move the will.' This, no doubt, was the Saint's meaning, for the Church teaches that the devil cannot influence the will directly, though indirectly (principally through the senses and the imagination) he may do so.

farther, unless the soul be consenting thereto ; and such trouble continues not long unless the soul's lack of courage and prudence be the occasion of its continuance. But the visions that are of God penetrate the soul and move the will to love, and produce their effect,¹ which the soul cannot resist even though it would, any more than the window can resist the sun's rays when they strike it.

7. The soul, then, must never presume to desire to receive them, even though, as I say, they be of God ; for if it desire to receive them, there follow six inconveniences.

The first is that faith² grows gradually less ; for things that are experienced by the senses derogate from faith ; since faith, as we have said, transcends every sense. And thus the soul withdraws itself from the means of union with God when it closes not its eyes to all these things of sense.

Secondly, they are a hindrance to the spirit, if they be not denied, for the soul rests in them and its spirit soars not to the invisible. This was one of the reasons why the Lord said to His disciples that it was needful for Him to go away that the Holy Spirit might come ; so, too, He forbade Mary Magdalene to touch His feet, after His resurrection, that she might be grounded in faith.

Thirdly, the soul becomes attached to these things and advances not to true resignation and detachment of spirit.

Fourthly, it begins to lose the effect of them and the inward spirituality which they cause it, because it sets its eyes upon their sensual aspect, which is the least important. And thus it receives not so fully the spirituality which they cause,³ which is impressed and preserved more securely when all things of sense are rejected, since these are very different from pure spirit.

Fifthly, the soul begins to lose the favours of God, because it accepts them as though they belonged to it and profits not by them as it should. And to accept them in this way and not to profit by them is to seek after them ; but God gives

¹ E.p. : ' . . . effect of excitement and overpowering delight, which makes ready and prepares [the soul] to give its free and loving consent to good.' It omits the rest of the paragraph as in the text and continues : ' But although these outward visions and feelings be of God, if the soul make much account of them and endeavour to desire to accept them, there follow six inconveniences. The first . . . '

² E.p. : ' that the perfection of guidance through faith.'

³ A here repeats the phrase above : ' because it sets . . . least important.'

them not that the soul may seek after them ;¹ nor should the soul take upon itself to believe that they are of God.²

Sixthly, a readiness to accept them opens the door to the devil that he may deceive the soul by other things like to them, which he very well knows how to dissimulate and disguise, so that they may appear to be good ; for, as the Apostle says, he can transform himself into an angel of light.³ Of this we shall treat hereafter, by the Divine favour, in our third book, in the chapter upon spiritual gluttony.⁴

8. It is always⁵ well, then, that the soul should reject these things with closed eyes whencesoever they come. For, unless it does so, it will prepare the way for those things that come from the devil, and will give him such influence that, not only will his visions come in place of God's, but his visions will begin to increase, and those of God to cease, in such manner that the devil will have all the power and God will have none. So it has happened⁶ to many uncautious and ignorant souls, who rely on these things to such an extent that many of them have found it hard to return to God in purity of faith ; and many have been unable to return,⁷ so securely has the devil rooted himself in them ; for which reason it is well to reject and deny them all.⁸ For, by the rejection of evil visions, the errors of the devil are avoided, and by the rejection of good visions no hindrance is offered to faith and the spirit receives the fruit of them. And just as, when the soul allows them entrance, God begins to withhold them because the soul is becoming attached to them and is not profiting by them as it should, while the devil insinuates and increases his own visions, where he finds occasion and cause for them ;⁹ just so, when the soul is resigned, or even opposed,¹⁰

¹ E.p. endeavours to bring out the sense more clearly here : 'is to seek after them and to rest in them, and God gives them not for this.'

² S. John of the Cross means that the soul should not rely upon its own judgement in such matters but upon some discreet and learned director.

³ 2 Corinthians xi, 14.

⁴ Only Alc. and e.p. have this sentence. The 'third book' must be the *Dark Night* (I, vi).

⁵ Alc. alone has 'always.'

⁶ E.p. abbreviates : 'that his visions will come in place of the others, as has happened . . .'

⁷ E.p. : 'have not returned.' This is more exact, since the backslider has always the *power* to return, if he so wills.

⁸ E.p. : 'and fear them all.'

⁹ A, B, e.p. : 'because the soul gives occasion for them and makes room for them.'

¹⁰ E.p. : 'resigned, and has no attachment.'

to them, the devil begins to desist, since he sees that he is working it no harm ; and contrariwise God begins to increase and magnify¹ His favours in a soul that is so humble and detached, making it ruler over² many things, even as He made the servant who was faithful in small things.

9. In these favours, if the soul be faithful and humble,³ the Lord will not cease until He has raised it from one step to another, even to Divine union and transformation. For Our Lord continues to prove the soul and to raise it ever higher, so that He first gives it things that are very unpretentious and exterior and in the order of sense,⁴ in conformity with the smallness of its capacity ; to the end that, when it behaves as it should, and receives these first morsels with moderation for its strength and sustenance, He may grant it further and better food. If, then, the soul conquer the devil upon the first step, it will pass to the second ; and if upon the second likewise, it will pass to the third ; and so onward, through all seven mansions,⁵ which are the seven steps of love, until the Spouse shall bring it to the cellar of wine of His perfect charity.

10. Happy the soul that can fight against that beast of the Apocalypse,⁶ which has seven heads, set over against these seven steps of love, and which makes war therewith against each one, and strives therewith against the soul in each of these mansions, wherein the soul is being exercised and is mounting step by step in the love of God. And undoubtedly if it strive faithfully against each of these heads, and gain the victory, it will deserve to pass from one step to another, and from one mansion to another, even unto the last, leaving the beast vanquished after destroying its seven heads, wherewith it made so furious a war upon it. So furious is this war that S. John says in that place⁷ that it was given unto the beast to make war against the saints and to be able to overcome them upon each one of these steps of love, arraying against each one many weapons and munitions of war. And it is therefore greatly to be lamented that many who engage in this spiritual battle against the beast do

¹ E.p. omits : ' and magnify.'

² [*Lit.*, ' making it over. '] E.p. has : ' setting it and placing it over. '

³ [*Lit.*, ' and retired. ']

⁴ E.p. : ' so that He rather visits it first according to sense. '

⁵ [The phrase is suggestive of S. Teresa, but the Spanish word is not *moradas*, but *mansiones*.]

⁶ [Revelation xiii, 1.]

⁷ [*Ibid.*, 7.]

not even destroy its first head by denying themselves the sensual things of the world. And, though some destroy and cut off this head, they destroy not the second head, which is that of the visions of sense whereof we are speaking. But what is most to be lamented is that some, having destroyed not only the first and the second but even the third, which is that of the interior senses,¹ pass out of the state of meditation, and travel still farther onward, and are overcome by this spiritual² beast at the moment of their entering into purity of spirit, for he rises up against them once more, and even his first head comes to life again, and the last state of those souls is worse than the first, since, when they fall back, the beast brings with him seven other spirits worse than himself.³

11. The spiritual person, then, has to deny himself all the apprehensions, and the temporal delights,⁴ that belong to the outward senses, if he will destroy the first and the second head of this beast, and enter into the first chamber of love, and the second, which is of living faith,⁵ desiring neither to lay hold upon, nor to be embarrassed by, that which is given to the senses, since it is this that derogates most from faith.⁶

12. It is clear, then, that these sensual apprehensions and visions cannot be a means to union, since they bear no proportion to God; and this was one of the reasons why Christ desired that the Magdalene and S. Thomas⁷ should not touch Him. And so the devil rejoices greatly when a soul desires to receive revelations, and when he sees it inclined to them, for he has then a great occasion and opportunity to insinuate errors and to detract from the faith in so far as he can; for, as I have said, he renders the soul that desires them very gross, and at times even leads it into many temptations and unseemly ways.

13.⁸ I have written at some length of these outward apprehensions in order to give and throw rather more light on the others, whereof we have to treat shortly. There

¹ So e.p. The other authorities [and P. Silverio] read: 'the interior sensual senses.'

² Only Alc. has 'spiritual.'

³ [S. Luke xi, 26.]

⁴ E.p.: 'and the bodily delights.'

⁵ E.p.: 'into the first and the second chamber of love in living faith.'

⁶ E.p.: '... this that is the greatest hindrance to this spiritual night of faith.'

⁷ E.p.: 'that Mary Magdalene and the apostle S. Thomas.'

⁸ This paragraph is not in A or B. It is given as found in Alc.; C, D, e.p. give it with slight variants.

is so much to say on this part of my subject that I could go on and never end. I believe, however, that I am summarizing it sufficiently by merely saying that the soul must take care never to receive these apprehensions, save occasionally on another person's advice, which should very rarely be given, and even then it must have no desire for them. I think that on this part of my subject what I have said is sufficient.¹

CHAPTER XII

*Which treats of natural imaginary apprehensions. Describes their nature and proves that they cannot be a proportionate means of attainment to union with God. Shows the harm which results from inability to detach oneself from them.*²

1. Before we treat of the imaginary visions which are wont to occur supernaturally to the interior sense, which is the imagination and the fancy, it is fitting here, so that we may proceed in order, to treat of the natural apprehensions of this same interior bodily sense, in order that we may proceed from the lesser to the greater, and from the more exterior to the more interior, until we reach the most interior³ recollection wherein the soul is united with God;⁴ this same order we have followed up to this point. For we treated first of all the detachment of the exterior senses⁵ from the natural apprehensions of objects,⁶ and, in consequence, from the natural power of the desires—this was contained in the first book, wherein we spoke of the night of sense. We then began to detach these same senses from⁷ supernatural exterior apprehensions (which, as we have just shown in the last chapter, affect the exterior senses), in order to lead the soul into the night of the spirit.

2. In this second book, the first thing that has now to be treated is the interior bodily sense—namely, the imagination

¹ E.p. has: ' . . . never to receive them, save in some rare case and after close examination by a learned, spiritual and experienced person, and even then [the soul must receive them] without any desire to do so.' This is clearly an editorial attempt to clarify [and improve upon] the Saint's directions.

² E.p. adds: 'in time.'

³ [Or 'the intimate'; but the superlative idea is clearly present.] Alc. has: 'the last'—probably a copyist's error ['último' for 'intimo'].

⁴ A, B omit the rest of this paragraph and the whole of the next.

⁵ E.p.: 'the detachment of the soul.'

⁶ E.p.: 'of exterior objects.'

⁷ E.p.: ' . . . began the detachment in particular from . . . '

and the fancy; this we must likewise void of all the imaginary apprehensions and forms that may belong to it by nature, and we must prove how impossible it is that the soul should attain to union with God until its operation cease in them, since they cannot be the proper and proximate means of this union.

3. It is to be known, then, that the senses whereof we are here particularly speaking are two interior bodily senses which are called imagination and fancy, which subserve each other in due order. For the one sense reasons, as it were, by imagining, and the other forms the imagination, or that which is imagined, by making use of the fancy.¹ For our purpose the discussion of the one is equivalent to that of the other, and, for this reason, when we name them not both, we are to be understood as speaking of either, as we have here explained.² All the things, then, that these senses can receive and fashion are known as imaginations and fancies, which are forms that are represented to these senses by bodily figures and images. This can happen in two ways. The one way is supernatural, wherein representation can be made, and is made, to these senses passively, without any effort of their own; these we call imaginary visions, wrought after a supernatural manner, and of these we shall speak hereafter. The other way is natural, wherein, through the ability of the soul, these things can be actively produced in it through its operation,³ beneath forms, figures and images. And thus to these two faculties belongs meditation, which is a discursive action wrought by means of images, forms and figures that are produced and imagined by the said senses, as when we imagine Christ crucified, or bound to the column, or at another of the stations; or when we imagine God seated upon a throne with great majesty; or when we consider and imagine glory to be like a most beauteous light, etc.; or when we imagine all kinds of other things, whether Divine or human, that can belong to the imagination. All these imaginings⁴ must be cast out from the soul, which will remain in darkness as far as this sense is concerned,

¹ [*Lit.*, 'by fancying.'] E.p.: 'For in the one there is something of reasoning, though it is imperfect and is [wrought] imperfectly, and the other forms the image, which is the imagination.'

² E.p. adds: 'that what we say of the one is understood likewise of the other and that we are speaking of both indifferently.'

³ E.p.: 'The other way is natural, when through its operation these things can be actively produced.'

⁴ A, B: 'All these apprehensions.'

that it may attain to Divine union ; for they can bear no proportion to proximate means of union with God, any more than can the bodily imaginings, which serve as object to the five exterior senses.

4. The reason of this is that the imagination cannot fashion or imagine anything whatsoever beyond that which it has experienced through its exterior senses—namely, that which it has seen with the eyes, or heard with the ears, etc. At most it can only compose likenesses of those things that it has seen or heard or felt, which are of no more consequence than¹ those which have been received by the senses aforementioned, nor are they even of as much consequence. For, although one imagines palaces of pearls and mountains of gold, through having seen gold and pearls, all this is in truth less² than the essence of a little gold or of a single pearl, although in the imagination it be greater in quantity and beauty.³ And since no created things, as has already been said, can bear any proportion to the Being of God, it follows that nothing that is imagined in their likeness can serve as proximate means to union with Him, but, as we say, quite the contrary.⁴

5. Wherefore those that imagine God beneath any of these figures, or as a great fire or brightness, or in any other such form, and think that anything like this will be like to Him, are very far from approaching Him. For, although these considerations and forms and manners of meditation are necessary to beginners, in order that they may gradually feed and enkindle their souls with love by means of sense, as we shall say hereafter, and although they thus serve them as remote means to union with God, through which a soul has commonly to pass in order to reach the goal and abode of spiritual repose, yet they must merely pass through them, and not remain ever in them, for in such a manner they would never reach their goal, which does not resemble these remote means, neither has aught to do with them. The stairs of a staircase have naught to do with the top of it and the room to which it leads, yet are means to the reaching of both ; and if the climber left not behind the stairs below him until there were no more to climb, but desired to

¹ E.p. : ' which are of no greater excellence than . . . '

² E.p. has ' no more ' for ' less.'

³ E.p. : ' although in the imagination it may have the order and trace of beauty.'

⁴ E.p. omits : ' but . . . contrary.'

remain upon any one of them, he would never reach the top of them nor would he mount to the pleasant¹ and peaceful room which is the goal. And just so the soul that is to attain in this life to the union of that supreme repose and blessing, by means of all these stairs of meditations, forms and ideas, must pass through them and have done with them,² since they have no resemblance and bear no proportion to the goal to which they lead, which is God. Wherefore S. Paul says in the Acts of the Apostles : *Non debemus aestimare, auro, vel argento, aut lapidi sculpturæ artis, et cogitationis hominis, divinum esse similem.*³ Which signifies : We ought not to think of the Godhead by likening Him to gold or to silver, neither to stone that is formed by art, nor to aught that a man can form with his imagination.

6. Great, therefore, is the error of many⁴ spiritual persons who have practised approaching God by means of images and forms and meditations, as befits beginners. God would now lead them on to⁵ further spiritual blessings, which are interior and invisible, by taking from them the pleasure and sweetness of discursive meditation ; but they cannot, or dare not, or know not how to detach themselves from those palpable methods to which they have grown accustomed. They continually labour to retain them, desiring to proceed, as before, by the way of consideration and meditation upon forms, for they think that it must be so with them always. They labour greatly to this end and find little sweetness or none ; rather the aridity and weariness and disquiet of their souls are increased and grow, in proportion as they labour for that earlier sweetness. They cannot find this in that earlier manner, for the soul no longer enjoys that food of sense, as we have said ; it needs not this but another food, which is more delicate, more interior and partaking less of the nature of sense ; it consists not in labouring with the imagination, but in setting the soul at rest, and allowing it to remain in its quiet and repose, which is more spiritual. For, the farther the soul progresses in spirituality, the more it ceases from the operation of the faculties in particular acts, for it becomes more and more occupied in one act that is general and pure ; and thus the faculties

¹ [*Lit.*, 'the level'—i.e., by contrast with the steep stairs.]

² E.p. omits : 'and have done with them.'

³ Acts xvii, 29.

⁴ E.p. : 'of certain.'

⁵ [The verb, *recoger*, of which the derived noun is translated 'recollection,' has more accurately the meaning of 'gather,' 'take inwards.']

that were journeying to a place whither the soul has arrived cease to work, even as the feet stop and cease to move when their journey is over. For if all were motion, one would never arrive, and if all were means, where or when would come the fruition of the end and goal ?

7. It is piteous, then, to see many a one who,¹ though his soul would fain tarry in this peace and rest of interior quiet, where it is filled with the peace and refreshment of God, takes from it its tranquillity, and leads it away to the most exterior things, and would make it return and retrace the ground it has already traversed, to no purpose,² and abandon the end and goal wherein it is already reposing for the means which led it to that repose,³ which are meditations. This comes not to pass without great reluctance and repugnance of the soul, which would fain be in that peace that it understands not,⁴ as in its proper place ; even as one who has arrived, with great labour, and is now resting, suffers pain if they make him return to his labour. And, as such souls know not the mystery of this new experience, the idea comes to them that they are being idle and doing nothing ; and thus they allow not themselves to be quiet, but endeavour to meditate and reason. Hence they are filled⁵ with aridity and affliction, because they seek to find sweetness where it is no longer to be found ; we may even say of them that the more they strive the less they profit,⁶ for, the more they persist after this manner, the worse is the state wherein they find themselves, because their soul is drawn farther away from spiritual peace ; and this is to leave the greater for the less, and to retrace the road already traversed, and to seek to do that which has been done.⁷

8. To such as these the advice must be given to learn to abide attentively and wait lovingly upon God in that state of quiet, and to pay no heed either to imagination or to its working ; for here, as we say, the faculties are at rest, and are working, not actively, but passively, by receiving that

¹ [*Lit.*, 'to see that there are many who.'] E.p. omits 'many who,' making the subject of the sentence an unspecified 'they.'

² E.p. omits : 'to no purpose.'

³ [P. Silverio prints 'a Él'—'to Him' ; but he now agrees with me that 'a él'—'to it,' i.e., the repose just mentioned—is the correct reading.]

⁴ E.p. omits : 'that it understands not.'

⁵ A, B : 'Hence comes it that they are filled' [using a stronger word for 'filled' with the sense of 'stuffed,' 'swollen'].

⁶ E.p. : 'the more they freeze, the more they bind' [a popular saying].

⁷ Alc. omits : 'and to . . . been done,' probably only by an oversight.



which God works in them ; and, if they work at times, it is not with violence¹ or with carefully elaborated meditation, but with sweetness of love, moved less by the ability of the soul itself than by God, as will be explained hereafter. But let this now suffice to show how fitting and necessary it is for those who aim at making further progress to be able to detach themselves from all these methods and manners and works of the imagination at the time and season when the profit of the state which they have reached demands and requires it.

9. And, that it may be understood how this is to be, and at what season, we shall give in the chapter following² certain signs which the spiritual person will see in himself and whereby he may know at what time and season he may freely avail himself of the goal mentioned above, and may cease from journeying by means of meditation and the work of the imagination.

CHAPTER XIII

*Wherein are set down the signs which the spiritual person will find in himself and whereby he may know at what season it behoves him to leave meditation and reasoning and pass to the state of contemplation.*³

1. In order that there may be no confusion in this instruction it will be meet in this chapter to explain at what time and season it behoves the spiritual person to lay aside the task of discursive meditation as carried on through the imaginations and forms and figures above mentioned, in order that he may lay them aside neither sooner nor later than when the Spirit⁴ bids him ; for, although it is meet for him to lay them aside at the proper time in order that he may journey to God and not be hindered by them, it is no less needful for him not to lay aside the said imaginative meditation before the proper time lest he should turn

¹ E.p. : ' . . . and work not, save in that simple and sweet loving attentiveness ; and if at times they work more [than this] it is not with violence . . . ' The reading in the text is that of Alc.

² Only Alc. and e.p. have : ' in the chapter following. '

³ E.p. : ' Sets down the signs which the spiritual person may recognize in himself, in order that he may begin to strip the understanding of the imaginary forms and reasonings of meditation. '

⁴ [The MSS. and editions, including P. Silverio, have ' spirit, ' but P. Silverio agrees with me that the correct reading is ' Spirit. ']

backward. For, although the apprehensions of these faculties serve not as proximate means of union to the proficient, they serve nevertheless as remote means to beginners in order to dispose and habituate¹ the spirit to spirituality by means of sense, and in order to void the sense, in the meantime, of all the other low forms and images, temporal, worldly and natural. We shall therefore here give certain signs and examples which the spiritual person will find in himself, whereby he may know if it is meet for him to lay them aside or not at this season.²

2. The first sign is his realization that he can no longer meditate or reason³ with his imagination, neither can take pleasure therein as he was wont to do aforetime; he rather finds aridity in that which aforetime was wont to attract his senses and to bring him sweetness. But, for as long as he finds sweetness in meditation,⁴ and is able to reason, he should not abandon this, save when his soul is led into the peace and quietness⁵ which is described under the third head.

¹ A, B: 'and habitate.'

² A, B add here: 'The signs which the spiritual person will observe in himself for laying aside discursive meditation are three.' Alc., C, D add none of these words. E.p. adds only: 'which [signs] are three.'

³ A, e.p.: 'or work.'

⁴ Alc. [and P. Silverio]: 'as he extracts sweetness from meditation.'

⁵ E.p. omits: 'and quietness.' The Saint's description of this first sign at which a soul should pass from meditation to contemplation was denounced as disagreeing with Catholic doctrine, particularly the phrase: 'that he can no longer meditate or reason with his imagination, neither can take pleasure therein as he was wont to do aforetime.' This language, however, is common to mystics and theologians, not excluding S. Thomas (2^a 2^æ, q. 180, a. 6) and Suárez (*De Oratione*, Bk. II, Chap. x), as is proved, with eloquence and erudition, by P. Basilio Ponce de León and the *Elucidatio*, in their refutations of the Saint's critics. All agree that, in the act of contemplation of which S. John of the Cross here speaks, the understanding must be stripped of forms and species of the imagination and that the reasonings and reflections of meditation must be set aside. This is to be understood, both of the contemplation that transcends all human methods, and also of that which is practised according to these human methods with the ordinary aid of grace. But there is this important difference, that those who enjoy the first kind of contemplation set aside all intellectual reasoning as well as processes of the fancy and the imagination, whereas, for the second kind, reasoning *prior* to the act of contemplation is normally necessary, though it ceases *at* the act of contemplation, and there is then substituted for it simple and loving intuition of eternal truth. It should be clearly understood that this is not of habitual occurrence in the contemplative soul, but occurs only *during the act* of contemplation, which is commonly of short duration. S. Teresa makes this clear in Chap. xxvii of her *Life*, and treats this same doctrinal question in many other parts of her works—e.g., *Life*, Chaps. x, xii; *Way of Perfection*, Chap. xxvi; *Mansions*, IV, Chap. iii, etc.

3. The second sign is a realization that he has no desire to fix his meditation or his sense upon other particular objects, exterior or interior. I do not mean that the imagination neither comes nor goes (for it is wont to move freely even at times of great recollection), but that the soul has no pleasure in fixing it of set purpose upon other objects.

4. The third and surest sign is that the soul takes pleasure in being alone, and waits with loving attentiveness upon God, without making any particular meditation, in inward peace and quietness and rest, and without acts and exercises of the faculties—memory, understanding and will—at least, without discursive acts, that is, without passing from one thing to another; the soul is alone, with an attentiveness and a knowledge, general and loving, as we said, but without any particular understanding, and adverting not to what it is contemplating.¹

5. These three signs, at least, the spiritual person must see in himself, all together, before he can venture with security to abandon the state of meditation and sense,² and to enter that of contemplation and spirit.

6. And it suffices not for a man to have the first alone without the second, for it might be that the reason for his being unable to imagine and meditate upon the things of God, as he did aforetime, was his being distracted and careless;³ for the which cause he must observe in himself the second likewise, which is the loss of inclination or desire to think upon other things; for, when the inability to fix the imagination and sense upon the things of God proceeds from distraction or lukewarmness, the soul then has the desire and inclination to fix it upon other and different things, which lead it thence altogether. Neither does it suffice that he should observe in himself the first and second signs, if he observe not likewise, together with these, the third; for, although he observe his inability to reason and think upon the things of God, and likewise his distaste for thinking upon other and different things, this might proceed from melancholy or from some other kind of humour in the brain or the heart, which

¹ Only Alc., B, C, D have: 'and adverting . . . it is contemplating.'

² E.p. omits: 'and sense.' Since sense plays so great a part in meditation, S. John of the Cross places it in contradistinction to contemplation, which, the more nearly it attains perfection, becomes the more lofty and spiritual and the more completely freed from the bonds of nature. Cf. *Elucidatio*, Pt. II, Chap. iii, p. 180.

³ A, B, C: 'and not recollected.'

habitually produces a certain absorption and suspension of the senses, causing the soul to think not at all, nor to desire or be inclined to think, but rather to remain in that pleasant condition of wonder. Against this must be set the third sign, which is loving attentiveness and knowledge, in peace, etc., as we have said.

7. It is true, however, that, when this condition first begins, this loving knowledge is hardly realized, and that for two reasons. First, this loving knowledge is apt at the beginning to be very subtle and delicate, and almost imperceptible to the senses. Secondly, when the soul has been accustomed to that other exercise of meditation, which is wholly¹ perceptible, it cannot realize, or is hardly conscious of, this other new and imperceptible condition, which is purely spiritual; especially when, not understanding it, the soul allows not itself to rest in it, but strives after the former, which is more readily realized; so that, abundant though the loving interior peace may be, the soul has no opportunity of experiencing and enjoying it. But the more accustomed the soul grows to this,² by allowing itself to rest, the more it will grow therein and become conscious of that loving general knowledge of God, in which it has greater enjoyment than in aught else, since this knowledge causes it peace, rest, pleasure and delight without labour.

8. And, to the end that what has been said may be the clearer, we shall give, in this chapter following, the causes and reasons why the three signs aforementioned appear to be necessary for the soul that is journeying to pure spirit.³

CHAPTER XIV

Wherein is proved the fitness of these signs, and the reason is given why that which has been said about them is necessary to progress.

1. With respect to the first sign whereof we are speaking—that is to say, that the spiritual person who would enter upon the spiritual road⁴ (which is that of contemplation) must leave the way of imagination and of meditation through

¹ E.p. : 'which is more.'

² A, e.p. : 'becomes prepared for this.'

³ [Lit., 'appear to be necessary in order to journey to spirit.'] E.p. : 'in order to guide the spirit.'

⁴ E.p. : 'spiritual life.'

sense, when he takes no more pleasure therein and is unable to reason—there are two reasons why this should be done, which may almost be comprised in one. The first is, that in one way the soul has received all the spiritual good which it would be able to derive from the things of God by the way of meditation and reasoning, the sign whereof is that it can no longer meditate or reason as before,¹ and finds no new sweetness or pleasure therein as it found before, because up to that time it had not progressed² as far as the spirituality which was in store for it ; for, as a rule, whensoever the soul receives some spiritual blessing, it receives it with pleasure, at least in spirit, in that means whereby it receives it and profits by it ; otherwise it is astonishing if it profits by it, or finds in the cause of it that help and that sweetness which it finds when it receives it.³ For this is in agreement with the saying of philosophers, *Quod sapit, nutrit*. That is : That which is palatable nourishes and fattens. Wherefore holy Job said : *Numquid poterit comedi insulsum, quod non est sale conditum* ?⁴ Can that which is unsavoury perchance be eaten when it is not seasoned with salt ? It is for this cause that the soul is unable to meditate or reason as before : the little pleasure which the spirit finds therein and the little profit which it gains.

2. The second reason is that the soul at this season has now both the substance and the habit of the spirit of meditation. For it must be known that the end of reasoning and meditation on the things of God is to gain some knowledge and love of God, and each time that the soul gains this through meditation,⁵ it is an act ; and just as many acts, of whatever kind, end by forming a habit in the soul, just so, many of these acts of loving knowledge which the soul has been making one after another from time to time come through repetition to be so continuous in it that they become habitual. This end God is wont also to effect in many souls without the intervention of these acts⁶ (or at least without many such acts having preceded it), by setting them at once in contemplation.⁷ And thus that which aforetime the soul was gaining gradually through its labour of meditation upon particular facts

¹ E.p. : 'as it was wont to do before.'

² E.p. : ' . . . pleasure therein as before, because before this it had not progressed . . . '

³ E.p. omits : 'or finds . . . receives it.'

⁴ Job vi, 6.

⁵ E.p. omits : 'through meditation.'

⁶ E.p. : 'This God is wont to do likewise without the intervention of these acts of meditation.'

⁷ A adds : 'and love.'

has now through practice, as we have been saying, become converted and changed into a habit and substance of loving knowledge, of a general kind, and not distinct or particular as before. Wherefore, when it gives itself to prayer, the soul is now like one to whom water has been brought, so that he drinks peacefully without labour, and is no longer forced to draw the water through the aqueducts of past meditations and forms and figures.¹ So that, as soon as the soul comes before God, it makes an act of knowledge, confused, loving, passive and tranquil, wherein it drinks of wisdom and love and delight.

3. And it is for this cause that the soul feels great weariness and distaste, when, although it is in this condition of tranquillity, men try to make it meditate and labour in particular acts of knowledge. For it is like a child, which, while receiving the milk that has been collected and brought together for it in the breast, is taken from the breast and forced to try to gain and collect food with the diligence of its own squeezing and handling. Or it is like one who has removed the rind from a fruit, and is tasting the substance of the fruit, but is now forced to cease doing this and to try to begin removing the said² rind, which has been removed already. He finds no rind to remove, and yet he is unable to enjoy the substance of the fruit which he already had in his hand ; herein he is like to one who leaves a prize which he holds for another which he holds not.

4. And many act thus who begin to enter this state ; they think that the whole business consists in a continual reasoning and learning to understand particular things by means of images and forms, which are to the spirit as rind. When they find not these in that substantial and loving quiet wherein their soul desires to remain, and wherein it understands nothing clearly, they think that they are going astray and wasting time, and they begin once more to seek the rind of their imaginings and reasonings,³ but find it not, because it has already been removed. And thus they cannot enjoy the substance or succeed in their meditation, and they become troubled by the thought that they are turning backward and are losing themselves. They are indeed losing themselves,⁴ though not in the way they think, for they

¹ [Cf. the simile of the Waters in S. Teresa, *Life*, Chap. xi.]

² E.p. : 'the same.'

³ A : 'the rind of reasoning.'

⁴ E.p. : 'And they are indeed doing so.'

are becoming lost to their own senses and to their first manner of perception ;¹ and this means the gain of that spirituality which is being given them. The less they understand, however, the farther they penetrate into the night of the spirit, whereof we are treating in this book, through the which night they must pass in order to be united with God, in a union that transcends all knowledge.

5. With respect to the second sign, there is little to say, for it is clear that at this season the soul cannot possibly take pleasure in other and different objects of the imagination, which are of the world, since, as we have said, and for the reasons already mentioned, it has no pleasure in those which are most like to it—namely, those of God. Only, as has been noted above, the imaginative faculty in this state of recollection is in the habit of coming and going and varying of its own accord ; but neither according to the pleasure nor at the will of the soul, which is troubled thereby, because its peace and joy are disturbed.

6. Nor do I think it necessary to say anything here concerning the fitness and necessity of the third sign whereby the soul may know if it is to leave the meditation aforementioned, which is a knowledge of God or an attentiveness to Him, both general and loving. For something has been said of this in treating of the first sign, and we shall treat of it again hereafter, when we speak in its proper place of this confused and general knowledge, which will come after our discussion of all the particular apprehensions of the understanding. But we will speak² of one reason alone by which it may clearly be seen how, when the contemplative has to turn aside from the way of meditation and reasoning, he needs this general and loving attentiveness or knowledge of God. The reason is that, if the soul at that time had not this knowledge of God or this realization of His presence, the result would be that it would do nothing and have nothing ; for, having turned aside from meditation (by means whereof the soul has been reasoning with its faculties of sense), and being still without contemplation, which is the general knowledge whereof we are speaking,³ wherein the soul has exerted its spiritual faculties⁴—namely, memory, under-

¹ A, B, e.p. add : ' and understanding.'

² E.p. : ' . . . now speak.'

³ B : ' whereof we were speaking.'

⁴ B : ' . . . the soul has present spiritual faculties.' [The difference in the Spanish between this reading and that of the text is very slight and might be due to a careless copyist.]

the limits which are necessary for that part of the doctrine which I am treating.¹ Herein I confess that I sometimes err purposely ; for that which is not explicable by one kind of reason will perhaps be better understood by another, or by others yet ; and I believe, too, that in this way I am shedding more light upon that which is to be said hereafter.

15. Wherefore it seems well to me also, before completing this part of my treatise, to set down a reply² to one question which may arise with respect to the continuance of this knowledge, and this shall be briefly treated³ in the chapter following.

CHAPTER XV

Wherein is explained how it is sometimes well for progressives who are beginning to enter upon this general knowledge of contemplation to profit by natural⁴ meditation and the work of the natural faculties.

1. With regard to what has been said, there might be raised one question—if progressives (that is, those whom God is beginning to bring into this supernatural knowledge of contemplation whereof we have spoken) must never again, because of this that they are beginning to experience, return to the way of meditation and argument and natural forms. To this the answer is that it is not to be understood that such as are beginning to experience this loving knowledge must never again, as a general rule, try to return to meditation ;⁵ for, when they are first gaining in proficiency, the habit of contemplation is not yet so perfect that whensoever they wish they can give themselves to the act thereof, nor, in the same way, have they reached a point so far beyond meditation that they cannot occasionally meditate and reason in a natural way,⁶ as they were wont, using the figures and the steps that they were wont to use,⁷ and finding something new in them. Rather, in these early stages, when, by means of the indications already given, they are able to see that the

¹ A, B omit the rest of this paragraph.

² E.p. : 'not to fail to reply.'

³ E.p. : 'and this I will do.'

⁴ E.p. omits 'natural.'

⁵ E.p. : 'this loving and simple knowledge must never meditate again or strive to do so.'

⁶ Alc. alone has : 'in a natural way.'

⁷ E.p. omits : 'using . . . to use.'

soul is not occupied in that repose and knowledge, they will need to make use of meditation until they come by its means to acquire the habit which we have described and which in some ways is perfect. This will come about when, as soon as they seek to meditate, they experience this knowledge and peace, and find themselves unable to meditate and no longer desirous of doing so, as we have said. For until they reach this stage, which is that of the proficient in this exercise, they use sometimes the one and sometimes the other, at different seasons.¹

2. The soul, then, will frequently find itself in this loving or peaceful state of waiting upon God² without in any way exercising its faculties—that is, with respect to particular acts—and without working actively at all, but only receiving.³ In order to reach this state, it will frequently need to make use of meditation, quietly and in moderation; but, when once the soul is brought into this other state,⁴ it acts not at all with its faculties,⁵ as we have already said. It would be truer to say that understanding and sweetness work in it and are wrought within it, than that the soul itself works at all, save only by waiting upon God and by loving Him without desiring to feel or to see anything.⁶ Then God communicates Himself to it passively, even as to one who has his eyes open, so that light is communicated to him passively, without his doing more than keep them open.⁷ And this reception of light which is infused supernaturally is passive understanding. We say that the soul works not at all, not because it understands not, but because it understands things not discovered by its own industry and receives only that which is given to it, as comes to pass in the illuminations and enlightenments or inspirations of God.⁸

3. Although in this condition the will freely receives this general and confused knowledge of God, it is needful, in

¹ E.p. omits: 'at different seasons.'

² [*Lit.*, 'in this loving or peaceful presence,' the original of the latter word having also the sense of 'attendance.']

³ The words: 'that is . . . only receiving' occur only in Alc. E.p. substitutes: 'as has been explained.'

⁴ E.p.: 'when once this [other state] is attained.'

⁵ E.p.: 'the soul neither reflects nor labours with its faculties.'

⁶ E.p. adds: 'save only to let itself be carried away by God.'

⁷ E.p. abbreviates: '. . . his eyes open, light is communicated.'

⁸ This passage ('And this reception . . . inspirations of God') together with the first clause of the next paragraph ('Although . . . knowledge of God') is only found in Alc.

Which signifies : If there be any prophet of the Lord among you, I will appear to him in some vision or form, or I will speak with him in his dreams ; but there is none like My servant Moses, who is the most faithful in all My house, and I speak with him mouth to mouth, and he sees not God by comparisons, similitudes and figures. Herein He says clearly that, in this lofty state of union whereof we are speaking, God is not communicated to the soul by means of any disguise of imaginary vision or similitude or form, neither can He be so communicated ; but mouth to mouth—that is, in the naked and pure essence of God, which is the mouth of God in love, with the naked and pure essence of the soul,¹ which is the mouth of the soul in love of God.

10. Wherefore, in order to come to this essential union of love in God,² the soul must have a care not to lean upon³ imaginary visions, nor upon forms or figures or particular objects of the understanding ; for these cannot serve it as a proportionate and proximate means to such an end ; rather they would disturb it, and for this reason the soul must renounce them and strive not to have them. For if in any circumstance they were to be received and prized, it would be for the sake of the profit which true visions bring to the soul and the good effect which they produce upon it. But it is not necessary, for this reason, to receive them ;⁴ rather, it is well always to reject them for the soul's profit. For these imaginary visions, like the outward bodily visions whereof we have spoken, do the soul good by communicating to it intelligence or love or sweetness. But for this effect to be produced by them in the soul it is not necessary that it should desire to receive them ; for, as has also been said above, at this very time⁵ when they are present to the imagination, they produce in the soul and infuse into it intelligence and love, or sweetness, or whatever effect God wills them to produce. And not only do they produce this joint effect, but principally, although not simultaneously, they produce

¹ The editions of 1630 and later dates add here : ' by means of the will.' But these words are found neither in e.p. nor in the Codices.

² E.p. : ' to this so perfect union of God.'

³ [The progressive form is used in the Spanish : ' not to go (or ' be ') leaning upon.']

⁴ A, B : ' but it is necessary, for this reason, not to admit them.' The second part of this sentence shows that the reading of the text, which is that of both Alc. and e.p., is the correct one.

⁵ E.p. omits : ' at this very time.'

their effect in the soul passively,¹ without its being able to hinder this effect, even if it so desired,² just as it was also powerless to acquire it, although it had been able previously to prepare itself.³ For, even as the window is powerless⁴ to impede the ray of sunlight which strikes it, but, when it is prepared by being cleansed, receives its light passively without any diligence or labour on its own part, even so the soul, although against its will,⁵ cannot fail to receive in itself the influences and communications of those figures, however much it may desire to resist them.⁶ For the will that is negatively inclined cannot, if coupled with loving and humble resignation, resist supernatural infusions; it can resist only the impurity and imperfections of the soul,⁷ even as the stains upon a window impede the brightness of the sunlight.⁸

11. From this it is clearly seen that, however much the soul may be detached, in its will and affection, from the apprehensions of the stains of those forms, images and figures wherein are clothed⁹ the spiritual communications which we have described, not only is it not deprived of these communications and blessings which they cause within it, but it is much better prepared to receive them with greater abundance, clearness, liberty of spirit and simplicity, when all these apprehensions are set on one side, which are, as it were, curtains and veils covering the spiritual thing¹⁰ that is behind them. And thus, if the soul desire to feed upon them, they occupy spirit and sense in such a way that the spirit cannot communicate itself simply and freely; for, while they are still occupied with the outer rind, it is clear that the understanding is not free to receive the substance.¹¹ Wherefore, if the soul at that time desires to receive these

¹ E.p.: 'And thus the soul receives their quickening effect passively.'

² E.p. omits: 'even though it so desired.'

³ E.p. substitutes for this last clause: 'notwithstanding its having laboured previously to prepare itself.'

⁴ E.p.: 'To some extent it resembles a window, which is powerless . . .'

⁵ E.p. omits: 'although against its will.'

⁶ E.p. omits: 'however . . . resist them.'

⁷ E.p.: 'For the will cannot resist supernatural infusions, although without doubt the impurity and imperfections of the soul are an obstruction.'

⁸ [Lit., 'impede the brightness.']

⁹ E.p.: 'from the stains of the apprehensions, images and figures wherein are clothed.' A: 'from the apprehensions and the stains of them and the affections wherein are clothed.' B: 'from the apprehensions of the stains of those forms and figures wherein are clothed.'

¹⁰ E.p.: 'the more spiritual thing.'

