

DARK NIGHT BOOK II

CHAPTER 15--Sets down **the second stanza** and its exposition

CHAPTER 16--Explains how, though in darkness, the soul walks securely

CHAPTER 17--Explains how this dark contemplation is secret

CHAPTER 18--Explains how this secret wisdom is likewise a ladder

CHAPTER 19--Begins to explain the ten steps of the mystic ladder of Divine love, according to Saint Bernard and Saint Thomas.

The first five are here treated

CHAPTER 20--Wherein are treated the other five steps of love

CHAPTER 21--Which explains this word 'disguised,' and describes the colours of the disguise of the soul in this night

CHAPTER 22--Explains **the third line** of the second stanza

CHAPTER 23--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.

CHAPTER 24--Completes the explanation of **the second stanza**

CHAPTER 25--Wherein is expounded **the third stanza**

STANZAS OF THE SOUL	CANCIONES DEL ALMA
<p>1. On a dark night, Kindled in love with yearnings --oh, happy chance!-- I went forth without being observed, My house being now at rest.</p> <p>2. In darkness and secure, By the secret ladder, disguised --oh, happy chance!-- In darkness and in concealment, My house being now at rest.</p> <p>3. In the happy night, In secret, when none saw me,</p>	<p>1. En una noche oscura, con ansias, en amores inflamada, ¡oh dichosa ventura!, salí sin ser notada estando ya mi casa sosegada.</p> <p>2. A oscuras y segura, por la secreta escala, disfrazada, ¡oh dichosa ventura!, a oscuras y en celada, estando ya mi casa sosegada.</p> <p>3. En la noche dichosa, en secreto, que nadie me veía,</p>

Nor I beheld aught,
Without light or guide,
save that which burned in my heart.

4. This light guided me
More surely than the light of noonday
To the place where he (well I knew who!)
was awaiting me--
A place where none appeared.

5. Oh, night that guided me,
Oh, night more lovely than the dawn,
Oh, night that joined
Beloved with lover,
Lover transformed in the Beloved!

6. Upon my flowery breast,
Kept wholly for himself alone,
There he stayed sleeping,
and I caressed him,
And the fanning of the cedars made a breeze.

7. The breeze blew from the turret
As I parted his locks;
With his gentle hand
he wounded my neck
And caused all my senses to be suspended.

8. I remained, lost in oblivion;
My face I reclined on the Beloved.
All ceased and I abandoned myself,
Leaving my cares
forgotten among the lilies.

ni yo miraba cosa,
sin otra luz y guía
sino la que en el corazón ardía.

4. Aquésta me guiaba
más cierto que la luz de mediodía,
adonde me esperaba
quien yo bien me sabía,
en parte donde nadie parecía.

5. ¡Oh noche que guiaste!
¡oh noche amable más que el alborada!
¡oh noche que juntaste
Amado con amada,
amada en el Amado transformada!

6. En mi pecho florido,
que entero para él solo se guardaba,
allí quedó dormido,
y yo le regalaba,
y el ventalle de cedros aire daba.

7. El aire de la almena,
cuando yo sus cabellos esparcía,
con su mano serena
en mi cuello hería
y todos mis sentidos suspendía.

8. Quedéme y olvidéme,
el rostro recliné sobre el Amado,
cesó todo y dejéme,
dejando mi cuidado
entre las azucenas olvidado.

BOOK THE SECOND

Of the Dark Night of the Spirit.

CHAPTER 15

Sets down the second stanza and its exposition.

*In darkness and secure,
By the secret ladder, disguised—
oh, happy chance!
In darkness and concealment,
My house being now at rest.*

1. IN this stanza the soul still continues to sing of certain **properties of the darkness** of this night, reiterating how great is the **happiness** which came to it through them.

[Objection: the purification has risks, is dangerous]

It speaks of them in replying to a certain tacit **objection**, saying that it is not to be supposed that, because in this night and darkness it has passed through so many tempests of afflictions, doubts, fears and horrors, as has been said, it has for that reason **run any risk of being lost**.

[Reply]

On the contrary, it says, in the darkness of this night **it has gained itself**. For in the night it has **freed itself** and **escaped** subtly from its enemies [sus contrarios], who were continually **hindering** its progress.

For in the darkness of the night it **changed its garments** and **disguised itself** with **three liveries** and colours which we shall describe hereafter;

LIBRO SEGUNDO

CAPITULO 15

Pónese la segunda canción y su declaración.

CANCION 2

*A oscuras y segura
por la secreta escala, disfrazada,
¡oh dichosa ventura!,
a oscuras y en celada,
estando ya mi casa sosegada.*

DECLARACION

1. Va el alma cantando en esta canción todavía algunas propiedades de la oscuridad de esta noche, repitiendo la **buena dicha** que le vino con ellas.

Dícelas, respondiendo a cierta objeción tácita, diciendo que no se piense que, por haber en esta noche y oscuridad pasado por tanta tormenta de angustias, dudas, recelos y horrores, como se ha dicho, corría por eso más peligro de perderse,

porque antes en la oscuridad de esta noche **se ganó**; porque en ella se **libraba** y **escapaba sutilmente** de sus contrarios, que le **impedían siempre el paso**,

porque en la oscuridad de la noche **iba mudado el traje** y **disfrazada** con tres libreas y colores que después diremos,

and went forth by **a very secret ladder**, which none in the house knew, the which ladder, as we shall observe likewise in the proper place, is the **living faith**.