¹¹ This is the reading of e.p. A, B [followed by P. Silverio] read: 'to receive those forms.' Alc. reads merely: 'to receive.'

forms and to set store by them, it would be embarrassing itself, and contenting itself with the least important part of them—namely, all that it can apprehend and know of them, which is the form and image and particular object of the understanding in question. The most important part of them, which is the spiritual part that is infused into the soul, it can neither apprehend nor understand, nor even know what it is, nor be able to express it, since it is pure spirit. What it knows of them, as we say, is only the least part of what is in them, according to its manner of understanding—namely, the forms which come through sense. For this reason I say that what it cannot understand or imagine is communicated to it by these visions, passively, without any effort of its own to understand and without its even knowing how to make such an effort.

12. Wherefore the eyes of the soul must ever be withdrawn from all these apprehensions which it can see and understand distinctly, which are communicated through sense, and do not produce the sure foundation of faith, and must be set upon that which it sees not, and which belongs not to sense, but to spirit, which can be expressed by no figure of sense ; and it is this which leads the soul to union in faith, which is the true medium, as has been said. And thus these visions will profit the soul substantially, in respect of faith, when it is able completely to renounce the sensible and intelligible part¹ of them, and to make good use of the purpose for which God gives them to the soul, by casting them aside ; for, as we said of corporeal visions, God gives them not so that the soul may desire to have them and to set its affection upon them.

13. But there arises here this question : If it is true that God gives supernatural visions to the soul, but not so that it may desire to have them or be attached to them or set store by them, why does He give them at all, since by their means the soul may fall into many errors and perils, or at the least may find in them such hindrances to further progress as are here described, especially since God can come to the soul, and communicate to it, spiritually and substantially, that which He communicates to it through sense, by means of the sensible forms and visions aforementioned ?

14. We shall answer this question in the following chapter :² it involves an important instruction, most necessary, as

¹ E.p. : ' the particular intelligible part.'

² The words 'in the following chapter' occur in Alc. and e.p. only.

I see it, both to spiritual persons and to those who teach them. For herein is taught the way and purpose of God with respect to these visions, which many know not, so that they cannot rule themselves or guide themselves to union, neither can they guide others to union, through these visions. For they think that, just because they know them to be true and to come from God, it is well to receive them and to trust them,¹ not realizing that the soul will become attached to them, cling to them and be hindered by them, as it will by things of the world, if it know not how to renounce these as well as those. And thus they think it well to receive one kind of vision and to reject another, causing themselves, and the souls under their care, great labour and peril in discerning between the truth and the falsehood of these visions. But God commands them not to undertake this labour, nor does He desire that sincere and simple souls should be led into this conflict and danger ; for they have safe and sound instruction, which is that of the faith, wherein they can go forward.

15. This, however, cannot be unless they close their eyes to all that is of particular and clear perception and sense. For, although S. Peter was quite certain of that vision of glory which he saw in Christ at the Transfiguration, yet, after having described it in his second canonical Epistle, he desired not that it should be taken for an important and sure testimony, but rather directed his hearers to faith, saying : *Et habemus firmiorem propheticum sermonem : cui benefacitis attendentes, quasi lucernæ lucenti in caliginoso loco, donec dies elucescat.*² Which signifies : And we have a surer testimony than this vision of Tabor—namely, the sayings and words of the prophets who bear testimony to Christ, whereunto ye must indeed cling, as to a candle which gives light in a dark place. If we will think upon this comparison, we shall find therein the instruction which we are giving. For, in telling us to look to the faith whereof the prophets spake, as to a candle that shineth in a dark place, he is bidding us remain in the darkness, with our eyes closed to all these other lights ; and telling us that in this darkness, faith alone, which likewise is dark, will be the light to which we shall cling ; for if we desire to cling to these other bright lights—namely, to distinct objects of the understanding—we cease to cling to that dark light, which is faith, and we no longer have that

¹ E.p. : 'it is well to lean on them and cleave to them.'

² 2 Peter i, 19.

light in the dark place whereof S. Peter speaks. This place, which here signifies the understanding, which is the candlestick wherein this candle of faith is set, must be dark until the day when the clear vision of God dawns upon it in the life to come, or, in this life, until the day of transformation and union with God to which the soul is journeying.¹

CHAPTER XVII

Wherein is described the purpose and manner of God in His communication of spiritual blessings to the soul by means of the senses. Herein is answered the question which has been referred to.

1. There is much to be said concerning the purpose of God, and concerning the manner wherein He gives these visions in order to raise up the soul from its lowly estate to His Divine union. All spiritual books deal with this and in this treatise of ours the method which we are pursuing is to explain it ;² therefore I shall only say in this chapter as much as is necessary to answer our question, which was as follows : Since in these supernatural visions there is so much hindrance and peril to progress, as we have said, why does God, Who is most wise and desires to remove stumbling-blocks and snares from the soul, offer and communicate them to it ?

2. In order to answer this, it is well first of all to set down three fundamental points.³ The first is from S. Paul *ad Romanos*, where he says : *Quæ autem sunt, a Deo ordinate sunt.*⁴ Which signifies : The works that are done are ordained of God. The second is from the Holy Spirit in the Book of Wisdom, where He says : *Disponit omnia suaviter.*⁵ And this is as though He had said : The wisdom of God, although it extends from one end to another—that is to say, from one extreme to another—orders all things with sweetness. The third is from the theologians, who say that *Omnia movet secundum modum eorum*. That is, God moves all things according to their nature.

3. It is clear, then, from these fundamental points, that for God to move the soul and to raise it up from the extreme

¹ Alc. ends the chapter with the words : ' transformation and union.'
E.p. has ' with Him ' for ' with God.'

² E.p. omits : ' and in this treatise . . . to explain it.'

³ E.p. : ' to take for granted three principles.'

⁴ Romans xiii, 1

⁵ Wisdom viii, 1.

depth of its lowliness to the extreme height of His loftiness, in Divine union with Him, He must do it with order and sweetness and according to the nature of the soul itself. Then, since the order¹ whereby the soul acquires knowledge is through forms and images of created things, and the natural way wherein it acquires this knowledge and wisdom is through the senses, it follows that, for God to raise up the soul to supreme knowledge, and to do so with sweetness, He must begin to work from the lowest and extreme end of the senses of the soul, in order that He may gradually lead it,² according to its own nature, to the other extreme of His spiritual wisdom, which belongs not to sense. Wherefore He first leads it onward by instructing it through forms, images and ways of sense, according to its own method of understanding, now naturally, now supernaturally, and by means of argument, to this supreme spirit of God.

4. It is for this reason that God gives the soul visions and forms, images and the other kinds of sensible and spiritual³ intelligible knowledge; not that God would not give it spiritual wisdom⁴ immediately, and all at once, if the two extremes—which are human and Divine, sense and spirit—could in the ordinary way concur and unite in one single act, without the preceding intervention of many other preparatory acts which concur among themselves in order and sweetness, and are a basis and a preparation one for another, like natural agents; so that the first acts serve the second, the second the third, and so onward, in exactly the same way.⁵ And thus God brings man to perfection according to the way of man's own nature, working from what is lowest and most exterior up to what is most interior and highest. First, then, He perfects his bodily senses, impelling him to make use of good things which are natural, perfect and exterior, such as hearing sermons and masses, looking on holy things, mortifying the palate at meals and chastening the sense of touch by penance and holy rigour. And, when these senses are to some extent prepared, He is wont to perfect them still further, by bestowing on them certain supernatural favours and gifts, in order to confirm them the more completely in

¹ B: 'since the method and order.' ['Method' is the *modo* translated above as 'nature.']

² E.p.: 'may gradually raise it.'

³ E.p. omits 'spiritual.'

⁴ E.p.: 'spiritual substance.'

⁵ E.p. modifies: '... preparation one for another; even as with natural agents the first serve the second, the second the third, and so onward.'

that which is good, offering them certain supernatural communications, such as visions of saints and holy things, in corporeal shape, the sweetest perfumes, locutions, and exceeding great delights of touch, wherewith¹ sense is greatly confirmed in virtue and is withdrawn from a desire for evil things. And besides this the interior bodily senses, whereof we are here treating, such as imagination and fancy, He continues at the same time to perfect and habituate² to that which is good, by means of considerations, meditations, and reflections of a sacred kind, in all of which He is instructing the spirit. And, when these are prepared by this natural exercise, God is wont to enlighten and spiritualize them still more by means of certain supernatural visions, which are those that we are here calling imaginary ; wherein, as we have said, the spirit, at the same time, profits greatly, for both kinds of vision help to take away its grossness and gradually to reform it. And after this manner God continues to lead the soul from one step to another till it reaches the most interior of all ; not that it is always³ necessary for Him to observe this order, and to cause the soul to advance exactly in this way, from the first step to the last ; sometimes He allows the soul to attain one stage and not another, or leads it from the more interior to the less, or effects two stages of progress together. This happens when God sees it to be meet for the soul, or when He desires to grant it His favours in this way ;⁴ nevertheless His ordinary way agrees with what has been said.

5. It is in this way, then, that God instructs⁵ the soul and makes it more spiritual, communicating spirituality to it first of all through outward and palpable things, adapted to sense, on account of the soul's feebleness and incapacity, so that, by means of the outer husk of those things of sense which in themselves are good, the spirit may make⁶ particular acts and receive so many morsels of spiritual communication that it may form a habit in things spiritual, and may acquire actual and substantial spirituality,⁷ in complete

¹ E.p. : locutions, together with pure and singular sweetness, wherewith . . . ² A, B : 'and habitate.'

³ E.p. omits 'always.'

⁴ E.p. : ' . . . and not another, when He sees that it so befits the soul and desires to grant it favours in this way.'

⁵ [The verb is progressive ('is instructing').] A, B add : 'ordinarily.'

⁶ [This verb also is progressive : 'may go (on) making.']

⁷ E.p. : 'may acquire the most substantial of the spirit' [i.e., the most substantial spirituality].

abstraction from every sense. To this, as we have said, the soul cannot attain except very gradually, and in its own way—that is, by means of sense—to which it has ever been attached.¹ And thus, in proportion as the spirit attains more nearly to converse with God, it becomes more completely detached and emptied of the ways of sense, which are those of imaginary meditation and reflection. Wherefore, when the soul attains perfectly to spiritual converse with God, it must of necessity have been voided of all that relates to God and yet comes under the head of sense. Even so, the more closely a thing is attracted to one extreme, the farther it becomes removed and withdrawn² from the other; and, when it rests perfectly in the one, it will also have withdrawn itself perfectly from the other. Wherefore there is a commonly quoted spiritual adage which says: *Gustato spiritu, desipit omnis caro*. Which signifies: After the taste and sweetness of the spirit have been received, everything carnal is insipid.³ That is: No profit or enjoyment is afforded by all the ways of the flesh⁴ wherein is included all communication of sense with the spiritual. And this is clear: for, if it is spirit, it has no more to do with sense; and, if sense can comprehend it, it is no longer pure spirit. For, the more that natural apprehension and sense can know of it, the less it has of spirit and of the supernatural, as has been explained above.

6. The spirit⁵ that is now perfect, therefore, pays no heed to sense, nor does it receive anything through sense, nor makes any important use of it, neither needs to do so, in its relations with God, as it did aforesaid when it had not grown in spirit. It is this that is signified by that passage from S. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians which says: *Cum essem parvulus, loquebar ut parvulus, sapiebam ut parvulus, cogitabam ut parvulus. Quando autem factus sum vir, evacuavi, quæ erant parvuli*.⁶ This signifies: When I was a child, I spake as a child, I knew as a child, I thought as a child; but, when I became a man, I put away⁷ childish things. We have already explained how the things of sense, and the knowledge that spirit can derive⁸ from them, are the business of a child.

¹ A, B add: 'and has come near.'

² E.p.: 'and rejected.' [All the verbs in these last two clauses are in the progressive form.] ³ E.p.: 'is tasteless.'

⁴ E.p.: 'all the tastes or roads of sense.'

⁵ E.p.: 'the spiritual man.'

⁶ 1 Corinthians xiii, 11.

⁷ [*Lit.*, 'I emptied.'] A, B, e.p.: 'I voided.'

⁸ E.p.: 'that can be derived.'

Thus, if the soul should desire to cling to them for ever, and not to throw them aside, it would never cease to be a child ; it would speak ever of God as a child, and would know of God as a child, and would think of God as a child ;¹ for, clinging to the outer husk of sense, which is the child, it would never attain to the substance of the spirit, which is the perfect man. And thus the soul must not desire to receive the said revelations in order to continue in growth, even though God offer them to it, just as the child must leave the breast in order to accustom its palate to strong meat, which is more substantial.

7. You will say, then, that when the soul is immature, it must take these things, and that, when it is grown, it must abandon them ; even as an infant must take the breast, in order to nourish itself, until it is older and can leave it. I answer that, with respect to meditation and natural reflection by means of which the soul begins to seek God, it is true that it must not leave the breast of sense in order to continue its nourishment until the time and season to leave it have arrived, and this comes when God brings the soul into a more spiritual communion, which is contemplation, concerning which we gave instruction in the eleventh chapter of this book.² But, when it is a question of imaginary visions, or other supernatural apprehensions, which can enter the senses without the co-operation of man's free will, I say that at no time and season must it receive them,³ whether the soul be in the state of perfection, or whether in a state less perfect—not even though they come from God. And this for two reasons. The first is that, as we have said, He produces His effect in the soul,⁴ without its being a hindrance to it, although it can and may hinder vision, which comes to pass frequently ;⁵ and consequently that effect⁶ which was to be produced in the soul is communicated to it much more substantially, although not after that manner. For, as we said likewise, the soul cannot hinder the blessings that God desires to communicate to it, neither is it in the soul to do so,

¹ A, B : ' it would never cease to be a child ; it would ever speak of, know and think of God as a child.'

² In reality, this instruction is given in Chap. xiii.

³ E.p. : ' must it seek them, or remain for long in them.'

⁴ So Alc. The other MSS. and e.p. read : ' . . . that, as we have said, they produce their effect passively in the soul.'

⁵ E.p. has : ' although it do something to hinder the manner of the vision,' and omits : ' which comes to pass frequently.'

⁶ E.p. : ' that second effect.'

save through some imperfection and attachment ; and there is neither imperfection nor attachment in renouncing these things with humility and misgiving.¹ The second reason is that the soul may free itself from the peril and labour inherent in discerning between evil visions and good, and in deciding whether an angel be of light or of darkness. In this labour there is no advantage ; it only wastes the soul's time, and hinders it, and becomes to it an occasion of many imperfections and of failure to make progress. The soul concerns not itself, in such a case, with what is important, nor disencumbers itself of trifles in the shape of apprehensions and perceptions of some particular kind, according as has been said in the discussion of corporeal visions ; and of these more will be said hereafter.

8. And let it be believed that, if Our Lord were not to lead the soul after the soul's own manner, as we say here, He would never communicate to it the abundance of His spirit by these aqueducts, which are so narrow—these forms and figures and particular perceptions—by means whereof He gives the soul enlightenment by crumbs. For this cause David says : *Mittit crystallum suam sicut buccellas*.² Which is as much as to say : He sent His wisdom to the souls as in morsels.³ It is greatly to be lamented that, though the soul has infinite capacity,⁴ it should be given its food by morsels of sense, by reason of the small degree of its spirituality and its incapacitation by sense. S. Paul was also grieved by this lack of preparation and this incapability of men for receiving the Spirit, when he wrote to the Corinthians, saying : I, brethren, when I came to you, could not speak to you as to spiritual persons, but as to carnal ; for ye could not receive it, neither can ye now. *Tamquam parvulis in Christo lac potum vobis dedi, non escam*.⁵ That is : I have given you milk to drink, as to infants in Christ, and not solid food to eat.⁶

9. It now remains, then, to be pointed out that the soul must not allow its eyes to rest upon that outer husk—namely,

¹ E.p. omits the passage : ' For, as we said likewise . . . and attachment,' and substitutes for ' and there . . . misgiving ' : ' For, in renouncing these things with humility and misgiving, there is neither imperfection nor attachment.' The Codices end the sentence at the word ' misgiving,' but e.p. continues : ' but rather disinterestedness and emptiness, which is the best preparation for union with God.'

² Psalm cxlvii, 17.

³ C, D : ' as morsels.'

⁴ E.p. : ' has as it were infinite capacity.' All the MSS. have the reading of the text.

⁵ 1 Corinthians iii, 1-2.

⁶ E.p. omits : ' in Christ ' and ' to eat.'

2. The reason which has now moved me to write at length about this is the lack of discretion, as I understand it, which I have observed in certain spiritual masters. Trusting to these supernatural apprehensions, and believing that they are good and come from God, both masters and disciples have fallen into great error and found themselves in dire straits, wherein is fulfilled the saying of Our Lord : *Si cæcus cæco ducatum præstet, ambo in foveam cadunt.*¹ Which signifies : If a blind man lead another blind man, they fall both into the ditch. And He says not ' they shall fall,' but ' they fall.' For they may fall without falling into error, since the very venturing of the one to guide the other is a going astray, and thus, they fall in this respect alone,² at the very least. And, first of all, there are some whose way and method with souls that experience these visions cause them to stray, or embarrass them with respect to their visions, or guide them not along the road of humility, but encourage them to fix their eyes upon them in some way (for which reason they remain without the true spirit of faith)³ and edify them not in faith, but lead them to speak highly of those things.⁴ By doing this they make them realize that they themselves set some value upon them, or⁵ make great account of them, and, consequently, their disciples do the same. Thus their souls have been set upon these apprehensions, instead of being edified in faith, so that they may be empty and detached and freed from those things and can soar to the heights of dark faith. And all this arises from the terms and language which the soul observes its master to employ with respect to this ; somehow it very easily conceives a satisfaction and an esteem for it, which is not in its own control, and which averts the eyes of the soul from the abyss of faith.

3. And the reason why this is so easy must be that the soul is so greatly occupied therewith that, as these are things of sense, to which it is inclined by nature, and as it is likewise disposed to enjoy the apprehension of those distinct and sensible things, it has only to see in its confessor, or in some other person, a certain esteem and appreciation for them, and not merely will it at once conceive the same itself, but

¹ S. Matthew xv, 14.

² E.p. omits ' alone.'

³ E.p. : ' for which reason they journey not by way of the pure and perfect spirit of faith.'

⁴ E.p. : ' and edify them not, neither fortify them in it [i.e., in faith], making these things of great account.'

⁵ E.p. omits : ' set some value upon them, or.'

also, without its realizing the fact, its desire will become allured by them, so that it will feed upon them and will be ever more inclined toward them and will set a certain value¹ upon them. And hence arise many imperfections, at the very least ; for the soul is no longer as humble as before, but thinks that all this is of some importance and productive of good, and that it is itself esteemed by God, and that He is pleased and somewhat satisfied with it, which is contrary to humility. And thereupon the devil begins secretly to increase this, without the soul's realizing it, and begins to suggest ideas to it about others, as to whether they have these things or have them not, or are this or are that ; which is contrary to holy simplicity and spiritual solitude.

4. There is much more to be said about these evils, and of how such souls, unless they withdraw themselves, grow not in faith, and also of how there are other evils of the same kind which, although they be not so palpable and recognizable² as these, are subtler and more hateful to the Divine eyes, and which result from not living in complete detachment. Let us, however, leave this subject now,³ until we come to treat of the vice of spiritual gluttony⁴ and of the other six vices, whereof, with the help of God,⁵ many things will be said, concerning these subtle and delicate stains which adhere to the spirit when its director cannot guide it in detachment.

5. Let us now say something of this manner wherein certain confessors deal with souls, and instruct them ill. And of a truth I could wish that I were able to describe it, for I realize that it is a difficult thing to explain how the spirit of the disciple grows in conformity with that of his spiritual father, in a hidden and secret way ; and this matter is so tedious that it wearies me,⁶ for it seems impossible to speak of the one thing without describing the other also, as they are spiritual things, and the one corresponds with the other.

6. But it is sufficient to say here that⁷ I believe, if the

¹ So all the MSS. E.p. alters to 'much value' [bringing out the general sense of the passage by the change].

² E.p. omits : 'and recognizable.'

³ E.p. omits 'complete' and reads : 'We shall leave' for 'Let us leave.'

⁴ A, B omit the remainder of the paragraph.

⁵ E.p. has : 'God willing.'

⁶ E.p. omits : 'and this . . . wearies me.'

⁷ E.p. omits this phrase. A, B have : 'And, treating of that which I promised.'

spiritual father has an inclination toward revelations of such a kind that they mean something to him,¹ or satisfy or delight his soul, it is impossible but that he will impress that delight and that aim² upon the spirit of his disciple, even without realizing it, unless the disciple be more advanced than he; and, even in this case, he may well do him grievous harm if he continue therein. For, from that inclination of the spiritual father toward such visions, and his pleasure in them, there arises a certain kind of esteem for them, of which, unless he watch it carefully, he cannot fail to communicate some indication or impression to other persons; and if any other such person is like-minded and has a similar inclination, it is impossible, as I understand, but that there will be communicated from the one to the other a great appreciation of these things and esteem for them.

7. But let us not now go into such detail. Let us speak of the confessor who, whether or no he be inclined toward these things, has not the prudence that he ought to have in disencumbering the soul and detaching the desire of his disciple from them, but begins to speak to him about these visions and devotes the greater part of his spiritual conversation to them, as we have said, giving him signs by which he may distinguish good visions from evil. Now, although it is well to know this, there is no reason to cause the soul this labour, anxiety and peril.³ By paying no heed⁴ to visions, and refusing to receive them, all this is prevented, and the soul acts as it should. Nor is this all, for such confessors, when they see that their penitents are receiving visions from God, beg them to entreat God to reveal them to themselves also, or to say such and such things to them, with respect to themselves or to others, and the foolish souls⁵ do so, thinking that it is lawful to desire knowledge by this means. For they suppose that, because God is pleased to reveal or say something by supernatural means, in His own way or for His own purpose, it is lawful for them to desire Him to reveal it to them, and even to entreat Him to do so.

¹ E.p.: 'that they have some weight with him.'

² E.p.: 'that same pleasure and esteem.'

³ E.p. adds: 'save in a case of stringent necessity, as has been said.'

⁴ E.p.: 'By paying little heed.'

⁵ All the MSS. have this reading, but the editor of e.p. evidently disliked this exact and expressive phrase, for he substituted 'good souls' for it.

8. And, if it comes to pass that God reveals it at their request, they become more confident, thinking that, because God answers them, it is His will and pleasure to do so ; whereas, in truth, it is neither God's will nor His pleasure. And they frequently act or believe according to that which He has revealed to them, or according to the way wherein He has answered them ; for, as they are attached to that manner of communion with God, their will acquiesces in it and it pleases them greatly. They take a natural pleasure in their own way of thinking and naturally abide by it ; and they frequently go astray.¹ Then they see that something happens not as they had expected ; and they marvel, and then begin to doubt if the thing were of God,² since it happens not, and they see it not, after their own manner. At the beginning they thought two things : first, that the vision was of God, since at the beginning it agreed so well with their disposition, and their natural inclination to that kind of thing may well have been the cause of this agreement, as we have said ; and secondly that, being of God, it would turn out as they thought or expected.

9. And herein lies a great delusion, for revelations or locutions which are of God do not always turn out as men expect or as they imagine inwardly. And thus they must never be believed or trusted blindly, even though men know them to be revelations or answers or sayings of God. For, although they may in themselves be certain and true, they are not always so³ in their causes, and according to our manner of understanding,⁴ as we shall prove in the chapter following. And afterwards we shall further say and prove that, although God sometimes gives a supernatural answer to that which is asked of Him, it is not His pleasure to do so, and sometimes, although He answers, He is angered.

¹ E.p. abbreviates : ' . . . they become more confident about other occasions and think that this manner of communion with God is His pleasure, whereas, in truth, it is neither His pleasure nor His will. And, as they are attached to that manner of communion with God, it pleases them greatly and their will acquiesces naturally in it. For, as it pleases them naturally, they are naturally inclined to their way of thinking, and they frequently go astray in what they say.'

² [*Lit.*, 'if it were of God.'] E.p.: 'if they were of God or no.' A : 'if it were of God or were not God [*sic*].' B : 'if it were of God or were not of God.'

³ E. p. adds : 'of necessity.'

⁴ A, B end the chapter here.

CHAPTER XXIII

Which begins to treat of the apprehensions of the understanding that come in a purely spiritual way, and describes their nature.

1. Although the instruction that we have given with respect to the apprehensions of the understanding which come by means of sense is somewhat brief, in comparison with what might be said about them, I have not desired to write of them at greater length ; I believe, indeed, that I have already been too lengthy for the fulfilment of my present intention, which is to disencumber the understanding of them and direct the soul into the night of faith. Wherefore we shall now begin to treat of those other four apprehensions of the understanding, which, as we said in the tenth chapter,¹ are purely spiritual—namely, visions, revelations, locutions and spiritual feelings. These we call purely spiritual, for they do not (as do those that are corporeal and imaginary) communicate themselves to the understanding by way of the corporeal senses ; but, without the intervention of any inward or outward corporeal sense, they present themselves to the understanding, clearly and distinctly, by supernatural means, passively—that is to say, without the commission of any act or operation on the part of the soul itself, at the least actively.²

2. It must be known, then, that, speaking broadly and in general terms, all these four apprehensions may be called visions of the soul ; for we can speak of the understanding of the soul as of its sight. And since all these apprehensions are intelligible to the understanding, they are described, in a spiritual sense, as ‘visible.’ And thus the kinds of intelligence that are formed in the understanding may be called intellectual visions. Now, since all the objects of the other senses, which are all that can be seen, and all that can be heard, and all that can be smelt and tasted and touched, are objects of the understanding in so far as they fall within the limits of truth or falsehood, it follows that, just as to the eyes of the body all that is visible in a bodily way causes bodily vision, even so, to the spiritual eyes of the soul—namely, the understanding—all that is intelligible causes

¹ It is in Chapter x (and not in viii, as is said in A, B and e.p.) that the author treats of these spiritual apprehensions.

² E.p. : ‘actively and as on its own account.’

spiritual vision ; for, as we have said, for the soul to understand is for it to see. And thus, speaking generally, these four apprehensions may be called visions. This cannot be said, however, of the other senses, for no one of them is capable, as such, of receiving the object of another one.

3. But, since these apprehensions present themselves to the soul in the same way as they do to the various senses, it follows that, speaking properly and specifically, we shall describe that which the understanding receives by means of sight (because it can see things spiritually, even as the eyes can see bodily) as a vision ; and that which it receives by apprehending and understanding new things (as it were through the hearing, when it hears things that are not heard¹) we describe as revelation ; and that which it receives by means of hearing we call locution ; and that which it receives through the other senses, such as the perception of sweet spiritual fragrance, and of spiritual taste and of spiritual delight which the soul may enjoy supernaturally, we call spiritual feelings. From all these the soul derives spiritual vision or understanding, without any kind of apprehension concerning form, image or figure of natural fancy or imagination² ; these things are communicated to the soul directly by supernatural means and a supernatural process.

4. Of these, likewise (even as we said of the other imaginary corporeal apprehensions), it is well that we should here disencumber the understanding, leading and directing it by means of them into the spiritual night of faith, to the Divine and substantial union of God³ ; lest, by letting such things encumber and stultify it, it should be hindered upon the road to solitude and detachment from all things, which is necessary to that end. For, although these apprehensions are nobler and more profitable and much more certain than those which are corporeal and imaginary, inasmuch as they are interior and purely spiritual, and are those which the devil is least able to counterfeit, since they are communicated to the soul more purely and subtly without any effort of its own or of the imagination, at least actively,⁴ yet not only may the understanding be encumbered by them upon this road, but

¹ E.p. omits the words in parenthesis.

² E.p. adds : ' whence it may derive them.'

³ The 1630 edition emends : ' of the love of God.'

⁴ E.p. adds : ' and on its own account.'

which is faith, serves as a means to Divine union in this life, even as, in the next life, the light of glory serves as an intermediary to the clear vision of God.

5. Let us, then, now treat of the visions of corporeal substances, received spiritually in the soul, which come after the manner of bodily visions. For, just as the eyes see bodily visions by means of natural light, even so does the soul, through the understanding, by means of supernaturally derived light, as we have said, see those same natural things inwardly, together with others, as God wills ; the difference between the two kinds of vision is only in the mode and manner of them. For spiritual and intellectual visions are much clearer and subtler than those which pertain to the body. For, when God is pleased to grant this favour to the soul, He communicates to it that supernatural light whereof we speak, wherein the soul sees the things that God wills it to see, easily and most clearly, whether they be of Heaven or of earth, and the absence or presence of them is no hindrance to the vision. And it is at times as though a door were most clearly opened before it, through which the soul sees a light, after the manner of a lightning flash, which, on a dark night, reveals things suddenly, and causes them to be clearly and distinctly seen, and then leaves them in darkness, although the forms and figures of them remain in the fancy. This comes to pass much more perfectly in the soul,¹ because those things that the spirit has seen in that light remain impressed upon it in such a way that whensoever it observes² them it sees them in itself as it saw them before ;³ even as in a mirror the forms that are in it⁴ are seen whensoever a man looks in it, and in such a way that those forms of the things that he has seen are never wholly removed from his soul, although in course of time they become somewhat remote.⁵

6. The effect which these visions produce in the soul is that of quiet, illumination, joy like that of glory, sweetness, purity and love, humility and inclination or elevation of the spirit in God ; sometimes more so, at other times less ; with sometimes more of one thing, at other times more of another ; according to the spirit wherein they are received and according as God wills.

¹ E.p. omits the rest of the paragraph.

² 'Whensoever, enlightened by God, it observes . . .' reads the edition of 1630.

³ A : 'it sees them even as it saw them before.'

⁴ Edition of 1630 : 'that are represented in it.'

⁵ *Ibid.* : 'more remote.'

God. With these we shall conclude in two chapters as briefly as we may, and in this chapter following we shall treat of the first.¹

CHAPTER XXVI

Which treats of the intuition of naked truths in the understanding, explaining how they are of two kinds and how the soul is to conduct itself with respect to them.

1. In order to speak properly of this intuition of naked truths which is conveyed to the understanding, the writer would need God to take his hand and to guide his pen ; for know, dear reader, that to describe what they are to the soul in themselves surpasses all words. But, since I speak not of them here of set purpose, but only that through them I may instruct the soul and direct it to Divine union, I shall suffer myself to speak of them here in a brief and modified form, as is sufficient for the fulfilment of that intention.

2. This kind of vision (or, to speak more properly, of knowledge of naked truths) is very different from that of which we have just spoken in the twenty-fourth chapter. For it is not like seeing bodily things with the understanding ; it consists rather in comprehending and seeing with the understanding the truths of God, whether of things that are, that have been or that will be, which is in close conformity with the spirit of prophecy, as perchance we shall show hereafter.

3. Here it is to be observed that this kind of knowledge is distinguishable according to two divisions : the one kind comes to the soul with respect to the Creator ; the other with respect to creatures, as we have said. And, although both kinds are very delectable to the soul, yet the delight caused in it by the kind that relates to God is comparable to nothing whatsoever, and there are no words or terms wherein it can be described. This kind of knowledge is of God Himself, and the delight is in God Himself, whereof David says : There is naught soever like to Him. For this kind of knowledge comes to the soul in direct relation to God, when the soul, after a most lofty manner, has a perception of some attribute of God—of His omnipotence, of His might, of His goodness and sweetness, etc. ; and, whensoever it has such a

¹ So Alc. A, B omit : 'and in . . . the first.' E.p. has : 'treating, in this first chapter, intellectual knowledge.'

perception, that which is perceived cleaves to the soul. Inasmuch as this is pure contemplation, the soul clearly sees that there is no way wherein it can say aught concerning it, save to speak, in certain general terms, of the abundance of delight and blessing which it has felt, and this is expressed by souls that experience it ; but not to the end that what the soul has experienced and perceived may be wholly apprehended.

4. And thus David, speaking for himself when something of this kind had happened to him, used only common and general terms, saying : *Judicia Domini vera, justificata in semetipsa. Desiderabilia super aurum et lapidem pretiosum multum ; et dulciora super mel et favum.*¹ Which signifies : The judgments of God²—that is, the virtues and attributes which we perceive in God—are in themselves true, justified, more to be desired than gold and very much more than precious stones, and sweeter than the honeycomb and the honey. And concerning Moses we read that, in a most lofty manifestation of knowledge that God gave to him from Himself on an occasion when He had passed before him, He said only that which can be expressed in the common terms above mentioned. And it was so that, when the Lord passed before him in that manifestation of knowledge, Moses quickly prostrated himself upon the ground,³ saying : *Dominator Domine Deus, misericors et clemens, patiens, et multe miserationis, ac verax. Qui custodis misericordiam in millia.*⁴ Which signifies : Ruler,⁵ Lord, God, merciful and clement, patient, and of great compassion, and true, that keepeth mercy promised unto thousands. Here it is seen that Moses could not express that which he had learned from God in one single manifestation of knowledge, and therefore he expressed and gave utterance to it in all these words. And although at times, when such knowledge is given to a soul, words are used, the soul is quite aware that it has expressed no part of what it has felt ; for it knows that there is no fit name by which it is able to name it. And thus S. Paul, when he was granted that lofty knowledge of God, made no attempt to describe it, saying only that it was not lawful for man to speak of it.

¹ Psalm xviii, 10-11 [A.V., xix, 9-10].

² E.p. : ' That which we judge and perceive concerning God.'

³ A, B omit ' quickly.'

⁴ Exodus xxxiv, 6-7.

⁵ [Lit., ' Emperor.']

5. These Divine manifestations of knowledge which have respect to God never relate to particular matters, inasmuch as they concern the Chief Beginning, and therefore can have no particular reference, unless it be a question of some truth concerning a thing less than God, which in some way is seen together with the rest ; but these Divine manifestations themselves—no, in no way whatsoever.¹ And these lofty manifestations of knowledge can only come to the soul that attains to union with God, for they are themselves that union; and to receive them is equivalent to a certain contact with the Divinity² which the soul experiences, and thus it is God Himself Who is perceived and tasted therein. And, although He cannot be experienced manifestly and clearly, as in glory, this touch of knowledge and delight is nevertheless so sublime and profound that it penetrates the substance³ of the soul, and the devil cannot meddle with it or produce any manifestation like to it, for there is no such thing, neither is there aught that compares with it, neither can he infuse pleasure or delight that is like to it ; for such kinds of knowledge savour of the Divine Essence and of eternal life, and the devil cannot counterfeit a thing so lofty.

6. Nevertheless he might make some pretence of imitating it, by representing to the soul certain great things and pregnant matters which can readily be perceived by the senses and endeavouring to persuade the soul that these are God ; but not in such wise that it enters into the substance⁴ of the soul and of a sudden⁵ renews it and enkindles it with love, as do the manifestations of God. For there are certain kinds of knowledge, and certain of these touches wrought by God in the substance of the soul, which enrich it after such wise that not only does one of them suffice to take from the soul once and for all the whole of the imperfections that it had itself been unable to throw off during its whole life, but it leaves the soul full of virtues and blessings⁶ from God.

7. And these touches are so delectable to the soul, and of a delight so intimate, that if it received only one of them it

¹ E.p. : 'and therefore can have no particular reference, unless this knowledge should be extended to some other truth concerning something less than God which is capable of being described in some way ; but these general manifestations—no.' ² E.p. has 'Divine Truth' for 'Divinity.'

³ E.p. : 'the inmost part.'

⁴ E.p. : 'into the very interior part.' A : 'into the wisdom.'

⁵ So Alc., D. A, B, C, P, e.p. have : 'and sublimely.' [The difference is slight : *subidamente* for *subitamente*.]

⁶ A, erroneously, has : 'and visions.'

would consider itself well rewarded for all the trials that it had suffered in this life, even had they been innumerable ; and it is so greatly encouraged and given such energy to suffer many things for God's sake that it suffers above all in seeing that it suffers not more.

8. The soul cannot attain to these lofty degrees of knowledge by means of any comparison or imagination of its own, because¹ they are loftier than all these ; and so God works them in the soul without making use of its own capacities. Wherefore, at certain times, when the soul is least thinking of it and least desiring it, God is wont to give it these Divine touches, by causing it certain recollections of Himself. And these are sometimes suddenly caused in the soul by its mere recollection of certain things—sometimes of very small things. And they are so readily perceived² that at times they cause not only the soul, but also the body, to tremble. But at other times they come to pass in the spirit when it is very tranquil, without any kind of trembling, but with a sudden³ sense of delight and spiritual refreshment.

9. At other times, again, they come when the soul repeats or hears some word, from Scripture or possibly from some other source ; but they are not always equally efficacious and sensible, for oftentimes they are extremely faint ; yet, however faint they may be, one of these recollections and touches of God is more profitable to the soul than many other kinds of knowledge or many meditations upon the creatures and the works of God. And, since these manifestations of knowledge come to the soul suddenly,⁴ and independently of its own free will, it must neither desire to have them, nor desire not to have them⁵ ; but must merely be humble and resigned concerning them, and God will perform His work how and when He wills.

10. And I say not that the soul should behave in the same negative manner with regard to these apprehensions as with regard to the rest, for, as we have said, they are a part of the union, towards which we are directing the soul ; to which end we are teaching it to detach and strip itself of all other apprehensions. And the means by which God will

¹ E.p. adds : ' as we have said.'

² E.p. : ' And they are so efficacious.'

³ So Alc. The other authorities read : ' with a sublime' [*subido* for *súbito*, as above].

⁴ E.p. adds : ' as we have said.'

⁵ E.p. : ' it must neither strive to have them nor strive not to have them.'

state of oblivion and even worse—since he becomes incapable of reasoning or of remembering his natural functions and necessities. It will be argued that God destroys not nature, but rather perfects it ; and that from this teaching there follows necessarily its destruction, when that which pertains to morality and reason is not practised and is forgotten, neither is that which is natural practised ; for (it will be said) none of these things can be remembered, when the soul is deprived of¹ forms and kinds of knowledge which are the means of remembrance.

8. To this I reply that, the more nearly the memory attains to union with God, the more do definite kinds of knowledge become perfected within it, until it loses them entirely—namely, when in perfection it attains to the state of union. And thus, at the beginning, when this is first taking place, the soul cannot but fall into great oblivion with respect to all things, since forms and kinds of knowledge are being erased from it ; and therefore it is guilty of many omissions in its outward behaviour and usage—forgetting to eat or drink, and being uncertain if it has done this or no, if it has seen this or no, if it has said this or no—through the absorption of the memory in God.² But when once it attains to the habit of union, which is a supreme blessing, it no longer has these periods of oblivion, after this manner, in that which pertains to natural and moral reason ; actions which are seemly and necessary it performs rather with a much greater degree of perfection, although it performs them no longer by means of forms and manners of knowledge pertaining to the memory. For, when it has the habit of union, which is a supernatural state, memory and the other faculties fail it completely in their natural functions, and pass beyond their natural limitations, even to God, Who is supernatural. And thus, when the memory is transformed in God, it cannot receive impressions of forms or manners of knowledge. Wherefore the functions of the memory and of the other faculties in this state are all Divine ; for, when at last God possesses the faculties and has become the entire master of them, through their transformation into Himself, it is He Himself Who moves and commands them divinely, according

¹ E.p. : 'when the soul pays no heed to.'

² E.p. abbreviates : ' . . . union with God, the less it heeds definite kinds of knowledge, and this increases in proportion as it draws nearer to the state of union through the absorption of the memory in God.'

to His Divine Spirit and will ;¹ and the result of this is that the operations of the soul are not distinct, but all that it does is of God, and its operations are Divine, so that, even as S. Paul says, he that is joined unto God becomes one spirit with Him.²

9. Hence it comes to pass that the operations of the soul in union are of the Divine Spirit and are Divine. And hence it comes that the actions of such souls are only those that are seemly and reasonable, and not those that are ill-beseeming. For the Spirit of God teaches them that which they ought to know, and causes them to be ignorant of that which it behoves them not to know, and to remember that which they have to remember, with or without forms, and to forget that which they should forget ; and it makes them love that which they have to love, and not to love that which is not in God. And thus,³ all the first motions of the faculties of such souls are Divine and it is not to be wondered at that the motions and operations of these faculties should be Divine, since they are transformed in the Divine Being.⁴

10.⁵ Of these operations I will give a few examples : let this be one. A person asks another who is in this state to commend him to God. This person will not remember to do so by means of any form or manner of knowledge that remains in his memory concerning that other person ; and if it is right that he should recommend him to God (which will be if God desires to receive a prayer for that person), He will move his will and give him a desire to pray for him ; and if God desires not such prayer, that other person will not be able nor will desire to pray,⁶ though he make great efforts to do so ; and at times God will cause him to pray for others of whom he has no knowledge nor has ever heard. And this is because, as I have said, God alone moves the faculties of

¹ E.p. omits the rest of this paragraph and the first sentence of the next.