By this ladder the soul went forth in **such complete hiding and concealment**, in order the better to execute its purpose, that it could not fail to be in great security;

above all since in this purgative night the **desires, affections and passions** of the soul are **put to sleep**, mortified and quenched, which are they that, when they were awake and alive, **consented not** to this.

The first line, then, runs thus¹:

In darkness and secure.

CHAPTER 16

Explains how, though in darkness, the soul walks securely.

1. THE *darkness* which the soul here describes relates, as we have said, to **the desires and faculties, sensual, interior and spiritual**, for all these are **darkened** in this night as to their natural light, so that, being purged in this respect, they may be illumined with respect to the supernatural.

For the sensual and spiritual desires [apetitos] are put to sleep and mortified, so that they can **experience** [206] **nothing, either divine or human**;

the **affections** of the soul are oppressed and constrained, so that they can neither move nor find **support in anything**;

the **imagination** is bound and can make no useful reflection;

the **memory** is gone;

the **mind** is in darkness, unable to understand anything;

y por **una escala muy secreta**, que ninguno de casa lo sabía, que, como también en su lugar notaremos, es la viva fe,

por la cual salió **tan encubierta y en celada**, para poder bien hacer su hecho, que no podía dejar de ir muy segura,

mayormente estando ya en esta noche purgativa los apetitos, afecciones y pasiones, etc., de su ánima adormidos, mortificados y apagados, que son los que, estando despiertos y vivos, no se lo consintieron.

Síguese, pues, el verso, y dice así:

A oscuras y segura.

CAPITULO 16

Pónese el primer verso y explícate cómo, yendo el alma a oscuras, va segura.

1. La oscuridad que aquí dice el alma, ya habemos dicho que es acerca de **los apetitos y potencias sensitivas, interiores y espirituales**, porque todas se oscurecen de su natural lumbre en esta noche porque, purgándose acerca de ellas, puedan ser ilustradas acerca de lo sobrenatural.

Porque los apetitos sensitivos y espirituales están adormecidos y amortiguados sin poder gustar de cosa **ni divina ni humana**;

las afecciones del alma, oprimidas y apretadas, sin poderse mover a ella ni hallar arrimo en nada;

la imaginación, atada, sin poder hacer algún discurso de bien;

la memoria, acabada;

el entendimiento, entenebrecido, sin poder entender cosa,

¹ Lit., 'The line, then, continues, and says thus.' In fact, however, the author is returning to the first line of the stanza.

and hence the **will** likewise is arid and constrained and all the faculties are void and useless; and in addition to all this a **thick and heavy cloud** is upon the soul, keeping it in affliction, and, as it were, **far away from God.**² It is in this kind of 'darkness' that the soul says here it travelled 'securely.'

2. The reason for this has been clearly expounded; for ordinarily the soul never strays save through its **desires** or its **tastes** or its **reflections** or its **understandings** or its **affections**; for as a rule [de ordinario] it has too much or too little of these, or they vary or go astray, and hence the soul becomes inclined to that which behoves it not.

Wherefore, when all these operations and motions are hindered, it is clear that the soul **is secure against being led astray by them**; for it is free, not only from itself, but likewise from its other enemies, which are the **world** and the **devil**.

For when the affections and operations of the soul are quenched, **these enemies cannot make war upon it by any other means or in any other manner.**

3. It follows from this that, **the greater** is the darkness wherein the soul journeys and **the more completely** is it voided of its natural operations, **the greater** is its security.

For, as the Prophet says,[208 (Hosea 13:9)] **perdition comes to the soul from itself alone** -- that is, from its **sensual and interior desires and operations**; and good, says God, comes from Me alone.

Wherefore, when it is thus hindered from following **the things that lead it into evil**, **there will then come to it forthwith the blessings** [bienes] **of union with God in its desires and faculties**, which in that union **He will**

y de aquí también la voluntad seca y apretada, y todas las potencias vacías e inútiles, y, sobre todo esto, **una espesa y pesada nube sobre el alma**, que la tiene angustiada y ajendada de Dios. De esta manera a oscuras, dice aquí el alma que iba segura.

2. La causa de esto está bien declarada; porque, ordinariamente, el alma nunca yerra sino por sus apetitos o sus gustos, o sus discursos, o sus inteligencias, o sus afecciones; porque de ordinario en éstas excede o falta, o varía o desatina, o da y se inclina en lo que no conviene.

De donde, impedidas todas estas operaciones y movimientos, claro está que queda el alma segura de errar en ellos, porque, no sólo se libra de sí, sino también de los otros enemigos, que son mundo y demonio,

los cuales apagadas las afecciones y operaciones del alma, no le pueden hacer guerra por otra parte ni de otra manera.

3. De aquí se sigue que, **cuanto** el alma va **más** a oscuras y vacía de sus operaciones naturales, **va más segura**;

porque, como dice el profeta (Os. 13, 9), la perdición al alma solamente le viene de sí misma, esto es, de sus **operaciones y apetitos interiores y sensitivos**, y el bien, dice Dios, solamente de mí.