² 1 Corinthians vi, 17.

³ E.p. substitutes for this sentence : ' For He [i.e., the Spirit of God] specially governs and moves them so that they may perform those actions which are seemly, according to the will and ordinance of God.'

⁴ P. José de Jesús María, in his *Vida y excelencias de la Santísima Virgen María* (I, xl), quotes this and part of the last paragraph from what he claims to be an original MS. of S. John of the Cross, but his text varies considerably from that of any MS. now known. [P. Silverio, however (cf. p. 224, above), considers that this and other similar citations are quite untrustworthy.]

⁵ E.p. omits paragraphs 10, 11, 12, all of which, however, are restored in the edition of 1630.

⁶ Edition of 1630 : ' will not pray nor will desire to pray.'

these souls to do those works which are meet, according to the will and ordinance of God, and they cannot be moved to do others ; and thus the works and prayers of these souls are always effectual. Such were those of the most glorious Virgin Our Lady, who, being raised to this high estate from the beginning, had never the form of any creature¹ imprinted in her soul, neither was moved by such, but was invariably guided by the Holy Spirit.

11. Another example. At a certain time a person in this state has to attend to some necessary business. He will remember it by no kind of form, but, without his knowing how, it will come to his soul,² at the time and in the manner that it ought to come, and that without fail.

12. And not only in these things does the Holy Spirit give such persons light, but in many others, relating both to the present and to the future, and, in many cases, even when they are far distant ; and although at times this comes to pass through intellectual forms, it frequently happens without the intervention of any forms that can be apprehended, so that these persons know not how they know.³ But this comes to them from the Divine Wisdom ; for, since these souls exercise themselves in knowing and apprehending nothing with the faculties,⁴ they come in general, as we have said in the Mount,⁵ to know everything, according to that which the Wise Man says : The worker of all things, who is Wisdom, taught me all things.⁶

13. You will say, perhaps, that the soul will be unable to void and deprive its memory of all forms and fancies to such an extent as to be able to attain to so lofty a state ; for there are two things so difficult that their accomplishment surpasses human ability and strength, namely, to throw off with one's natural powers that which is natural, which is hard enough,⁷ and to attain and be united to the super-

¹ Edition of 1630 : ' of any creature that would turn her aside from God.'

² Edition of 1630 adds here : ' by the stirring up of his memory described above.'

³ Edition of 1630 abbreviates : ' . . . even when they are distant, so that these persons know not how they know.'

⁴ Edition of 1630 : ' and apprehending with the faculties nothing that can impede them.'

⁵ The reference is to the drawing of the Mount of Perfection. Cf. p. xxxiv, above.

⁶ Wisdom vii, 21.

⁷ [*Lit.*, ' which cannot be ' (*que no puede ser*), but this is a well-known Spanish hyperbole describing what is extremely difficult.]

speak here only of the necessary means whereby the memory may place itself actively in this night and purgation, as far as lies in its power. And these means are that the spiritual man must habitually exercise caution, after this manner. All the things that he hears, sees, smells, tastes or touches, he must be careful not to store up or collect in his memory, but he must allow himself to forget them immediately, and this he must accomplish, if need be, with the same efficacy as that with which others contrive to remember them, so that there remains no knowledge or image of them whatsoever in his memory. It must be with him as if they existed not in the world, and his memory must be left free and disencumbered of them, and be tied to no consideration, whether from above or from below, as if he had no faculty of memory; he must freely allow everything to fall into oblivion as though all things were a hindrance to him; and in fact everything that is natural, if one attempt to make use of it in supernatural matters, is a hindrance rather than a help.

15. And if those questions and objections which arose above with respect to the understanding should also arise here (the objections, that is to say, that the soul is doing nothing, is wasting its time and is depriving itself of spiritual blessings which it might well receive through the memory), the answer to this has already been given,¹ and will be given again farther on, in our treatment of the passive night; wherefore there is no need for us to linger here. It is needful only to observe that, although at certain times the benefit of this suspension of forms and kinds of knowledge may not be realized, the spiritual man must not for that reason grow weary, for God will not fail to succour him in His own time. To attain so great a blessing it behoves the soul to endure much and to suffer with patience and hope.

16. And, although it is true that a soul will hardly be found that is moved by God in all things and at all times, and has such continual union with God that, without the mediation of any form, its faculties² are ever moved divinely, there are yet souls who in their operations are very habitually moved by God, and these are not they that move themselves of their own strength, for, as S. Paul says, the sons of God, who are transformed and united in God, are moved by the

¹ E.p.: ' . . . through the memory) much has already been said here in reply to them, and there, too, they have been completely answered.'

² E.p. omits: 'without the mediation of any form.'

Spirit of God,¹ that is, are moved to Divine actions in their faculties. And it is no marvel that their operations should be Divine, since the union of the soul is Divine.

CHAPTER III

Wherein are described three kinds of evil which come to the soul when it enters not into darkness with respect to knowledge and reflections in the memory. Herein is described the first.

1. To three kinds of evil and inconvenience the spiritual man is subject when he persists in desiring to make use of all natural knowledge and reflections of the memory in order to journey toward God, or for any other purpose : two of these are positive and one is privative. The first comes from things of the world ; the second, from the devil ; the third, which is privative, is the impediment and hindrance to Divine union caused and effected in the soul.

2. The first evil, which comes from the world,² consists in the subjection of the soul, through knowledge³ and reflection, to many kinds of harm, such as falsehoods, imperfections, desires, opinions, loss of time, and many other things which breed many kinds of impurity in the soul. And it is clear that the soul must of necessity fall into many perils of falsehood, when it gives way to knowledge and reasoning ; for oftentimes that which is true must appear false, and that which is certain, doubtful ; and contrariwise ; for there is scarcely a single truth of which we can have complete knowledge. From all these things the soul is free if the memory enters into darkness with respect to every kind of reflection and knowledge.

3. Imperfections meet the soul at every step if it sets its memory upon that which it has heard, seen, touched, smelt and tasted ; for there must then perforce cling to it some affection, whether this be of pain, of fear, of hatred, of vain hope, vain enjoyment, vainglory, etc. ; for all these are, at the least, imperfections, and at times are downright⁴ venial sins ; and they leave much impurity most subtly in the soul, even though the reflections and the knowledge have relation

¹ Romans viii, 14.

² E.p. : ' from the things of the world.'

³ A, B : ' through much knowledge.'

⁴ [*Lit.*, ' good. '] E.p. reads ' known ' for ' downright.'

to God.¹ And it is also clear that they engender desires within the soul, for these arise naturally from the knowledge and reflections aforementioned, and if one wishes only to have this knowledge and these reflections, even that is a desire. And it is clearly seen that many occasions of judging others will come likewise ; for, in using its memory, the soul cannot fail to come upon that which is good and bad in others, and, in such a case, that which is evil oftentimes seems good, and that which is good, evil. I believe there is none who can completely free himself from all these kinds of evil, save by blinding his memory and leading it into darkness with regard to all these things.

4. And if you tell me that a man is well able to conquer all these things when they come to him, I reply that, if he sets store by knowledge, this is simply and utterly impossible ; for countless imperfections and follies insinuate themselves into such knowledge, some of which are so subtle and minute that, without the soul's realization thereof, they cling to it of their own accord, even as pitch clings to the man that touches it ; so that it is better to conquer once for all by denying the memory completely. You will say likewise that by so doing the soul deprives itself of many good thoughts and meditations upon God, which are of great profit to it and whereby God grants it favours. I reply that to this end purity of soul is of the greatest profit,² and this consists in clinging to no creature affection, or temporal affection, or effective advenience ; concerning which I believe that they cannot but cling to the soul because of the imperfection which the faculties have in their own operations. Wherefore it is better to learn to silence the faculties and to cause them to be still, so that God may speak. For, as we have said, in order to attain to this state the natural operations must be lost from sight, and this happens, as the prophet says, when the soul comes into solitude, according to these its faculties, and God speaks to its heart.³

5. And if you again reply, saying that the soul will have

¹ So Alc., A, B. E.p. reads : ' . . . venial sins : all of these [being] things which disturb perfect purity and most simple union with God.'

² E.p. inserts, after ' grants it favours ' : ' I reply that that which is purely God and assists this simple, pure, universal and confused knowledge is not to be rejected, but that which detains [the memory] in images, forms, figures or similitudes of created things.' It continues : ' And, speaking of this purgation, in order that God may accomplish it, purity of soul is of the greatest profit. . . . ' The insertion is also found in the edition of 1630.

³ Hosea ii, 14.

no blessing unless it meditates upon God and allows its memory to reflect upon Him, and that many distractions and negligences will continually enter it, I say that it is impossible, if the memory is recollected with regard both to things of the next life and to things here below, that evils or distractions should enter it, nor other follies or vices (the which things always enter when the memory wanders), since there is no exit or entrance for them. This would come to pass if, when we had shut the door upon considerations and reflections concerning things above, we opened it to things below ; but in this state we shut the door to all things whence distraction may come,¹ causing the memory to be still and dumb, and the ear of the spirit to be attentive, in silence, to God alone, saying with the prophet : Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.² It was thus that the Spouse in the Songs said that his Bride should be, in these words : My sister is a garden enclosed and a fountain sealed³—that is to say, enclosed and sealed against all things that may enter.

6. Let the soul, then, remain 'enclosed,' without anxieties and troubles, and He that entered in bodily form to His disciples when the doors were shut, and gave them peace,⁴ though they neither knew nor thought that this was possible nor knew how it was possible,⁵ will enter spiritually into the soul, without its knowing how He does so, when the doors of its faculties—memory, understanding and will—are enclosed against all apprehensions. And He will fill them with peace, coming down upon the soul, as the prophet says, like a river of peace,⁶ and taking from it all the misgivings and suspicions, disturbances and darknesses which caused it to fear that it was lost or was on the way to perdition. Let it not lose its anxiety to pray, and let it wait in detachment and emptiness, for its blessing will not tarry.

CHAPTER IV⁷

Which treats of the second kind of evil that may come to the soul from the devil by way of the natural apprehensions of the memory.

1. The second positive evil that may come to the soul by means of the knowledge of the memory proceeds from the

¹ [*Lit.*, 'whence that may come.'] E.p.: 'We shut the door to all things which are a hindrance to union, and whence distraction may come.'

² 1 Kings [A.V., 1 Samuel] iii, 10. ³ Canticles iv, 12.

⁴ [S. John xx, 19.]

⁵ E.p. omits: 'nor knew how it was possible.'

⁶ Isaiah xlviii, 18.

⁷ P. omits this chapter.

devil, who by this means obtains great influence over the soul. For he can continually bring it new forms, knowledge and reflections, by means whereof he can taint the soul with pride, avarice, wrath, envy, etc., and cause it unjust hatred, or vain love, and deceive it in many ways. And beside this, he is wont to leave impressions,¹ and to implant them in the fancy, in such wise that those that are false appear true, and those that are true, false. And finally all the greatest deceptions which are caused by the devil, and the evils that he brings to the soul, enter by way of knowledge and reflections of the memory. Thus if the memory enter into darkness with respect to them all, and be annihilated in its oblivion to them, it shuts the door altogether upon this evil which proceeds from the devil, and frees itself from all these things, which is a great blessing. For the devil has no power over the soul unless it be through the operations of its faculties, principally by means of knowledge,² since upon these depend almost all the other operations of the other faculties. Wherefore, if the memory be annihilated with respect to them, the devil can do naught ; for he finds no foothold, and without a foothold he is powerless.³

2. I would that spiritual persons might clearly see how many kinds of harm are wrought by evil spirits in their souls by means of the memory, when they devote themselves frequently to making use of it, and how many kinds of sadness and affliction and vain and evil⁴ joys they have, both with respect to their thoughts about God, and also with respect to the things of the world ; and how many impurities are left rooted in their spirits ;⁵ and likewise how greatly they are distracted from the highest recollection, which consists in fixing the whole soul, according to all its faculties— upon the one incomprehensible Good, and in withdrawing it from all things that can be apprehended, since these are not incomprehensible Good. This is a great good (although less good results from this emptiness than from the soul's fixing itself upon God), simply because it is the cause which frees the soul from many griefs and afflictions and sorrows, over and above the imperfections and sins from which it is delivered.

¹ [*Lit.*, 'to leave things.' A, B, e.p. : 'to fix things.'

² E.p. : 'by means of forms and species.'

³ [*Lit.*, 'he finds nothing to seize, and with nothing he can do nothing.'

⁴ E.p. omits : 'and evil.'

⁵ A/c. omits : 'and how many . . . spirits.'

by Him, for, as the Wise Man says, He removes Himself from thoughts which are without understanding.¹ Even if a man received no other benefit from this forgetfulness and emptiness of the memory than being freed thereby from troubles and disturbances, it would be a great gain and blessing for him. For the troubles and disturbances which are bred in the soul by adversity² are of no use or profit³ for bringing prosperity;⁴ indeed, as a rule, they make things worse and also harm the soul itself. Wherefore David said : Of a truth every man is disquieted vainly.⁵ For it is clear that to disquiet oneself is always vain since it brings profit to none. And thus, even if everything came to an end and were destroyed, and if all things went wrong and turned to adversity, it would be vain to disturb oneself ; for this hurts a man rather than relieves him. And to bear everything with equable and peaceful tranquillity not only brings the soul the profit of many blessings, but likewise causes it, even in the midst of its adversities, to form a truer judgement about them and to find them a fitting remedy.

4. For this reason Solomon, being well acquainted both with the evil and with the benefit of which we are speaking, said : I knew that there was naught better for man than to rejoice and to do good in his life.⁶ By this he meant that, in everything that happens to us, howsoever adverse it be, we should rejoice rather than be troubled, so that we may not lose a blessing which is greater than any kind of prosperity—namely, tranquillity and peace of mind in all things, which, whether they bring adversity or prosperity, we must bear in the same manner. This a man would never lose if he were not only to forget all kinds of knowledge and put aside all thoughts, but would even withdraw himself from hearing, sight and commerce with others, in so far as was possible for him. Our nature is so frail and so easily moved that, however well it be disciplined, it will hardly fail to stumble upon the remembrance of things which will disturb and change a mind that was in peace and tranquillity when it remembered them not. For this cause said Jeremiah : With memory I will remember, and my soul will fail me for pain.⁷

¹ Wisdom i, 5.

² [*Lit.*, 'by adverse things and happenings.']

³ E.p. omits : 'or profit.'

⁴ [*Lit.*, 'for the prosperity of the same things and happenings.']

E.p. omits : 'things and.'

⁵ Psalm xxxviii, 7 [A.V., xxxix, 6].

⁶ Ecclesiastes iii, 12.

⁷ Lamentations iii, 20.

CHAPTER VII

Which treats of the second kind of apprehension of the memory—the imaginary—and of supernatural knowledge.

1. Although in writing of natural apprehensions of the first kind we also gave instruction concerning the imaginary, which are likewise natural, it was well to make this division because of the love which the memory preserves for other forms and kinds of knowledge, which are of supernatural things, such as visions, revelations, locutions and feelings which come in a supernatural way. When these things have passed through the soul, there is wont to remain impressed upon it some image, form, figure or notion, whether in the soul or in the memory or fancy, at times very vividly and effectively. Concerning these images it is also needful to give advice, lest the memory be encumbered with them and they be a hindrance to its union with God in perfect and pure hope.

2. And I say that the soul, in order to attain that blessing, must never reflect upon the clear and distinct objects which may have passed through its mind by supernatural means, so as to preserve within it the forms and figures and knowledge of those things. For we must ever bear in mind this principle : the greater heed the soul gives to any clear and distinct apprehensions, whether natural or supernatural, the less capacity and preparation it has for entering into the abyss of faith, wherein are absorbed all things else. For, as has been said, no supernatural forms or knowledge which can be apprehended by the memory are God,¹ and, in order to reach God, the soul must void itself of all that is not God. The memory must also strip itself of all these forms and notions, that it may unite itself with God in hope.² For all possession is contrary to hope, which, as S. Paul says, belongs to that which is not possessed.³ Wherefore, the more the memory dispossesses itself, the greater is its hope ; and the more it has of hope, the more it has of union with God ; for, with respect to God, the more the soul hopes, the more it attains. And it hopes most when it is most completely

¹ E.p. adds : ' nor do they bear any proportion to Him nor can serve as proximate means to union with Him.'

² E.p. : ' . . . unite itself with God in a manner of mystical and perfect hope.'

³ Hebrews xi, 1.

dispossessed ; and, when it shall be perfectly dispossessed, it will remain with the perfect possession of God,¹ in Divine union. But there are many who will not deprive themselves of the sweetness and delight which memory finds in those forms and notions, wherefore they attain not to supreme possession and perfect sweetness. For he that renounces not all that he possesses cannot be the disciple of Christ.²

CHAPTER VIII

*Of the evils which may be caused to the soul by the knowledge of supernatural things, if it reflect upon them. Says how many these evils are.*³

1. The spiritual man incurs the risk of five kinds of evil if he gives heed to, and reflects upon, these forms and notions which are impressed upon him by the things which pass through his mind in a supernatural way.

2. The first is that he is frequently deceived, and mistakes one thing for another. The second is that he is like to fall, and is exposed to the danger of falling, into some form of presumption or vanity. The third is that the devil has many occasions of deceiving him by means of the apprehensions aforementioned. The fourth is that he is hindered as to union in hope with God. The fifth is that, for the most part, he has a low judgement of God.

3. As to the first evil, it is clear that, if the spiritual man gives heed to these forms and notions, and reflects upon them, he must frequently be deceived in his judgement of them ; for, as no man can have a complete understanding of the things that pass through his imagination naturally, nor a perfect and certain judgement about them, he will be much less able still to have this with respect to supernatural things, which are above our capacity to understand, and occur but rarely. Wherefore he will often think that what comes but from his fancy pertains to God ; and often, too, that what is of God is of the devil, and what is of the devil is of God. And very often there will remain with him deep impressions of forms and notions concerning the good and evil of others, or of himself, together with other figures which

¹ E. p. adds : ' in so far as may be in this life.'

² S. Luke xiv, 33.

³ A, B, e. p. add : ' and treats here of the first.'

have been presented to him : these he will consider to be most certain and true, when they will not be so, but very great falsehoods. And others will be true, and he will judge them to be false, although this error I consider safer, as it is apt to arise from humility.

4. And, even if he be not deceived as to their truth, he may well be deceived as to their quantity or quality,¹ thinking that little things are great, and great things, little. And with respect to their quality, he may consider what is in his imagination to be this or that, when it is something quite different ; he may put, as Isaiah says, darkness for light, and light for darkness, and bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.² And finally, even though he be correct as to one thing, it will be a marvel if he goes not astray with respect to the next ; for, although he may not desire to apply his judgement to the judging of them, yet, if he apply it in paying heed to them, this will be sufficient for some evil to cling to him as a result of it,³ at least passively ; if not evil of this kind, then of one of the four other kinds of which we shall shortly speak.

5. It behoves the spiritual man, therefore, lest he fall into this evil of being deceived in his judgement, not to desire to apply his judgement in order to know the nature of his own condition or feelings, or the nature of such and such a vision, notion or feeling ; neither should he desire to know it or to give heed⁴ to it. This he should only desire in order to speak of it to his spiritual father, who will then teach him how to void his memory of these apprehensions.⁵ For, whatever may be their intrinsic nature, they cannot help him to love God as much as the smallest act of living faith and hope performed in the emptiness and renunciation of all things.⁶

CHAPTER IX

Of the second kind of evil, which is the peril of falling into self-esteem and vain presumption.

1. The supernatural apprehensions of the memory already described are also a great occasion to spiritual persons of

¹ E.p. : ' quality and value.'

² Isaiah v, 20.

³ The 1630 edition adds : ' and for him to suffer from it.'

⁴ E.p. : ' give much heed.'

⁵ E.p. adds : ' or [to do] what in his particular case may be most expedient, with this same detachment.'

⁶ E.p. : ' in the emptiness of all this.'

falling into some kind of presumption or vanity, if they give heed to them and set store by them. For, even as he who knows nothing of them is quite free from falling into this vice, since he sees in himself no occasion of presumption, even so, in contrary wise, he that has experience of them has close at hand an occasion for thinking himself to be something, since he possesses these supernatural communications. For, although it is true that he may attribute them to God, hold himself¹ to be unworthy of them, and give God the thanks, yet nevertheless he is wont to keep in his spirit a certain secret satisfaction, and a self-esteem and a sense of their value, from which, without his knowledge, there will come to him great spiritual pride.

2. This may be observed very clearly by spiritual men who will consider the dislike and aversion caused them by any who do not praise their spirituality, or esteem the experiences which they enjoy; and in the mortification which they suffer when they think or are told that others have just those same experiences, or greater ones. All this arises from secret self-esteem and pride, and they cannot manage to understand that they are steeped in pride up to their very eyes. For they think that a certain degree of recognition of their own wretchedness suffices, and, although they have this, they are full of secret self-esteem and satisfaction, taking more delight in their own spirituality and spiritual gifts² than in those of others. They are like the Pharisee who gave thanks to God that he was not as other men, and that he practised such and such virtues, whereat he was satisfied with himself and presumed thereon.³ Such men, although they speak not like the Pharisee in so many words, habitually resemble him in spirit. And some of them even become so proud that they are worse than the devil. For, observing in themselves, as they imagine, certain apprehensions and feelings concerning God which are devout and sweet, they become self-satisfied to such an extent that they believe themselves to be very near God; and those that are not like themselves they consider very low and despise them after the manner of the Pharisee.⁴

3. In order to flee from this pestilent evil, abhorrent in the eyes of God, they must consider two things. First, that

¹ E.p. : 'feel himself.'

² E.p. : 'spirituality and gifts.'

³ S. Luke xviii, 11-12.

⁴ A, B : 'and despise them as the Pharisee despised the publican.'

virtue consists not in apprehensions and feelings concerning God, howsoever sublime they be, nor in anything of this kind that a man can feel within himself ; but, on the contrary, in that which has nothing to do with feeling—namely, a great humility and contempt of oneself and of all that pertains to oneself, firmly rooted in the soul and keenly felt by it ; and likewise in being glad that others feel in this very way concerning oneself and in not wishing to be of any account in the esteem¹ of others.

4. Secondly, it must be noted that all visions, revelations and feelings coming from Heaven, and any thoughts that may proceed from these, are of less worth than the least act of humility ; for such an act has the effects of charity. The humble soul esteems not its own things nor strives to attain them ; nor thinks evil, save of itself ; nor thinks any good thing of itself, but only of others. It is well, therefore, that these supernatural apprehensions should not attract men's eyes, but that they should strive to forget them in order that they may be free.

CHAPTER X

Of the third evil that may come to the soul from the devil, through the imaginary apprehensions of the memory.

1. From all that has been said above it may be clearly understood and inferred how great is the evil that may come to the soul from the devil by way of these supernatural apprehensions. For not only can he represent to the memory and the fancy many false forms and notions, which seem true and good, impressing them on spirit and sense with great effectiveness and certifying them to be true by means of suggestion (so that it appears to the soul that it cannot be otherwise, but that everything is even as he represents it ; for, as he transfigures himself into an angel of light, he appears as light to the soul) ; but he may also tempt the soul in many ways with respect to true knowledge, which is of God, moving its desires² and affections, whether spiritual or sensual, in unruly fashion with respect to these ; for, if the soul takes pleasure in such apprehensions, it is very easy for the devil to cause its desires and affections to grow³ within it,

¹ [*Lit.*, 'in the heart.']

² A, B : 'its will and desires.'

³ A, B and many of the editions (not, however, e.p.) have *creer* ('believe') for *crecer* ('grow'), so that we should have to read : 'to cause it to believe its desires and affections.'

and to make it fall into spiritual gluttony and other evils.

2. And, in order the better to do this, he is wont to suggest and give pleasure, sweetness and delight to the senses with respect to these same things of God, so that the soul is corrupted and bewildered¹ by that sweetness, and is thus blinded with that pleasure and sets its eyes on pleasure rather than on love (or, at least, very much more than upon love), and gives more heed to the apprehensions than to the detachment and emptiness which are found in faith and hope and love of God. And from this he may go on gradually to deceive the soul and cause it to believe his falsehoods with great facility. For to the soul that is blind falsehood no longer appears to be falsehood, nor does evil appear to be evil, etc. ; for darkness appears to be light, and light, darkness ; and hence that soul comes to commit a thousand foolish errors,² whether with respect to natural things, or to moral things, or to spiritual things ; so that that which was wine to it becomes vinegar. All this happens to the soul because it began not, first of all, by denying itself the pleasure of those supernatural things. At first this is a small matter, and not very harmful, and the soul has therefore no misgivings, and allows it to continue, and it grows,³ like the grain of mustard seed, into a tall tree. For a small error at the beginning, as they say, becomes a great error in the end.

3. Wherefore, in order to flee from this great evil, which comes⁴ from the devil, the soul must not desire to have any pleasure in such things, because such pleasure will most surely lead it to become blind and to fall. For of their own nature, and without the help of the devil,⁵ pleasure and delight and sweetness blind⁶ the soul. And this was the meaning of David when he said : Peradventure darkness shall blind me in my delights and I shall have the night for my light.⁷

¹ [The two verbs, in the original, have very definite and concrete meanings, 'sweetened with honey' and 'dazzled by a lamp' respectively.]

² E.p. adds here : 'so that that which was wine to it becomes vinegar,' omitting this same phrase where it occurs below.

³ E.p. : 'to continue and grow.'

⁴ E.p. : 'which may come.'

⁵ E.p. omits : 'and without the help of the devil.'

⁶ E.p. : 'dull and blind.'

⁷ Psalm cxxxviii, 11 [A.V., cxxxix, 11].

CHAPTER XI

Of the fourth evil that comes to the soul from the distinct supernatural apprehensions of the memory, which is the hindrance that it interposes to union.

1. Concerning this fourth evil there is not much to be said, since it has already continually been expounded in this third book, wherein we have proved how, in order that the soul may come to union with God in hope, it must renounce every possession of the memory ; for, in order that its hope in God may be perfect, it must have naught in the memory that is not God. And, as we have likewise said, no form or figure or image or other kind of knowledge that may come to the memory can be God, neither can be like Him, whether it be of heaven or of earth,¹ natural or supernatural, even as David teaches, when he says : Lord, among the gods there is none like unto Thee.²

2. Wherefore, if the memory desires to pay any heed to any of these things, it hinders the soul from reaching God ; first, because it encumbers it, and next because, the more the soul has of possession, the less it has of hope.³ Wherefore it is needful for the soul to be stripped of the distinct forms and notions of supernatural things, and to become oblivious to them, so that there may be no hindrance to its union with God according to the memory in perfect hope.

CHAPTER XII

Of the fifth evil that may come to the soul in supernatural imaginary forms and apprehensions, which is a low and unseemly judgement of God.

1. No less serious is the fifth evil that comes to the soul from its desire to retain in the memory and imagination the said forms and images of things that are supernaturally communicated to it, above all if it desires to take them as a means to Divine union. For it is a very easy thing to judge of the Being and greatness of God less worthily and nobly

¹ E.p. omits : ' whether it be of heaven or of earth.'

² Psalm lxxxv, 8 [A.V., lxxxvi, 8].

³ E.p. : ' of perfection of hope.'

than befits His incomprehensible nature ; for, although our reason and judgement may form no express conception that God is like any one of these things, yet the very consideration of these apprehensions, if in fact the soul considers them, makes and causes it not to esteem God,¹ or not to feel concerning Him, as highly as faith teaches, since faith tells us that He is incomparable, incomprehensible, and so forth. For, besides the fact that the soul takes from God all that it gives to the creature, it is natural that, by means of its consideration of these apprehensible things, there should be formed within it a certain comparison between such things and God, which prevents it from judging and esteeming God as highly as it ought. For the creatures, whether terrestrial or celestial, and all distinct images and kinds of knowledge,² both natural and supernatural, that can be apprehended by the faculties of the soul, however lofty they be in this life, have no comparison or proportion with the Being of God, since God falls within no genus and no species, as they do, according as the theologians tell us.³ And the soul in this life is not capable of receiving in a clear and distinct manner aught save that which falls into a genus and a species. For this cause S. John says that no man hath seen God at any time.⁴ And Isaiah says that it has not entered into the heart of man what God is like.⁵ And God said to Moses that he could not see Him in this state of life.⁶ Wherefore, he that encumbers his memory and the other faculties of the soul with that which they can comprehend cannot esteem God, neither feel concerning Him, as he ought.

2. Let us make a comparison on a lower scale. It is clear that the more a man fixes his eyes⁷ upon the servants of a king, and the more notice he takes of them, the less notice does he take of the king himself, and the less does he esteem him ; for, although this comparison be not formally and distinctly present in the understanding, it is inherent in the act, since, the more attention the man gives to the servants, the more he takes from their lord ; and he cannot have a very high opinion of the king if the servants appear to him to be of any importance while they are in the presence of the

¹ E.p. abbreviates : ' the very consideration of these apprehensions makes the soul not to esteem God . . . '

² E.p. : ' and all the forms and images.'

³ E.p. ends this sentence at ' no species.'

⁵ Isaiah lxiv, 4.

⁷ E.p. : ' fixes the eyes of his esteem.'

⁴ S. John i, 18.

⁶ Exodus xxxiii, 20.

king, their lord. Even so does the soul treat its God when it pays heed to the creatures¹ aforementioned. This comparison, however, is on a very low scale, for, as we have said, God is of another being than His creatures in that He is at an infinite distance from them all. For this reason they must all be banished from sight, and the soul must withdraw its gaze from them in all their forms, that it may set its gaze on God through faith and hope.²

3. Wherefore those who not only pay heed to the imaginary apprehensions aforementioned, but suppose God to be like to some of them, and think that by means of them they will be able to attain to union with God, have already gone far astray and will ever continue to lose the light³ of faith in the understanding, through which this faculty is united with God; neither will they grow in the loftiness of hope, by means whereof the memory is united with God in hope,⁴ which must be brought about through disunion from all that is of the imagination.

CHAPTER XIII

*Of the benefits which the soul receives through banishing from itself the apprehensions of the imagination. This chapter answers a certain objection and describes a difference which exists between apprehensions that are imaginary, natural and supernatural.*⁵

1. The benefits that come from voiding the imagination of imaginary forms can be clearly observed in the five evils aforementioned which they inflict upon the soul, if it desires to retain them, even as we also said of the natural forms. But, apart from these, there are other benefits for the spirit—namely, those of great rest and quiet. For, setting aside that natural rest which the soul obtains when it is free from images and forms, it likewise becomes free from anxiety as to whether they are good or evil, and as to how it must behave with respect to the one and to the other. Nor has it to waste the labour and time of its spiritual masters, requiring them to ascertain if these things are good or evil, and if they are of this kind or of another; for the soul has no need

¹ A, B, e.p.: 'to the things.'

² E.p.: 'and perfect hope.'

³ E.p.: 'and profit not greatly by the light.'

⁴ E.p. omits: 'in hope.'

⁵ So Alc., e.p. The other authorities have the first sentence of the title only.

to desire to know all this if it gives no heed to them.¹ The time and energies which it would have wasted in dealing with these images and forms² can be better employed in another and a more profitable exercise, which is that of the will with respect to God, and in having a care to seek detachment and poverty of spirit and sense, which consists in desiring earnestly to be without any support and consolation that can be apprehended, whether interior or exterior. This is well practised when we desire and strive to strip ourselves of these forms, since from this there will proceed no less a benefit than that of approach to God (Who has no image, neither form nor figure) and this will be the greater according as the soul withdraws itself the more completely from all forms, images and figures of the imagination.³

2. But perchance you will say : ' Why do many spiritual persons counsel the soul to strive to profit by the communications and feelings which come from God, and to desire to receive them from Him, that it may have something to give Him ; since, if He gives us nothing, we shall give Him nothing likewise ? And wherefore does S. Paul say : Quench not the Spirit ?⁴ And the Spouse to the Bride : Set me as a seal⁵ upon thy heart and as a seal upon thine arm ?⁶ This certainly denotes some kind of apprehension. And, according to the instruction given above, not only must all this not be striven after, but, although God sends it, it must be rejected and cast aside. But surely it is clear that, since God gives it, He gives it to a good purpose, and it will have a good effect. We must not throw away pearls. And it is even a kind of pride to be unwilling to receive the things of God, as if we could do without them and were self-sufficient.'

3. In order to meet this objection it is necessary to recall what we said in the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters⁷ of the second book, where to a great extent this question is answered. For we said there that the good that overflows in the soul from supernatural apprehensions, when they come from a good source, is produced passively in the soul at that very instant⁸ when they are represented to the senses, without

¹ E.p. adds : ' but [needs] only to reject them in the sense already mentioned.'

² E.p. abbreviates : ' which would have been wasted upon this.'

³ E.p. omits : ' of the imagination.'

⁴ 1 Thessalonians v, 19.

⁵ D, P : ' as a sign.'

⁶ Canticles viii, 6.

⁷ More correctly, in Chaps. xvi and xvii.

⁸ E.p. omits : ' at that very instant.'

the working of any operation of the faculties. Wherefore it is unnecessary for the will to perform the act of receiving them ; for, as we have also said, if at that time the soul should try to labour with its faculties,¹ the effect of its own base and natural operation would be to hinder the supernatural graces² which God is even then working in it rather than that, through these apprehensions, God should cause it to derive any benefit from its active exertion. Nay, rather, as the spirituality coming from those imaginary apprehensions is given passively to the soul, even so must the soul conduct itself passively with respect to them, setting no store by its inward or outward actions.³ To do this is to preserve the feelings that come from God, for in this way they are not lost through the soul's base manner of working. Neither is this to quench the spirit ; for the spirit would be quenched by the soul if it desired to behave in another manner than that whereby God is leading it. And this it would do if, when God had given it spiritual graces⁴ passively, as He does in these apprehensions, it should then desire to exert itself actively with respect to them, by labouring⁵ with its understanding⁶ or by seeking to find something in them. And this is clear because, if the soul desires to labour at that time with its own exertions, its work cannot be more than natural,⁷ for of itself it is capable of no more ; for supernaturally⁸ it neither moves itself nor can move itself, but it is God that moves the soul and brings it to this state.⁹ And thus, if the soul at that time desires to labour with its own exertions (as far as lies in its power), its active working will hinder the passive work¹⁰ that God is communicating to it, which is that of the Spirit.¹¹ It will be setting itself to its own work, which is of another and a lowlier kind than that which God

¹ A, B: 'labour with the favour of its faculties.' E.p.: 'labour according to the ability of its faculties.'

² [Lit., 'the supernatural.']

³ E.p. adds: 'in the sense mentioned above.'

⁴ [Lit., 'had given it spirit' (or 'spirituality').]

⁵ E.p. inserts: 'of itself.'

⁶ E.p. ends the paragraph here, but the 1630 edition adds 'beyond what God gives it' and continues, with the variants noted below.

⁷ The 1630 edition adds: 'or, at most, if it be supernatural, it must be very much inferior to that which God would work in it, for of itself.'

⁸ The 1630 edition has: 'for in this most sublime and supernatural way.'

⁹ The 1630 edition adds: 'when it gives its consent.'

¹⁰ The 1630 edition has: 'it will, with its working, hinder the work.'

¹¹ [Or 'that of spirituality.' Cf. n. 4, above.]

communicates to it ; for the work of God is passive and supernatural, and that of the soul is active and natural ;¹ and in this way the soul would therefore be quenching the Spirit.

4. That this activity of the soul is an inferior one is also clear from the fact that the faculties of the soul cannot, of their own power,² reflect and act, save upon some form, figure and image, and this is the rind and accident of the substance and spirit which exists below this rind and accident. This substance and spirit unite not with the faculties of the soul in true understanding and love, save when at last the operation of the faculties ceases. For the aim and end of this operation is only that the substance which can be understood and loved and which lies beneath these forms may come to be received in the soul. The difference, therefore, between passive and active operation, and the superiority of the former, corresponds to the difference that exists between that which is being done and that which is done already, or between that which a man tries to attain and effect and that which is already effected. Hence it may likewise be inferred that, if the soul desires to employ its faculties actively on these supernatural apprehensions, wherein God, as we have said, bestows the spirit of them passively, it would do nothing less than abandon what it had already done, in order to do it again, neither would it enjoy what it had done, nor could it produce any other result, by these actions of its own, save that of frustrating what has been done already. For, as we say, the faculties cannot of their own power attain to the spirituality which God bestows upon the soul without any operation of their own. And thus the soul would be directly quenching the spirituality³ which God infuses through these imaginary apprehensions aforementioned if it were to set any store by them ; wherefore it must set them aside, and take up a passive and negative attitude with regard to them.⁴ For at that time God is moving the soul to things which are above its own power and knowledge. For this cause the prophet said : I will stand upon my watch and set my step upon my tower, and I will watch to see that which will be said to me.⁵ This is as though he were to say : I will stand on guard over

¹ The 1630 edition omits : ' for the work . . . active and natural.'

² E.p. : ' cannot, according to their natural and ordinary method.'

³ [Or ' the Spirit.' Cf. p. 251, nn. 4, 11, above.]

⁴ E.p. omits ' and negative ' and adds ' as we say.'

⁵ Habakuk ii, 1. [The original has 'munition' for 'tower' and 'contemplate' for 'watch to see.']

my faculties and I will take no step forward as to my actions, and thus I shall be able to contemplate that which will be said to me—that is, I shall understand and enjoy that which will be communicated to me supernaturally.

5. And that, too, which is alleged of the Spouse is here understood of the love that He entreats of¹ the Bride, the office of which love between two lovers is to make one like to the other² in the principal part of them. Wherefore He tells her to set Him as a seal upon her heart,³ where all the arrows strike that leave the quiver of love, which arrows are the actions and motives of love. So they will all strike Him Who is there as a mark⁴ for them ; and thus all will be for Him, so that the soul will become like Him through the actions and motions of love, until it be transformed in Him. Likewise he bids her set Him as a seal⁵ upon her arm, because the arm performs⁶ the exercise of love, for by the arm the Beloved is sustained and comforted.

6. Therefore all that the soul has to endeavour to do in all the apprehensions which come to it from above, whether imaginary or of any other kind—it matters not if they be visions, locutions, feelings or revelations—is to make no account of the letter or the rind (that is, of what is signified or represented or given to be understood), but to pay heed only to the possession of the love of God which they cause interiorly within the soul. And in this case the soul will make account, not of feelings of sweetness or delight, nor of figures, but of the feelings of love which they cause it. And with this sole end in view it may at times recall that image and apprehension which caused it to love, in order to place the spirit in the way of love. For, though the effect of that apprehension be not so great afterwards, when it is recalled, as it was on the first occasion when it was communicated, yet, when it is recalled, love is renewed, and the mind is lifted up to God, especially when the recollection is of certain figures, images or feelings which are supernatural, and are wont to be sealed and imprinted upon the soul in such a way that they continue for a long time—some of them, indeed, are never taken from the soul. And those that are thus sealed upon the soul produce in it Divine effects of love, sweetness,

¹ A, B : 'that He has to.'

² E.p. omits the rest of this sentence.

³ Canticles viii, 6. A, B : 'as a sign.'

⁴ A, e.p. : 'as a sign.'

⁵ E.p. : 'as a sign.'

⁶ [*Lit.*, 'because in the arm is.']

light and so forth, on almost every occasion when the soul returns to them, sometimes more so and sometimes less ; for it is to this end that they were impressed upon it. And thus this is a great favour for the soul on which God bestows it, for it is as though it had within itself a mine of blessings.

7. The figures which produce effects such as these are deeply implanted in the soul,¹ for they are not like other images and forms that are retained in the fancy. And thus the soul has no need to have recourse to this faculty when it desires to recall them, for it sees that it has them within itself, and that they are as an image seen in the mirror. When it comes to pass that any soul has such figures formally within itself, it will then do well to recall them to the effect of love to which I have referred, for they will be no hindrance to the union of love in faith, since the soul will not desire to be absorbed in the figure, but only to profit by the love ; it will immediately set aside the figure, which will thus rather be a help to it.

8. Only with great difficulty can it be known when these images are imprinted upon the soul, and when they touch but the fancy.² For those which touch the fancy are as apt to occur very frequently as are the others ; for certain persons are accustomed habitually to have imaginary visions in their imagination and fancy, which are presented to them in one form with great frequency ; sometimes because the apprehensive power of the organ concerned is very great, and, however little they reflect upon it, that habitual figure is at once presented and outlined in their fancy ; sometimes because it is the work of the devil ; sometimes, again, because it is the work of God ; but the visions are not formally impressed upon the soul. They may be known, however, by their effects. For those that are natural, or that come from the devil, produce no good effect upon the soul, however frequently they be recalled, nor work its spiritual renewal, but the contemplation of them simply produces aridity. Those that are good, however, produce some good effect when they are recalled, like that³ which was produced in the soul upon the first occasion. But the formal images which

¹ E.p. adds : ' according to its intellectual memory.'

² E.p. : ' . . . when these images touch the spiritual part of the soul directly and when they belong to the fancy.'

³ So e.p. The MSS. [and P. Silverio] read : ' in that.'

are imprinted upon the soul almost invariably produce some effect in it, whensoever they are remembered.

9. He that has experienced these will readily distinguish the one kind from the other, for the great difference¹ between them is very clear to anyone that has experience of them. I will merely say that those which are formally and durably imprinted upon the soul are of very rare occurrence. But, whether they be of this kind or of that, it is good for the soul to desire to understand nothing, save God alone, through faith, in hope. And if anyone makes the objection that to reject these things, if they are good, appears to be pride, I reply that it is not so, but that it is prudent humility to profit by them in the best way, as has been said, and to be guided by that which is safest.

CHAPTER XIV

Which treats of spiritual knowledge in so far as it may concern the memory.

1. We classed spiritual knowledge as the third division of the apprehensions of the memory, not because they belong to the bodily sense of the fancy, as do the rest, for they have no bodily form and image,² but because they are likewise apprehensible by spiritual memory and reminiscence. Now, after the soul has had experience of one of these apprehensions, it can recall it whensoever it will ; and this is not by the effigy³ and image that the apprehension has left in the bodily sense, for, since this is of bodily form, as we say, it has no capacity for spiritual forms ; but because it recalls it, intellectually and spiritually, by means of that form which it has left impressed upon the soul, which is likewise a formal or spiritual form or notion or image, whereby it is recalled, or by means of the effect that it has wrought. It is for this reason that I place these apprehensions among those of the memory, although they belong not to the apprehensions of the fancy.

2. What this knowledge is, and how the soul is to conduct itself with respect to it in order to attain to union with God, are sufficiently described in the twenty-fourth chapter⁴ of

¹ E.p. : ' the aforementioned difference.'

² E.p. omits : ' for they have no bodily form and image.'

³ E.p. : ' not by the figure.'

⁴ Really the chapter is the twenty-sixth.

the second book, where we treated this knowledge as apprehensions of the understanding. Let this be referred to, for we there described how it was of two kinds : either uncreated¹ or of the creatures. I speak now only of things relating to my present purpose—namely, how the memory must behave with respect to them in order to attain to union. And I say, as I have just said of formal knowledge in the preceding chapter (for this, being of created things, is of the same kind), that these apprehensions may be recalled when they produce good effects, not that they may be dwelt upon, but that they may quicken the soul's love and knowledge of God. But, if the recollection of them produces not good effects, let the memory never give them even passing attention. With regard to uncreated knowledge,² I say that the soul should try to recall it as often as possible, for it will produce great effects. As we said above, it produces touches and impressions of union with God, which is the aim towards which we are directing the soul. And by no form, image or figure which can be impressed upon the soul does the memory recall these (for these touches and impressions of union with the Creator³ have no form), but only by the effects which they have produced upon it of light, love, joy and renewal of the spirit, and so forth, some of which are wrought anew in the soul whensoever they are remembered.

CHAPTER XV

Which sets down the general method whereby the spiritual person must govern himself with respect to this sense.

1. In order to conclude this discussion on the memory, it will be well at this point to give the spiritual reader an account of⁴ the method which he must observe, and which is of universal application, in order that he may be united with God according to this sense.⁵ For, although what has been said makes the subject quite clear, it will nevertheless be more easily apprehended if we summarize it here. To this end it must be remembered that, since our aim is the union

¹ E.p. : 'either of uncreated perfections.'

² E.p. : 'With regard to the knowledge of things uncreated.'

³ A, B : 'with God.'

⁴ Only Alc. and e.p. have : 'an account of.'

⁵ E.p. : 'this faculty.'

of the soul with God in hope, according to the memory, and since that which is hoped for is that which is not possessed, and since, the less we possess of other things, the greater scope and the greater capacity we have for hoping, and consequently the greater hope,¹ therefore, the more things we possess, the less scope and capacity there is for hoping, and consequently the less hope² have we. Hence, the more the soul dispossesses the memory of forms and things which may be recalled by it, which are not God,³ the more will it set its memory upon God, and the emptier will its memory become, so that it may hope for Him Who shall fill it. What must be done, then, that the soul may live in the perfect and pure hope of God is that, whensoever these distinct images, forms and notions come to it, it must not rest in them, but must turn immediately to God, voiding the memory of them entirely, with loving affection. It must neither think of these things nor consider them beyond the degree which is necessary for the understanding and performing of its obligations, if they have any concern with these. And this it must do without setting any affection or inclination upon them, so that they may produce no effects⁴ in the soul. And thus a man must not fail to think and recall that which he ought to know and do, for, provided he preserves no affection or attachments, this will do him no harm. For this matter the lines of the Mount, which are in the thirteenth chapter⁵ of the first book, will be of profit.

3. But here it must be borne in mind that this doctrine of ours does not agree, nor do we desire that it should agree, with the doctrine of those pestilent men, who, inspired by Satanic pride and envy, have desired to remove from the eyes of the faithful the holy and necessary use, and the worthy⁶ adoration, of images of God and of the saints. This doctrine of ours is very different from that ; for we say not here, as they do, that images should not exist, and should not be

¹ E.p. : 'the greater perfection of hope.'

² E.p. : 'the less perfection of hope.'

³ E.p. : 'which are not Divinity or God made human, the memory of Whom is always a help to that end, since He is the true Way and Guide and Author of all good.' With this addition, cf. that quoted on p. 232, n. 3, above.

⁴ E.p. : 'no effects or perturbations.'

⁵ So e.p. A, B have : 'in the first chapter,' referring apparently to the drawing described above (pp. xxxiv-v). Alc., C, D [followed by P. Silverio] read : 'in the chapter.'

⁶ [The Spanish word, *inclita*, is stronger than this, meaning 'distinguished,' 'illustrious.']

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of faith, and by the purgation of the memory¹ in order to ground it in hope, if we purged not the will also according to the third virtue, which is charity,² whereby the works that are done in faith live and have great merit, and without it are of no worth. For, as S. James says : Without works of charity, faith is dead.³ And, now that we have to treat of the active detachment and night of this faculty, in order to form it and make it perfect in this virtue of the charity of God, I find no more fitting authority than that which is written in the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, where Moses says : Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength.⁴ Herein is contained all that the spiritual man ought to do, and all that I have here to teach him, so that he may truly attain to God, through union of the will, by means of charity. For herein man is commanded to employ all the faculties and desires and operations and affections of his soul in God, so that all the ability and strength of his soul may serve for no more than this, according to that which David says, in these words : *Fortitudinem meam ad te custodiam.*⁵

2. The strength of the soul consists in its faculties, passions and desires, all of which are governed by the will. Now when these faculties, passions and desires are directed by the will toward God, and turned away from all that is not God, then the strength of the soul is kept for God, and thus the soul is able to love God with all its strength. And, to the end that the soul may do this, we shall here treat of the purgation from the will of all its unruly affections, whence arise unruly operations, affections and desires,⁶ and whence also arises its failure to keep all its strength for God. These affections and passions are four, namely : joy, hope, grief and fear. These passions, when they are controlled by reason with respect to God, so that the soul rejoices only in that which is purely the honour and glory of God, and hopes for naught else, neither grieves save for things that concern this, neither fears aught save God alone, it is clear that the strength and ability of the soul are being directed toward God and kept for Him. For, the more the soul rejoices in any other thing

¹ E.p. adds : 'in the sense referred to in the sixth chapter of the second book.'

² E.p. : 'if we purged not the will also with respect to charity.'

³ S. James ii, 20.

⁴ Deuteronomy vi, 5.

⁵ Psalm lviii, 10 [A.V., lix, 9].

⁶ E.p. omits : 'whence arise . . . and desires.'

than God, the less completely will it centre its rejoicing in God ;¹ and the more it hopes in aught else, the less will it hope in God ; and so with the other passions.

3. And in order to give fuller instructions concerning this, we shall treat, in turn and in detail, as is our custom, of each of these four passions and of the desires of the will. For the whole business of attaining to union with God consists in purging the will from its affections and desires ; so that thus it may no longer be a base, human will, but may become a Divine will, being made one² with the will of God.

4. These four passions have the greater dominion in the soul and assail it the more vehemently, when the will is less strongly attached to God and more dependent on the creatures. For then it rejoices very readily at things that merit not rejoicing, hopes in that which brings no profit, grieves over that in which perchance it ought to rejoice, and fears where there is no reason for fearing.

5. From these affections, when they are unbridled, arise in the soul all the vices and imperfections which it possesses, and likewise, when they are ordered and composed, all its virtues. And it must be known that, if one of them should become ordered and controlled by reason, the rest will become so likewise ; for these four passions of the soul are so closely and intimately united to one another that the actual direction of one is the virtual direction of the others ; and if one be actually recollected the other three will virtually and proportionately be recollected likewise. For, if the will rejoice in anything, it will as a result hope for the same thing to the extent of its rejoicing, and herein are virtually included grief and fear with regard to the same thing ; and, in proportion as desire for these is taken away, fear and grief concerning them are likewise gradually lost, and hope for them is removed.³ For the will, with these four passions, is denoted by that figure which was seen by Ezekiel, of four beasts with one body, which had four faces ; and the wings of the one were joined to those of the other, and each one went straight before his face, and when they went forward they turned not back.⁴ And thus in the same manner the wings of each one of these affections are joined to those of each of the others, so that,

¹ [*Lit.*, ' the less strongly its rejoicing will be employed in God. ']

² [The original is stronger : ' one same thing. ']

³ E.p. adds : ' after the manner (though it is not this that is there meant) of those four beasts that were seen by Ezekiel. ']

⁴ Ezekiel i, 5-9.

in whichever direction one of them turns—that is, in its operation—the others of necessity go with it virtually also ; and, when one of them descends, as is there said, they must all descend, and, when one is lifted up, they will all be lifted up. Where thy hope is, thither will go thy joy and fear and grief ; and, if thy hope returns, the others will return, and so of the rest.

6. Wherefore thou must take note¹ that, wheresoever one of these passions is, thither will go likewise the whole soul and the will and the other faculties, and they will all live as captives to this passion, and the other three passions² will be living in it also, to afflict the soul with their captivity,³ and not to allow it to fly upward to the liberty and rest of sweet contemplation and union. For this cause Boetius told thee that, if thou shouldst desire to understand truth with clear light, thou must cast from thee joys, hope, fear and grief.⁴ For, as long as these passions reign, they allow not the soul to remain in the tranquillity and peace which are necessary for the wisdom which, by natural or supernatural means, it is capable of receiving.

CHAPTER XVII

Which begins to treat of the first affection of the will. Describes the nature of joy and makes a distinction between the things in which the will can rejoice.

1. The first of the passions of the soul and affections of the will is joy, which, in so far as concerns that⁵ which we propose to say about it, is naught else than a satisfaction of the will together with esteem for something which it considers desirable ; for the will never rejoices save when an object gives it appreciation and satisfaction. This has reference to active joy, which arises when the soul clearly and distinctly understands the reason for its rejoicing, and when it is in its own power to rejoice or not. There is another and a passive joy, a condition in which the will may find itself rejoicing without understanding clearly and distinctly the reason for its rejoicing, and which also occurs at times when

¹ A, B, e.p. add : ' O spiritual man.'

² A : ' and the other three faculties, or rather passions.'

³ E.p. omits : ' with their captivity.'

⁴ Cf. p. 168, above.

⁵ E.p. : ' which, with regard to that.'

Boetius?

it does understand this ; but it is not in the soul's power¹ to rejoice or not. Of this condition we shall speak hereafter. For the present we shall speak of joy when it is active and voluntary and arises from things that are distinct and clear.

2. Joy may arise from six kinds of good things or blessings,² namely : temporal, natural, sensual, moral, supernatural and spiritual. Of these we shall speak in their order, controlling the will with regard to them so that it may not be encumbered by them and fail to place the strength of its joy in God. To this end it is well to presuppose one fundamental truth, which will be as a staff whereon we should ever lean as we progress ; and it will be well to have understood it, because it is the light whereby we should be guided and whereby we may understand this doctrine, and direct our rejoicing in all these blessings to God. This truth is that the will must never rejoice save only in that which is to the honour and glory of God ; and that the greatest honour we can show to Him is that of serving Him according to evangelical perfection ; and anything that has naught to do with this is of no value and profit to man.

CHAPTER XVIII

Which treats of joy with respect to temporal blessings. Describes how joy in them must be directed to God.

1. The first kind of blessing of which we have spoken is temporal. And by temporal blessings we here understand riches, rank, office and other things that men desire ; and children, relatives, marriages, etc. : all of which are things wherein the will may rejoice. But it is clear how vain a thing it is for men to rejoice in riches, titles, rank, office and other such things which they are wont to desire ; for, if a man were the better servant of God for being rich, he ought to rejoice in riches ; but in fact they are rather a cause³ for his giving offence to God, even as the Wise Man teaches, saying : ' Son, if thou be rich, thou shalt not be free from sin.'⁴ Although it is true that temporal blessings do not

¹ E.p. adds : ' at that time.'

² [Lit., ' things or blessings.' The word here translated ' blessings ' is *bienes*, often rendered ' goods.' I use ' blessings ' or ' good things ' in the following chapters, according as best suits the context.]

³ E.p. : ' but rather they may be a cause.'

⁴ Ecclesiasticus xi, 10.

3. It follows, then, that a man must neither rejoice in riches when he has them, nor when his brother has them,¹ unless they help them to serve God. For if ever it is allowable to rejoice in them,² this will be when they are spent and employed in the service of God, for otherwise no profit will be derived from them. And the same is to be understood of other blessings (titles, offices, etc.) : in all of which it is vain to rejoice if a man feel not that God is the better served because of them and the way to eternal life is made more secure. And as it cannot be clearly known if this is so (if God is better served, etc.), it would be a vain thing to rejoice in these things deliberately, since such a joy³ cannot be reasonable. For, as the Lord says : If a man gain all the world, he may yet lose his soul.⁴ There is naught, then, wherein to rejoice save in the fact that God is better served.

4. Neither is there cause for rejoicing in children, be they many, or rich, or endowed with natural graces and talents and blessings of fortune, but only in that they serve God. For Absalom, the son of David, found neither his beauty nor his riches nor his lineage of any service to him because he served not God.⁵ Hence it was a vain thing to have rejoiced in such a son. For this reason it is also vain for men to desire to have children, as do some who trouble and disturb everyone with their desire for them, since they know not if such children will be good and serve God. Nor do they know if their satisfaction in them will be turned into pain ; nor if the comfort and consolation which they should have from them will change to disquiet and trial ; and the honour which they should bring them, into dishonour ; nor if they will cause them to give greater offence to God, as happens to many. Of these Christ says that they encompass sea and land to enrich them and to make them doubly the children of perdition which they are themselves.⁶

5. Wherefore, though all things smile upon a man and all that he does turns out prosperously,⁷ he ought to have misgivings rather than to rejoice ; for these things increase

¹ E.p. : ' . . . rejoice because he has riches, nor because his brother has them.'

² A, Alc. [and P. Silverio] add : ' as one will rejoice in riches.'

³ E.p. : ' such a joy in them.'

⁴ S. Matthew xvi, 26. E.p. has : ' If a man gain all the world, it profits him little, if he suffers detriment in his soul.'

⁵ 2 Kings [A.V., 2 Samuel] xiv, 25.

⁶ S. Matthew xxiii, 15.

⁷ E.p. adds : ' and, as they say, [good things] fall into his mouth.'



the occasion and peril of his forgetting God.¹ For this cause Solomon says, in Ecclesiastes, that he was cautious : Laughter I counted error and to rejoicing I said, ' Why art thou vainly deceived ? ' ² Which is as though he had said : When things smiled upon me I counted it error and deception to rejoice in them ; for without doubt it is great error and folly on the part of a man if he rejoice when things are bright and pleasant for him, knowing not of a certainty that there will come to him thence some eternal good. The heart of the fool, says the Wise Man, is where there is gladness, but that of the wise man is where there is sorrow.³ For gladness⁴ blinds the heart and allows it not to consider things and ponder them ; but sadness makes a man open his eyes and look at the profit and the harm of them. And hence it is that, as he himself says, anger is better than laughter.⁵ Wherefore it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of a feast ; for in the former is figured the end of all men,⁶ as the Wise Man says likewise.

6. It would therefore be vanity for a woman or her husband to rejoice in their marriage when they know not clearly that they are serving God better thereby. They ought rather to feel confounded, since matrimony is a cause, as S. Paul says, whereby each one sets his heart upon the other and keeps it not wholly with God. Wherefore he says : If thou shouldst find thyself free from a wife, desire not to seek a wife ; while he that has one already should walk with such freedom of heart as though he had her not.⁷ This, together with what we have said concerning temporal blessings, he teaches us himself, in these words : This is certain ; as I say to you, brethren, the time is short ; it remaineth both that they that have wives be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as them that weep not ; and they that rejoice, as them that rejoice not ; and they that buy, as them that possess not ; and they that use this world, as them that use it not.⁸ All this he says to show us that we must not set our rejoicing⁹ upon any other thing than

¹ A, B, e.p. add : ' and of offending Him, as we have said.'

² Ecclesiastes ii, 2.

⁴ E.p. : ' For vain gladness.'

⁶ Ecclesiastes vii, 2.

⁷ 1 Corinthians vii, 27.

³ Ecclesiastes vii, 5.

⁵ Ecclesiastes vii, 4.

⁸ 1 Corinthians vii, 29-30.

⁹ [The original reads : ' to show us that to set,' etc., leaving the sentence grammatically incomplete. P. Gerardo omits ' since the rest ' and reads : ' to show us that to set . . . service of God is vanity,' etc.] Alc. omits all the paragraph down to this point, reading : ' And thus we must not set our rejoicing . . . '

that which tends to the service of God, since the rest is vanity and that which profits not ; for joy that is not according to God can bring no profit.¹

CHAPTER XIX

Of the evils that may befall the soul when it sets its rejoicing upon temporal blessings.

1. If we had to describe the evils which environ the soul when it sets the affections of its will upon temporal blessings, neither ink nor paper would suffice us and our time would be too short. For from very small beginnings a man may attain to great evils and destroy great blessings ; even as from a spark of fire, if it be not quenched, may be enkindled great fires which set the world aflame. All these evils have their root and origin in one important evil of a privative kind that is contained in this joy—namely, withdrawal from God. For even as, in the soul that is united with Him by the affection of its will, there are born all blessings, even so, when it withdraws itself from Him because of this creature affection, there beset it all evils and disasters proportionately to the joy and affection wherewith it is united with the creature ; for this is inherent in² withdrawal from God. Wherefore a soul may expect the evils which assail it to be greater or less according to the greater or lesser degree of its withdrawal from God. These evils may be extensive or intensive ; for the most part they are both together.

2. This privative evil, whence, we say, arise other privative and positive evils, has four degrees, each one worse than the other. And, when the soul compasses the fourth degree, it will have compassed all the evils and depravities that arise in this connection.³ These four degrees are well indicated by Moses in Deuteronomy in these words, where he says : The Beloved grew fat and kicked. He grew fat and became swollen and gross.⁴ He forsook God his Maker and departed from God his Salvation.⁵

3. This growing fat of the soul, which was loved before it

¹ A, B : ' . . . to God cannot please the soul.' E.p. : ' . . . to God cannot do the soul good.' ² [Lit., 'for this is.']

³ [Lit., 'that can be told in this case.']

⁴ E.p. : 'The Beloved became fat and turned ; he became swollen and gross.'

⁵ Deuteronomy xxxii, 15.

*A degree of evil arising from
joy in temporal goods.*

grew fat,¹ indicates absorption in this joy of creatures. And hence arises the first degree of this evil, namely the going backward ; which is a certain blunting of the mind with regard to God, an obscuring of the blessings of God like the obscuring of the air by mist, so that it cannot be clearly illumined by the light of the sun. For, precisely when the spiritual person sets his rejoicing upon anything, and gives rein to his desire for foolish things, he becomes blind as to God, and the simple intelligence of his judgement becomes clouded, even as the Divine Spirit teaches in the Book of Wisdom, saying : The use and association of vanity² and scorn obscureth good things, and inconstancy of desire overturneth and perverteth the sense and judgement that are without malice.³ Here the Holy Spirit shows that, although there be no malice⁴ conceived in the understanding of the soul, concupiscence and rejoicing in the creatures suffice of themselves to create in the soul the first degree of this evil, which is the blunting of the mind and the darkening of the judgement, by which the truth is understood and each thing honestly judged as it is.

4. Holiness and good judgement suffice not to save a man from falling into this evil, if he gives way to concupiscence or rejoicing in temporal things. For this reason God warned us by uttering these words through Moses : Thou shalt take no gifts, which blind even the prudent.⁵ And this was addressed particularly to those who were to be judges ; for these have need to keep their judgement clear and alert, which they will be unable to do if they covet and rejoice in gifts. And for this cause likewise God commanded Moses to make judges of those who abhorred avarice, so that their judgement should not be blunted with the lust of the passions.⁶ And thus he says not only that they should not desire it, but that they should abhor it. For, if a man is to be perfectly defended from the affection of love, he must preserve an abhorrence of it, defending himself by means of the one thing against its contrary. The reason why the prophet Samuel, for example, was always so upright and enlightened a judge is that (as he said in the Book of the Kings) he had never received a gift from any man.⁷

¹ E.p. : ' This becoming fat of the soul, which previously was loved . . . '

² E.p. : ' The false appearance of vanity . . . ' ³ Wisdom iv, 12.

⁴ E.p. : ' no precedent malice.' ⁵ Exodus xxiii, 8.

⁶ Exodus xviii, 21-2.

⁷ 1 Kings [A.V., 1 Samuel] xii, 3.

2. 5. The second degree of this privative evil arises from the first, which is indicated in the words following the passage already quoted, namely : He grew fat and became swollen and gross.¹ And thus this second degree is dilatation of the will through the acquisition of greater liberty in temporal things ; which consists in no longer attaching so much importance to them, nor troubling oneself about them, nor esteeming so highly the joy and pleasure that come from created blessings. And this will have arisen in the soul from its having in the first place given rein to rejoicing ; for, through giving way to it, the soul has become swollen with it, as is said in that passage, and that fatness of rejoicing and desire has caused it to dilate and extend its will more freely toward the creatures. And from this result great evils. For this second degree causes the soul to withdraw itself from the things of God, and from holy practices, and to find no pleasure in them, because it takes pleasure in other things and devotes itself continually to many imperfections and follies² and to joys and vain pleasures.

6. And when this second degree is wholly consummated, it withdraws a man from the practices which he followed continually and makes his whole mind and covetousness to be given to secular things. And those who are affected by this second degree not only have their judgement and understanding darkened so that they cannot recognize truth and justice, like those who are in the first degree, but they are also very weak and lukewarm and careless³ in acquiring knowledge of, and in practising, truth and justice, even as Isaiah says of them in these words : They all love gifts and allow themselves to be carried away by rewards, and they judge not the orphan, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them that they may give heed to it.⁴ This comes not to pass in them without sin, especially when to do these things is incumbent upon them because of their office. For those who are affected by this degree are not free from malice as are those of the first degree. And thus they withdraw themselves more and more from justice and virtues, since their will reaches out more and more⁵ in affection for creatures. Wherefore, the characteristics of those who are

¹ Deuteronomy xxxii, 15. E.p. omits : 'grew fat and.'

² E.p. : 'and many follies.'

³ E.p. omits : 'and careless.'

⁴ Isaiah i, 23.

⁵ A, e.p. : '... their will becomes more and more enkindled ...'
[The change is a slight one : *encendiendo* for *extendiendo*.]

in this second degree are great lukewarmness in spiritual things and failure to do their duty by them ; they practise them from formality or from compulsion or from the habit which they have formed of practising them, rather than because they love them.

7. The third degree of this privative evil is a complete falling away from God, neglect to fulfil His law in order not to lose worldly things and blessings ;¹ and relapse into mortal sin through covetousness. And this third degree is described in the words following the passage quoted above, which says : He forsook God his Maker.² In this degree are included all who have the faculties of the soul absorbed in things of the world and in riches and commerce,³ in such a way that they care nothing for fulfilling the obligations of the law of God. And they are very forgetful and dull with respect to that which touches their salvation, and have a correspondingly greater ardour and ingenuity with respect to things of the world. So much so that in the Gospel Christ calls them children of this world, and says of them that they are more prudent and acute in their affairs than are the children of light in their own.⁴ And thus they are as nothing in God's business, whereas in the world's business they are everything. And these are the truly avaricious, who have extended and dispersed their desire and joy on things created, and this with such affection that they cannot be satisfied ; on the contrary, their desire and their thirst grow all the more because they are farther withdrawn from the only source that could satisfy them, which is God. For it is of these that God Himself speaks through Jeremiah, saying : They have forsaken Me, Who am the fountain of living water, and they have hewed them out broken cisterns that can hold no water.⁵ And this is the reason why the covetous man finds naught among the creatures wherewith he can quench his thirst, but only that which increases it. These persons are they that fall into countless kinds of sin through love of temporal blessings and the evils which afflict them are innumerable. And of this, David says : *Transierunt in affectum cordis.*⁶

¹ E.p. : ' not to lose the trifling things of the world.'

² Deuteronomy xxxii, 15.

³ S. Luke xvi, 8.

⁴ E.p. : ' commerce with it.'

⁵ Jeremiah ii, 13.

⁶ Psalm lxxii, 7 [A.V., lxxiii, 7]. Only e.p. has this quotation in its Spanish form. Alc. adds the word *exponat*.

8. The fourth degree of this privative evil is indicated in the last words of our passage, which says : And he departed from God his Salvation.¹ This degree is reached by those of the third degree whereof we have just spoken. For, through not giving heed to setting his heart upon the law of God because of temporal blessings, the soul of the covetous man departs far from God according to his memory, understanding and will, forgetting Him as though He were not his God, which comes to pass because he has made for himself a god of money and of temporal blessings,² as S. Paul says when he describes avarice as slavery to idols.³ For this fourth degree leads a man as far as to forget God, and to set his heart, which he should have set formally upon God, formally upon money, as though he had no god beside.

9. To this fourth degree belong those who hesitate not to subject Divine and supernatural things to temporal things, as to their God, when they ought to do the contrary, and subject temporal things to God, if they considered Him as their God, as would be in accordance with reason.⁴ To these belonged the iniquitous⁵ Balaam, who sold the grace that God had given to him.⁶ And also Simon Magus, who thought to value the grace of God in terms of money, and desired to buy it.⁷ In doing this he showed a greater esteem for money ; and he thought there were those who similarly esteemed it, and would give grace for money. In many other ways there are many nowadays who belong to this fourth degree ; their reason is darkened to spiritual things by covetousness ; they serve money and not God, and are influenced by money and not by God, putting first the cost of a thing and not its Divine worth and reward, and in many ways making money their principal god and end, and setting it before the final end, which is God.

10. To this last degree belong also those miserable souls who are so greatly in love with their own goods that they take them for their god, so much so that they scruple not to sacrifice their lives for them, when they see that this god of theirs is receiving some temporal harm. They abandon themselves to despair and commit suicide for miserable ends, showing by their own acts how wretched is the reward which

¹ Deuteronomy xxxii, 15.

² A. e.p. : ' . . . he has made money and temporal blessings a god for himself.' ³ Colossians iii, 5.

⁴ E.p. omits : ' if they considered Him as their God.'

⁵ E.p. : ' the impious.' ⁶ Numbers xxii, 7. ⁷ Acts viii, 18-19.

they receive from a god like their own. For when they can no longer hope for aught from him he bestows on them despair¹ and death ; and those whom he pursues not to this last evil of death he condemns to a dying life² in the griefs of anxiety and in many other miseries, allowing no gladness to enter their heart, and no good thing upon earth to enlighten them. They continually pay the tribute of their heart to money by their yearning for it and hoarding of it for the final calamity of their just perdition, as the Wise Man warns them, saying : Riches are kept to the hurt of their owner.³

II. And to this fourth degree belong those of whom S. Paul says : *Tradidit illos in reprobum sensum*.⁴ For joy, when it strives after possessions as its final goal, drags man down to these evils. But those on whom it inflicts lesser evils are also to be sorely pitied, since, as we have said, their souls are driven far backward upon the way⁵ of God. Wherefore, as David says : Be not thou afraid when one is made rich : that is, envy him not, thinking that he outstrips thee, for, when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away, neither shall his glory nor his joy descend with him.⁶

CHAPTER XX

Of the benefits that come to the soul from its withdrawal of joy from temporal things.

I. The spiritual man, then, must see to it carefully that his heart and his rejoicing begin not to lay hold upon temporal things ; he must fear lest from being little it should grow to be great, and should increase from one degree to another. For little things do indeed become great ; and from a small beginning there comes in the end a great matter,⁷ even as a spark suffices to set a mountain on fire and to burn up the whole world.⁸ And let him never be self-confident because his attachment is small, and fail to uproot it instantly because he thinks that he will do so later. For if,

¹ The remainder of this chapter is omitted in Alc.

² So e.p. [*lit.*, 'to live dying']. A : 'to live living' ; B : 'to die living.'

³ Ecclesiastes v, 11-12.

⁴ Romans i, 28.

⁵ E.p. : 'upon the road.'

⁶ Psalm xlviii, 17-18 [A.V., xlix, 16-17].

⁷ Thus the Codices. E.p. alters this to 'a great evil.' [P. Silverio supports the emendation.]

⁸ E.p. omits : 'and to burn up the whole world.' [The word rendered 'mountain' may also mean 'wood.' Cf. S. James iii, 5, Vulgate.]

when it is so small and in its beginnings, he has not the courage to make an end of it, how does he suppose, and presume, that he will be able to do so when it is great and more deeply rooted. The more so since Our Lord said in the Gospel : He that is unfaithful in little will be unfaithful also in much.¹ For he that avoids the small sin will not fall into the great sin ; but great evil is inherent in the small sin,² since it has already penetrated within the fence and wall of the heart ; and as the proverb says : Once begun, half done. Wherefore David warns us, saying : Though riches abound, let us not apply our heart to them.³

2. Although a man might not do this for the sake of God and of the obligations of Christian perfection, he should nevertheless do it because of the temporal advantages that result from it, to say nothing of the spiritual advantages, and he should free his heart completely from all rejoicing in the things mentioned above. And thus, not only will he free himself from the pestilent evils which we have described in the last chapter, but, besides this, he will withdraw his joy from temporal blessings and acquire the virtue of liberality, which is one of the principal attributes of God,⁴ and can in no wise coexist with covetousness. Apart from this, he will acquire liberty of soul, clarity of reason, rest, tranquillity and peaceful confidence in God and a true reverence and worship of God which comes from the will.⁵ He will find greater joy and recreation in the creatures through his detachment from them, for he cannot rejoice in them if he look upon them with attachment to them as to his own. Attachment is an anxiety that, like a bond, ties the spirit down to the earth and allows it no enlargement of heart. He will also acquire, in his detachment from things, a clear conception of them, so that he can well understand the truths relating to them, both naturally and supernaturally. He will therefore enjoy them after a very different fashion from that of one who is attached to them, and he will have a great advantage and superiority over such a one. For, while he

¹ S. Luke xvi, 10.

² [The word 'sin' is not in the original of this sentence, which reads 'the small . . . the great . . . etc.']

³ Psalm lxi, 11 [A.V., lxii, 10]. E.p. : 'let us not attach our heart to them.'

⁴ So Alc., e.p. A, B : 'one of the principal virtues of God, or, rather, attributes.'

⁵ A, B : 'which comes from liberty.' [The word translated 'reverence' normally implies respectful acquiescence.]

enjoys them according to their truth, the other enjoys them according to their deceptiveness ;¹ the one appreciates the best side of them and the other the worst ; the one rejoices in their substance ; the other, whose sense is bound to them, in their accident. For sense cannot grasp or attain to more than the accident, but the spirit, purged of the clouds and species of accident, penetrates the truth and worth of things, for this is its object. Wherefore joy, like a cloud, darkens the judgement, since there can be no voluntary joy in creatures without voluntary attachment, even as there can be no joy which is passion when there is no habitual attachment in the heart ;² and the renunciation and purgation of such joy leave the judgement clear, even as the mists leave the air clear when they are scattered.

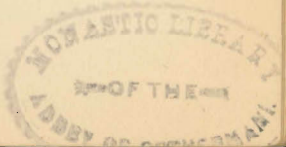
3. This man, then, rejoices in all things—since his joy is dependent upon none of them—as if he had them all ; and this other, through looking upon them with a particular sense of ownership, loses all the pleasure of them in general. This former man, having none of them in his heart, possesses them all, as S. Paul says, in great freedom.³ This latter man, inasmuch as he has something of them through the attachment of his will, neither has nor possesses anything ; it is rather they that have possessed⁴ his heart, and he is, as it were, a sorrowing captive. Wherefore, if he desire to have a certain degree of joy in creatures, he must of necessity have an equal degree of disquietude and grief in his heart, since it is seized and possessed by them. But he that is detached is untroubled by anxieties, whether in prayer or apart from it ; and thus, without losing time, he readily gains great spiritual treasure. But the other man loses everything, running to and fro upon the chain by which his heart is attached and bound ; and with all his diligence he can still hardly free himself for a short time from this bond of thought and rejoicing by which his heart is bound. The spiritual man, then, at the first motion of his heart towards creatures, must restrain it, remembering the truth which we have here laid down, that there is naught wherein a man must rejoice, save in his service of God, and in his striving for His glory and honour in all things, directing all things solely to this end and turning aside from vanity in them, looking in them neither for his own joy nor for his consolation.

¹ Alc. omits the rest of this sentence and the whole of the next.

² E.p. [for 'when . . . heart'] reads : 'without voluntary attachment.'

³ 2 Corinthians vi, 10.

⁴ A, B : 'they have seized.'



4. There is another very great and important benefit in this detachment of the rejoicing from creatures—namely, that it leaves the heart free for God. This is the dispositive foundation of all the favours which God will grant to the soul, and without this disposition He grants them not. And they are such that, even from the temporal standpoint, for one joy which the soul renounces for love of Him and for the perfection of the Gospel, He will give him a hundred in this life, as His Majesty promises in the same Gospel.¹ But, even were there not so high a rate of interest, the spiritual man should quench these creature joys in his soul because of the displeasure which they give to God. For we see in the Gospel that, simply because that rich man rejoiced at having goods for many years, God was so greatly angered that He told him that his soul would be brought to account on that very night.² Therefore, we must believe³ that, whensoever we rejoice vainly, God is beholding us and preparing some punishment and bitter draught according to our deserts, so that the pain which results from the joy may sometimes be a hundred times greater⁴ than the joy. For, although it is true, as S. John says on this matter, in the Apocalypse, concerning Babylon, that as much as she had rejoiced and lived in delights, so much torment and sorrow⁵ should be given her, yet this is not to say that the pain will not be greater than the joy, which indeed it will be, since for brief pleasures are given eternal torments. The words mean that there shall be nothing without its particular punishment, for He who will punish the idle word will not pardon vain rejoicing.

CHAPTER XXI

Which describes how it is vanity to set the rejoicing of the will upon the good things of nature, and how the soul must direct itself, by means of them, to God.

1. By natural blessings we here understand beauty, grace, comeliness, bodily constitution and all other bodily endowments ; and likewise, in the soul, good understanding, discretion and other things that pertain to reason. Many a man

¹ S. Matthew xix, 29.

² S. Luke xii, 20.

³ E.p. : ' Therefore, we may fear.'

⁴ E.p. : ' . . . may often be greater.'

⁵ Revelation xviii, 7.

sets his rejoicing upon all these gifts, to the end that he himself, or those that belong to him, may possess them, and for no other reason, and gives no thanks to God Who bestows them on him so that He may be the better known and loved by him because of them. But it is vanity and deception to rejoice for this cause alone, as Solomon says in these words : Deceitful is grace and vain is beauty ; the woman who fears God, she shall be praised.¹ Here he teaches us that a man ought rather to be fearful because of these natural gifts, since he may easily be distracted² by them from the love of God, and, if he be attracted by them, he may fall into vanity and be deceived. For this reason bodily grace is said to be deceptive because it deceives a man in the way³ and attracts him to that which beseems him not, through vain joy and complacency, either in himself or in others that have such grace. And it is said that beauty is vain because it causes a man to fall in many ways when he esteems it and rejoices in it, for he should only rejoice if he serves God or others through it. But he ought rather to fear and harbour misgivings lest perchance his natural graces and gifts should be a cause of his offending God, either by his vain presumption or by the extreme affection⁴ with which he regards them. Wherefore he that has such gifts should be cautious and live carefully, lest, by his vain ostentation, he give cause to any man to withdraw his heart in the smallest degree from God. For these graces and gifts of nature are so full of provocation and occasion of evil, both to him that possesses them and to him that looks upon them, that there is hardly any who entirely escapes from binding and entangling his heart in them. We have heard that many spiritual persons, who had certain of these gifts, had such fear of this that they prayed God to disfigure them, lest they should be a cause and occasion of any vain joy or affection to themselves or to others, and God granted their prayer.

2. The spiritual man, then, must purge his will, and make it to be blind to this vain rejoicing, bearing in mind that beauty and all other natural gifts are but earth, and that they come from the earth and will return thither ; and that grace and beauty are smoke and vapour of this same earth ; and that they must be held and esteemed as such by a man that desires not to fall into vanity, but will direct his heart to God

¹ Proverbs xxxi, 30.

³ A, B : ' in the road.'

² A, B : ' be kept back.'

⁴ A, B, e.p. : ' the strange affection.'

in these matters, with rejoicing and gladness, because God is in Himself all these beauties and graces in the most eminent degree, and is infinitely high above all created things. And, as David says, they are all like a garment and shall grow old and pass away, and He alone remains immutable for ever.¹ Wherefore, if in all these matters a man direct not his rejoicing to God, it will ever be false and deceptive. For of such a man is that saying of Solomon to be understood, where he addresses joy in the creatures, saying : To joy I said : ' Wherefore art thou vainly deceived ? ' ² That is, when the heart allows itself to be attracted by the creatures.

CHAPTER XXII

Of the evils which come to the soul when it sets the rejoicing of its will upon the good things of nature.

1. Although many of these evils and benefits that I am describing in treating of these kinds of joy are common to all, yet, because they follow directly from joy and detachment from joy (although comprised under any one of these six divisions which I am treating), therefore I speak under each heading of some evils and benefits which are also found under another, since these, as I say, are connected with that joy which belongs to them all. But my principal intent is to speak of the particular evils and benefits which come to the soul, with respect to each thing, through its rejoicing or not rejoicing in it. These I call particular evils, because they are primarily and immediately caused by one particular kind of rejoicing, and are not, save in a secondary and mediate sense, caused by another. The evil of spiritual lukewarmness, for example, is caused directly by any and every kind of joy, and this evil is therefore common to all these six kinds ; but fornication is a particular evil, which is the direct result only of joy in the good things of nature of which we are speaking.

2. The spiritual and bodily evils, then, which directly and effectively come to the soul when it sets its rejoicing on the good things of nature are reduced to six principal evils. The first is vainglory, presumption, pride and disesteem of our

¹ Psalm ci, 27 [A.V., cii, 26-7].