Por tanto, impedida ella así de sus males, resta que le vengan luego los bienes de la unión de Dios en sus apetitos y potencias, en que las hará divinas y celestiales.

² Some have considered this description exaggerated, but it must be borne in mind that all souls are not tested alike and the Saint is writing of those whom God has willed to raise to such sanctity that they drain the cup of bitterness to the dregs. We have already seen (Bk. I, chap. xiv, Sect. 5) that 'all do not experience (this) after one manner . . . for (it) 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, (and) in conformity, likewise, with the degree of love of union to which God is pleased to raise it' (Bk. I, chap xiv, above).

make Divine and celestial.

Hence, at the time of this darkness, if the soul considers the matter, it will see very clearly how little its **desire** and its **faculties** are being diverted to things that are useless and harmful; and **how secure** it is from **vainglory and pride and presumption, vain and false rejoicing and many other things**. It follows clearly, then, that, by walking in darkness, **not only** is the soul **not lost**, but it has even **greatly gained**, since it is here gaining the virtues.

[A Question]

4. But there is a question [duda] which at once arises here -- namely, since the **things of God** are of themselves profitable to the soul and bring it gain and security, **why does God**, in this night, **darken the desires and faculties with respect to these good things likewise, in such a way that the soul can no more taste of them or busy itself with them** than with these other things, and indeed in some ways can do so less?

[Answer]

The answer is that it is well for the soul to perform **no operation touching spiritual things** at that time and **to have no pleasure in such things**, because **its faculties and desires are base, impure and wholly natural**; and thus, although these faculties be given the desire and interest in **things supernatural and Divine**, **they could not receive them save after a base and a natural manner, exactly in their own fashion**.

For, as the philosopher says,

*whatsoever is received comes to him that receives it
after the manner of the recipient.*³

De donde en el tiempo de las tinieblas, si el alma mira en ello, muy bien echará de ver cuán poco se le divierte el apetito y las potencias a cosas inútiles y dañosas, y cuán segura está de vanagloria, soberbia y presunción vana y falso gozo, y de otras muchas cosas. Luego, bien se sigue que, por ir a oscuras, no sólo no va perdida, sino aun muy ganada, pues aquí va ganando las virtudes.

4. Pero a **la duda** que de aquí nace luego, conviene a saber: que, pues **las cosas de Dios de suyo hacen bien al alma y la ganan y aseguran**, ¿por qué en esta noche **le oscurece Dios los apetitos y potencias** también acerca de **estas cosas buenas**, de manera que **tampoco pueda gustar de ellas**, ni tratarlas como las demás, y aun en alguna manera menos?

Respóndese que entonces conviene que tampoco le quede operación ni gusto acerca de las cosas espirituales, porque tiene **las potencias y apetitos impuros y bajos y muy naturales**; y así, aunque les den el sabor y trato a estas potencias de las **cosas sobrenaturales y divinas**, **no le podrían recibir sino muy baja y naturalmente, muy a su modo**.

Porque, como dice el Filósofo,

cualquier cosa que se recibe está en el recipiente al modo que lo recibe.

³ Parallel texts: Ascent II,29,6; 1DN 4,2 e LF 3,34. This profound and important principle, which has often been developed in mystical theology, is well expounded by P. José de Jesús María in a treatise called *Reply to a question* [*Respuesta a una duda*]. Here, among other things, he says: 'As St. Thomas proves (*De Veritate*, q. 12, a. 6), *Divine illumination, like every other spiritual form, is communicated to the soul after the manner of the receiver of it, whether according to sense or according to spirit, to the particular or to the universal.*

Wherefore, since these natural faculties have **neither purity nor strength nor capacity to receive and taste** things that are supernatural **after the manner of those things**, which **manner** is **Divine**, but can do so only **after their own manner**, which is **human and base**, as we have said, it is meet that its faculties be in darkness **concerning these Divine things likewise**.

Thus, being weaned and purged and annihilated in this respect first of all, they may lose that **base and human way of receiving and acting**, and thus all these faculties and desires of the soul may come to be prepared and tempered in such a way as to be able to **receive, feel and taste that which is Divine and supernatural after a sublime and lofty manner**, which is impossible if **the old man die not first of all**.

5. Hence it follows that all spiritual things, if they come not **from** above and be not communicated **by** the Father of lights to human desire and free will (howsoever much a man may exercise his taste and faculties for God, and howsoever much it may seem to the faculties that they are experiencing these things), will not be **experienced after a Divine and spiritual manner**, but **after a human and natural manner**, just as other things are experienced, for

De donde, porque estas naturales potencias no tienen **pureza ni fuerza ni caudal para poder recibir y gustar** las cosas sobrenaturales **al modo de ellas, que es divino, sino sólo al suyo, que es humano y bajo**, como hemos dicho, conviene que **sean oscurecidas también acerca de esto divino**,

porque, destetadas y purgadas y aniquiladas en aquello primero, pierdan aquel **bajo y humano modo de recibir y obrar**, y así vengan a quedar dispuestas y templadas todas estas potencias y apetitos del alma **para poder recibir, sentir y gustar lo divino y sobrenatural alta y subidamente**, lo cual no puede ser si primero no muere el hombre viejo.