² Ecclesiastes ii, 2.

neighbour ; for a man cannot cast¹ eyes of esteem on one thing without taking them from the rest. From this follows, at the least, a real disesteem² for everything else ; for naturally, by setting our esteem on one thing, we withdraw our heart from all things else and set it upon the thing esteemed ; and from this real contempt it is very easy to fall into an intentional and voluntary contempt for all these other things, in particular or in general, not only in the heart, but also in speech, when we say that such a thing or³ such a person is not like such another. The second evil is the moving of the senses to complacency and sensual delight and luxury.⁴ The third evil comes from falling into adulation and vain praise, wherein is deception and vanity, as Isaiah says in these words : My people, he that praises thee deceives thee.⁵ And the reason is that, although we sometimes speak the truth when we praise grace and beauty, yet it will be a marvel if there is not some evil enwrapped therein or if the person praised is not plunged into vain complacency and rejoicing, or his imperfect intentions and affections are not directed thereto. The fourth evil is of a general kind : it is a serious⁶ blunting of the reason and the spiritual sense, such as is effected by rejoicing in temporal good things. In one way indeed it is much worse. For as the good things of nature are more closely connected with man than are temporal good things, the joy which they give leaves an impression and effect and trace upon the senses more readily and more effectively, and deadens them more completely. And thus reason and judgement are not free, but are clouded with that affection of joy which is very closely connected with them ; and from this arises the fifth evil, which is distraction of the mind by created things. And hence arise and follow lukewarmness and weakness of spirit, which is the sixth evil, and is likewise of a general kind ; this is apt to reach such a pitch that a man may find the things of God very tedious and troublesome, until at last he comes to abhor them. In this rejoicing purity of spirit, at least, is invariably lost first of all. For if any spirituality is discerned, it will be of such a gross and sensual kind that it is hardly spiritual or interior or recollected at all, since it will consist rather in pleasure of

¹ E.p. : ' cannot excessively cast.'

² E.p. : ' a real and, as it were, negative disesteem.'

³ E.p. omits : ' such a thing or.'

⁴ E.p. omits : ' and luxury.'

⁵ Isaiah iii, 12.

⁶ [*Lit.*, ' the great. ']

sense than in strength of spirit. Since, then, the spirituality of the soul is of so low and weak a character at that time as not to quench the habit of this rejoicing (for this habit alone suffices to destroy pure spirituality, even when the soul is not consenting to the acts of rejoicing), the soul must be living, so to say, in the weakness of sense rather than in the strength of the spirit. Otherwise,¹ it will be seen in the perfection and fortitude which the soul will have when the occasion demands it. Although I deny not that many virtues may exist together with serious imperfections, no pure or delectable inward spirituality can exist while these joys are not quenched; for the flesh reigns² within, warring against the spirit, and, although the spirit may be unconscious of the evil, yet at the least it causes it hidden distraction.

3. Returning now to speak of that second evil, which contains innumerable evils within itself, it is impossible to describe with the pen or to express in words the lengths to which it can go, neither is this unknown or hidden,³ nor the extent of the misery that arises from the setting of our rejoicing on natural beauty and graces. For every day we hear of numerous deaths, the loss by many of their honour, the commission of many insults, the dissipation of much wealth, numerous cases of emulation and strife, of adultery, rape and fornication,⁴ and of the fall⁵ of many holy men, comparable in number to that third part of the stars of Heaven which was swept down by the tail of the serpent on earth.⁶ All these disasters come from that cause. The fine gold has lost its brilliance and lustre and is become mire; and the notable and noble men of Sion, who were clothed in finest gold, are counted as earthen pitchers, that are broken and have become potsherds.⁷ How far does the poison of this evil not penetrate?

4. And who drinks not, either much or little, from this golden chalice of the Babylonian woman of the Apocalypse?⁸ She seated herself on that great beast, that had seven heads

¹ E.p. omits 'otherwise.'

² E.p. : 'the flesh almost reigns here.'

³ E.p. omits : 'neither . . . hidden.'

⁴ E.p. : 'of adultery and rape.'

⁵ The Codices [followed by P. Silverio] have 'of the fall to the ground' which e.p. abbreviates [as in the text].

⁶ Revelation xii, 4.

⁷ Lamentations iv, 1-2.

⁸ Revelation xvii, 4. Here eleven pages are missing from Alc., which P. Andrés de la Encarnación supplies, taking them from the old MS. which in his time was preserved at Duruelo.

and ten crowns, signifying that there is scarce any man, whether high or low, saint or sinner, who comes not to drink of her wine, to some extent enslaving his heart thereby, for, as is said of her in that place, all the kings of the earth have become drunken with the wine of her prostitution. And she seizes upon all estates of men, even upon the highest and noblest estate—the service of the sanctuary and the Divine priesthood—setting her abominable cup, as Daniel says, in the holy place,¹ and leaving scarcely a single strong man without making him to drink, either little or much, from the wine of this chalice, which is vain rejoicing. For this reason it is said that all the kings of the earth have become drunken with this wine, for very few will be found, however holy they may have been, that have not been to some extent stupefied and bewildered by this draught of the joy and pleasure of natural graces and beauty.

5. This phrase 'they have become drunken' should be noted. For, however little a man may drink of the wine of this rejoicing, it at once takes hold upon the heart, and stupefies it and works the evil of darkening the reason, as does wine to those who have been corrupted by it. So that, if some antidote be not at once taken against this poison, whereby it may be quickly expelled, the life of the soul is endangered. Spiritual weakness will increase, bringing it down to such great evil that it will be like Samson, when his eyes² were put out and the hair of his first strength was cut off, and like Samson it will see itself grinding in the mills, a captive among its enemies;³ and afterwards, peradventure, it will die the second death among its enemies, even as did he,⁴ since the drinking of this rejoicing will produce spiritually in them all those evils that were produced in him physically, and does in fact produce them in many persons to this day. Let his enemies come and say to him afterwards, to his great confusion: Art thou he that broke the knotted cords,⁵ that tore asunder the lions, slew the thousand Philistines, broke down the gates and freed himself from all his enemies?

6. Let us conclude, then, by giving the instruction necessary to counteract this poison. And let it be this: As soon

¹ Daniel ix, 27.

² The Codices have: 'when the eyes of his sight . . .' This reading [adopted by P. Silverio] is shortened by e.p., as being pleonastic, to 'when his eyes . . .'

³ Judges xvi.

⁴ The 1630 edition reads: 'even as he died the first [death].'

⁵ E.p.: 'the three knotted cords.'

as thy heart feels moved by this vain joy in the good things of nature, let it remember how vain a thing it is to rejoice in aught save the service of God, how perilous and how pernicious. Let it consider how great an evil it was for the angels to rejoice and take pleasure in their natural endowments and beauty, since it was this that plunged them into the depths of shame.¹ Let them think, too, how many evils come to men daily through this same vanity, and let them therefore resolve in good time to employ the remedy which the poet counsels to those who begin to grow affectioned to such things. 'Make haste now,' he says, 'to use the remedy at the beginning ; for when evil things have had time to grow in the heart, remedy and medicine come late.'² Look not upon the wine, as the Wise Man says, when its colour is red and when it shines in the glass ; it enters pleasantly and bites like a viper and sheds abroad poison like a basilisk.³

CHAPTER XXIII

Of the benefits which the soul receives from not setting its rejoicing upon the good things of nature.

1. Many are the benefits which come to the soul through the withdrawal of its heart from this rejoicing ; for, besides preparing itself for the love of God and the other virtues, it makes a direct way for its own humility, and for a general charity toward its neighbours. For, as it is not led by the apparent⁴ good things of nature, which are deceitful, into affection for anyone, the soul remains free and able⁵ to love them all rationally and spiritually, as God wills them to be loved. Here it must be understood that none deserves to be loved, save for the virtue that is in him. And, when we love in this way, it is very pleasing to the will of God, and this love also brings great liberty ; and if there be attachment in it, there is greater attachment to God. For, in that case, the more this love grows, the more grows our love toward God ; and, the more grows our love toward God, the greater be-

¹ [*Lit.*, 'since through this they fell into the vile abysses.']

² So Alc. The other authorities have only : 'medicine comes late.'

³ Proverbs xxiii, 31-2. Only Alc. and e.p. have : 'and sheds abroad poison [really 'poisons'] like a basilisk.' A, B have 'its poison' and use the word *basilisco*, where Alc., e.p. have *regulo*, with the same meaning.

⁴ E.p. omits 'apparent.'

⁵ [*Lit.*, 'free and clear.']

comes our love for our neighbour. For, when love is grounded in God, the reason for all love is one and the same and the cause of all love is one and the same also.

2. Another excellent benefit results to the soul from its renunciation of this kind of rejoicing,¹ which is that it fulfils and keeps² the counsel of Our Saviour which He gives us through S. Matthew. Let him that will follow Me, He says, deny himself.³ This the soul could in no wise do if it were to set its rejoicing upon the good things⁴ of nature ; for he that attaches any importance to himself neither denies himself nor follows Christ.

3. There is another great benefit in the renunciation of this kind of rejoicing, which is that it produces great tranquillity in the soul, empties it of distractions and brings recollection to the senses, especially to the eyes. For the soul that desires not to rejoice in these things desires neither to look at them nor to attach the other senses to them, lest it should be attracted or entangled by them.⁵ Neither will it spend time or thought upon them, being like the prudent serpent, which stops its ears that it may not hear the charmers⁶ lest they make some impression upon it.⁷ For, by guarding its doors, which are the senses, the soul guards itself safely and increases its tranquillity and purity.

4. There is another benefit of no less importance to those that have become proficient in the mortification of this kind of rejoicing, which is that evil things and the knowledge of them neither make an impression upon them nor stain them as they do those to whom they still give any delight. Wherefore the renunciation and mortification of this rejoicing result in spiritual cleanness of soul and body ; that is, of spirit and sense ; and the soul comes to have an angelical conformity with God, and becomes, both in spirit and in body, a worthy temple of the Holy Spirit. This cannot come to pass if the heart rejoices in natural graces and good things.⁸ For this reason it is not necessary to have given consent to any evil thing, or to have remembrance of such ;⁹ for that rejoicing

¹ 'From . . . rejoicing' are words found in Alc. only.

² E.p. adds : 'with perfection.'

³ S. Matthew xvi, 24.

⁵ E.p. omits : 'or entangled by them.'

⁴ A, B, e.p. read : 'the gifts.'

⁶ So Alc. A, B : 'incantations.' E.p. : 'charms.'

⁷ Psalm lvii, 5 [A.V., lviii, 4-5].

⁸ E.p. : 'if the heart allows itself to be to any extent carried away by rejoicing in natural graces and good things.'

⁹ E.p. omits : 'or to have remembrance of such.'

suffices to stain the soul and the senses with impurity by means of the knowledge of evil ;¹ for, as the Wise Man says, the Holy Spirit will remove Himself from thoughts that are without understanding—that is, without the higher reason that has respect to God.²

5. Another benefit of a general kind follows, which is that, besides freeing ourselves from the evils and dangers aforementioned, we are delivered also from countless vanities, and from many other evils, both spiritual and temporal ; and especially from falling into the small esteem in which are held all those that are seen to glory or rejoice in the said natural gifts, whether in their own or in those of others. And thus these souls are held and esteemed as wise and prudent, as indeed are all those who take no account of these things, but only of that which pleases God.

6. From these said benefits follows the last, which is a generosity of the soul, as necessary to the service of God as is liberty of spirit, whereby temptations are easily vanquished and trials faithfully endured, and whereby, too, the virtues³ grow and become prosperous.

CHAPTER XXIV

Which treats of the third kind of good thing whereon the will may set the affection of rejoicing, which kind pertains to sense. Indicates what these good things are and of how many kinds, and how the will has to be directed to God and purged of this rejoicing.

1. We have next to treat of rejoicing with respect to the good things of sense, which is the third kind of good thing wherein we said that the will may rejoice. And it is to be noted that by the good things of sense we here understand everything in this life that can be apprehended by the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste or touch, and by the interior fashioning of imaginary reflections, all of which things belong to the bodily senses, interior and exterior.

2. And, in order to darken the will and purge it of rejoicing with respect to these sensible objects, and direct it

¹ E.p. concludes this paragraph here, but the 1630 edition continues, as in the Codices, which we here follow.

² Wisdom i, 5.

³ A, B : ' the virtues of the soul.'

to God by means of them, it is necessary to assume one truth, which is that, as we have frequently said, the sense of the lower part of man, which is that whereof we are treating, is not, neither can be, capable of knowing or understanding God as God is. So that the eye cannot see Him, or aught that is like Him; neither can the ear hear His voice, or any sound that resembles it; neither can the sense of smell perceive a perfume so sweet as He; neither can the taste detect a savour so sublime and delectable; neither can the touch feel a movement so delicate and full of delight, nor aught like to it; neither can His form or any figure that represents Him enter into the thought or imagination. Even so says Isaiah: Eye hath not seen Him, nor hath ear heard Him, neither hath it entered into the heart of man.¹

3. And here it must be noted that the senses may receive pleasure and delight, either from the spirit, by means of some communication that it receives from God interiorly, or from outward things communicated to them. And, as has been said, neither by way of the spirit nor by that of sense can the sensual part of the soul know God. For, since it has no capacity for attaining to such a point, it receives in the senses both that which is of the spirit and that which is of sense,² and receives them in no other way. Wherefore it would be at the least but vanity to set the rejoicing of the will upon pleasure caused by any of these apprehensions, and it would be hindering the power of the will from occupying itself with God and from centring its rejoicing in Him alone. This the soul cannot perfectly accomplish, save by purging itself and remaining in darkness as to rejoicing of this kind, as also with respect to other things.

4. I said advisedly that if the rejoicing of the will were set upon any of these things it would be vanity. But, when it is not set upon them, and when, as soon as the will finds pleasure in that which it hears, sees and does, it soars upward to rejoice in God—to which end its pleasure furnishes a motive and provides strength—this is very good. In such a case not only need the said motions not be shunned when they cause this devotion and prayer, but the soul may profit by them, and indeed should so profit, to the end that it may accomplish this holy exercise. For there are souls who

¹ Isaiah lxiv, 4; 1 Corinthians ii, 9.

² E.p.: 'and that which is of the intellect.'

are greatly moved by objects of sense to seek God. But much caution must be observed herein and the resulting effects must be considered ; for oftentimes many spiritual persons indulge in the recreations of sense aforementioned under the pretext of offering prayer and devotion to God ; and they do this in a way which must be called recreation rather than prayer, and which gives more pleasure to themselves than to God. And, although¹ the intention that they have is toward God, the effect which they produce² is that of recreation of sense, wherein they find weakness and imperfection, rather than revival of the will and surrender thereof to God.

5. I wish, therefore, to propose a test here whereby it may be seen when these delights of the senses aforementioned are profitable and when they are not. And it is that, whensoever a person hears music and other things, and sees pleasant things,³ and is conscious of sweet perfumes, or tastes things that are delicious or feels soft touches, if his thought and the affection of his will are at once centred upon God and if that thought of God gives him more pleasure than the movement of sense which causes it, and save for that he finds no pleasure in the said movement, this is a sign that he is receiving benefit therefrom, and that this thing of sense is a help to his spirit. In this way such things may be used, for then such things of sense subserve the end for which God created and gave them, which is that He should be the better loved and known because of them. And it must be known, furthermore, that one upon whom these things of sense cause the pure spiritual effect which I describe has no desire for them, and makes hardly any account of them, though they cause him great pleasure when they are offered to him, because of the pleasure which, as I have said, they cause him in God. He is not, however, solicitous for them, and when they are offered to him, as I say, his will passes from them at once and he abandons it to God and sets it upon Him.

6. The reason why he cares little for these motives, although they help him on his journey to God, is that the spirit which is so ready to go by every means and in every way to God is so completely nourished and prepared and satisfied by the spirit of God that it lacks nothing and desires nothing ; or, if it desires anything to that end, the desire

¹ E.p. : ' although it seems that.'

² E.p. : ' which they cause.'

³ A, e.p. : ' hears music or other pleasant things.'

at once passes and is forgotten, and the soul makes no account of it. But one that feels not this liberty of spirit in these things and pleasures of sense, but whose will rests in these pleasures and feeds upon them, is greatly harmed by them and should withdraw himself from the use of them. For, although his reason may desire to employ them to journey toward God, yet, inasmuch as his desire finds pleasure in them which is according to sense, and their effect is ever dependent upon the pleasure which they give, he is certain to find hindrance rather than help in them, and harm rather than profit. And, when he sees that the desire¹ for such recreation reigns in him, he must mortify it ; for, the stronger it becomes, the more imperfection he will have and the greater will be his weakness.

7. Whatsoever pleasure, then, presents itself to the spiritual person from sense, and whether it come to him by chance or by design, he must make use of it only as a means to God, lifting up to Him the rejoicing of his soul so that his rejoicing may be useful and profitable² and perfect ; realizing that all rejoicing which implies not renunciation³ and annihilation of every other kind of rejoicing, although it be with respect to something apparently very lofty, is vain and profits not, but is a hindrance towards the union of the will in God.

CHAPTER XXV

Which treats of the evils that afflict the soul when it desires to set the rejoicing of its will upon the good things of sense.

1. In the first place, if the soul does not darken and quench the joy which may arise within it from the things of sense, and direct its rejoicing to God, all the general kinds of evil which we have described as arising from every other kind of rejoicing follow from this joy in the things of sense : such evils are darkness in the reason, lukewarmness, spiritual weariness, etc. But, to come to particulars, many are the evils, spiritual, bodily and sensual, into which the soul may fall through this rejoicing.

2. First of all, from joy in visible things, when the soul denies not itself in order to reach God, there may come to it,

¹ E.p. : ' that the spirit.'

² Alc. alone has : ' and profitable.'

³ [Lit., ' that is not in renunciation . . .']

directly, vanity of spirit and distraction of the mind, unruly covetousness, immodesty, outward and inward unseemliness, impurity of thought, and envy.

3. From joy in hearing useless things there may directly arise distraction of the imagination, gossiping, envy, rash judgements and vacillating thoughts ; and from these arise many other and pernicious evils.

4. From joy in sweet perfumes, there arise loathing of the poor, which is contrary to the teaching of Christ, dislike of serving others, unruliness of heart in humble things, and spiritual insensibility, at least to a degree proportionate with its desire for this joy.

5. From joy in the savour of meat and drink, there arise directly such gluttony and drunkenness, wrath, discord and want of charity with one's neighbours and with the poor, as had that Epulon,¹ who fared sumptuously every day, with Lazarus.² Hence arise bodily disorders, infirmities and evil motions, because the incentives to luxury become greater. Directly, too, there arises great spiritual torpor, and the desire for spiritual things is corrupted, so that the soul cannot taste any of them, neither endure them nor treat of them. From this joy is likewise born distraction of the other senses and of the heart, and discontent with respect to many things.

6. From joy in the touch of soft things arise many more evils and more pernicious ones, which more quickly cause sense to overflow into spirit,³ and quench all spiritual strength and vigour. Hence arises the abominable vice of effeminacy, or the incentives thereto, according to the proportion of joy of this kind which is experienced. Hence luxury increases, the mind becomes effeminate and timid, and the senses grow soft and delicate and are predisposed to sin and evil. Vain gladness and joy are infused into the heart ; the tongue takes to itself licence and the eyes roam unrestrainedly ; and the remaining senses are blunted and deadened, according to the measure⁴ of this desire. The judgement is confounded, being nourished by spiritual folly and insipidity ; moral cowardice and inconstancy increase ; and, by the darkness of the soul and the weakness of the heart, fear is begotten even where no fear is. At times, again, this joy begets a spirit of confusion, and insensibility

¹ E.p. : 'as had that rich eater.'

² S. Luke xvi, 19.

³ E.p. : 'which more quickly hurt the spirit.'

⁴ [*Lit.*, 'to the quantity.'] E.p. : 'to the degree.'

with respect to conscience and spirit ; wherefore the reason is greatly enfeebled, and is affected in such a way that it can neither take nor give good counsel, and remains incapable of moral and spiritual blessings and becomes as useless as a broken vessel.

7. All these evils are caused by this kind of rejoicing—in some more intensely,¹ according to the intensity of their rejoicing, and also according to the complacency or weakness or variableness of the person who yields to it. For there are natures that will receive greater detriment from a small occasion of sin than will others from a great one.

8. Finally, from joy of this kind in touch, a person may fall into as many evils and perils as those which we have described as concerning the good things of nature ; and, since these have already been described, I do not detail them here ; neither do I describe many other evils wrought thus, such as diminution of spiritual exercises and bodily penance and lukewarmness and lack of devotion in the use of the sacraments of penance and of the Eucharist.

CHAPTER XXVI

Of the benefits that come to the soul from self-denial in rejoicing as to things of sense, which benefits are spiritual and temporal.

1. Marvellous are the benefits that the soul derives from self-denial in this rejoicing : some of these are spiritual and some temporal.

2. The first is that the soul, by restraining its rejoicing as to things of sense, is restored from the distraction into which it has fallen through excessive exercise of the senses, and is recollected in God. The spirituality and the virtues that it has acquired are preserved ; nay, they are increased and increase continually.²

3. The second spiritual benefit which comes from self-denial in rejoicing as to things of sense is exceeding great. We may say with truth that that which was sensual becomes spiritual, and that which was bestial becomes rational ; and even that the soul is journeying from a human life to a

¹ E.p. : 'in some more, in others less, more or less intensely . . .'

² [*Lit.*, 'and gain continually.'] So Alc. A, B add 'anew.' E.p. omits : 'and increase continually.'

portion which is angelical ; and that, instead of being temporal and human, it becomes celestial and divine. For, even as a man who seeks the pleasure of things of sense and sets his rejoicing upon them neither merits nor deserves any other name than those which we have given him—that is, sensual, bestial, temporal, etc.—even so, when he exalts his rejoicing above these things of sense, he merits all those other names—to wit, spiritual, celestial, etc.

4. And it is clear that this is true ; for, although the exercise of the senses and the power of sensuality are contrary, as the Apostle says, to the power and the exercises of spirituality,¹ it follows that, when the one kind of power is diminished and brought to an end, the other contrary kinds, the growth of which was hindered by the first kinds, are increased. And thus, when the spirit is perfected, (which is the higher part of the soul and the part that has relations with God and receives His communications), it merits all these attributes aforementioned, since it is perfected in the heavenly and spiritual gifts and blessings of God. Both these things are proved by S. Paul, who calls the sensual man (namely, the man that directs the exercise of his will solely to sense) the animal man, who perceives not² the things of God. But this other man, who lifts up his will to God, he calls the spiritual man, saying that this man penetrates and judges all things, even the deep things of God.³ Therefore the soul gains herein the marvellous⁴ benefit of a disposition well able to receive the blessings and spiritual gifts of God.

5. The third benefit is that the pleasures and the rejoicing of the will in temporal matters are very greatly increased ; for, as the Saviour says, they shall receive an hundredfold in this life.⁵ So that, if thou deniest thyself one joy, the Lord will give thee an hundredfold in this life, both spiritually and temporally ; and likewise, for one joy that thou hast in these things of sense, thou shalt have an hundredfold of affliction and misery. For, through the eye that is purged from the joys of sight, there comes to the soul a spiritual joy, directed to God in all things that are seen, whether Divine or profane.⁶ Through the ear that is purged from the joy of hearing, there

¹ Galatians v, 17.

² A, B : ' who is he that perceives not . . . '

³ 1 Corinthians ii, 9, 10, 14.

⁴ Here P. Juan Evangelista's copy recommences (cf. p. 278, n. 8, above).

⁵ S. Matthew xix, 29.

⁶ E.p. : ' or human.'

comes to the soul joy most spiritual an hundredfold, directed to God in all that it hears, be it Divine or profane.¹ Even so is it with the other senses when they are purged. For, even as in the state of innocence all that our first parents saw and said and ate in Paradise furnished them with greater sweetness of contemplation, so that the sensual part of their nature might be duly subjected to, and ordered by, reason ; even so the man whose sense is purged from all things of sense and made subject to the spirit, receives, in his very first motion, the delight of delectable knowledge and contemplation of God.

6. Wherefore, to him that is pure, all things, whether high or low, are an occasion of greater good and further purity ; even as the man that is impure is apt to derive evil from things both high and low, because of his impurity. But he that conquers not the joy of desire will not enjoy the serenity of habitual rejoicing in God through His creatures and works. In the man that lives no more according to sense, all the operations of the senses and faculties are directed to Divine contemplation. For, as it is true in good philosophy that each thing operates according to its being, and to the life that it lives, so it is clear, beyond contradiction, that, if the soul lives a spiritual life, the animal life² being mortified, it must be journeying straight to God, since all its spiritual actions and motions pertain to the life of the spirit. Hence it follows that such a man, being pure in heart, finds in all things a knowledge of God which is joyful and pleasant, chaste, pure, spiritual, glad and loving.

7. From what has been said I deduce the following doctrine—namely that, until a man has succeeded in so habituating his senses to the purgation of the joys of sense that from his first motion³ he is gaining the benefit aforementioned of directing all his powers to God, he must needs deny himself joy and pleasure with respect to these powers, so that he may withdraw his soul from the life of sense. He must fear that, since he is not yet spiritual, he may perchance derive from the practice of these things a pleasure and an energy which is of sense rather than of spirit ; that the energy which is of sense may predominate in all his actions ;

¹ E.p. : ' or human.'

² E.p. : ' . . . that according to the being which everything has is the life that it lives, therefore, in a soul [*lit.*, 'in him'] that has a spiritual being, the animal life . . .

³ E.p. omits : ' from his first motion.'

and that this may lead to an increase of sensuality and may sustain and nurture it. For, as Our Saviour says, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.¹ Let this be closely considered, for it is the truth. And let not him that has not yet mortified his pleasure in things of sense dare to make great use of the power and operation of sense with respect to them, thinking that they will help him to become more spiritual ; for the powers of the soul will increase the more without the intervention of these things of sense—that is, if it quench the joy and desire for them rather than make any use of it.

8. There is no need to speak of the blessings of glory that, in the life to come, result from the renunciation of these joys. For, apart from the fact that the bodily gifts of the life of glory, such as agility and clarity, will be much more excellent than in those souls who have not denied themselves, there will be an increase in the essential glory of the soul corresponding to its love of God, for Whose sake it has renounced the things of sense aforementioned. For every momentary, fleeting joy that has been renounced, as S. Paul says, there shall be laid up an exceeding weight of glory eternally.² And I will not here recount the other benefits, whether moral, temporal or spiritual, which result from this night of rejoicing ; for they are all those that have already been described, and to a more eminent degree ; since these joys that are renounced are more closely linked to the natural man, and therefore he that renounces them acquires thereby a more intimate purity.

CHAPTER XXVII

*Which begins to treat of the fourth kind of good—namely, the moral.
Describes wherein this consists, and in what manner joy of the
will therein is lawful.*

1. The fourth kind of good wherein the will may rejoice is moral. By this we here understand the virtues, and the habits of the virtues, in so far as these are moral, and the practice of any virtue, and the practice of works of mercy, the keeping of the law of God, and of that of the common-

¹ S. John iii, 6.

² 2 Corinthians iv, 17.

weal,¹ and the putting into practice of all good intentions and inclinations.

2. These kinds of moral good, when they are possessed and practised, deserve perhaps more than any of the other kinds aforementioned that the will should rejoice in them. For a man may rejoice in his own affairs for one of two reasons, or for both reasons together—namely, for that which they are in themselves, or for the good which they imply and bring with them as a means and instrument. We shall find that the possession of the three kinds of good already mentioned merits no rejoicing of the will. For, as has been said, they do no good to man of themselves, nor have they any good in themselves, since they are so fleeting and frail; rather, as we have likewise said, they cause and bring him trouble and grief and affliction of spirit. Now, although they might merit that man should rejoice in them for the second reason—which is that he may profit by them for journeying to God—this is so uncertain that, as we commonly see, they more often harm man than bring him profit. But moral goods merit a certain degree of rejoicing in him that possesses them, and this for the first reason—namely, for their intrinsic nature and worth. For they bring with them peace and tranquillity, and a right and ordered use of the reason and actions that are consistent therewith, so that a man cannot, humanly speaking, have anything better in this life.

3. Thus, since these virtues deserve to be loved and esteemed, humanly speaking, for their own sakes, a man may well rejoice in the possession of them, and may practise them for that which they are in themselves, and for the blessing which they bring to man in human and temporal form. In this way and for this reason² philosophers and wise men and princes of old esteemed and praised them, and endeavoured to possess and practise them; and, although they were heathen, and regarded them only in a temporal manner, merely considering the blessings which they knew would result from them—temporal, corporal and natural—they not only obtained by means of them the temporal renown and benefits which they sought, but, apart from this, God, Who

¹ [*Lit.*, *política*, which I take as an adjective qualifying *ley* ('law') in the sense of 'law of the commonweal.' P. Silverio seems to consider it to be a noun, and glosses it as meaning 'good government in the commonweal, courtesy and other social virtues.'] A, B read *plática* ['conversation'], thereby entirely altering the sense.

² E.p. omits: 'and for this reason.'

loves all that is good (even in barbarians and heathen) and, as the Wise Man says, hinders naught that is good,¹ gave them longer life, greater honour, dominion and peace (as He did for example to the Romans), because they followed just laws ; for He subjected nearly the whole world to them, and gave rewards of a temporal kind for their good customs to those who because of their unbelief were incapable of eternal reward. For God loves moral good so much that, merely because Solomon asked wisdom of Him that he might teach his people, govern them justly and bring them up in good customs, God Himself was greatly pleased with him, and told him that, because he had asked for wisdom to that end, this should be given him, and there should also be given him that which he had not asked, namely, riches and honour, so that no king, either in the past or in the future, should be like him.²

4. But, although the Christian should rejoice in this first way in the moral good that he possesses and in the good works of a temporal kind which he does, since they lead to the temporal blessings which we have described, he must not allow his joy to stop at this first stage (as we have said the heathen did, because their spiritual sight extended not beyond the things of this mortal life) ; but, since he has the light of faith, wherein he hopes for eternal life, without which nothing that belongs to this life and the next will be of any value to him, he must rejoice principally and solely in the possession and employment of these moral goods after the second manner—namely, in that by doing these works for the love of God he will gain eternal life. And thus he should set his eyes and his rejoicing solely on serving and honouring God with his good customs and virtues. For without this intention the virtues are of no worth in the sight of God, as is seen in the ten virgins of the Gospel, who had all kept their virginity and done good works ; and yet, because the joy of five of them was not of the second kind (that is, because they had not directed their joy to God), but was rather after the first and vain kind, for they rejoiced³ in the possession of their good works, they were cast out from Heaven with no acknowledgement or reward from the Bridegroom. And likewise many persons of old had many virtues⁴ and practised

¹ Wisdom vii, 22.

² 3 Kings [A.V., 1 Kings] iii, 11-13.

³ A, B, e.p. add : 'and boasted.'

⁴ E.p. : 'certain virtues.'

good works, and many Christians have them¹ nowadays and accomplish great acts, which will profit them nothing for eternal life, because they have not sought in them the glory and honour which belong to God alone.² The Christian, then, must rejoice, not in the performing of good works and the following of good customs, but in doing them for the love of God alone, without respect to aught else soever. For, inasmuch as good works that are done to serve God alone will have the greater reward in glory, the greater will be the confusion in the presence of God of those who have done them for other reasons.

5. The Christian, then, if he will direct his rejoicing to God with regard to moral good, must realize that the value of his good works, fasts, alms, penances, etc., is not based upon the number or the quality of them, but upon the love of God which inspires him to do them ; and that they are the more excellent when they are performed with a purer and sincerer love of God, and when there is less in them of self-interest, joy, pleasure, consolation and praise, whether with reference to this world or to the next. Wherefore the heart must not be set upon pleasure, consolation and delight, and the other interests which good works and practices commonly bring with them, but it must concentrate its rejoicing upon God. It must desire to serve Him in its good works, and purge itself from this other rejoicing, remaining in darkness with respect to it and desiring that God alone shall have joy in its good works and shall take secret pleasure therein, without any other intention and delight than those relating to the honour and glory of God. And thus, with respect to this moral good, the soul will concentrate all the strength of its will upon God.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Of seven evils into which a man may fall if he set the rejoicing of his will upon moral good.

1. The principal evils into which a man may fall through vain rejoicing in his good works and habits I find to be seven ; and they are very hurtful because they are spiritual.³

¹ E.p. : ' have and practise them.'

² E.p. adds : ' and His love above all things.'

³ A, B, e.p. add : ' These I shall here briefly describe.'

1. 2. The first evil is vanity, pride, vainglory and presumption ; for a man cannot rejoice in his works without esteeming them. And hence arise boasting and like things, as is said of the Pharisee in the Gospel, who prayed and congratulated himself before God,¹ boasting that he fasted and did other good works.

2. 3. The second evil is usually linked with this : it is our judging others, by means of comparisons, as wicked and imperfect, when it seems to us that their acts and good works are inferior to our own ; we esteem them the less highly in our hearts, and at times in our speech. And this evil was likewise that of the Pharisee, for in his prayer he said : I thank Thee that² I am not as other men are : robbers, unjust and adulterers.³ So that by one single act he fell into these two evils, esteeming himself and despising others, as do many nowadays, saying : I am not like such a man, nor do I do this and that, as does such or such a man. And many of these are even worse than the Pharisee. He, it is true, not only despised others, but also pointed to an individual, saying : Nor am I like this publican. But they, not satisfied with either of these things, go so far as to be angry and envious when they see that others are praised, or do more, or are of greater use, than themselves.

4. The third evil is that, as they look for pleasure in their good works, they usually perform them only when they see that some pleasure and praise will result from them. And thus, as Christ says, they do everything *ut videantur ab hominibus*,⁴ and work not for the love of⁵ God alone.

5. The fourth evil follows from this. It is that they will have no reward from God, since they have desired in this life to have joy or consolation or honour or some other kind of interest as a result of their good works : of such the Saviour says that herein they have received their reward.⁶ And thus they have had⁷ naught but the labour of their work and are confounded, and receive no reward. There is so much misery among the sons of men which has to do with this evil that I myself believe that the greater number of good works which they perform in public are either vicious or will be of no value to them, or are imperfect⁸ in the sight of God, since

¹ S. Luke xviii, 11-12.

² E.p. omits : ' I thank Thee that.'

³ S. Luke xviii, 11.

⁴ S. Matthew xxiii, 5.

⁵ A, B, e.p. omit : ' the love of.'

⁶ S. Matthew vi, 2.

⁷ E.p. : ' And thus they will have.'

⁸ A, e.p. : ' or are imperfect and defective.'

they are not detached from these human intentions and interests. For what other judgement can be formed of some of the actions which certain men perform, and of the memorials which they set up, when they will not perform these actions at all unless they are surrounded by human respect and honour, which are the vanity of life, or unless they can perpetuate in these memorials their name, lineage or authority, until they set up their emblems¹ and escutcheons in the very churches, as if they wished to set themselves, in the stead of images, in places where all bend the knee? In these good works which some men perform, may it not be said that they are worshipping² themselves more than God? This is certainly true if they perform them for the reason described and otherwise would not perform them at all.³ But leaving aside these, which are the worst cases, how many are there who fall into these evils in their good works in many ways? Some wish to be praised, others to be thanked, others enumerate their good works and desire that this person and that shall know of them, and indeed the whole world; and sometimes they wish an intermediary to present their alms, or to carry out other charitable deeds,⁴ so that more may be known of them; and some desire all these things. This is the sounding of the trumpet, which, says the Saviour in the Gospel, vain men do, for which reason they shall have no reward for their works from God.⁵

6. These persons, then, in order to flee from this evil, must hide their good works so that God alone may see them, and must not desire anyone to take notice of them. And they must hide them, not only from others, but even from themselves. That is to say that they must find no satisfaction in them, nor esteem them as if they were of some worth, nor derive pleasure from them at all. It is this that is spiritually indicated in those words of Our Lord: Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.⁶ Which is as much as to say: Esteem not with thy carnal and temporal eye the work that thou doest spiritually. And in this way the strength of the will is concentrated upon God, and a good deed bears fruit in His sight; so that not only will it not be lost, but it

¹ A, B; 'their names.'

² [*Lit.*, 'are adoring.'] E.p.: 'are esteeming.'

³ E.p. omits this entire sentence.

⁴ [*Lit.*, 'to present their alms or that which they do.']

⁵ S. Matthew vi, 2.

⁶ S. Matthew vi, 3.

will be of great merit.¹ And in this sense must be understood that passage from Job : If I have kissed my hand with my mouth, which is a great sin and iniquity, and my heart hath rejoiced in secret.² Here by the hand is understood good works, and by the mouth is understood the will which finds satisfaction in them. And since this is, as we say, finding satisfaction in oneself, he says : If my heart hath rejoiced in secret ; which is a great iniquity and a denial of God. And this is as though he were to say that he had no satisfaction, neither did his heart rejoice in secret.³

7. The fifth of these evils is that such persons make no progress on the road of perfection. For, since they are attached to the pleasure and consolation which they find in their good works, it follows that, when they find no such pleasure and consolation in their good works and exercises, which is ordinarily when God desires to lead them on, by giving them the dry bread of the perfect and taking from them the milk of babes, in order to prove their strength and to purge their delicate appetites so that they may be able to enjoy the food of grown men, they commonly faint and cease to persevere, because their good works give them no pleasure. In this way may be spiritually understood these words of the Wise Man : Dying flies spoil the sweetness of ointment.⁴ For, when any mortification comes to these persons, they die to their good works and cease to practise them ; and thus they lose their perseverance, wherein are found sweetness of spirit and interior consolation.

8. The sixth of these evils is that such persons commonly deceive themselves, thinking that the things and good works which give them pleasure must be better than those that give them none. They praise and esteem the one kind and depreciate the other ;⁵ yet as a rule those works whereby a man is most greatly mortified (especially when he is not proficient in perfection) are more acceptable and precious in the sight of God, by reason of the self-denial which a man

¹ So Alc. A, B, e.p. read : 'where not only will it be lost [*sic.* Read : 'where otherwise'], but oftentimes, through inward vanity and boasting, the soul will sin greatly before God.'

² Job xxxi, 27-8.

³ So Alc. A, B and (with slight variations) e.p. add : 'For to assign and attribute good works to oneself is to deny them to God, to Whom belongs every good work ; this Lucifer did, rejoicing in himself and denying to God that which was His, and exalting himself because of it, which was the cause of his perdition.'

⁴ Ecclesiastes x, 1.

⁵ So Alc. A, B : 'and reprehend and despise the other.' E.p. : 'and condemn and despise the other.'

must observe in performing them, than are those wherein he finds consolation and which may very easily be an occasion of self-seeking. And in this way Micah says of them : *Malum manuum suarum dicunt bonum*.¹ That is : That which is bad in their works they call good. This comes to them because of the pleasure which they take in their good works, instead of thinking only of giving pleasure to God. The extent to which this evil predominates, whether in spiritual men or in ordinary persons, would take too long to describe, for hardly anyone can be found who is moved to do such works simply for God's sake, without the attraction of some advantage of consolation or pleasure, or some other consideration.

9. The seventh evil is that, in so far as a man stifles not vain rejoicing in moral works, he is to that extent incapable of receiving reasonable counsel and instruction with regard to good works that he should perform. For he is fettered by the habit of weakness that he has acquired through performing good works with attachment to vain rejoicing ; so that he cannot consider the counsel of others as best, or, even if he considers it to be so, he cannot follow it, through not having the necessary strength of mind. Such persons as this are greatly weakened in charity toward God and their neighbour ; for self-love, in which they indulge with respect to their good works, causes their charity to grow cold.

CHAPTER XXIX

Of the benefits which come to the soul through the withdrawal of its rejoicing from moral good.

1. Very great are the benefits which come to the soul when it desires not to set the vain rejoicing of its will on this kind of good. For, in the first place, it is freed from falling into many temptations and deceits of the devil, which are involved in rejoicing in these good works, as we may understand by that which is said in Job, namely : He sleepeth under the shadow, in the covert of the reed² and in moist places.³ This he applies to the devil, who deceives the soul in the moisture of rejoicing and in the vanity of the reed—that is, in vain

¹ Micah vii, 3.

² This is the emendation of e.p. The Codices [followed by P. Silverio] have : ' of the feather,' as also below.

³ Job xl, 16 [A.V., xl, 21].

works. And it is no wonder if the soul is secretly deceived by the devil in this rejoicing ; for, apart altogether from his suggestions, vain rejoicing is itself deception. This is especially true when there is any boasting of heart concerning these good works, as Jeremiah well says in these words : *Arrogantia tua decepit te.*¹ For what greater deception is there than boasting ? And from this the soul that purges itself from this rejoicing is freed.