5. De aquí es que todo lo espiritual, si **de arriba no viene comunicado** del Padre de las lumbres (Sant. 1,17) sobre el albedrío y apetito humano, aunque más se ejercite el gusto y potencias del hombre con Dios y por mucho que les parezca los gustan, **no los gustarán divina y espiritualmente**, sino **humana y naturalmente**, como gustan las demás cosas,

And thus, he that receives it must prepare himself for it to be communicated to him further, whether in small measure (as we say) or according to sense, or in large measure or intellectually.' "Quidquid recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur". "For to him who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away." (Matthew 13:11–12) "You will get the God you want" (Therese to a nun). Severe, etc. Rigidity prevents change, hinders God's action in us.

The Philosopher is Aristotle who is attributed the motto/maxim, used in a simplified form: « Quidquid recipitur, ad modum recipientis recipitur » (*De anima*, l. III, c. 4, lect. 8; cit. in S Th I, q. 79, a. 6c). In Living Flame B 3,34, saint John of the Cross attributes the maxim in a generic way "as the philosophers say". With the mystical doctor it assumes the value of an axiom which regards the human behaviour in front of God. God communicates himself to the beginners in a different way compared to the one used with the perfects. But this means that the human being needs to perceive the turning points in God's way of communicating himself and adapt himself to the new way God communicates himself.

spiritual blessings [bienes] **go** not from man to God,
but come **from God to man**.

With respect to this (if this were the proper place for it) we might here explain how **there are many persons** whose many tastes and affections and the operations of whose faculties are **fixed upon God or upon spiritual things**, and who may perhaps **think** that this is supernatural and spiritual, when it is perhaps **no more than the most human and natural desires and actions**.

They regard these good things **with the same disposition as they have for other things**, by means of a certain **natural facility** which they possess for directing their desires and faculties to anything whatever.

6. If perchance we find occasion elsewhere in this book, **we shall treat of this**, describing **certain signs** which indicate when the interior actions and motions of the soul, with respect to communion with God,

**are only natural,
when they are spiritual,
and when they are both natural and spiritual.**

It suffices for us here to know that, **in order that the interior motions and acts of the soul may come to be moved by God divinely**, they must first be **darkened** and **put to sleep** and **hushed to rest naturally** as touching **all their capacity and operation**, until they have no more strength.

7. Therefore, **O spiritual soul**, when thou seest thy desire obscured, thy affections arid and constrained, and thy faculties bereft of their capacity for any interior exercise, **be not afflicted** by this, but rather **consider it a great happiness**,

since God is **freeing thee from thyself** and **taking the matter from thy hands**. For **with those hands**, howsoever well they may serve thee, thou

porque **los bienes** no van del hombre a Dios,
sino **vienen de Dios al hombre**.

Acerca de lo cual, si éste fuera lugar de ello, pudiéramos aquí **declarar** cómo hay muchas personas que tienen muchos gustos y aficiones y operaciones de sus potencias acerca de Dios o de cosas espirituales, y por ventura pensarán ellos que aquello es sobrenatural y espiritual, y por ventura no son más que actos y apetitos más naturales y humanos,

que, como los tienen de las demás cosas, los tienen en el mismo temple de aquellas cosas buenas, por cierta facilidad natural que tienen en mover el apetito y potencias a cualquier cosa.

6. Si por ventura encontráremos ocasión en lo restante, lo trataremos, diciendo algunas señales de cuándo los movimientos y acciones interiores del alma

sean sólo naturales,
y cuándo sólo espirituales,
y cuándo espirituales y naturales acerca del trato con Dios.

Basta aquí saber que, **para que los actos y movimientos interiores del alma puedan venir a ser movidos por Dios divinamente**, primero han de ser oscurecidos y adormidos, aseogados **naturalmente acerca de toda su habilidad y operación** hasta que desfallezcan.

7. ¡Oh, pues, alma espiritual!, cuando vieres oscurecido tu apetito, tus aficiones secas y apretadas, e inhabilitadas tus toques para cualquier ejercicio interior, no te penes por eso, antes lo ten a buena dicha;

pues que te va **Dios librando de ti misma**, quitándote de las manos la hacienda; con las cuales, por bien que ellas te anduviesen, no obraras

wouldst never labour

so effectively,
so perfectly and
so securely

(because of their clumsiness and uncleanness) as **now**, when God takes thy hand and guides thee in the darkness, as though thou wert blind, to an end and **by a way which thou knowest not**.

Nor couldst thou ever hope to travel with the aid of **thine own eyes and feet**, howsoever good thou be as a walker.

8. The reason, again, why the soul not only travels **securely**, when it travels thus in the darkness, but also **achieves even greater gain and progress**, is that usually, when the soul is receiving fresh advantage and profit, this comes by **a way that it least understands**--indeed, it quite commonly believes that it is **losing ground**.

For, as it has never experienced this **newness feeling** which drives it forth and dazzles it and makes it **depart recklessly from its former way of life** [*su primer modo de proceder*], **it thinks itself to be losing ground** rather than **gaining and progressing**, since **it sees that it is losing with respect to that which it knew and enjoyed**, and is **going by a way** which it knows not and wherein it finds no enjoyment.

[Example]
[the Traveller]

It is like the traveller, who, in order **to go to new and unknown lands**, takes **new roads, unknown and untried**, and **journeys unguided** by his past experience, but doubtingly and according to what others say.

It is clear that such a man **could not reach new countries**, or add to his past experience, if he went not along **new and unknown roads** and **abandoned those which were known to him**.

tan cabal,
perfecta y
seguramente,

a causa de la impureza y torpeza de ellas, como ahora que, tomando Dios la mano tuya, te guía a oscuras como a ciego, **a donde y por donde tú no sabes**,

ni jamás con tus ojos y pies, por bien que anduvieran, atinaras a caminar.

8. La causa también por que el alma no sólo va segura, cuando va así a oscuras, sino aún se va más ganando y aprovechando, es porque, comúnmente, cuando **el alma va recibiendo mejoría de nuevo y aprovechando, es por donde ella menos entiende, antes muy de ordinario piensa que se va perdiendo**,

porque, como ella nunca ha experimentado aquella novedad que le hace salir y deslumbrar y desatinar de **su primer modo de proceder**, antes piensa que se va perdiendo que acertando y ganando, como ve que se pierde acerca de lo que sabía y gustaba, y se ve ir **por donde no sabe ni gusta**.

Así como el caminante que, para ir a nuevas tierras no sabidas, va por nuevos caminos no sabidos ni experimentados, que camina no guiado por lo que sabía antes, sino en duda y por el dicho de otros.

Y claro está que éste no podría venir a nuevas tierras, ni saber más de lo que antes sabía, si no fuera por caminos nuevos nunca sabidos, y dejados los que sabía;

[the Artisan]

Exactly so, one who is learning fresh details concerning any office or art **always proceeds in darkness**, and receives no guidance from his original knowledge, for if he **left** not that behind he would get no farther nor make any progress;

and in the same way, when the soul is making **most progress**, it is **travelling in darkness, knowing naught**.

Wherefore, since **God, as we have said, is the Master and Guide of this blind soul**, it may well and truly rejoice, once it has learned to understand this, and say: *'In darkness and secure.'*

9. There is another reason why the soul has walked **securely** in this darkness, and this is because it has been **suffering**; for **the road of suffering is more secure and even more profitable than that of fruition and action**:

first, because in suffering **the strength of God is added** to that of man, while in action and fruition the soul is practising [exercising] its own weaknesses and imperfections;

and **second**, because in suffering the soul continues to **practise and acquire the virtues** and become **purser, wiser and more cautious**.

10. But there is another and a more important reason why if the soul now walks **in darkness it is secure**;

this emanates from **the dark light or wisdom** aforementioned. For in such a way does this **dark night of contemplation absorb and immerse the soul in itself**, and **so near does it bring the soul to God**, that **it protects and delivers** it from **all that is not God**.

For this soul is now, as it were, **undergoing a cure**, in order that it may **regain its health** -- **its health being God Himself**. **His Majesty restricts** it to a diet and abstinence from **all things**, and **takes away** its appetite for them all.

It is **like a sick man**, who, if he is respected by those in his house, is carefully tended so that he may be cured; the air is not allowed to touch him, nor may he even enjoy the light, nor must he hear footsteps, nor yet

ni más ni menos, el que va sabiendo más particularidades en un oficio o arte siempre va a oscuras, no por su saber primero, porque, si aquél no dejase atrás, nunca saldría de él ni aprovecharía en más;

así, de la misma manera, cuando el alma va aprovechando más, va a oscuras y no sabiendo.

Por tanto, siendo, como habemos dicho, Dios el maestro y guía de este ciego del alma bien puede ella, ya que le ha venido a entender como aquí decimos, con verdad alegrarse y decir: **a oscuras y segura**.

9. Otra causa también por que en estas tinieblas ha ido el alma segura es porque iba padeciendo; porque **el camino de padecer es más seguro y aun más provechoso que el de gozar y hacer**:

lo uno, porque en el padecer se le añaden fuerzas de Dios, y en el hacer y gozar **ejercita** el alma sus flaquezas e imperfecciones;

y lo otro, porque en el padecer se van ejercitando y ganando las virtudes y purificando el alma y haciendo más sabia y cauta.

10. Pero aquí hay otra más principal causa por que aquí el alma a oscuras va segura,

y es de parte de la dicha luz o sabiduría oscura; porque de tal manera **la absorbe y embebe en sí** esta oscura noche de contemplación y **la pone tan cerca de Dios**, que la ampara y libra de **todo lo que no es Dios**.

Porque, como está puesta aquí en cura esta alma para que consiga su salud, que es el mismo Dios, tiénela Su Majestad en dieta y abstinencia de todas las cosas, estragado el apetito para todas ellas;

bien así como para que sane el enfermo, que en su casa es estimado, le tienen tan adentro guardado, que no le dejan tocar del aire ni aun gozar de la luz, ni que sienta las pisadas, ni aun el rumor de los de casa, y la comida

the noise of those in the house; and he is given **food** that is **very delicate**, and even that only in great moderation--food that is nourishing rather than delectable.

11. **All** these particularities (which are for the security and safekeeping of the soul) **are caused by this dark contemplation**, because **it brings the soul nearer to God**.