2. The second benefit is that the soul performs its good works more deliberately and more perfectly, which is impossible if there be in them the passion of joy and pleasure. For, because of this passion of joy, the passions of wrath and concupiscence are so strong that they will not submit to reason,² but ordinarily cause a man to be inconsistent in his actions and purposes, so that he abandons some and takes up others, and begins a thing only to abandon it without completing any part of it. For, since he acts under the influence of pleasure, and since pleasure is variable, being much stronger in some natures than in others, it follows that, when this pleasure ceases, both the action and its purpose cease, even though they may be important. To such persons the joy which they have in their work is the soul and the strength thereof ; and, when the joy is quenched,³ the work ceases and perishes, and they persevere therein no longer. It is of such persons that Christ says : They receive the word with joy, and then the devil taketh it away from them, lest they should persevere.⁴ And this is because they have no strength and no roots save in the joy aforementioned. To take and to withdraw their will, therefore, from this rejoicing is the cause of their perseverance and success.⁵ This benefit, then, is a great one, even as the contrary evil is great likewise. The wise man sets his eyes upon the substance and benefit of his work, not upon the pleasure and delight which it gives him ; and so he is not beating the air, but derives from his work a stable joy, without any meed of bitterness.⁶

¹ Jeremiah xlix, 16. E.p. adds the translation : ' Thy arrogance hath deceived thee.'

² [*Lit.*, ' will not give place to the weight of reason.']

³ A, B : ' when the joy ceases.'

⁴ S. Luke viii, 12.

⁵ E.p. : ' . . . is an excellent preparation for perseverance and success.'

⁶ E.p. : ' without demanding any meed of pleasure.' [The word translated ' bitterness ' in the text is *sinsabor*, the contrary of *sabor*, which is translated above ' pleasure.' The chief idea beneath *sinsabor* is that of insipidity and boredom.]

3. The third benefit is divine. It is that, when vain joy in these good works is quenched, the soul becomes poor in spirit, which is one of the blessings spoken of by the Son of God when He says : Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.¹

4. The fourth benefit is that he that denies himself this joy will be meek, humble and prudent in his actions. For he will not act impetuously and rapidly, through being impelled² by the wrath and concupiscence which belong to joy ; neither presumptuously, through being affected by the esteem of his own work which he cherishes because of the joy that he has in it ; neither incautiously, through being blinded by joy.³

5. The fifth benefit is that he becomes pleasing to God and man, and is freed from spiritual sloth, gluttony and avarice, and from spiritual envy and from a thousand other vices.

CHAPTER XXX

Which begins to treat of the fifth kind of good thing wherein the will may rejoice, which is the supernatural. Describes the nature of these supernatural good things, and how they are distinguished from the spiritual, and how joy in them is to be directed to God.

1. It now behoves us to treat of the fifth kind of good thing wherein the soul may rejoice, which is the supernatural. By this term we here understand all the gifts and graces given by God which transcend natural virtue and capacity and are called *gratis datæ*. Such as these are the gifts of wisdom and knowledge which God gave to Solomon, and the graces whereof S. Paul speaks⁴—namely, faith, gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, knowledge and discernment of spirits, interpretation of words and likewise the gift of tongues.

2. These good things, it is true, are also spiritual, like those of the same kind of which we have to speak presently ; yet, since the two are so different, I have thought well to make a distinction between them. The practice of these has an intimate relation with the profit of man, and it is with a view to this profit and to this end that God gives them, as

¹ S. Matthew v, 3.

³ Alc. omits : 'neither . . . by joy.'

² E.p. : 'being carried away.'

⁴ 1 Corinthians xii, 9-10.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding bell or metal. And though I have prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, even as much as may remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing, etc.¹ Wherefore Christ will refuse the requests of many who have esteemed their good works in this way, when they beg Him for glory because of them, saying² : Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name and worked many miracles ? Then Christ will say to them : Depart from Me, workers of iniquity.³

5. A man, then, should rejoice, not when he has such graces and practises them, but when he reaps from them the second spiritual fruit, namely that of serving God in them with true charity, for herein is the fruit of eternal life. For this cause Our Saviour reproved the disciples who were rejoicing because they cast out devils, saying : Desire not to rejoice in this, that devils are subject to you, but rather because your names are written in the book of life.⁴ This, according to good theology, is as much as to say : Rejoice if your names are written in the book of life. By this it is understood that a man should not rejoice save when he is walking in the way of life, which he may do by performing good works in charity ; for where is the profit and what is the worth in the sight of God of aught that is not love of God ? And this love is not perfect if it be not strong and discreet in purging the will of joy in all things, and if it be not set upon doing the will of God alone. And in this manner the will is united with God through these good things which are supernatural.

CHAPTER XXXI

Of the evils which come to the soul when it sets the rejoicing of the will upon this kind of good.

1. Three principal evils, it seems to me, may come to the soul when it sets its rejoicing⁵ upon supernatural good. These are : that it may deceive and be deceived ; that it

¹ 1 Corinthians xiii, 1-2.

² A, B : ' and say to Him.' The other authorities omit ' saying.'

³ S. Matthew vii, 22-3.

⁴ S. Luke x, 20.

⁵ E.p. : ' may come to man when he sets his rejoicing.'

may fall away from the faith ; and that it may indulge in vainglory or some other such vanity.

2. As to the first of these, it is a very easy thing to deceive others, and to deceive oneself, by rejoicing in this kind of operation. And the reason is that, in order to know which of these works are false and which are true, and how and at what time they should be practised, much counsel and much light from God are needful, and both these are greatly impeded by joy in these operations and esteem for them. And this for two reasons : first, because joy deadens and darkens judgement ; second, because, when a man has joy in these things, not only does he the more quickly become eager to obtain them, but he is also the more impelled¹ to work them out of the proper season. And supposing even that the virtues and operations which are practised are genuine, these two defects suffice for us to be frequently deceived in them, either through not understanding them as they should be understood, or through not profiting by them and using them at the times and in the ways that are most meet. For, although it is true that, when God gives these gifts and graces, He gives light by which to see them, and the impulse whereby a man may know at what times and in what ways to use them ; yet these souls, through the attachment and imperfection which they may have with regard to them, may greatly err, not using them with the perfection that God desires of them therein, and in the way and at the time that He wills. We read that Balaam desired to do this, when, against the will of God, he determined to go² and curse the children of Israel, for which reason God was wroth and purposed to slay him.³ And S. James and S. John⁴ desired to call down fire from Heaven upon the Samaritans because they gave not lodging to Our Saviour, and for this He reproved them.⁵

3. Here it is evident that these persons⁶ were led to determine to perform these works, when it was not meet to do so, by a certain imperfect passion, which was inherent in their joy in them and esteem for them. For, when no such imperfection exists, the soul is moved and determined to perform these virtues only in the manner wherein God so

¹ E.p. : ' the more inclined.'

² E.p. : ' he dared to go.'

³ Numbers xxii, 22-3.

⁴ E.p. adds : ' carried away by zeal.'

⁵ S. Luke ix, 54-5.

⁶ E.p. : ' that these imperfect persons of whom we are speaking.'

impels it, and at His time, and until then it is not right that they should be performed. It was for this reason that God complained of certain prophets, through Jeremiah, saying : I have not sent the prophets, and they ran ; I have not spoken to them, and they prophesied.¹ And later He says : They deceived My people by their lying and their miracles, when I had not commanded them, neither had I sent them.² And in that place He says of them likewise : They see the visions of their heart, and speak of them³ ; which would not happen if they had not this abominable attachment to these works.

4. From these passages it is to be understood that the evil of this rejoicing not only leads men to make wicked and perverse use of these graces given by God, as did Balaam and those of whom the prophet here says that they worked miracles whereby they deceived the people, but it even leads them to use these graces without having been given them by God, like those who prophesied their own fancies and published the visions which they invented or which the devil represented to them. For, when the devil sees them affectioned to these things, he opens a large field to them, gives them abundant material and interferes with them in many ways ; whereupon they spread their sails and become shamelessly audacious, devoting themselves freely to these prodigious works.

5. Nor does the evil stop here. To such a point does their joy in these works and their eagerness for them extend that, if before they had a secret compact with the devil (and many of them do in fact perform these works by such secret compacts), it now makes them bold enough to work with him by an explicit and manifest compact, submitting themselves to him, by agreement, as his disciples and allies. Hence we have wizards, enchanters, magicians, fortune-tellers and sorcerers. And so far does the joy of these persons in their works carry them that, not only do they seek to purchase gifts and graces with money, as did Simon Magus, in order to serve the devil ; but they even strive to obtain sacred things, and (which cannot be said without trembling) Divine things,⁴ for even the very Body⁵ of our Lord Jesus Christ has been seen to be usurped for the use of their wicked deeds

¹ Jeremiah xxiii, 21.

² Jeremiah xxiii, 32.

³ Jeremiah xxiii, 26.

⁴ The remainder of this sentence is omitted from e.p.

⁵ [*Lit.*, ' the awful Body. ']

and abominations. May God here extend and show to them His great mercy !

6. Everyone will clearly understand how pernicious are such persons to themselves and how prejudicial to Christianity.¹ It may be noted here that all those magicians and fortune-tellers who lived among the children of Israel, whom Saul destroyed out of the land, because they desired to imitate the true prophets of God, had fallen into such abominations and deceits.

7. He, then, that has supernatural gifts and graces ought to withdraw himself from desiring to practise them, and from joy in so doing, nor ought he to care to exercise them ;² for God, Who gives Himself to such persons, by supernatural means, for the profit of His Church and of its members, will move them likewise supernaturally³ in such a manner and at such time as He desires. As He commanded His faithful ones⁴ to take no thought as to what they were to say, or as to how they were to say it, since this is the supernatural business of faith, it will likewise be His will (as these operations are no less a supernatural matter) that a man should wait and allow God to work, by moving his heart, since in the virtue of this working will be wrought all virtue. The disciples (so we read in the Acts of the Apostles), although these graces and gifts had been infused within them, prayed to God, beseeching Him to be pleased to stretch forth His hand in making signs and performing works of healing through them, that they might introduce the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ into the hearts of men.⁵

8. From this first evil may proceed the second, which is a falling away from the faith ; this can come to pass after two manners. The first has respect to others ; for, when a man sets out, unseasonably and needlessly, to perform a marvel or a mighty work, apart from the fact that this is tempting God, which is a great sin, it may be that he will not succeed, and will engender in the hearts of men discredit and contempt for the faith. For, although at times such persons may succeed because for other reasons and purposes God so wills it, as in the case of Saul's witch⁶ (if it is true that it was indeed Samuel who appeared on that occasion), they will not always

¹ A, B, e.p. : ' to the Christian commonweal.'

² A : ' to name them.' E.p. omits : ' nor ought he to care to exercise them.'

³ E.p. adds : ' to exercise them.'

⁴ E.p. : ' His disciples.'

⁵ Acts iv, 29-30.

⁶ 1 Kings [A.V., 1 Samuel] xxviii, 7, ff.

so succeed ; and, when they do so, they go astray none the less and are blameworthy for having used these graces when it was not fitting to do so. The second manner in which we may fall away is in ourselves¹ and has respect to the merit of faith ; for, if a man make much account of these miracles, he ceases to lean upon the substantial practice of faith, which is an obscure habit ; and thus, where signs and witnesses abound, there is less merit in believing. In this way S. Gregory says that faith has no merit when human reason supplies experience.² And thus these marvels are never worked by God save when they are really necessary for belief.³ Therefore, to the end that His disciples should not be without merit, though they had experience of His resurrection, He did many things before He showed Himself to them, so that they should believe Him without seeing Him. To Mary Magdalene, first of all, He showed the empty tomb, and afterwards bade the angels speak to her ;⁴ for, as S. Paul says, faith comes by hearing ;⁵ and, having heard, she believed before she saw. And, although she saw Him, it was as an ordinary man,⁶ that, by the warmth of His presence, He might completely instruct her in the belief in which she was wanting. And He first sent to tell His disciples, with the women, and afterwards they went to see the tomb. And, as to those who went to Emmaus, He first of all enkindled their hearts in faith so that they might see Him, dissembling with them as He walked.⁷ And finally He reproved them all because they had not believed those who had announced to them His resurrection.⁸ And He reproved S. Thomas because he desired to have the witness of His wounds, by telling him that they who saw Him not and yet believed Him were blessed.⁹

9. And thus it is not the will of God that miracles should be wrought, for, as men say, when He works them, He does so only because He cannot do otherwise.¹⁰ And for this cause He reproved the Pharisees because they believed not save

¹ Alc. has ' in like manner ' [*asimismo*] for ' in ourselves ' [*en si mismo*].

² ' Nec fides habet meritum cui humana ratio præbet experimentum.' S. Gregory, Hom. 26 in Evang. (Migne, Vol. LXXVI, p. 1137). The translation in the text is that of Alc. A, B, e.p. have: ' . . . supplies experience of a human and palpable kind.'

³ E.p. adds: ' and for other ends concerning His glory and His saints.'

⁴ [S. Luke xxiv, 6 ; S. John xx, 2.]

⁵ [Romans x, 17.]

⁶ E.p. : ' as a gardener ' [S. John xx, 15].

⁷ S. Luke xxiv, 15.

⁸ [S. Luke xxiv, 25-6.]

⁹ S. John xx, 29.

¹⁰ E.p. omits: ' for, as . . . do otherwise.'

through signs, saying : Unless ye see marvels and signs, ye believe not.¹ Those, then, who love to rejoice in these supernatural works, lose much in the matter of faith.

10. The third evil is that, because of their joy in these works, men commonly fall into vainglory or some other vanity. For even their joy in these wonders, when it is not, as we have said, purely in God and for God, is vanity ; which is evident in the reproof given by Our Lord to the disciples because they had rejoiced that devils were subject to them ;² for which joy, if it had not been vain, He would not have reproved them.

CHAPTER XXXII

Of two benefits which are derived from the renunciation of rejoicing in the matter of the supernatural graces.

1. Besides the benefits which the soul gains by being delivered from the three evils aforementioned through its renunciation of this joy, it acquires two excellent benefits. The first is that it magnifies and exalts God : the second is that it exalts itself. For God is exalted in the soul after two manners : first, by the withdrawal of the heart and the joy of the will from all that is not God, in order to set them upon Him alone. This David signified in the verse³ which we quoted when we began to speak of the night of this faculty ; namely : Man shall attain to a lofty heart, and God shall be exalted.⁴ For, when the heart is raised above all things, the soul is exalted above them all.

2. And, because in this way the soul centres itself in God alone, God is exalted and magnified, when He reveals to the soul His excellence and greatness ; for, in this elevation of joy, God bears witness of Himself, Who He is. This cannot be done save if the will be voided of joy and consolation with respect to all things, even as David said also, in these words : Be still and see that I am God.⁵ And again he says : In a desert land, dry and pathless, have I appeared before Thee, to see Thy power and Thy glory.⁶ And, since it is true that God is exalted by the fixing of the soul's rejoicing

¹ S. John iv, 48.

³ E.p. : ' in the place.'

⁵ Psalm xlv, 11 [A.V., xlv, 10].

² S. Luke x, 20.

⁴ Psalm lxiii, 7 [A.V., lxiv, 6-7].

⁶ Psalm lxii, 3 [A.V., lxiii, 1-2].

upon detachment from all things, He is much more highly exalted when the soul withdraws itself from the most wondrous of these things in order to fix its rejoicing on Him alone. For these, being supernatural, are of a higher nature ; and thus for the soul to cast them aside, in order to set its rejoicing upon God alone, is to attribute greater glory and excellence to God than to them. For, the more and the greater things a man despises for the sake of another, the more does he esteem and exalt that other.

3. Furthermore, God is exalted after the second manner when the will is withdrawn from this kind of operation ; for, the more God is believed and served without testimonies and signs, the more He is exalted by the soul, for it believes more concerning God than signs and miracles can demonstrate.

4. The second benefit wherein the soul is exalted consists in this, that, withdrawing the will from all desire for apparent¹ signs and testimonies, it is exalted in purest faith, which God increases and infuses within it much more intensely. And, together with this, He increases in it the other two theological virtues, which are charity and hope, wherein the soul enjoys the highest Divine knowledge by means of the obscure and detached habit of faith ; and it enjoys great delight of love by means of charity, whereby the will rejoices in naught else than in the living God ; and likewise it enjoys satisfaction in the memory² by means of hope. All this is a wondrous benefit, which leads essentially and directly to the perfect union of the soul with God.

CHAPTER XXXIII

*Which begins to treat of the sixth kind of good wherein the soul may rejoice. Describes its nature and makes the first division under this head.*³

1. Since the intention of this work of ours is to lead the spirit through these good things of the spirit even to the Divine union of the soul with God, it will now behove both myself and the reader to give our consideration to this matter with particular care. For, in speaking of this sixth

¹ [*i.e.*, that are perceived by the faculties of the soul in other ways than by pure faith.]

² A, B, e.p. : 'in the will.'

³ This last sentence is found in A, B and e.p. only.

kind of good, we have to treat of the good things of the spirit, which are those that are of the greatest service to this end. For it is quite certain, and quite an ordinary occurrence,¹ that some persons, because of their lack of knowledge, make use of spiritual things with respect only to sense, and leave the spirit empty. There will scarcely be anyone whose spirit is not to a considerable degree corrupted by sweetness of sense ; since, if the water be drunk up before it reaches the spirit, the latter becomes dry and barren.

2. Coming to this matter, then, I say that by good things of the spirit I understand all those that influence and aid the soul in Divine things and in its intercourse with God, and the communications of God to the soul.

3. Beginning by making a division between these supreme kinds of good, I say that good things of the spirit are of two kinds : the one kind is delectable and the other painful. And each of these kinds is likewise of two manners ; for the delectable kind consists of clear things that are distinctly understood, and also of things that are not understood clearly or distinctly. The painful kind, likewise, may be of clear and distinct things, or of things dark and confused.

4. Between all these we may likewise make distinctions with respect to the faculties of the soul. For some kinds of spiritual good, being of knowledge, pertain to the understanding ; others, being of affection, pertain to the will ; and others, inasmuch as they are imaginary, pertain to the memory.

5. We shall leave for later consideration those good things that are painful, since² they pertain to the passive night, in treating of which we shall have to speak of them ; and likewise the delectable blessings which we described as being of things confused and not distinct, of which we shall treat hereafter, since they pertain to that general, confused and loving knowledge wherein is effected the union of the soul with God, and which we passed over in the second book, deferring it so that we might treat of it later³ when we should make a division between the apprehensions of the understanding.⁴ We shall speak here and now of those delectable blessings which are of things clear and distinct.

¹ [*Lit.*, 'thing.'] E.p. : 'For it is quite a certain thing . . .'

² E.p. : 'inasmuch as.'

³ Cf. p. 126, n. 4, above.

⁴ Alc. omits : 'when we should . . . understanding.' E.p. adds to this last phrase : 'and this we shall duly do in the book of the *Dark Night*.'

CHAPTER XXXIV

Of those good things of the spirit which can be distinctly apprehended by the understanding and the memory. Describes how the will is to behave in the matter of rejoicing in them.

1. We might spend much time here upon the multitude of the apprehensions of the memory and the understanding, teaching how the will is to conduct itself with regard to the joy that it may have in them, had we not treated of this at length in the second and the third book. But, since we there spoke of the manner wherein it behoves these two faculties to act with respect to them, in order that they may take the road to Divine union, and since it behoves the will to conduct itself likewise as regards rejoicing in them, it is unnecessary to go over this here ; for it suffices to say that wheresoever we there said that those faculties should void themselves of this or that apprehension, it is to be understood also that the will should likewise be voided of joy in them. And in the way wherein it is said that memory and understanding should conduct themselves with regard to all these apprehensions, the will must conduct itself likewise ; for, since the understanding and the other faculties cannot admit or reject anything unless the will intervene therein, it is clear that the same teaching that serves for the one will serve also for the other.

2. It may there be seen, then, what is requisite in this case, for the soul will fall into all the evils and perils to which we there referred if it cannot direct the rejoicing of the will to God in all those apprehensions.¹

CHAPTER XXXV

Of the delectable spiritual good things which can be distinctly apprehended by the will. Describes the kinds of these.

1. We can reduce all the kinds of good which can distinctly cause joy to the will to four : namely, motive, provocative, directive and perfective. Of these we shall speak in turn, each in its order ; and first, of the motive kind

¹ Alc. abbreviates : ' It may there be seen what is requisite herein, for the soul will fall into all those evils if it cannot direct itself to God.'

—namely, images and portraits of saints, oratories and ceremonies.

2. As touching images and portraits, there may be much vanity and vain rejoicing in these. For, though they are most important for Divine worship and most necessary to move the will to devotion, as is shown by the approval given to them and the use made of them by our Mother Church (for which reason it is always well that we should employ them, in order to awaken our lukewarmness), there are many persons who rejoice rather in the painting and decoration of them than in what they represent.

3. The use of images has been ordained by the Church for two principal ends—namely, that we may reverence the Saints in them, and that the will may be moved and devotion to the Saints awakened by them. When they serve this purpose they are beneficial and the use of them is necessary ; and therefore we must choose those that are most true and lifelike, and that most move the will to devotion, and our eyes must ever be fixed upon this motive rather than upon the value and cunning of their workmanship and decoration. For, as I say, there are some who pay more attention to the cunning with which an image is made, and to its value, than to what it represents ; and that interior devotion which they ought to direct spiritually to the saint whom they see not, forgetting the image at once, since it serves only as a motive,¹ they squander upon the cunning and the decoration of its outward workmanship. In this way sense is pleased and delighted, and the love and rejoicing of the will remain there. This is a complete hindrance to true spirituality, which demands annihilation of the affections as to all particular things.

4. This will become quite clear from the detestable custom which certain persons observe with regard to images in these our days. Holding not in abhorrence the vain trappings of the world, they adorn images with the garments which from time to time vain persons invent in order to satisfy their own pleasures and vanities.² They clothe images with these garments which are reprehensible even in themselves, a kind of vanity which was, and is still, abhorrent to the saints whom the images represent. Herein, with their help, the devil succeeds in canonizing his vanities,

¹ E.p. omits the phrase : ' forgetting . . . as a motive.'

² A, B, e.p. have 'frivolities' for 'vanities.'

by clothing the saints with them, not without causing them great displeasure. And in this way the honest and grave devotion of the soul, which rejects and spurns all vanity and every trace of it, is reduced in them to little more than a dressing of dolls ; some persons use images merely as idols upon which they have set their rejoicing.¹ And thus you will see certain persons who are never tired of adding one image to another, and wish them to be of this or that kind and workmanship, and to be placed in this or that manner, so as to be pleasing to sense ; and they make little account of the devotion of the heart. They are as much attached to them as was Micah to his idols,² or as was Laban ;³ for the one ran out of his house crying aloud because they were being taken from him ; and the other, having made a long journey and been very wroth because of them, disturbed all the household stuff of Jacob, in searching for them.

5. The person who is truly⁴ devout sets his devotion principally upon that which is invisible ; he needs few images and uses few, and chooses those that harmonize with the Divine rather than with the human, clothing them, and with them himself, in the garments of the world to come, and following its fashions rather than those of this world. For not only does an image belonging to this world in no way influence his desire ; it does not even lead him to think of this world, in spite of his having before his eyes something worldly, akin to the world's interests. Nor is his heart attached to the images that he uses ; if they are taken from him, he grieves very little, for he seeks within himself the living image, which is Christ crucified, for Whose sake he rather desires that all should be taken from him and he should have nothing. Even when the motives and means which lead him closest to God⁵ are taken from him, he remains in tranquillity. For the soul is nearer perfection when it is tranquil and joyous, though it be deprived of these motives, than if it has possession of them together with desire and attachment. For, although it is good to be pleased to have such images as assist the soul to greater devotion (for which reason it is those which move it most

¹ E.p. abbreviates : ' . . . to little more than curiosity and vanity.'

² Judges xviii, 22-4.

³ Genesis xxxi, 34-7.

⁴ Alc. alone has ' truly.'

⁵ E.p. : ' Even when the means that seemed to be leading him closest to God . . . '

that must always be chosen), yet it is something far removed from perfection to be so greatly attached to them as to possess them with attachment, so that, if they are taken away from the soul, it becomes sad.

6. Let the soul be sure that, the more closely it is attached to an image or a motive,¹ the less will its devotion and prayer mount to God. For, although it is true that, since some are more appropriate than others, and excite devotion more than others, it is well, for this reason alone, to be affectioned to some rather than to others, as I have just now said,² yet there must be none of the attachment and affection which I have described. Otherwise, that which has to sustain the spirit in its flight to God, in total forgetfulness, will be wholly occupied by sense, and the soul will be completely immersed in a delight afforded it by what are but instruments. These instruments I have to use solely in order to assist me in devotion ; yet, on account of my imperfection, they may well serve me as a hindrance, no less so than may affection and attachment to anything else.³

7.⁴ But, though perhaps in this matter of images you may think that there is something to be said on the other side, if you have not clearly understood the detachment and poverty of spirit which is required by perfection, at least you cannot excuse the imperfection which is commonly indulged with regard to rosaries ; for you will hardly find anyone who has not some weakness with regard to these, desiring them to be of this workmanship rather than of that,⁵ or of this colour or metal rather than of that, or decorated in some one style or in some other. Yet no one style is better than another for the hearing of a prayer by God, for this depends upon the simple and true heart,⁶ which looks at no more than pleasing God, and, apart from the question of indulgences, cares no more for one rosary than for another.

8. Our vain concupiscence is of such a nature and quality that it tries to cling to everything ; and it is like the worm which destroys healthy wood, and works upon things both good and evil. For what else is your desire to have a rosary of

¹ E.p. : ' or a motive of sense.'

² Alc. omits : ' as I have just now said.'

³ E.p. omits : ' no less . . . anything else.'

⁴ [In this and the next paragraph the Saint is more than usually personal in his approach to the reader. The word *tú* (you) is repeated many times, and placed in emphatic positions, in a way which cannot be exactly reproduced in English.]

⁵ E.p. : ' than of the other.'

⁶ E.p. : ' and upright heart.'

BOOK THE FIRST

*Which treats of the Night of Sense.*¹

STANZA THE FIRST

On a dark night, Kindled in love with yearnings—oh, happy chance !—

I went forth without being observed, My house being now at rest.

EXPOSITION

1. In this first stanza the soul relates the way and manner which it followed in going forth, as to its affection, from itself and from all things, and in dying to them all and to itself, in order to attain to living the sweet and delectable life of love with God ; and it says that this going forth from itself and from all things was a 'dark night,' by which, as will be explained hereafter, it here understands purgative contemplation, which causes passively² in the soul the negation of itself and of all things referred to above.

2. And this going forth it says here that it was able to accomplish in the strength and ardour which love for its Spouse gave to it for that purpose in the dark contemplation aforementioned. Herein it magnifies³ the great happiness which it found in journeying to God through this night with such signal success that none of the three enemies, which are world, devil and flesh (who are they that ever impede⁴ this road), could hinder it ; inasmuch as the aforementioned night of purgative⁵ contemplation lulled to sleep and morti-

¹ The Codices all begin with the stanza. The title belongs to the e.p. only.

² E.p. omits 'passively.'

³ V : 'desired to magnify.'

⁴ E.p., B : 'disturb.'

⁵ [More exactly : 'purificative.'] E.p. : 'purified.'

heat of her bosom and nurtures it with sweet milk and soft and pleasant food, and carries it and caresses it in her arms ; but, as the child grows bigger, the mother gradually ceases caressing it, and, hiding her tender love, puts bitter aloes upon her sweet breast, sets down the child¹ from her arms and makes it walk upon its feet, so that it may lose the characteristics of a child and betake itself to greater and more substantial occupations. The loving mother is like the grace of God, for, as soon as the soul is regenerated by its new warmth and fervour for the service of God, He treats it in the same way ; He makes it to find spiritual milk, sweet and delectable, in all the things of God, without any labour of its own, and also great pleasure in spiritual exercises, for here God is giving to it the breast of His tender love, even as to a tender child.

3. Therefore, such a soul finds its delight in spending long periods—perchance whole nights—in prayer ; penances are its pleasures ; fasts its joys, and its consolations are to make use of the sacraments and commune of Divine things. In the which things spiritual persons (though taking part in them with great efficacy and persistence and using and treating them with great care), commonly find themselves, speaking spiritually, very weak and imperfect. For since they are moved to these things and to these spiritual exercises by the consolation and pleasure that they find in them, and since, too, they have not been prepared for them by the practice of earnest striving in the virtues, they have many faults and imperfections with respect to these spiritual actions of theirs ; for, after all, everyone's actions correspond to the habit of perfection attained by him. And as these persons have not had the opportunity of acquiring the said habits of strength, they have necessarily to work like feeble² children, feebly. In order that this may be seen more clearly, and likewise how much these beginners in the virtues lack³ with respect to the works in which they so readily engage with the pleasure aforementioned, we shall describe it by reference to the seven capital sins, each in its turn, indicating some of the many imperfections which they have under each heading ; wherein it will be clearly seen

¹ E.p. modifies these lines of the Codices, thus : 'and, hiding her tender breast, puts bitter aloes upon it, sets down the child.'

² E.p. and M omit 'feeble.'

³ Thus B, G, H, Mtr., P, V. The other Codices and e.p. have : 'how feeble are these beginners in the virtues.'

how like to children are these persons in all they do. And it will also be seen how many blessings the dark night of which we shall afterwards treat brings with it, since it cleanses the soul and purifies it from all these imperfections.

CHAPTER II

*Of certain spiritual imperfections which beginners have with respect to the habit of pride.*¹

1. As these beginners feel themselves to be very fervent and diligent in spiritual things and devout exercises, from this prosperity² (although it is true that holy things of their own nature cause humility) there often comes to them, through their imperfections, a certain kind of secret pride, whence they come to have some degree of satisfaction with their works and with themselves. And hence there comes to them likewise a certain desire, which is somewhat vain, and at times very vain, to speak of spiritual things³ before others, and sometimes even to teach such things rather than to learn them. They condemn others in their heart when they see that they have not the kind of devotion which they themselves desire; and sometimes they even say this in words, resembling herein the Pharisee, who boasted of himself, praising God for his own good works and despising the publican.⁴

2. In these persons the devil often increases the fervour that they have and the desire to perform these and other works more frequently, so that their pride and presumption may grow greater. For the devil knows quite well that all these works and virtues which they perform are not only valueless to them, but even become vices in them. And such a degree of evil are some of these persons wont to reach that they would have none appear good save themselves; and thus, in deed and word, whenever the opportunity occurs, they condemn them and slander them, beholding the mote in their brother's eye⁵ and not considering the beam

¹ This title is found in e.p. and also in all the Codices.

² M, H: 'from this property.'

³ E.p.: 'And hence there comes to them likewise a certain exceedingly vain desire to speak of spiritual things.'

⁴ S. Luke xviii, 11-12.

⁵ E.p.: 'in another's eye.'

which is in their own ;¹ they strain at another's gnat and themselves swallow a camel.²

3. Sometimes, too, when their spiritual masters, such as confessors and superiors, do not approve of their spirit and behaviour (for they are anxious that all they do may be esteemed and praised), they consider that they do not understand them, or that, because they do not approve of this and comply with that, they are themselves not spiritual. And so they immediately desire and contrive to find some one else who will fit in with their tastes ; for as a rule they desire to speak of spiritual matters with those who, as they understand, will praise and esteem what they do, and they flee, as they would from death, from those who disabuse them in order to lead them into a safe road—sometimes they even harbour ill-will against them. Presuming thus,³ they are wont to resolve much⁴ and accomplish very little. Sometimes they are anxious that others shall realize how spiritual and devout they are, to which end they occasionally give outward evidence thereof in movements, sighs and other ceremonies ; and at times they are apt to fall into⁵ certain ecstasies, in public rather than in secret, wherein the devil aids them, and they are pleased that this should be noticed, and are often eager that it should be noticed more.⁶

4. Many such persons desire to be favoured by their confessors and to be intimate with them⁷, whence there come to them continual occasions of envy and disquietude.⁸ They are too much embarrassed⁹ to confess their sins nakedly, lest their confessors should think less of them, so they palliate them and make them appear less evil, and thus it is to excuse themselves rather than to accuse themselves that they go to confession. And sometimes they seek another confessor to tell the wrongs that they have done, so that their own confessor shall think they have done nothing wrong at all, but only good ; and thus they always take pleasure in telling

¹ S. Matthew vii, 3.

² S. Matthew xxiii, 24.

³ [*Lit.*, 'Presuming.'] E.p. reads : 'Presuming upon themselves.'

⁴ A, B abbreviate : ' . . . who disabuse them in order to cause them fear. They are wont to resolve much.'

⁵ The words 'they are apt to fall into' are found in e.p. alone.

⁶ [The original merely has : 'and are often eager.'] E.p. modifies : 'that this about which they are so eager should be noticed.'

⁷ E.p. : 'Many such desire to be intimate with their confessors.' H has : 'desire to preach and to be intimate with their confessors,' which destroys the sense of the passage.

⁸ [*Lit.*, 'a thousand envies and disquietudes.']

⁹ Bz. : 'They are ashamed.'

him what is good,¹ and sometimes in such terms as make it appear to be greater than it is rather than less, desiring that he may think them to be good, when it would be greater humility in them, as we shall say, to depreciate it, and to desire that² neither he nor anyone else should consider them of account.

5. Some of these beginners, too, make little of their faults, and at other times become over-sad when they see themselves fall into them, thinking themselves to have been saints already ; and thus they become angry and impatient with themselves, which is another imperfection. Often they beseech God, with great yearnings,³ that He will take from them their imperfections and faults, but they do this that they may see themselves at peace, and may not be troubled by them, rather than for God's sake ; not realizing that, if He should take their imperfections from them, they would probably become prouder and more presumptuous⁴ still. They dislike praising others and love to be praised themselves ; sometimes they seek out such praise. Herein they are like the foolish virgins, who, when their lamps could not be lit, sought oil from others.⁵

6. From these imperfections some souls go on to develop⁶ many very grave ones, which do them great harm. But some have fewer and some more,⁷ and some, only the first motions thereof or little further ; and there are hardly any of these beginners who, at the time of these signs of fervour,⁸ fall not into some of these errors.⁹ But those who at this time are going on to perfection proceed very differently and with quite another temper of spirit ; for they progress by means of humility and are greatly edified, not only thinking naught of their own affairs,¹⁰ but having very little satisfaction with themselves ; they consider all others as far better, and usually have a holy envy of them, and an eagerness to serve God as these do. For the greater is their fervour, and the more numerous are the works that they perform, and the greater is the pleasure that they take in them, as they progress in

¹ A, B, M omit : ' and thus . . . is good.'

² E.p. : ' and to say naught, so that . . . '

³ E.p., M omit ' great.'

⁴ E.p., M omit : ' and more presumptuous.'

⁵ S. Matthew xxv, 8. [*Lit.*, ' who, having their lamps dead, sought oil from without. ']

⁶ [*Lit.*, ' to have. '] M, A omit this verb and read : ' go on to many . . . '

⁷ E.p. : ' and others more.'

⁸ [*Lit.*, ' these fervours. ']

⁹ [*Lit.*, ' into something of this. ']

¹⁰ E.p. : ' their own works.'

humility, the more do they realize how much God deserves of them, and how little is all that they do for His sake;¹ and thus, the more they do, the less are they satisfied. So great is that which they would gladly do from charity and love for Him, that all that they do seems to them naught; and so greatly are they importuned, occupied and absorbed² by this loving care, that they never notice what others do or do not; or if they do notice it, they always believe, as I say, that all others are far better than they themselves. Wherefore, holding themselves as of little worth, they are anxious that others too should thus hold them,³ and should despise and depreciate that which they do. And further, if men should praise and esteem them, they can in no wise believe what they say; it seems to them strange that anyone should say these good things of them.

7. Together with great tranquillity and humbleness, these souls have a deep desire to be taught by anyone who can bring them profit; they are the complete opposite of those of whom we have spoken above, who would fain be always teaching, and who, when others seem to be teaching them, take the words from their mouths as if they knew them already. These souls, on the other hand, being far from desiring to be the masters of any, are very ready to travel and set out on another road than that which they are actually following, if they be so commanded, because they never think that they are right in anything whatsoever. They rejoice when others are praised; they grieve only because they serve not God like them. They have no desire to speak of the things that they do, because they think so little of them that they are ashamed to speak of them even to their spiritual masters, since they seem to them to be things that merit not being spoken of. They are more anxious to speak of their faults and sins, or that these should be recognized rather than their virtues;⁴ and thus they incline to talk of their souls with those who account⁵ their actions and their spirituality of little value. This is a characteristic of the spirit which is simple, pure, genuine and very pleasing to God. For as the wise Spirit of God dwells in these humble

¹ H omits: 'and how . . . His sake.'

² Bz. has 'fascinated' for 'absorbed.' E.p.: 'importuned and occupied.'

³ A, B omit this clause [interrupting the sense of the passage].

⁴ E.p., M: 'or that it should be recognized that these [faults and sins] are not virtues.'

⁵ E.p.: 'esteem.'

souls, He moves them and inclines them to keep His treasures secretly within and likewise to cast out from themselves all evil. God gives this grace to the humble, together with the other virtues, even as He denies it to the proud.

8. These souls will give their hearts' blood to anyone that serves God, and will help others to serve Him as much as in them lies. The imperfections into which they see themselves fall they bear with humility, meekness of spirit¹ and a loving fear of God, hoping in Him. But souls who in the beginning journey with this degree of perfection are, as I understand, and as has been said, a minority, and we should be glad even if there were only a very few who fell not into contrary errors. For this reason, as we shall afterwards say, God leads into the dark night those whom He desires to purify from all these imperfections so that He may bring them farther onward.

CHAPTER III

Of some imperfections which some of these souls² are apt to have, with respect to the second capital sin, which is avarice,³ in the spiritual sense.

1. Many of these beginners have also at times great spiritual avarice. They will be found to be discontented with the spirituality which God gives them; and they are very disconsolate and querulous because they find not in spiritual things the consolation that they would desire. Many can never have enough of listening to counsels and learning⁴ spiritual precepts, and of possessing and reading many books which treat of this matter, and they spend their time on all these things rather than on works of mortification⁵ and the perfecting⁶ of the inward poverty of spirit which

¹ H: 'with humility and with humility of spirit.'

² E.p.: 'which some beginners.'

³ Bz.: 'which is pride and boasting.'

⁴ E.p., M omit 'learning.'

⁵ Bz., P insert here: 'and they have and read many spiritual books which treat of this vice and of gluttony, which generally lead them to attempt many kinds of exercise, either to make great use of their capital, from a craving for great profits or through mere pleasure and cupidity; whence comes inconstancy to them and lack of stability in their particular exercises, which are chiefly necessary in these beginnings; and this spoils their labour and makes it of none effect and vain, wasting their time in experiments and trials.'

⁶ E.p. reads: 'rather than on works, without the mortification and the perfecting.'

should be theirs. Furthermore, they burden themselves with images and rosaries which are very curious ;¹ now they put down one, now take up another ; now they change about, now change back again ; now they want this kind of thing, now that, preferring one kind of cross to another, because it is more curious.² And others you will see adorned with *agnusdeis*³ and relics and tokens,⁴ like children with trinkets. Here I condemn the attachment of the heart, and the affection which they have for the nature, multitude and curiosity of these things, inasmuch as it is quite contrary to poverty of spirit, which solely considers the substance of devotion, makes use only of what suffices for that end and grows weary of this other kind of multiplicity and curiosity. For true devotion must issue from the heart, and consists in the truth and substance⁵ alone of what is represented by spiritual things ; all the rest is affection and attachment proceeding from imperfection ; and in order that one may pass to any kind of perfection⁶ it is necessary for such desires to be killed.

2. I knew a person who for more than ten years made use of a cross roughly formed from a branch⁷ that had been blessed, fastened with a pin twisted round it ; he had never ceased using it, and he always carried it about with him until I took it from him ; and this was a person of no small sense and understanding. And I saw another who said his prayers using beads that were made of bones from the spine of a fish ; his devotion was certainly no less precious on that account in the sight of God, for it is clear that these things⁸ carried no devotion in their workmanship or value. Those, then, who start from these beginnings and make

¹ So H, P. A, B, C, G, Mtr., V have : ' which are sometimes very curious and showy.' So Bz., but with ' costly ' for ' showy.' E.p. and M : ' images and crosses which are very curious and costly.'

² Bz. adds : ' or costly.' Other authorities add : ' or valuable.'

³ The *agnusdei* was a wax medal with a representation of the Lamb stamped upon it, often blessed by the Pope ; at the time of the Saint such medals were greatly sought after, as we know from various references in S. Teresa's letters.

⁴ [The word *nómina*, translated ' token,' and normally meaning ' list ' or ' roll,' refers to a relic on which were written the names of saints. In modern Spanish it can denote a medal or amulet used superstitiously.]

⁵ E.p. alone modifies thus : ' from the heart, in truth alone, and must consider only the truth and substance.'

⁶ E.p. alone has : ' pass to the estate of perfection.'

⁷ [No doubt a branch of palm, olive or rosemary, blessed in church on Palm Sunday, like the English palm crosses of to-day.]