For **the nearer the soul approaches Him, the blacker is the darkness which it feels and the deeper is the obscurity which comes through its weakness**;

just as, the nearer a man approaches **the sun**, the greater are the darkness and the affliction caused him through the great splendour of the sun and through the weakness and impurity of his eyes.

In the same way, so immense is the spiritual light of God, and **so greatly** does it transcend our natural mind, that **the nearer** we approach it, **the more it blinds and darkens us**.

And this is the reason why, in Psalm 17(18):12⁴, David says that God made darkness *His hiding-place* and covering, and His tabernacle around Him dark water in the clouds of the air.[209]

This dark water in the clouds of the air **is dark contemplation and Divine wisdom** in **souls**, as we are saying.

They continue to feel it is a thing which is near Him, as the tabernacle wherein He dwells, when **God brings them ever nearer to Himself**.

And thus, **that which in God is supreme light and refulgence is to man blackest darkness**, as Saint Paul says [1 Cor 2:14] , according as David explains in the same Psalm, saying: *'Because of the brightness which is in His presence, passed clouds and cataracts'* [210 Ps 17(18):13] -- that is to say, over the natural mind, **the light whereof**, as Isaias says in Chapter 5:30: *Obtenebrata est in caligine ejus*.[211]⁵

12. Oh, **miserable is the fortune of our life**, which is lived in such great

muy delicada y muy por tasa, de sustancia más que de sabor.

11. Todas estas propiedades, que todas son de seguridad y guarda del alma, causa en ella esta oscura contemplación, porque ella está puesta más cerca de Dios;

porque, cuanto el alma más a él se acerca, más oscuras tinieblas siente y más profunda oscuridad por su flaqueza;

así como el que más cerca del sol llegase, más tinieblas y pena le causaría su grande resplandor por la flaqueza e impureza de su ojo.

De donde tan inmensa es la luz espiritual de Dios, y tanto excede al entendimiento natural, que, cuando llega más cerca, le ciega y oscurece.

Y ésta es la causa por que en el salmo 17 (v. 12) dice David que puso Dios por su escondrijo y cubierta las tinieblas, y su tabernáculo en rededor de sí, tenebrosa agua en las nubes del aire.

La cual agua tenebrosa en las nubes del aire es **la oscura contemplación y sabiduría divina en las almas**, como vamos diciendo;

la cual ellas van sintiendo como cosa que está cerca de él, como tabernáculo donde él mora, cuando Dios a sí la va más juntando.

Y así, lo que en Dios es luz y claridad más alta, es para el hombre tiniebla más oscura, como dice san Pablo (1 Cor. 2, 14) según lo declara luego David en el mismo salmo (17, 13), diciendo: Por causa del resplandor que está en su presencia, salieron nubes y cataratas, conviene a saber, para el entendimiento natural, cuya luz, como dice Isaias en el capítulo 5 (v. 30), *obtenebrata est in caligine eius*.

12. ¡Oh mísera suerte de vida, donde con tanto peligro se vive y **con tanta**

⁴ "He made darkness his hiding place, his canopy surrounding him was dark waters and thick clouds."

⁵ "And it will roar against it on that day like the roaring of the sea. If one looks across to the land, behold, there is darkness and distress; **Even the light is darkened by its clouds.**"

peril and wherein it is so difficult to find [know] the truth. For **that which is most clear and true is to us most dark and doubtful**; wherefore, though it is the thing that is most needful for us, we flee from it.

And that which gives the greatest light and satisfaction to [llena] **our eyes** we embrace and pursue, though it be **the worst thing for us**, and **make us fall at every step**.

In what peril and fear does man live, since the very natural light of his eyes by which he has to guide himself is the first light that dazzles him and leads him astray on his road to God!

And **if he is to know with certainty by what road he travels, he must perforce keep his eyes closed and walk in darkness**, that **he may be secure from the enemies** who inhabit his own house -- that is, **his senses and faculties**.

13. **Well hidden**, then, and **well protected** is the soul in these dark waters, **when it is close to God**.

For, as these waters serve as **a tabernacle and dwelling-place for God Himself**, they will serve the soul in the same way and for a **perfect protection and security**, though it remain in darkness, wherein, as we have said, it is hidden and protected **from itself**, and from **all evils that come from creatures**;

for to such the words of David refer in another Psalm, where he says: *'Thou shalt hide them in the hiding-place of Thy face from the disturbance of men; Thou shalt protect them in Thy tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues.* [(Ps 30:21) 212]

Herein we understand **all kinds of protection**;

for **to be hidden in the face of God from the disturbance of men is to be fortified with [in] this dark contemplation against all the chances**

dificultad la verdad se conoce, pues lo más claro y verdadero nos es más oscuro y dudoso, y por eso huimos de ello siendo lo que más nos conviene,

¡Y lo que más luce y llena nuestro ojo lo abrazamos y vamos tras de ello, siendo lo que peor nos está y lo que a cada paso nos hace dar de ojos!

¡En cuánto peligro y temor vive el hombre, pues la misma lumbre de sus ojos natural, con que se ha de guiar, es la primera que le encandila y engaña para ir a Dios,

y, que si ha de acertar a ver por dónde va, **tenga necesidad de llevar cerrados los ojos y de ir a oscuras** para ir **seguro** de los enemigos domésticos de su casa, que son sus sentidos y potencias!

13. Bien está, pues, el alma aquí **escondida y amparada** en esta agua tenebrosa, que está cerca de Dios.

Porque, así como **al mismo Dios** sirve de **tabernáculo y morada, le servirá**, ni más ni menos, al alma de otro tanto y de amparo perfecto y seguridad, aunque a ella en tinieblas, en que está escondida y amparada de sí misma y de todos los daños de criaturas, como habemos dicho.

Porque de los tales se entiende lo que también David dice en otro salmo (30, 21), diciendo: *Esconderlos has en el escondrijo de tu rostro de la turbación de los hombres; ampararlos has en tu tabernáculo de la contradicción de las lenguas,*

en lo cual se entiende toda manera de amparo.

Porque estar escondidos en el rostro de Dios de la turbación de los hombres es estar fortalecidos en esta oscura contemplación contra todas las

which may come upon the soul from men.

And “*to be protected in His tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues*” is for the soul to be engulfed in these dark waters, which are **the tabernacle of David** whereof we have spoken.

Wherefore, since the soul has **all its desires and affections weaned** and its **faculties set in darkness**, it is free from all imperfections which contradict the spirit, whether they come from its **own flesh** or from **other creatures**. Wherefore this soul may well say that it journeys *‘in darkness and secure.’*

14. There is likewise another reason, which is no less effectual than the last, by which we may understand **how** the soul journeys *securely in darkness*;

it is derived from **the fortitude** by which the soul is at once inspired in these obscure and afflictive dark waters of God.

For after all, though the waters be dark, they are none the less waters, and therefore they cannot but **refresh and fortify the soul** in that which is most needful for it, although in darkness and with affliction.

For the soul immediately perceives in itself **a genuine determination and an effectual desire** to do naught which it understands to be an offence to God, and to omit to do naught that seems to be for His service.

For that **dark love** cleaves to the soul, causing it a **most watchful care** and an **inward solicitude**⁶ concerning **that which it must do, or must not do**, for His sake, in order to **please Him**.

It will consider and ask itself a **thousand times** if it has given Him cause to be offended [enojarle];

and all this it will do with **much greater care and solicitude** than before, as has already been said with respect to the yearnings of love.

For here **all** the desires and energies and faculties of the soul **are recollected from all things else**, and its effort and strength are employed [only] in pleasing its God **alone**.

After this manner the soul **goes forth from itself and from all created things** to the sweet and delectable union of love of God,

ocasiones que de parte de los hombres les pueden sobrevenir.

Y “*estar amparados en su tabernáculo de la contradicción de las lenguas*” es estar el alma engolfada en esta agua tenebrosa, que es **el tabernáculo** que hemos dicho de David.

Donde, por tener el alma todos los apetitos y afecciones **destetados** y las potencias **oscurecidas**, está libre de todas las imperfecciones que contradicen al espíritu, así de su misma carne como de las demás criaturas. De donde esta alma bien puede decir que *va a oscuras y segura*.

14. Hay también otra causa no menos eficaz que la pasada para acabar bien de entender que esta tal alma *va segura a oscuras*,

y es por **la fortaleza** que esta oscura, penosa y tenebrosa agua de Dios desde luego pone en el alma.

Que, en fin, aunque es tenebrosa, es agua, y por eso no ha de dejar de **reficcionar y fortalecer** al alma en lo que más le conviene, aunque a oscuras y penosamente.

Porque, desde luego, ve el alma en sí **una verdadera determinación y eficacia** de no hacer cosa que entienda ser ofensa de Dios, ni dejar de hacer lo que parece cosa de su servicio;

porque aquel **amor oscuro** se le pega con un muy vigilante cuidado y solicitud interior de qué hará o dejará por él para **contentarle**,

mirando y dando mil vueltas si ha sido causa de enojarle;

y todo esto con **mucho más cuidado y solicitud** que antes, como arriba queda dicho en lo de las ansias de amor.

Porque aquí todos los apetitos y fuerzas y potencias del alma están recogidas **de todas las demás cosas**, empleando su conato y fuerza sólo en obsequio de su Dios.

De esta manera **sale** el alma **de sí misma y de todas las cosas criadas** a la dulce y deleitosa unión de amor de Dios,

⁶ This *inward solicitude* is considered to be a fourth sign of the new contemplation.

*'In darkness and secure.'
By the secret ladder, disguised.*

CHAPTER 17

[very important chapter on the nature of Contemplation]

*Explains how this dark contemplation is **secret**.*

1. THREE things [propiedades] have to be expounded with reference to three words contained in this present line. Two (namely, '*secret*' and '*ladder*') belong to the **dark night of contemplation** of which we are treating; the third (namely, '*disguised*') belongs to the soul by reason of **the manner wherein it conducts itself** in this night.

As to the first, it must be known that in this line the soul describes this **dark contemplation**, by which it goes forth to the union of love, as a *secret ladder*, because of the **two properties** which belong to it--namely, its being *secret* and its being a *ladder*. We shall treat of each separately.