⁸ Thus e.p. alone. The other authorities have ' these.'

good progress, attach themselves to no visible instruments, nor do they burden themselves with such, nor desire to know more than is necessary in order that they may act well;¹ for they set their eyes only on being right with God and on pleasing Him, and therein consists their covetousness. And thus with great generosity they give away all that they have, and delight to know that they have it not, for God's sake and for charity to their neighbour,² no matter whether these be spiritual things or temporal. For, as I say, they set their eyes only upon the reality of interior³ perfection, which is to give pleasure to God and in naught to give pleasure to themselves.

3. But neither from these imperfections nor from those others can the soul be perfectly purified until God brings it into the passive purgation of that dark night whereof we shall speak presently. It befits the soul, however, in so far as it can, to contrive to labour, on its own account, to purge and perfect itself, so that it may merit being taken by God into that Divine care wherein it becomes healed of all things that it was unable of itself to cure. Because, however greatly the soul itself labours, it cannot⁴ actively purify itself so as to be in the least degree prepared for the Divine union of perfection of love, if God takes not⁵ its hand and purges it not in that dark fire, in the way and manner that we have to describe.⁶

CHAPTER IV

Of other imperfections which these beginners are apt to have with respect to the third sin, which is luxury.⁷

1. Many of these beginners have many other imperfections than those which I am describing with respect to each of the deadly sins, but these I set aside, in order to avoid prolixity, touching upon a few of the most important, which are, as it were, the origin and cause⁸ of the rest. And thus with

¹ M: 'neither do they desire to know much in order to act [well].'
[The word 'well' does not occur anywhere in the original.]

² E.p.: 'and for charity to their neighbour, ruling everything by the laws of this virtue.'

³ E.p., M omit 'interior.'

⁴ E.p.: 'it cannot by its industry.'

⁵ E.p., M: 'of love with God, if He takes not.'

⁶ E.p.: 'in the manner that we have to describe'; M: 'in the manner that we have described.'

⁷ E.p. adds: 'spiritually understood.'

⁸ Bz.: 'origin and head.'

respect to this sin of luxury (leaving apart the falling of spiritual persons¹ into this sin, since my intent is to treat of the imperfections which have to be purged by the dark night), they have many imperfections which² might be described as spiritual luxury, not because they are so, but because the imperfections proceed from spiritual things. For it often comes to pass that, in their very spiritual exercises, when they are powerless to prevent it, there arise and assert themselves in the sensual part of the soul impure acts and motions,³ and sometimes this happens even when the spirit is deep in prayer, or taking part in the Sacrament of Penance or in the Eucharist. These things are not, as I say, in their power; they proceed from one of three causes.⁴

2. The first cause from which they often proceed is the pleasure which human nature takes in spiritual things.⁵ For when the spirit and the sense are pleased, every part of a man is moved by that pleasure⁶ to delight according to its proportion⁷ and character. For then the spirit, which is the higher part, is moved to pleasure⁸ and delight in God; and the sensual nature, which is the lower part, is moved to pleasure and delight of the senses, because it cannot possess and lay hold upon aught else, and it therefore lays hold upon that which comes nearest to itself, which is the impure and sensual.⁹ Thus it comes to pass that the soul is in deep prayer with God according to the spirit, and, on the other hand, according to sense it is passively conscious, not without great displeasure, of rebellions and motions and acts of the senses,¹⁰ which often happens in Communion, for when

¹ E.p. omits: 'of spiritual persons.' [A better reading: the omission throws into relief the author's contrast between the actual commission of the deadly sin and the imperfections connected with it.]

² So e.p. The Codices read [more emphatically]: 'many which.'

³ E.p.: 'in the sensual part of the soul unclean motions.' The edition of 1630 reads: 'not because this is so, but because at times it is felt and experienced in the flesh, by reason of its weakness, when the soul receives spiritual things. For it often comes to pass that, in their very spiritual exercises, when they are powerless to prevent it, there arise and are experienced in the sensual part of the soul unclean motions.'

⁴ Thus the chief Codices. Others, and e.p., read: 'three things.'

⁵ E.p.: '... occasionally proceed, albeit rarely and in weak natures, is from,' etc.

⁶ [*Lit.*, recreation.]

⁸ [*Lit.*, recreation.]

⁷ So H, P. The other authorities [followed by P. Silverio] have 'portion.'

⁹ E.p. omits: 'and it ... and sensual.'

¹⁰ E.p. reads: 'Thus it comes to pass that the soul is in prayer with God according to the spirit, and, on the other hand, according to sense it is passively conscious, not without great displeasure, of rebellions and motions of the senses.' It then omits the following words: 'which often ... after its manner.'

the soul receives joy and comfort in this act of love, because this Lord bestows it (since it is to that end that He gives Himself), the sensual nature takes that which is its own likewise, as we have said, after its manner. Now as, after all, these two parts form one subject, they ordinarily both participate in that which one of them receives, each after its manner ; for, as the philosopher says, everything that is received is in the recipient¹ after the manner of the same recipient. And thus, in these beginnings, and even when the soul has made some progress, its sensual part, being imperfect, oftentimes receives the Spirit of God with the same imperfection.² Now when this sensual part is renewed by the purgation of the dark night which we shall describe, it no longer has these weaknesses ; for it is no longer this part that receives aught, but rather it is itself received into the Spirit. And thus it then has everything after the manner of the Spirit.³

3. The second cause whence these rebellions sometimes proceed is the devil, who, in order to disquiet⁴ and disturb the soul, at times when it is at prayer or is striving to pray, contrives to stir up these motions of impurity in its nature ; and if the soul gives heed to any of these, they cause it great harm. For through fear of these not only does a soul become lax in prayer—which is the aim of the devil when he begins to strive with it—but some persons abandon prayer altogether, because they think that these things attack them more during that exercise than apart from it, which is true, since the devil attacks them then more than on other occasions, so that they may abandon spiritual exercises. And not only so, but he succeeds in portraying to them very vividly things that are most foul and impure, and at times are very closely related to certain spiritual things and persons that are of profit to their souls, in order to terrify them and make them fearful ;⁵ so that those who are affected by this

¹ E.p. omits : ' in the recipient.'

² E.p. : ' since its sensual part is imperfect, it occasionally partakes of spiritual pleasures with the same imperfection.'

³ E.p. expands thus : ' . . . has these weaknesses ; for so abundantly does it receive the Divine Spirit that it seems rather to be received into that same Spirit—into One, in brief, that is very much greater. And thus it possesses everything after the manner of the Spirit, in a wondrous way, in Whom it is a partaker, being united with God.'

⁴ M, V : ' to disgust ' ; Mtr. : ' to retaliate.'

⁵ E.p. has ' make an end of them ' [*acabarlas*] for ' make them fearful ' [*acobarlas*].

dare not even look at anything or meditate upon anything, because they immediately stumble upon this temptation. And upon those who are inclined to melancholy this acts with such effect¹ that they become greatly to be pitied since they are suffering so sadly ; for this trial reaches such a point in certain persons, when they have this evil humour, that they believe it to be clear that the devil is ever present with them and that they have no power to prevent this, although some of these persons can prevent his attack by dint of great effort and labour.² When these impurities³ attack such souls through the medium of melancholy, they are not as a rule freed from them until they have been cured of that kind of humour, unless the dark night has entered the soul, and gradually rids them of all impurities.⁴

4. The third source whence these impure motions are apt to proceed in order to make war upon the soul is often the fear which such persons have conceived for these impure representations and motions ; for the fear which comes to them from a sudden remembrance of them, arising from something that they see or say or think, makes them suffer from them through no fault of their own.

5.⁵ There are also certain souls of so tender and frail a nature that, when there comes to them some spiritual consolation or delight in prayer, the spirit of luxury is with them immediately, inebriating⁶ and delighting their sensual nature in such manner that they are, as it were, plunged into the enjoyment and pleasure of this sin ; and the enjoyment remains with the consolation, passively, and sometimes they are able to see that they have committed certain impure and rebellious actions. The reason for this is that, since these natures are, as I say, frail and tender, their humours are stirred up and their blood is excited at the least disturbance.⁷ And hence come these motions ; and the same

¹ So H. A, B, Bz., G, Mtr., P, V have : 'with such effect and frequency.' E.p., M : 'with such effect and vehemence.'

² E.p. omits : 'since they are suffering . . . effort and labour.' C also omits these lines and a number of other passages in this chapter.

³ E.p. : 'these things.'

⁴ [*Lit.*, 'of everything.'] E.p. : 'and gradually purifies them altogether.'

⁵ E.p. omits the whole of this paragraph and C omits the greatest part of it.

⁶ M has 'hindering' [*embarga*] for 'inebriating' [*embriaga*].

⁷ V : 'the least operation.'

thing happens to such souls when they are enkindled with anger or suffer any disturbance or grief.¹

6. Sometimes, again, there comes to these spiritual persons, whether they be speaking or performing spiritual actions, a certain energy and boldness, through their having regard to persons who are present, and before these persons they display a certain kind of vain delight. This also arises from luxury of spirit, after the manner wherein we here understand it, which is accompanied as a rule² by complacency in the will.

7.³ Some of these persons make friendships of a spiritual kind with others, which oftentimes arise from luxury and not from spirituality ; this may be known to be the case when the remembrance of that friendship causes not the remembrance and love of God to grow, but occasions remorse of conscience. For, when the friendship is purely spiritual, the love of God grows with it ; and the more the soul remembers it, the more it remembers the love of God, and the greater the desire it has for God ; so that, as the one grows, the other grows also. For the spirit of God has this property, that it increases good by adding to it more good, inasmuch as there is likeness and conformity between them. But, when this love arises from the vice of sensuality aforementioned, it has the contrary effects ; for the more the one grows, the more the other decreases, and the remembrance of it likewise. If that sensual love grows, it will at once be observed that the soul's love of God is becoming colder, and that it is forgetting Him as it remembers that love ; there comes to it, too, a certain remorse of conscience. And, on the other hand, if the love of God grows in the soul, that other love becomes cold and is forgotten ; for, as the two are contrary to one another,

¹ All writers who comment upon this delicate matter go into lengthy and learned explanations of it, though in reality there is little that needs to be added to the Saint's clear and apt exposition. It will be remembered that S. Teresa once wrote to her brother Lorenzo, who suffered in this way : ' The movements of your senses, as I told you, are to try you ; I am convinced that they are of no account, and that it is best not to notice them ' [*Letters of S. Teresa*, trans. Benedictines of Stanbrook, London, 1921, Vol. II, pp. 241-2]. The most effective means of calming souls tormented by these favours is to commend them to a discreet and wise director whose counsel they may safely follow. The Illuminists committed errors so gross in dealing with this matter that it is difficult to write of them in temperate language, save in a study devoted exclusively to their heretical teaching.

² E.p. reads ' at times ' for ' as a rule. '

³ H, V insert here a sub-title : ' Rule for knowing the love which is with God and that which is not so. '

not only does the one not aid the other, but the one which predominates quenches and confounds the other, and becomes strengthened in itself, as the philosophers say. Wherefore Our Saviour said in the Gospel : That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.¹ That is to say, the love which is born of sensuality ends in sensuality, and that which is of the spirit ends in the spirit of God and causes it to grow. This is the difference that exists between these two kinds of love, whereby we may know them.

8. When the soul enters the dark night, it brings these kinds of love under control. It strengthens and purifies the one, namely that which is according to God ; and the other it removes and brings to an end ;² and in the beginning it causes both to be lost sight of, as we shall say hereafter.

CHAPTER V

Of the imperfections into which beginners fall with respect to the sin of wrath.

1. By reason of the concupiscence which many beginners have for spiritual consolations, their experience of these consolations is very commonly accompanied by many imperfections proceeding from the sin of wrath ; for, when their delight and their pleasure in spiritual things come to an end, they naturally become embittered,³ and bear that lack of sweetness which they have to suffer with a bad grace, which affects all that they do ; and they very easily become irritated over the smallest matter—sometimes, indeed, none can tolerate them. This happens frequently after they have been very pleasantly recollected in prayer according to the senses ; when their pleasure and delight therein come to an end, their nature is naturally vexed and disappointed ; even so is the child when they take it from the breast of which it was enjoying the sweetness. There is no sin in this natural vexation,⁴ when it is not permitted to indulge itself, but only imperfection, which must be purged by the aridity and severity of the dark night.

¹ S. John iii, 6.

² E.p. : 'removes, brings to an end or mortifies.'

³ [*Desabridos*. Cf. note on *sinsabor*, p. 298, above.]

⁴ M : 'natural disillusion.'

2. There are other of these spiritual persons, again, who fall into another kind of spiritual wrath : this happens when they become irritated at the sins of others, and keep watch on those others with a sort of uneasy zeal. At times the impulse comes to them to reprove them angrily, and occasionally they go so far as to indulge it¹ and set themselves up as masters of virtue. All this is contrary to spiritual meekness.

3. There are others who are vexed with themselves when they observe their own imperfectness,² and display an impatience that is not humility ; so impatient are they about this that they would fain be saints in a day. Many of these persons purpose to accomplish a great deal and make grand³ resolutions ; yet, as they are not humble and have no misgivings about themselves,⁴ the more resolutions they make, the greater is their fall and the greater their annoyance, since they have not the patience to wait for that which God will give them when it pleases Him ; this likewise is contrary to the spiritual meekness⁵ aforementioned, which cannot be wholly remedied save by the purgation of the dark night. Some souls, on the other hand, are so patient⁶ in this matter of the progress which they desire, that God would gladly see them less so.

CHAPTER VI

Of imperfections with respect to spiritual gluttony

1. With respect to the fourth sin, which is spiritual gluttony, there is much to be said, for there is scarce one of these beginners who, however good his progress, falls not into some of the many imperfections which come to these beginners with respect to this sin, on account of the sweetness which they find at first in spiritual exercises. For many of these, lured by the sweetness and pleasure which they find in such exercises, strive more after spiritual sweetness than after spiritual purity and discretion,⁷ which is that which God

¹ [*Lit.*, 'they even do it.'] E.p. : 'they even carry it out.'

² M : 'impatience' for 'imperfectness.'

³ Some codices read : 'make many.'

⁴ So A, G, H, M, Mtr. The other authorities read : 'nor trust in themselves' [*confian* for *desconfian*].

⁵ All the MSS. have 'meekness.' H reads 'dishonour,' which a corrector has altered to 'misgivings' [*desconfianza*].

⁶ E.p. adds : 'and travel so slowly.'

⁷ E.p. : 'than after true devotion and purity.'

regards and accepts throughout the spiritual journey.¹ Therefore, besides the imperfections into which the seeking for sweetness of this kind makes them fall, the gluttony which they now have makes them continually go too far, so that they pass beyond the limits of moderation within which the virtues are acquired and wherein they consist. For some of these persons, attracted by the pleasure which they find therein, kill themselves with penances, and others weaken themselves with fasts, by performing more than their frailty can bear, without the order or advice of any,² but rather endeavouring to avoid those whom they should obey in these matters ; some, indeed, dare to do these things even though the contrary has been commanded them.

2. These persons are most imperfect and devoid of reason ; for they set bodily penance before subjection and obedience, which is penance of the reason and discretion, and therefore a sacrifice more acceptable and pleasing to God than any beside. But this, when the other side of it is disregarded, is no more than the penance of beasts, to which they are attracted, exactly like beasts, by the desire and pleasure which they find therein.³ Inasmuch as all extremes are sinful, and as in behaving thus such persons⁴ are working their own will, they grow in vice rather than in virtue ; for, at the least, they are acquiring spiritual gluttony and pride in this way, through not walking in obedience. And many of these the devil assails,⁵ stirring up this gluttony in them through the pleasures and desires which he increases within them, to such an extent that, since they can no longer help themselves, they either change or vary or add to that which is commanded them, since any obedience in this respect is so bitter⁶ to them. To such depravity have some persons fallen that, simply because it is through obedience that they engage in these exercises, they lose the desire and devotion to perform them, their only desire and pleasure being to do what they themselves are inclined to do,⁷ so that it would probably

¹ [*Lit.*, 'spiritual road.']

² A, P : 'without any order or advice.' H : 'without order and advice.'

³ E.p. softens thus : 'This, disregarding this other side of it, is most imperfect, for they are attracted thereto only by the desire and pleasure which they find therein.'

⁴ [*Lit.*, 'these persons.' E.p., M : 'all persons.']

⁵ E.p. : 'the devil deceives.'

⁶ E.p. : 'so severe and bitter.'

⁷ C, G, Mtr., V add : 'and not because it is commanded them.'

be more profitable for them not to engage in these exercises at all.

3. You will see many of these persons very insistent with their spiritual masters to be granted that which they desire, extracting it from them almost by force; if they be refused it they become as peevish as children and go about in great displeasure, thinking that they are not serving God when they are not allowed to do that which they would. For they go about clinging to their own will and pleasure, which they treat as though it came from God;¹ and immediately their directors² take it from them and try to subject them to the will of God, they become peevish, grow faint-hearted and fall away. These persons think that their own satisfaction and pleasure are the satisfaction and service of God.

4. There are others, again, who, because of this gluttony, know so little of their own unworthiness and misery and have thrust so far from them the loving fear and reverence which they owe to the greatness of God, that they hesitate not to insist continually that their confessors shall allow them to communicate³ often. And, what is worse, they frequently dare to communicate without the leave and consent⁴ of the minister and steward of Christ, merely acting on their own opinion, and contriving to conceal the truth from him. And for this reason, because they desire to communicate continually, they make their confessions⁵ carelessly,⁶ being more eager to eat than to eat cleanly and perfectly, although it would be healthier and holier for them had they the contrary inclination and begged their confessors not to command them to approach the altar so frequently: between these two extremes, however, the better way is that of humble resignation. But the boldness referred to is⁷ a thing that does great harm, and men may fear to be punished for such temerity.

5. These persons, in communicating, strive with every nerve to obtain some kind of sensible sweetness and pleasure, instead of humbly doing reverence and giving praise within

¹ [*Lit.*, 'and treat this as their God.'] This e.p. omits [softening the sense of the whole, as above (p. 365)].

² [The Spanish is impersonal: 'immediately this is taken from them,' etc.]

³ E.p., G, M: 'to confess and communicate.'

⁴ [*Lit.*, 'and opinion.']

⁵ H erroneously reads: 'their passions.'

⁶ [*Lit.*, 'anyhow.']

⁷ [*Lit.*, 'the other boldnesses are.'] A, e.p. read: 'the excessive boldnesses are.'

themselves to God. And in such wise do they devote themselves to this that, when they have received no pleasure or sweetness in the senses, they think that they have accomplished nothing at all. This is to judge God very unworthily ; they have not realized that the least of the advantages which comes from this Most Holy Sacrament is that which concerns the senses ; and that the invisible part of the grace that it bestows is much greater ; for, in order that they may look at it with the eyes of faith, God oftentimes withholds from them these other consolations and sweetnesses of sense.¹ And thus they desire to feel and taste God as though He were comprehensible by them and accessible to them, not only in this, but likewise in other spiritual exercises. All this is very great imperfection and completely opposed to the nature of God, since it is impurity in faith.²

6. These persons have the same defect as regards the practice of prayer, for they think that all the business of prayer consists in experiencing sensible pleasure and devotion and they strive to obtain this by great effort,³ wearying and fatiguing their faculties and their heads ; and when they have not found this pleasure they become greatly discouraged, thinking that they have accomplished nothing. Through these efforts they lose true devotion and spirituality, which consist in perseverance, together with patience and humility, and mistrust of themselves, that they may please God alone. For this reason, when they have once failed to find pleasure in this or some other exercise, they have great disinclination and repugnance to return to it, and at times they abandon it. They are, in fact, as we have said, like children, who are not influenced by reason, and who act, not from rational motives but from inclination.⁴ Such persons expend all their effort in seeking spiritual pleasure and consolation ; they never tire, therefore, of reading books ; and they begin, now one meditation, now another, in their pursuit of this pleasure which they desire to experience in the things of God. But God, very justly, wisely and lovingly, denies it to

¹ E.p., M : ' and favours of sense.' [The difference, in a Spanish MS., between *sabores* and *favores* would be of the slightest.]

² So the MSS. E.p. modifies the last clause and reads : ' Who demands the purest faith.'

³ [*Lit.*, ' they strive to obtain this, as they say, by the strength of their arms.' The phrase is, of course, understood in the Spanish to be metaphorical, as the words ' as they say ' clearly indicate.]

⁴ [*Lit.*, ' who are not influenced, neither act by reason, but from pleasure.']

them, for otherwise this spiritual gluttony and inordinate appetite would breed innumerable evils. It is, therefore, very fitting that they should enter into the dark night, whereof we shall speak¹, that they may be purged from this childishness.

7. These persons who are thus inclined to such pleasures have another very great imperfection, which is that they are very weak and remiss in journeying upon the hard² road of the Cross ; for the soul that is given to sweetness naturally has its face set against all self-denial, which is devoid of sweetness.³

8. These persons have many other imperfections which arise hence, of which in time the Lord heals them by means of temptations, aridities and other trials, all of which are part of the dark night. All these I will not treat further here, lest I become too lengthy ; I will only say that spiritual temperance and sobriety lead to another and a very different temper, which is that of mortification, fear and submission in all things. It thus becomes clear that the perfection and worth of things consist not in the multitude and the pleasantness of one's actions,⁴ but in being able to deny oneself in them ; this such persons must endeavour to compass, in so far as they may, until God is pleased to purify them indeed, by bringing them⁵ into the dark night, to arrive at which I am hastening on with these imperfections.

CHAPTER VII

*Of imperfections with respect to spiritual envy and sloth.*⁶

1. With respect likewise to the other two sins, which are spiritual envy and sloth, these beginners fail not to have many imperfections. For, with respect to envy, many of them are wont to experience movements⁷ of displeasure at the spiritual good of others, which cause them a certain sensible grief at being outstripped upon this road, so that they

¹ [*Lit.*, 'which we shall give:'] E.p. omits : 'whereof we shall speak.'
A, G, V : 'which we shall describe.'

² [*Aspero* : harsh, rough, rugged.]

³ [*Lit.*, 'against all the sweetnessness of self-denial.']

⁴ Bz., M : 'of one's things.' E.p. abbreviates : 'in the multitude of one's actions.'

⁵ [*Lit.*, 'causing them to enter.'] Bz. : 'putting them.'

⁶ Bz., H omit : 'and sloth.'

⁷ Bz. qualifies with 'many.'

would prefer not to hear others praised ; for they become displeased at others' virtues and sometimes they cannot refrain from contradicting what is said in praise of them, depreciating it as far as they can ; and their annoyance thereat grows¹ because the same² is not said of them, for they would fain be preferred in everything. All this is clean contrary to charity, which, as S. Paul says, rejoices in goodness.³ And, if charity has any envy, it is a holy envy, comprising grief at not having the virtues of others, yet also joy because others have them, and delight when others outstrip us in the service of God, wherein we ourselves are so remiss.

2. With respect also to spiritual sloth, beginners are apt to be wearied by the things that are most spiritual, from which they flee because these things are incompatible with sensible pleasure. For, as they are so much accustomed to sweetness in spiritual things, they are wearied by things in which they find no sweetness. If once they failed to find in prayer the satisfaction which their taste required (and after all it is well that God should take it from them to prove them), they would prefer not to return to it : sometimes they leave it ; at other times they continue it unwillingly. And thus because of this sloth they abandon the way of perfection (which is the way of the negation of their will and pleasure for God's sake) for the pleasure and sweetness of their own will, which they aim at satisfying in this way rather than the will of God.

3. And many of these would fain have God will that which they themselves will, and are fretful at having to will that which He wills, and find repugnance in accommodating their will to that of God.⁴ Hence it happens to them that oftentimes they think that that wherein they find not their own will and pleasure is not the will of God ; and that, on the other hand, when they themselves find satisfaction, God is satisfied. Thus they measure God by themselves and not themselves by God, acting quite contrarily to that which He

¹ [*Lit.*, 'and, as they say, their eye (*el ojo*) grows'—a colloquial phrase expressing annoyance.] E.p. omits this phrase altogether. Bz., G read *enojo* for *el ojo* [destroying the metaphor but not altering the sense of this translation.]

² E.p. : 'and they greatly regret that the same.'

³ 1 Corinthians xiii, 6. The Saint here cites the sense, not the letter, of the epistle. B, H give the quotation correctly, as 'rejoiceth in the truth.'

⁴ E.p. : 'to the Divine will.'

Himself taught in the Gospel, saying : That he who should lose his will for His sake, the same should gain it ; and he who should desire to gain it, the same should lose it.¹

4. These persons likewise find it wearisome when they are commanded to do that wherein they take no pleasure. Because they aim at spiritual sweetness and consolation, they are too weak to have the fortitude and bear the trials of perfection.² They resemble those who are softly nurtured and who run fretfully away from everything that is hard, and take offence at the Cross, wherein consist the delights of the spirit. The more spiritual a thing is, the more wearisome they find it, for, as they seek to go about spiritual matters with complete freedom and according to the inclination of their will, it causes them great sorrow and repugnance to enter upon the narrow way, which, says Christ, is the way of life.³

5. Let it suffice here to have described these imperfections, among the many to be found in the lives of those that are in this first state of beginners, so that it may be seen how greatly they need God to set them in the state of proficients. This He does by bringing them into the dark night whereof we now speak ; wherein He weans them from the breasts of these sweetnesses and pleasures, gives them pure aridities and inward darkness, takes from them all these superficialities⁴ and puerilities, and by very different means causes them to win the virtues. For, however assiduously the beginner practises the mortification in himself of all these actions and passions of his, he can never completely succeed—very far from it—until God works it in him passively by means of the purgation of the said night. Of this I would fain speak in some way that may be profitable ; may God, then, be pleased to give me His Divine light, because this is very needful in a night that is so dark and a matter that is so difficult⁵ to describe and to expound.

The line, then, is :

In a dark night.

¹ S. Matthew xvi, 25.

² [*Lit.*, 'they are very weak for the fortitude and trial of perfection.']

³ S. Matthew vii, 14.

⁴ E.p., M, P : 'all these imperfections.'

⁵ E.p. and a number of MSS. omit all that follows the word 'difficult.'

CHAPTER VIII

*Wherein is expounded the first line of the first stanza, and a beginning is made of the explanation of this dark night.*¹

1. This night, which, as we say, is contemplation, produces in spiritual persons two kinds of darkness or purgation, corresponding to the two parts of man's nature—namely, the sensual and the spiritual. And thus the one night or purgation will be sensual, wherein the soul is purged according to sense, which is subdued to the spirit; and the other is a night or purgation which is spiritual; wherein the soul is purged and stripped² according to the spirit, and subdued and made ready for the union of love with God. The night of sense is common and comes to many; these are the beginners; and of this night³ we shall first speak. The night of the spirit is the portion of very few, and these are they that are already practised and proficient, of whom we shall treat hereafter.

2. The first purgation or night is bitter and terrible to sense, as we shall now show.⁴ The second bears no comparison with it, for it is horrible and awful⁵ to the spirit, as we shall show⁶ presently. Since the night of sense is first in order and comes first, we shall first of all⁷ say something about it briefly, since more is written of it, as of a thing that is more common; and we shall pass on to treat more fully of the spiritual night, since very little has been said of this, either in speech⁸ or in writing, and very little⁹ is known of it, even by experience.

3. Since, then, the conduct of these beginners upon the way of God is ignoble,¹⁰ and has much to do with their love of self and their own inclinations, as has been explained above, God desires to lead them farther. He seeks to bring them out of that ignoble kind of love to a higher degree of

¹ The title is taken from e.p. The Codices have no title.

² E.p.: 'wherein a soul is purged or stripped.'

³ E.p.: 'of whom.'

⁵ E.p.: 'for it is very awful.'

⁷ E.p. omits: 'first of all.'

⁸ [*Plática*: the word is frequently used in Spanish to denote an informal sermon or address.]

⁹ This 'very little' [which in the original comes in the emphatic final position] is omitted in e.p.

¹⁰ [*Lit.*, 'low'; the same word recurs below and is similarly translated.]

love for Him, to free them from the ignoble exercises of sense and meditation (wherewith, as we have said, they go seeking God so unworthily and in so many ways that are unbefitting), and to lead them to a kind of spiritual exercise wherein they can commune with Him more abundantly and are freed more completely from imperfections. For they have now had practice for some time in the way of virtue and have persevered in meditation and prayer, whereby, through the sweetness and pleasure that they have found therein, they have lost their love of the things of the world and have gained some degree of spiritual strength in God ; this has enabled them to some extent to refrain from creature desires, so that for God's sake they are now able to suffer a light burden and a little aridity without turning back to a time¹ which they found more pleasant. When they are going about these spiritual exercises with the greatest delight and pleasure, and when they believe that the sun of Divine favour is shining most brightly upon them, God turns all this light of theirs into darkness, and shuts against them the door and the source of the sweet spiritual water which they were tasting in God whensoever and for as long as they desired. (For, as they were weak and tender, there was no door closed to them, as S. John says in the Apocalypse, iii, 8). And thus He leaves them so completely in the dark that they know not whither to go with their sensible imagination and meditation ; for they cannot² advance a step in meditation, as they were wont to do aforetime, their inward senses being submerged in this night, and left with such dryness that not only do they experience no pleasure and consolation in the spiritual things and good exercises wherein they were wont to find their delights and pleasures, but instead, on the contrary, they find insipidity and bitterness in the said things. For, as I have said, God now sees that they have grown a little, and are becoming strong enough to lay aside their swaddling clothes and be taken from the gentle breast ; so He sets them down from His arms and teaches them to³ walk on their own feet ; which they feel to be very strange, for everything seems to be going wrong with them.

4. To recollected persons this commonly happens sooner after their beginnings than to others, inasmuch as they are

¹ [*Lit.*, 'to the better time.']

² E.p., M : 'for they know not how to.'

³ E.p., M : 'and shows them how to.'

freer from occasions of backsliding, and their desires turn more quickly from the things of the world, which is what is needful if they are to begin to enter this blessed¹ night of sense. Ordinarily no great time passes after their beginnings before they begin to enter this night of sense ; and the great majority of them do in fact enter it, for they will generally be seen to fall into these aridities.

Nota Bene!

5. With regard to this way of purgation of the senses, since it is so common, we might here adduce a great number of quotations from Divine Scripture, where many passages relating to it are continually found, particularly in the Psalms and the Prophets. However, I do not wish to spend time upon these, for he that cannot see them there will find the common experience of them to be sufficient.²

CHAPTER IX

Of the signs by which it will be known that the spiritual person is walking along the way of this night and purgation of sense.

1. But since these aridities might frequently proceed, not from the night and purgation of the sensual desires aforementioned, but from sins and imperfections, or from weakness and lukewarmness, or from some bad humour or indisposition of the body, I shall here set down certain signs by which it may be known if such aridity proceeds from the aforementioned purgation, or if it arises from any of the aforementioned sins. For the making of this distinction I find that there are three principal signs.

2. The first is whether, when a soul finds no pleasure or consolation in the things of God, it also fails to find it in any thing created ; for, as God sets the soul in this dark night to the end that He may quench and purge its sensual desire, He allows it not to find attraction or sweetness in anything whatsoever. Hence it may be laid down as very probable³ that this aridity and insipidity proceed not from recently committed sins or imperfections. For, if this were so, the soul would feel in its nature some inclination or desire to taste other things than those of God ; for, whenever the desire is

¹ E.p. has 'happy' for 'blessed.'

² E.p., C omit this entire sentence, substituting: 'And, to avoid prolixity, we omit them, albeit we shall adduce certain of them later.'

³ [*Lit.*, 'And in this it is known very probably.'] E.p. omits 'very.'

allowed indulgence in any imperfection, it immediately feels inclined thereto, whether little or much, in proportion to the pleasure and the love that it had for it. Since, however, this lack of enjoyment in things above or below might proceed from some indisposition or melancholy humour, which oftentimes makes it impossible for the soul to take pleasure in anything, it becomes necessary to apply the second sign and condition.

3. The second sign whereby a man may believe himself to be experiencing the said purgation¹ is that ordinarily the memory is centred upon God, with painful care and solicitude, thinking that it is not serving God, but is backsliding, because it finds itself without sweetness in the things of God. And in such a case it is evident that this lack of sweetness and this aridity come not from weakness and lukewarmness ; for it is the nature of lukewarmness not to care greatly or to have any inward solicitude for the things of God. There is thus a great difference between aridity and lukewarmness, for lukewarmness consists in great weakness and remissness in the will and in the spirit, without solicitude as to serving God ; whereas purgative aridity is ordinarily accompanied by solicitude, with care and grief, as I say, because the soul is not serving God. And although this may sometimes be increased by melancholy or some other humour (as it frequently is) it fails not for this reason to produce a purgative effect upon the desire, since the desire is deprived of all pleasure,² and has its care centred upon God alone. For, when mere humour is the cause, it spends itself in displeasure and ruin of the physical nature, and there are none of those desires to serve God which belong to purgative aridity. When the cause is aridity, it is true that the sensual part of the soul has fallen low, and is weak and feeble in its actions, by reason of the little pleasure which it finds in them; but the spirit, on the other hand, is ready and strong.

4. For the cause of this aridity is that God transfers to the spirit the good things and the strength of the senses, which, since the soul's natural strength and senses are incapable of using them, remain barren, dry and empty. For the sensual part of a man has no capacity for that which is pure spirit, and thus, when it is the spirit that receives the pleasure, the flesh is left without savour and is too weak to perform any

¹ E.p. : ' The second sign and condition of this purgation.'

² A, B : ' since it is completely purged as to [its] pleasure.'

action. But the spirit, which all the time is being fed, goes forward in strength, and with more alertness and solicitude than before, in its anxiety not to fail God ; and if it is not immediately conscious of spiritual sweetness and delight, but only of aridity and lack of sweetness, the reason for this is the strangeness of the exchange ; for its palate has been accustomed to those other sensual pleasures upon which its eyes are still fixed, and, since the spiritual palate is not made ready or purged for such subtle pleasure, until it finds itself becoming prepared for it by means of this arid and dark night, it cannot experience spiritual pleasure and good, but only aridity and lack of sweetness, since it misses the pleasure which aforetime it enjoyed so readily.

5. These souls whom God is beginning to lead through these solitary places of the wilderness are like to the children of Israel ; to whom in the wilderness God began to give food from Heaven, containing within itself all sweetness, and, as is there said,¹ it turned to the savour which each one of them desired. But withal the children of Israel felt the lack of the pleasures and delights of the flesh and the onions which they had eaten aforetime in Egypt, the more so because their palate was accustomed to these and took delight in them, rather than in the delicate sweetness of the angelic manna ; and they wept and sighed for the fleshpots even in the midst of the food of Heaven.² To such depths does the vileness of our desires descend that it makes us to long for our own wretched food³ and to be nauseated by the indescribable⁴ blessings of Heaven.

6. But, as I say, when these aridities proceed from the way of the purgation of sensual desire, although at first the spirit feels no sweetness, for the reasons that we have just given, it feels that it is deriving strength and energy to act from the substance which this inward food gives it, the which food is the beginning of a contemplation that is dark and arid to the senses ; which contemplation is secret and hidden from the very person that experiences it ; and ordinarily, together with the aridity and emptiness which it causes in the senses, it gives the soul an inclination and desire to be alone and in quietness, without being able to think of any particular thing

¹ E.p. abbreviates : ' God began to give such delicious food from Heaven that, as is there said.'

² Numbers xi, 5-6.

³ [*Lit.*, ' makes us to desire our miseries. ']

⁴ [*Lit.*, ' incommunicable. '] E.p. has ' incommutable. '

very important
 or having the desire to do so. If those souls to whom this comes to pass knew how to be quiet at this time, and troubled not about performing any kind of action, whether inward or outward, neither had any anxiety about doing anything,¹ then they would delicately experience this inward refreshment in that ease and freedom from care. So delicate is this refreshment that ordinarily, if a man have desire or care² to experience it, he experiences it not ; for, as I say, it does its work when the soul is most at ease and freest from care ; it is like the air which, if one would close one's hand upon it, escapes.

7. In this sense we may understand that which the Spouse said to the Bride in the Songs, namely : Withdraw thine eyes from me, for they make me to soar aloft.³ For in such a way does God bring the soul into this state, and by so different a path does He lead it that, if it desires to work with its faculties,⁴ it hinders the work which God is doing in it rather than aids it ; whereas aforetime it was quite the contrary. The reason is that, in this state of contemplation, which the soul enters when it forsakes meditation for the state of the proficient, it is God Who is now working in the soul ; He binds⁵ its interior faculties, and allows it not to cling to the understanding, nor to have delight in the will, nor to reason with the memory. For anything that the soul can do of its own accord at this time serves only, as we have said, to hinder inward peace and the work which God is accomplishing in the spirit by means of that aridity of sense. And this peace, being spiritual and delicate, performs a work which is quiet and delicate, solitary, productive of peace and satisfaction⁶ and far removed from all those earlier pleasures, which were very palpable and sensual. This is the peace which, says David, God speaks in the soul to the end that He may make it spiritual.⁷ And we proceed hence to the third point.

¹ E.p. reads : ' . . . [outward], which they strive with their labour and their reasoning to perform, and had no anxiety to do anything save to allow themselves to be led by God, to receive and to listen with loving interior attentiveness, then . . . ' etc.

² E.p. : ' if a man have superadded and particular desire and care.'

³ Canticles vi, 4 [A.V., vi, 5].

⁴ E.p. : ' that, if it will work of itself and by its own ability.'

⁵ Nearly all authorities read thus. E.p. and M, however, have : ' He seems to bind,' and V : ' He veils.'

⁶ [Lit., ' satisfactory and pacific. ' E.p. omits : ' solitary, productive of . . . satisfaction.' H has ' solicitous ' for ' solitary.' Comits ' solitary.' All other authorities read as in the text.

⁷ Psalm lxxxiv, 9 [A.V., lxxxv, 8].

8. The third sign whereby this purgation of sense may be recognized is that the soul can no longer meditate or reflect in its sense of the imagination, as it was wont,¹ however much it may of itself endeavour to do so. For God now begins to communicate Himself to it, no longer through sense, as He did aforetime, by means of reflections which joined and sundered its knowledge, but by pure spirit, into which consecutive reflections enter not ; but He communicates Himself to it by an act of simple contemplation, to which neither the exterior nor the interior senses of the lower part of the soul can attain. From this time forward, therefore, imagination and fancy can find no support in any meditation,² and can gain no foothold by means thereof. *headache, fatigue, worry, etc.*

9. With regard to this third sign it is to be understood that this embarrassment and dissatisfaction of the faculties proceed not from indisposition, for, when this is the case, and the indisposition, which is never permanent,³ comes to an end, then the soul is able once more, by taking some care about the matter, to do what it did before, and the faculties find their wonted support. But in the purgation of the desire this is not so : when once the soul begins to enter therein, its inability to reflect with the faculties grows ever greater. For, although it is true that at first, and with some persons, it is not as continuous⁴ as this, so that occasionally they fail to abandon their pleasures and reflections⁵ of sense (for perchance⁶ by reason of their weakness it was not fitting to wean them from these immediately), yet this inability grows within them more and more and brings the workings of sense to an end, if indeed they are to make progress, for those who walk not in the way of contemplation act very differently. For this night of aridities is not usually continuous in their senses. At times they have these aridities ; at others they have them not. At times they cannot meditate ; at others they can. For God sets them in this night only to prove them and to humble them, and to reform their desires, so that they go not nurturing in themselves a sinful⁷ gluttony in spiritual things. He sets them not there in order

¹ E.p. is slightly more explicit : ' . . . or reflect, making use of its sense of the imagination, that it may move it as it was wont.'

² E.p. : ' cannot find support or make a beginning with any meditation.'

³ [The original has : ' which is never permanent in a being.' The reference is evidently to transient distempers, whether moral or physical.]

⁴ Bz. : ' as continent.'

⁵ E.p. : ' and alleviations.'

⁶ E.p. omits ' perchance.'

⁷ E.p. omits : ' a sinful.'

to lead them in the way of the spirit, which is this contemplation ; for not all those who consciously walk in the way of the spirit are brought by God to contemplation, nor even the half of them¹—why, He best knows. And this is why He never completely weans the senses of such persons from the breasts of meditations and reflections, but only for short periods and at certain seasons, as we have said.

CHAPTER X

Of the way in which these souls are to conduct themselves in this dark night.

1. During the time, then, of the aridities of this night of sense (wherein God effects the change of which we have spoken above, drawing forth the soul from the life of sense to that of the spirit—that is, from meditation to contemplation—wherein it has no longer any power to work or to reason with its faculties concerning the things of God, as has been said) spiritual persons suffer great trials, by reason not so much of the aridities which they suffer, as of the fear which they have of being lost on the road, thinking that all spiritual blessing is over for them and that God has abandoned them since they find no help or pleasure in good things.² Then they grow weary, and endeavour (as they have been accustomed to do) to concentrate their faculties with some degree of pleasure upon some object of meditation, thinking that, when they are not doing this and yet are conscious of making an effort, they are doing nothing. This effort they make not without great inward repugnance and unwillingness on the part of their soul, which was taking pleasure in being in that quietness and ease, instead of working with its faculties.³ So they have abandoned the one pursuit,⁴ yet draw no profit from the other ; for, while they seek⁵ what is prompted by their own spirit,⁶ they lose the spirit of tranquillity and peace⁷ which they had before. And thus they are like to one

¹ E.p. reads 'to perfect contemplation' and omits 'nor even the half of them.'

² H : 'no help whatever in good things.'

³ E.p. omits : 'instead . . . faculties.'

⁴ [Lit., 'spoiling themselves in the one.'] E.p. has : 'turning aside in [i.e., from] the one.'

⁵ A, B, M, e.p. have 'use.' Bz. : 'taste.'

⁶ [Lit., 'for to seek their spirit.']

⁷ G, H, P omit : 'and peace.'

who abandons what he has done in order to do it over again, or to one who leaves a city only to re-enter it, or to one who is hunting and lets his prey go in order to hunt it once more. This is useless here, for the soul will gain nothing further by conducting itself in this way, as has been said.¹

2. These souls turn back at such a time if there is none who understands them ; they abandon the road or lose courage ; or, at the least, they are hindered from going farther by the great trouble which they take in advancing along the road of meditation and reasoning. Thus they weary and overwork their nature, imagining that they are failing through negligence or sin. But this trouble that they are taking is quite useless, for God is now leading them by another road, which is that of contemplation, and is very different from the first ; for the one is of meditation and reasoning, and the other belongs neither to imagination nor yet to reasoning.

3. It is well for those who find themselves in this condition to take comfort, to persevere in patience and to be in no wise afflicted. Let them trust in God, Who abandons not those that seek Him with a simple and right heart, and will not fail to give them what is needful for the road, until He bring them into the clear and pure light of love. This last He will give them by means of that other dark night, that of the spirit, if they merit that He should bring them thereto.

4. The way in which they are to conduct themselves in this night of sense is to devote themselves not at all to reasoning and meditation, since it is not the time for this, but to allow the soul to remain in peace and quietness, although it may seem clear² to them that they are doing nothing and are wasting their time, and although it may seem to them³ that it is because of their weakness that they have no desire in that state to think of anything. The truth is that they will be doing quite sufficient if they have patience and persevere in prayer without making any effort.⁴ What they must do is merely to leave the soul free and disencumbered and at rest from all knowledge and thought, troubling not themselves, in that state, about what they shall think or meditate, but contenting themselves with no more than a peaceful and loving

¹ G modifies and abbreviates the rest of the chapter considerably from this point onward.

² E.p. omits 'clear.'

³ E.p. omits : 'although it may seem to them.'

⁴ [*Lit.*, 'without doing anything themselves.'] E.p. abbreviates : 'persevere in prayer, only leaving the soul free,' etc.

of love in the spirit grows greater, the yearnings for God become so great in the soul that the very bones seem to be dried up by this thirst, and the natural powers to be fading away, and their warmth and strength to be perishing through the intensity¹ of the thirst of love, for the soul feels that this thirst of love is a living thirst. This thirst David had and felt, when he said : My soul thirsted for the living God.² Which is as much as to say : Living was the thirst of my soul. Of this thirst, since it is living, we may say that it kills. But it is to be noted that the vehemence of this thirst is not continuous, but occasional, although as a rule the soul is accustomed to feel it to a certain degree.³

2. But it must be noted that, as I began to say just now, this love is not as a rule felt at first, but only the dryness and emptiness are felt whereof we are speaking. Then in place of this love which afterwards becomes gradually enkindled, what the soul experiences in the midst of these aridities and emptinesses of the faculties is an habitual care and solicitude with respect to God, together with grief and fear that it is not serving Him. But it is a sacrifice which is not a little pleasing to God that the soul should go about afflicted and solicitous for His love. This solicitude and care leads the soul into that secret contemplation, until, the senses (that is, the sensual part) having in course of time been in some degree purged of the natural affections and powers by means of the aridities which it causes within them, this Divine love begins to be enkindled in the spirit. Meanwhile, however, like one who has begun a cure, the soul knows only suffering in this dark and arid purgation of the desire ; by this means it becomes healed of many imperfections, and exercises itself in many virtues, in order to make itself meet for the said love, as we shall now say with respect to the line following :

Oh, happy chance!

3. When God leads the soul into this night of sense in order to purge the sense of its lower part and to subdue it, unite it and bring it into conformity with the spirit, by setting it in darkness and causing it to cease from meditation (as

¹ [*Lit.*, 'livingness' : cf. the quotation below.]

² Psalm xli, 3 [A.V., xlii, 2].

³ E.p. substitutes for this last sentence : 'although the vehemence of this thirst is not continuous, but only occasional ; howbeit this thirst is ordinarily felt to a certain degree.'

He afterwards does in order to purify the spirit to unite it with God, as we shall afterwards say¹), He brings it into the night of the spirit, and (although it appears not so to it) the soul gains so many advantages that it holds it to be a happy chance to have escaped from the bonds and restrictions of the senses of its lower self, by means of this night aforesaid;² and utters the present line, namely: Oh, happy chance! With respect to this, it behoves us here to note the advantages which the soul finds in this night, and because of which it considers it a happy chance to have passed through it; all of which advantages the soul includes in the next line, namely:

I went forth without being observed.

4. This going forth is understood of the subjection to its sensual part which the soul suffered when it sought God through operations so weak, so limited and so defective³ as are those of this lower part; for at every step it stumbled into numerous imperfections and ignorances, as we have noted above in writing of the seven capital sins. From all of these it is freed, when this night quenches within it all pleasures, whether from above or from below, and makes all meditation darkness to it, and grants it other innumerable blessings in the acquirement of the virtues, as we shall now show. For it will be a matter of great pleasure and great consolation, to one that journeys on this road, to see how that which seems to the soul so severe and adverse, and so contrary to spiritual pleasure, works in it so many blessings. These, as we say, are gained when the soul goes forth, as regards its affection and operation, by means of this night, from all created things, and when it journeys to eternal things,⁴ which is great happiness and good fortune:⁵ first, because of the great blessing which is in the quenching of the desire and affection with respect to all things; secondly, because they are very few that endure and persevere in entering by this strait gate and by the narrow way which leads to life, as says Our Saviour.⁶ The strait gate is this night of sense, and the soul detaches itself from sense and strips itself thereof that it may enter by

¹ E.p. omits: 'as we shall afterwards say.'

² E.p.: 'this happy night.'

³ E.p. omits: 'so . . . so . . . so . . .'

⁴ V: 'to invisible things.'

⁵ [Lit., 'and chance': the same word as in the verse-line above.]

⁶ S. Matthew vii, 14.

this gate, and establishes itself in faith,¹ which is a stranger to all sense, so that afterwards it may journey by the narrow way, which is the other night—that of the spirit—and this the soul afterwards² enters in order to journey to God in pure faith,³ which is the means whereby the soul is united to God. By this road, since it is so narrow, dark and terrible (for there is no comparison between this night of sense and that other,⁴ in its darkness and trials, as we shall say later), they are far fewer that journey, but its advantages are far greater without comparison than those of this night. Of this we shall now begin to say something, with such brevity as is possible, in order that we may pass to the other night.

CHAPTER XII

Of the benefits which this night⁵ causes in the soul.

1. This night and purgation of the desire, a happy one for the soul, works in it so many blessings and benefits (although to the soul it rather seems, as we have said, that blessings are being taken away from it) that, even as Abraham made a great feast when he weaned his son Isaac,⁶ even so is there joy in Heaven because God is now taking this soul from its swaddling clothes, setting it down from His arms, making it to walk upon its feet, and likewise taking from it the milk of the breast and the soft and sweet food proper to children, and making it to eat bread with crust, and to begin to enjoy the food of robust persons. This food, in these aridities and this darkness of sense, is now given to the spirit, which is dry and emptied of all the sweetness of sense. And this food is the infused contemplation whereof we have spoken.

2. This is the first and principal benefit caused by this arid and dark night of contemplation : the knowledge of oneself and of one's misery.⁷ For, besides the fact that all the favours which God grants to the soul are habitually granted to them enwrapped in this knowledge, these aridities and this emptiness

¹ E.p. : 'directing itself by faith.' Some codices have : 'uniting itself in faith.'

² E.p. : 'later.'

³ E.p. : 'in faith most pure.'

⁴ E.p. : 'and that of the spirit.'

⁵ E.p. : 'this night of sense.'

⁶ Genesis xxi, 8.

⁷ So H and the other codices. E.p. has : 'And this is the first and principal benefit which the soul gains here, and from which almost all the others are derived. Of these, the first benefit is the knowledge of oneself and of one's misery.'

of the faculties compared with the abundance which the soul experienced aforesaid and the difficulty which it finds in good works, make it recognize its own lowliness and misery, which in the time of its prosperity it was unable to see. Of this there is a good illustration in the Book of Exodus, where God, wishing to humble the children of Israel and desiring that they should know themselves, commanded them to take away and strip off the festal garments and adornments wherewith they were accustomed to adorn themselves in the Wilderness, saying : Now from henceforth strip yourselves of festal ornaments and put on everyday working dress, that ye may know what treatment ye deserve.¹ This is as though He had said : Inasmuch as the attire that ye wear, being proper to festival and rejoicing, causes you to feel less humble concerning yourselves than ye should, put off from you this attire, in order that henceforth, seeing yourselves clothed with vileness, ye may know that ye merit no more, and may know who ye are. Wherefore the soul knows the truth that it knew not at first, concerning its own misery ; for, at the time when it was clad as for a festival and found in God much pleasure, consolation and help, it was somewhat more satisfied and contented, since it thought itself to some extent to be serving God. It is true that such souls may not have this idea explicitly in their minds ; but some suggestion of it at least is conveyed to them by the satisfaction which they find in their pleasant experiences. But, now that the soul has put on its other and working attire—that of aridity and abandonment—and now that its first lights have turned into darkness, it possesses these lights more truly in this virtue of self-knowledge, which is so excellent and so necessary,² considering itself now as nothing and experiencing no satisfaction in itself ; for it sees that it does nothing of itself neither can do anything. And the smallness of this self-satisfaction, together with the soul's affliction at not serving God, is considered and esteemed by God as greater than all the consolations which the soul formerly experienced and the works which it wrought, however great they were, inasmuch as they were the occasion of many imperfections and ignorances. And concerning this attire³ of aridity, there remains

¹ Exodus xxxiii, 5.

² E.p. : ' it more truly possesses and has this virtue of self-knowledge so excellent and so necessary.' Our reading is that of H.

³ H : ' this labour,' probably in error [*trabajo for traje*].

to be described, besides that which we have said already, the benefits which we shall now describe and many more which may be spoken of, as they proceed from their fount and source of self-knowledge.

3. In the first place, the soul learns to commune with God with more respect and more courtesy, such as one must ever observe in converse with the Most High. These it knew not in its prosperous times of pleasure and consolation, for that pleasant favour¹ which it experienced made its desire toward God somewhat bolder than was fitting, and discourteous and ill-considered.² Even so did it happen to Moses, when he felt that God was speaking to him; blinded³ by that pleasure and desire, without further consideration, he was making bold to go to Him, if God had not commanded him to stay and put off his shoes. By this incident we are shown the respect and discretion in detachment of desire wherewith a man is to commune with God. When Moses had obeyed in this matter, he became so discreet and so attentive that the Scripture says that not only did he not make bold to draw near to God, but that he dared not even look at Him.⁴ For, having taken off the shoes of his desires and pleasures, he became very conscious of his wretchedness in the sight of God, as befitted one about to hear the word of God. Even so likewise the preparation which God granted⁵ to Job in order that he might speak with Him consisted not in those delights and glories which Job himself reports that he was wont to have in his God, but in leaving him naked upon a dung-hill,⁶ abandoned and even persecuted by his friends, filled with anguish and bitterness, and the earth covered with worms. And then the Most High God, He that lifts up the poor man from the dung-hill, was pleased to come down and speak with him there face to face, revealing⁷ to him the depths and heights⁸ of His wisdom, in a way that He had never done in the time of his prosperity.

¹ E.p. omits 'pleasant.' Bz. has: 'that fervour and pleasure.' Mtr., V: 'that favour and pleasure.'

² E.p. 'somewhat bolder and less courteous than was fitting.'

³ E.p. has 'carried away' for 'blinded.'

⁴ This is the reading of e.p. Cf. Exodus iii, 6. [P. Silverio reads, with] other authorities: 'dared not even reflect.'

⁵ E.p.: 'to hear the Divine words. The preparation likewise which God granted . . .'

⁶ [Job ii, 7-8.]

⁷ E.p.: 'the Most High God, Who lifts up the poor man from the dung-hill, was pleased to communicate Himself to him with greater abundance and sweetness, revealing . . .'

⁸ [Lit., 'the deep heights.']

②
Influence of knowledge of God

4. And here we must note another excellent benefit which there is in this night and aridity of the desire of sense, since we have had occasion to speak of it. It is that, in this dark night of the desire (to the end that the words of the Prophet may be fulfilled, namely : Thy light shall shine in the darkness¹), God will enlighten the soul, giving it knowledge, not only of its lowliness and wretchedness, as we have said, but likewise of the greatness and excellence of God. For, as well as quenching the desires and pleasures and attachments of sense, He cleanses and frees the understanding that it may understand the truth ; for pleasure of sense and desire, even though it be for spiritual things, darkens and obstructs the spirit, and furthermore that straitness² and aridity of sense enlightens and quickens the understanding, as says Isaiah :³ Vexation makes us to understand how the soul that is empty and disencumbered, as is necessary for His Divine influence, is instructed supernaturally by God in His Divine wisdom, through this dark and arid night of contemplation,⁴ as we have said ; and this instruction God gave not in those first sweetnesss and joys.

5. This is very well explained by the same prophet Isaiah, where he says : Whom shall God teach His knowledge, and whom shall He make to hear that which He speaks ?⁵ To those, He says, that are weaned from the milk and drawn away from the breasts.⁶ Here it is shown that the first milk of spiritual sweetness is no preparation for this Divine influence, neither is there preparation in attachment to the breast of delectable meditations, belonging to the faculties of sense, which gave the soul pleasure ; such preparation consists rather in the lack of the one and withdrawal from the other. Inasmuch as, in order to listen to God, the soul needs to stand upright and to be detached, with regard to affection and sense, even as the Prophet says concerning himself, in these words : I will stand upon my watch (this is that detachment of desire) and I will make firm my step, (that is, I will

¹ Isaiah lviii, 10.

² A, B, Bz., C, H read ' appetite ' [*apetito*] for ' straitness ' [*aprieto*], presumably in error.

³ Isaiah xxviii, 19. [The author omits the actual text.]

⁴ [To translate this passage at all, we must read the *Dios cómo* of P. Silverio (p. 403, l. 20), which is also found in P. Gerardo and elsewhere, as *cómo Dios*.]

⁵ E.p. : ' to hear His word.' [The Spanish is *audición*, ' hearing, which is the rendering in A.V. margin. A.V. has ' doctrine. ']

⁶ Isaiah xxviii, 9.

not meditate with sense), in order to contemplate (that is, in order to understand that which may come to me from God).¹ So we have now arrived at this, that from this arid night comes first of all self-knowledge, whence, as from a foundation, rises this other knowledge of God. For which cause S. Augustine said to God : Let me know myself, Lord, and I shall know Thee.² For, as the philosophers say, one extreme can be well known by another.

6. And in order to prove more completely how efficacious is this night of sense, with its aridity and its desolation, in bringing the soul that light which, as we say, it receives there from God, we shall quote that passage of David, wherein he clearly describes the great power which is in this night for bringing the soul this lofty knowledge of God. He says, then, thus : In the desert land, waterless, dry and pathless, I appeared before Thee, that I might see Thy virtue and Thy glory.³ It is a wondrous thing that David should say here that the means and the preparation for his knowledge of the glory of God were not the spiritual delights and the many pleasures which he had experienced, but the aridities and detachments of his sensual nature, which is here understood by the dry and desert land. No less wondrous is it that he should describe as the road to his perception and vision of the virtue of God, not the Divine meditations and conceptions of which he had often made use, but his being unable to form any conception of God or to walk by meditation produced by imaginary consideration, which is here understood by the pathless land. So that the means to a knowledge of God and of oneself is this dark night with its aridities and voids, although it leads not to a knowledge of Him of the same plenitude and abundance that comes from the other night of the spirit, since this is only, as it were, the beginning of that other.

7. Likewise the soul draws from the aridities and voids of this night of the desire, spiritual humility, which is the contrary virtue to the first capital sin, which, as we said, is spiritual pride. Through this humility, which is acquired by the said knowledge of self, the soul is purged from all those imperfections whereinto it fell with respect to that sin of pride,⁴ in the time of its prosperity. For it sees itself so dry

¹ Habakuk ii, 1.

² S. Augustine: *Soliloq.*, Cap. ii.

³ Psalm lxii, 3 [A.V., lxiii, 1-2].

⁴ E.p. omits : 'with respect to that sin of pride.'

and miserable, that the idea never even occurs to it that it is making better progress than others, or outstripping them, as it believed itself to be doing before. On the contrary, it recognizes that others are making better progress than itself.

8. And hence arises the love of its neighbours, for it esteems them, and judges them not as it was wont to do aforetime, when it saw that itself had great fervour and others not so. It is aware only of its own wretchedness, which it keeps before its eyes to such an extent that it never forgets it, nor takes occasion to set its eyes on anyone else. This was described wonderfully by David, when he was in this night, in these words: I was dumb and was humbled and kept silence from good things and my sorrow was renewed.¹ This he says because it seemed to him that the good that was in his soul had so completely departed that not only did he neither speak nor find any language concerning it, but with respect to the good of others he was likewise dumb because of his grief at the knowledge of his misery.

9. In this condition, again, souls become submissive and obedient upon the spiritual road, for, when they see their own misery, not only do they hear² what is taught them, but they even desire that anyone soever may set them on the way and tell them what they ought to do. The affective³ presumption which they sometimes had in their prosperity is taken from them; and finally, there are swept away from them on this road all the other imperfections which we noted above with respect to this first sin, which is spiritual pride.⁴

CHAPTER XIII

*Of other benefits which this night of sense causes in the soul.*⁵

1. With respect to the soul's imperfections of spiritual avarice, wherein it coveted this and that spiritual thing and found no satisfaction in this and that exercise because of its covetousness for the desire and pleasure which it found therein, this arid and dark night has now greatly reformed it. For, as it finds not the pleasure and sweetness which it was

¹ Psalm xxxviii, 3 [A.V., xxxix, 2].

² Bz.: 'do they obey.'

³ E.p. omits 'affective.'

⁴ E.p.: 'all the other imperfections are swept away from them which we touched on above when speaking of spiritual pride.' A, B add: 'as we have said.'

⁵ From e.p.

wont to find, but finds rather affliction and lack of sweetness, it has such moderate recourse to them that it might possibly now lose, through defective use, what aforetime it lost through excess ; although as a rule God gives to those whom He leads into this night humility and readiness, albeit with lack of sweetness, so that what is commanded them they may do for God's sake alone ; and thus they no longer seek profit in many things¹ because they find no pleasure in them.

2. With respect to spiritual luxury, it is likewise clearly seen that, through this aridity and lack of sensible sweetness which the soul finds in spiritual things, it is freed from those impurities which we there noted ; for we said that, as a rule, they proceeded from the pleasure which overflowed from spirit into sense.

3. But with regard to the imperfections from which the soul frees itself in this dark night with respect to the fourth sin, which is spiritual gluttony,² although they may be seen above, they have not all been described there, because they are innumerable ; and thus I will not detail them here, for I would fain make an end of this night in order to pass to the next, concerning which we have grave words and instructions.³ Let it suffice for the understanding of the innumerable benefits which, over and above those mentioned, the soul gains in this night with respect to this sin⁴ of spiritual gluttony, to say that it frees itself from all those imperfections which have there been described, and from many other and greater evils, and vile abominations⁵ which are not written above, into which fell many of whom we have had experience, because they had not reformed their desire with respect to this inordinate love of spiritual sweetness. For in this arid and dark night wherein He sets the soul, God has restrained its concupiscence and curbed its desire so that the soul cannot feed upon any pleasure or sweetness of sense,⁶ whether from above or from below ; and this He continues to do⁷ after such manner that the soul is subjected, reformed and repressed with respect to concupiscence and desire. It loses the strength of its passions and concupiscence

¹ E.p. : 'and thus they detach themselves from many things.'

² H erroneously reads : 'spiritual pleasure.'

³ E.p. : 'grave instructions.'

⁴ E.p. : 'against this sin.'

⁵ E.p. omits : 'and vile abominations.'

⁶ E.p. : 'so that it can hardly feed at all upon sweetnesses or pleasures of sense.'

⁷ H omits : 'and this He continues to do.'

and it becomes sterile, because it no longer consults its likings. Just as, when none is accustomed to take milk from the breast, the courses of the milk¹ are dried up, so the desires of the soul are dried up. And besides² these things there follow admirable benefits from this spiritual sobriety, for, when desire and concupiscence are quenched, the soul lives in spiritual tranquillity and peace ; for, where desire and concupiscence reign not, there is no disturbance, but peace and consolation of God.

4. From this there arises another and a second benefit, which is that the soul habitually has remembrance of God, with fear and dread of backsliding upon the spiritual road, as has been said. This is a great benefit, and not one of the least that results from this aridity and purgation of the desire, for the soul is purified and cleansed of the imperfections that were clinging to it because of the desires and affections, which of their own accord debilitate and darken the soul.

5. There is another very great benefit for the soul in this night, which is that it practises the virtues jointly, as, for example, patience and longsuffering, which are well tried in these times of emptiness and aridity, when the soul endures and perseveres in its spiritual exercises without consolation and without pleasure. It practises the charity of God, since it is not now moved by the pleasure of attraction and sweetness which it finds in its work, but only by God. It likewise practises here the virtue of fortitude, because, in these difficulties and insipidities which it finds in its work, it brings strength out of weakness and thus becomes strong. All the virtues, in short—the theological and also the cardinal and moral—both in body and in spirit,³ are practised by the soul in these times of aridity.

6. And that in this night the soul obtains these four benefits which we have here described (namely, delight of peace, habitual remembrance and thought of God, cleanliness and purity of soul and the practice of the virtues which we have just described), David tells us, having experienced it himself when he was in this night, in these words :

¹ A : ' of the breast of the milk ' ; Mtr. : ' of the veins of the milk. '

² E.p. omits freely, reading : ' and this He continues to do after such manner that the soul is gradually correcting, mortifying and controlling itself, according to concupiscence and desire, so that it seems to be losing the strength of its passions ; and besides . . . '

³ E.p. reads : ' in all the virtues, the cardinal, and also the theological and moral, ' and omits : ' both in body and in spirit. '

My soul refused consolations, I had remembrance of God, I found consolation and was exercised and my spirit failed.¹ And he then says : And I meditated by night with my heart and was exercised, and I swept and purified my spirit—that is to say, from all the affections.²

7. With respect to the imperfections of the other three spiritual sins which we have described above, which are wrath, envy and sloth, the soul is purged hereof likewise in this aridity of the desire and acquires the virtues opposed to them ; for, softened and humbled by these aridities and hardships and other temptations and trials wherein God exercises it during this night, it becomes meek with respect to God, and to itself, and likewise with respect to its neighbour. So that it is no longer angry with itself and disturbed because of its own faults, nor with its neighbour because of his faults, neither is it displeased with God, nor does it utter unseemly complaints because He does not quickly make it holy.

8. Then, as to envy, the soul has charity toward others in this respect also ; for, if it has any envy, this is no longer a vice as it was before, when it was grieved because others were preferred to it and given greater advantage. Its grief now comes from seeing how great is its own misery, and its envy (if it has any) is a virtue, since it desires to imitate others, which is great virtue.

9. Neither are the sloth and the weariness which it now has concerning spiritual things vicious as they were before ; for in the past these sins proceeded from the spiritual pleasures which the soul sometimes experienced and sought after when it found them not. But this new weariness proceeds not from this insufficiency of pleasure, because God has taken from the soul pleasure in all things in this purgation of the desire.

10. Besides these benefits which have been mentioned, the soul attains innumerable others by means of this arid contemplation. For often, in the midst of these times of aridity and hardship, God communicates to the soul, when it is least expecting it, the purest spiritual sweetness and love, together with a spiritual knowledge which is sometimes very delicate, each manifestation of which is of greater benefit and worth than those which the soul enjoyed aforetime ; although in its beginnings the soul thinks that this is not so, for the

¹ Psalm lxxvi, 4 [A.V., lxxvii, 3-4].

² [A.V., Psalm lxxvii, 6.]

spiritual influence now granted to it is very delicate and cannot be perceived by sense.

11. Finally, inasmuch as the soul is now purged from the affections and desires of sense, it obtains liberty of spirit, whereby in ever greater degree it gains the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit. Here, too, it is wondrously delivered from the hands of its three enemies—devil, world and flesh ; for, its pleasure and delight of sense being quenched with respect to all things, neither the devil nor the world nor sensuality has any arms or any strength wherewith to make war upon the spirit.

12. These times of aridity, then, cause the soul to journey in all purity in the love of God, since it is no longer influenced in its actions by the pleasure and sweetness of the actions themselves, as perchance it was when it experienced sweetness, but only by a desire to please God. It becomes neither presumptuous nor self-satisfied, as perchance it was wont to become in the time of its prosperity, but fearful and timid with regard to itself, finding in itself no satisfaction whatsoever ; and herein consists that holy fear which preserves and increases the virtues. This aridity also quenches natural energy and concupiscence, as has also been said. Save for the pleasure, indeed, which at certain times God Himself infuses into it, it is a wonder if it finds pleasure and consolation of sense, through its own diligence, in any spiritual exercise or action, as has already been said.

13. There grows within souls that experience this arid night care for God and yearnings to serve Him, for in proportion as the breasts of sensuality, wherewith it sustained and nourished the desires that it pursued, are drying up, there remains nothing in that aridity and detachment save the yearning to serve God, which is a thing very pleasing to God. For, as David says, a troubled spirit is a sacrifice to God.¹

14. When the soul, then, knows that, in this arid purification through which it has passed, it has elicited and attained so many and such precious benefits² as those which have here been described, it tarries not in crying, as in the stanza which we are expounding in this verse, 'Oh, happy chance !—I went forth without being observed.' That is, 'I went forth' from the bonds and subjection of the desires of sense and the affections, 'without being observed'—that is to say, without

¹ Psalm 1, 19 [A.V., li, 17].

² E.p. : 'attained such precious benefits, and so many.'

the three enemies aforementioned being able to keep me from it. These enemies, as we have said, bind the soul as with bonds,¹ in its desires and pleasures, and prevent it from going forth from itself to the liberty of the love² of God ; and without these desires and pleasures they cannot give battle to the soul, as has been said.

15. When, therefore, the four passions of the soul—which are joy, grief, hope and fear—are calmed through continual mortification ; when the natural desires have been lulled to sleep, in the sensual nature of the soul, by means of habitual times of aridity ; and when the harmony of the senses and the interior faculties causes a suspension of labour and a cessation from the work of meditation, as we have said (which is the dwelling and the household of the lower part of the soul), these enemies cannot obstruct this spiritual liberty, and the house remains at rest and quiet, as says the following line :

My house being now at rest.³

CHAPTER XIV

Expounds this last verse of the first stanza.⁴

1. When this house of sensuality was now at rest—that is, was mortified—its passions being quenched and its desires put to rest and lulled to sleep by means of this blessed night of the purgation of sense, the soul went forth, to set out upon the road and way of the spirit, which is that of progressives and proficients,⁵ and which, by another name, is called the way of illumination or of infused contemplation, wherewith God Himself feeds and refreshes the soul, without meditation, or the soul's active help.⁶ Such, as we have said,

¹ E.p. omits : ' as with bonds.'

² E.p. : ' of the perfect love.'

³ [So e.p., which completes the sense of the paragraph. The other versions, which P. Silverio follows, leave it unfinished, reading : ' . . . of the soul), which is that which the Lord (*sic*) here calls His house, she says : " My house being now at rest."']

⁴ The title is from e.p. In the first four lines of the first paragraph the Codices show considerable variations in secondary matters. We here follow H.

⁵ [*de los aprovechantes y aprovechados.*] E.p., Bz. omit : ' progressives and.'

⁶ H : ' or the soul's active way.' The 1630 edition reads as in the text above, but adds : ' with labour.'

is the night and purgation of sense in the soul.¹ In those who have afterwards to enter the other and more serious night of the spirit, in order to pass to the Divine union of love of God (for not all, but only the smallest number, pass habitually thereto), it is wont to be accompanied by grave trials and temptations of sense, which last for a long time, albeit longer in some than in others. For to some the angel of Satan presents himself—namely, the spirit of fornication—that he may buffet their senses with abominable and violent temptations, and may trouble their spirits with vile considerations and representations which are most² visible to the imagination, which things at times are a greater affliction to them than death.³

2. At other times in this night there is added to these things the spirit of blasphemy, which roams abroad, setting in the path of all the conceptions and thoughts of the soul intolerable blasphemies. These it sometimes suggests to the imagination with such violence that the soul almost utters them, which is a grave torment to it.

3. At other times another abominable spirit, which Isaiah calls *Spiritus vertiginis*,⁴ is allowed to molest them, not in order that they may fall, but that it may try them. This spirit darkens their senses in such a way that it fills them with numerous scruples and problems, so perplexing, as they judge, that they can never, by any means, be satisfied concerning them, neither can they find any help for their judgement⁵ in counsel or thought. This is one of the severest goads and horrors of this night, very closely akin to that which passes in the night of the spirit.

4. As a rule these storms and trials are sent by God in this night and purgation of sense to those whom afterwards He purposes to lead into the other night (though not all reach it), to the end that, when they have been chastened and buffeted, they may in this way continually exercise and prepare themselves, and continually accustom their senses and faculties to the union of wisdom which is to be bestowed upon them in that other night. For, if the soul be not tempted, exercised and proved with trials and temptations, it cannot

¹ E.p. omits: 'in the soul.'

² Ep., B.z.: 'are very.'

³ The next paragraph is lacking in V.

⁴ [The 'perverse spirit' of A.V., Isaiah xix, 14.] E.p. adds: 'is allowed to try them,' and omits: 'not in order that they may fall, but.'

⁵ So A. The other authorities [and P. Silverio] read: 'for the judgement.'

quicken¹ its senses for wisdom. For this reason it is said in Ecclesiasticus : He that has not been tempted, what does he know ? And he that has not been proved, what are the things that he recognizes ?² To this truth Jeremiah bears good witness, saying : Thou didst chastise me, Lord, and I was instructed.³ And the most proper form of this chastisement, for one who will enter into Wisdom, is that of the interior trials which we are here describing, inasmuch as it is these which most effectively purge sense of all favours and consolations to which it was affected with natural weakness, and by which the soul is truly humiliated in preparation for the exaltation which it is to experience.

5. For how long a time the soul will be held in this fasting and this penance of sense, cannot be told with any certainty ; for all do not experience it after one manner, neither do all encounter the same temptations. For this is meted out by the will of God, in conformity with the greater or the smaller degree of imperfection which each soul has to purge away. In conformity, likewise, with the degree of love of union⁴ to which God is pleased to raise it, He will humble it with greater or less intensity or in greater or less time. Those who have the disposition and greater strength to suffer, He purges with greater intensity and more quickly. But those who are very weak are kept for a long time in this night, and these He purges very gently and with slight temptations. Habitually, too, He gives them refreshments of sense so that they may not fall away, and only after a long time do they attain to purity of perfection in this life, some of them never attaining to it. Such are neither properly in the night nor properly out of it ; for, although they pass on no farther, yet, in order that they may be preserved in humility and self-knowledge, God exercises them for certain periods and at certain times⁵ in those temptations and aridities ; and at other times and seasons He aids them with consolations, lest they should grow faint and return to seek the consolations of the world. Other souls, which are weaker, God Himself accompanies, first appearing,⁶ and then passing to another place, that He may

¹ So Bz., H, Mtr., P, V. E.p., A, B, C, M read : ' arrive ' [which involves a retranslation : ' its senses cannot arrive at wisdom '—this is not a natural reading in the Spanish].

² Ecclesiasticus xxxiv, 9-10.

⁴ E.p. : ' of union of love.'

⁶ E.p. : ' now disappearing.'

³ Jeremiah xxxi, 18.

⁵ [Lit., ' for certain days.']

of this treatise. For, as they find so many and such abundant spiritual¹ communications and apprehensions, both in sense and spirit, wherein they oftentimes see imaginary and spiritual visions (for all these things, together with other delectable feelings, come to many souls in this state, wherein the devil and their own fancy very commonly practise deceptions on them), and, as the devil is apt to take such pleasure in impressing upon the soul and suggesting to it the said apprehensions and feelings, he fascinates and deludes it with great facility,² when it takes not the precaution of resigning itself to God, and of protecting itself strongly, by means of faith, from all these visions and feelings. For in this state the devil causes many to believe in vain visions³ and false prophecies; and strives⁴ to make them presume that God and the saints are speaking with them; and they often trust their own fancy. And the devil is also accustomed, in this state, to fill them with presumption and pride, and, attracted by vanity and arrogance, they allow themselves to be seen performing outward acts which appear to be holy, such as raptures and other manifestations. Thus they become bold with God, and lose holy fear, which is the key and the custodian of all the virtues; and in some of these souls so many falsehoods and deceits are apt to be multiplied, and so persistent do they become, that it is very doubtful if such souls will return⁵ to the pure road of virtue and true spirituality. Into these miseries they fall because they are beginning to give themselves over to spiritual feelings and apprehensions with too great security, when they were beginning to make some progress upon the way.⁶

4. There is so much that I might say of these imperfections and of how they are the more incurable because such souls consider them to be more spiritual than the others, that I will leave this subject. I only say, in order to prove how necessary is the night of the spirit, which is purgation, for him that would go farther, that none of these proficient, however greatly he may have exerted himself, is free, at best, from many of those natural affections and imperfect habits,

¹ E.p. omits 'spiritual.'

² A, M: 'with great difficulty': presumably a copyist's error.

³ E.p., A, B, M: 'causes to be believed many visions.'

⁴ So e.p. The Codices [and P. Silverio, rather meaninglessly] read: 'here, in this place, he strives.'

⁵ Bz.: 'it is very difficult for such to return.'

⁶ E.p.: 'the spiritual way.'

is that all the imperfections and disorders of the sensual part have their strength and root in the spirit, where all habits, both good and bad, are brought into subjection,¹ and thus, until these are purged, the rebellions and depravities of sense cannot be purged throughly.²

2. Wherefore, in this night following, both parts of the soul are purged together, and it is for this end that it is well to have passed through the corrections of the first night, and the period of tranquillity³ which proceeds from it, in order that, sense⁴ being united with spirit, both may be purged after a certain manner and may then suffer with greater fortitude. For very great fortitude⁵ is needful for so violent and severe a purgation, since, if the weakness of the lower part has not first been corrected and fortitude has not been gained from God through the sweet and delectable communion which the soul has afterwards enjoyed with Him, its nature will not have the strength or the disposition to bear it.

3. Therefore, since these proficients are still at a very low stage of progress, and follow their own nature closely⁶ in the intercourse and dealings which they have with God, because the gold of their spirit is not yet purified and refined, they still think of God as little children, and speak of God as little children, and feel and experience God as little children, even as S. Paul says,⁷ because they have not reached perfection, which is the union of the soul⁸ with God. In the state of union, however, they will work great things in⁹ the spirit, even as grown men, and their works and faculties will then be Divine rather than human, as will afterwards be said. To this end God is pleased to strip them of this old man and clothe them with the new man, who is created according to God, as the Apostle says,¹⁰ in the newness of sense. He strips their faculties, affections and feelings, both spiritual and sensual, both outward and inward,

¹ E.p. omits : 'where . . . subjection.'

² E.p. : 'until the bad habits are purged, the rebellions and depravities of sense cannot be purged throughly.'

³ E.p. : 'and to have attained to the period of tranquillity' [*lit.*, 'the fair weather'].

⁴ Only Bz., H, Mtr., V have the word 'sense.'

⁵ Most authorities omit 'fortitude' [which however, the context supplies]. Bz. gives it explicitly ; A. has : 'great preparation.'

⁶ E.p. omits : 'and . . . closely.'

⁷ 1 Corinthians xiii, 11.

⁸ E.p. : 'the union of love.'

⁹ E.p., A, B, M have 'with' for 'in.'

¹⁰ [Ephesians iv, 24.]

leaving the understanding dark, the will dry, the memory empty and the affections in the deepest affliction, bitterness and straitness, taking from the soul the pleasure and experience of spiritual blessings which it had aforetime, so that this privation may be one of the principles which are required in the spirit that the spiritual form of the spirit may be introduced into it and united with it, which is the union of love. All this the Lord works in the soul by means of a pure and dark contemplation,¹ as the soul explains in the first stanza. This, although in the beginning² it was interpreted with reference to the first night of sense, is principally understood by the soul of this second night of the spirit, since this is the principal part of the purification of the soul. And thus we shall set it down and expound it here again in this sense.

CHAPTER IV

*Sets down the first stanza and the exposition thereof.*³

On a dark night, Kindled⁴ in love with yearnings—oh, happy chance!—

I went forth without being observed, My house being now at rest.

EXPOSITION⁵

1. Interpreting this stanza now with reference to purification, contemplation or detachment or poverty of spirit, which here are almost one and the same thing, we can expound it after this manner and make the soul speak thus: In poverty, and without protection⁶ and support in all the apprehensions of my soul—that is, in the darkness of my understanding and the constraint of my will, in affliction and anguish with respect to memory, remaining in the dark in pure faith, which is dark night for the said natural faculties, the will alone being touched by grief and afflictions and yearnings for the love of God—I went forth from myself—that is, from my low manner of understanding, from my weak mode of loving and from my poor and limited manner of experiencing God, without being hindered therein by sensuality or the devil.

¹ Bz.: 'of a dark and clean contemplation.'

² Only e.p. has: 'in the beginning.'

³ So e.p. The Codices have only 'Stanza the First' or no title at all. V reads: 'Stanza for the third part.'

⁴ B, G, H, M: 'aflame.'

⁵ Omitted by e.p., A, B.

⁶ E.p. omits: 'protection and.'

2. This was a great happiness and a good chance for me ; for, when the faculties had been perfectly annihilated and calmed, together with the passions, desires¹ and affections of my soul, wherewith I had experienced and tasted God after a lowly manner, I went forth from my own human way and operation to the operation and way of God.² That is to say, my understanding went forth from itself, turning from the human and natural to the Divine ; for, when it is united with God by means of this purgation, its understanding no longer comes through its natural light and vigour,³ but through the Divine Wisdom wherewith it has become united. And my will went forth from itself, becoming Divine ; for, being united with Divine love, it no longer loves with its natural strength after a lowly manner,⁴ but with strength and purity from the Holy Spirit ;⁵ and thus the will, which is now near to God, acts not after a human manner, and similarly the memory has become transformed into eternal apprehensions of glory. And finally, by means of this night and purgation of the old man, all the energies and affections of the soul are wholly renewed into a Divine temper and Divine delight.

There follows the line :

On a dark night.

CHAPTER V

*Sets down the first line and begins to explain how this dark contemplation is not only night for the soul but is also grief and purgation.*⁶

1. This dark night is an inflowing of God into the soul, which purges it from its ignorances and imperfections, habitual, natural and spiritual, and which is called by contemplatives infused contemplation, or mystical theology. Herein God secretly teaches the soul and instructs it in perfection of love, without its doing anything, or understanding of

¹ E.p. omits ' desires.'

² E.p. : ' I went forth from the way and limited operation aforementioned to the operation and way of God.'

³ E.p. : ' it no longer has understanding after the narrow and limited manner that it had aforetime.'

⁴ E.p. : ' with the limited vigour and strength that it had aforetime.'

⁵ E.p. : ' from the Divine Spirit.'

⁶ So e.p. The Codices have no title.