[secret=in the spirit]

2. **First**, it describes this dark contemplation as '*secret*,' since, as we have indicated above, it is **mystical theology**, which theologians call **secret wisdom**, and which, as Saint Thomas says is **communicated and infused into the soul** [spirit] **through love**.^[213]⁷ **This happens secretly and in darkness, so as to be hidden from the work of [conscious] the mind and of**

*a oscuras y segura,
por la secreta escala disfrazada.*

CAPITULO 17

*Pónese el segundo verso y explicase cómo esta oscura contemplación sea **secreta**.*

1. Tres propiedades conviene declarar acerca de tres vocablos que contiene el presente verso. Las dos, conviene a saber, *secreta escala*, pertenecen a **la noche oscura de contemplación** que vamos tratando; la tercera, conviene a saber, *disfrazada*, pertenece al alma por razón del **modo** que lleva en esta noche.

Cuanto a lo primero, es de saber que el alma llama aquí en este verso a esta oscura contemplación por donde ella va saliendo a la unión de amor, secreta escala por estas dos propiedades que hay en ella, es a saber, ser secreta y ser escala, y diremos de cada una de por sí.

2. **Primeramente** llama *secreta* a esta contemplación tenebrosa, por cuanto, según habemos tocado arriba, ésta es la **teología mística**, que llaman los teólogos **sabiduría secreta**, la cual dice **Santo Tomás** que se comunica e infunde en el alma por amor, lo cual acaece **secretamente a oscuras de la obra del entendimiento y de las demás potencias**.

⁷ 'Propter hoc Gregorius (Hom. 14 in Ezech.) constituit vitam contemplativam in charitate Dei.' Cf. Summa Theologica, 2a, 2ae, q. 45, a. 2. "Now this sympathy (*compassio*) or connaturality for Divine things is the result of charity, which unites us to God, according to 1 Corinthians 6:17: "He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit." Consequently **wisdom which is a gift, has its cause in the will, which cause is charity**, but it has its essence in the intellect, whose act is to judge aright, as stated above (I-II:14:1)." See also: Ia, Q.1, a.6, in c; II-IIae, Q. 97, a.2 ad 2m, Q. 162, ad 3, ad 1m, Q. 180, a.1.

other faculties. Wherefore, inasmuch as the faculties aforementioned attain not to it, but **the Holy Spirit infuses and orders it in the soul**, as says the Bride in the Songs, **without either its knowledge or its understanding**, it is called *secret*.

And, in truth, not only does the soul not understand it, but **there is none that does so, not even the devil**; inasmuch as the Master Who teaches the soul is within it **in its substance**, **to which the devil may not attain**, neither may natural sense nor the mind.

3. And it is not for this reason **alone** that it may be called *secret*, but likewise because of **the effects which it produces in the soul**.

For it is *secret* not only in the darkneses and afflictions of purgation, when this wisdom of love purges the soul, and the soul is unable to speak of it, but equally so **afterwards in illumination**, when this wisdom is communicated to it **most clearly**.

Even then **it is still so secret** that the soul cannot speak of it and give it a name whereby it may be called; for, apart from the fact that the soul **has no desire to speak of it**, it can find **no suitable way or manner or similitude** by which it may be able to describe **such lofty understanding and such delicate spiritual feeling**.

And thus, even though the soul might have a **great desire to express it** and might find many ways in which to describe it, **it would still be secret and remain undescribed**.

For, as that inward wisdom is **so simple, so general and so spiritual** that it **has not entered into the [conscious] mind** enwrapped or cloaked in any form or image subject to sense, it follows that **sense and imagination** (as it has not entered through them nor has taken their form and colour) **cannot account for it or imagine it**, so as to say anything concerning it, although the soul be **clearly aware** that it is **experiencing and partaking** [entiende y gusta] of that rare and delectable wisdom.

It is like one who sees **something never seen before**, whereof he has not even seen the like;

De donde, por cuanto las dichas potencias **no la alcanzan**, sino que **el Espíritu Santo la infunde y ordena en el alma**, como dice la Esposa en los Cantares (2,4) **sin ella saberlo, ni entenderlo cómo sea**, se llama secreta.

Y, a la verdad, no sólo ella no lo entiende, **pero nadie, ni el mismo demonio**; por cuanto el Maestro que la enseña está dentro del alma sustancialmente, **donde no puede llegar el demonio**, ni el sentido natural, ni el entendimiento.

3. Y no sólo por esto se puede llamar secreta, sino también por **los efectos que hace en el alma**.

Porque no solamente en las tinieblas y aprietos de la purgación, cuando esta sabiduría de amor purga el alma, **es secreta**, para no saber decir de ella el alma nada; mas **también después en la iluminación**, cuando más a las claras se le comunica esta sabiduría,

le es al alma **tan secreta** para decir y ponerle nombre para decirla, que, demás de que ninguna gana le dé al alma de decirla, no halla modo ni manera ni símil que le cuadre para poder significar **inteligencia tan subida y sentimiento espiritual tan delicado**.

Y así, aunque más gana tuviese de decirlo, y más significaciones trajese, siempre se quedaría secreto y por decir.

Porque, como aquella sabiduría interior es **tan sencilla y tan general y espiritual**, que **no entró al entendimiento envuelta ni paliada con alguna especie o imagen sujeta al sentido**, de aquí es que **el sentido e imaginativa**, como no entró por ellas ni sintieron su traje y color, no saben dar razón ni imaginarla para decir algo de ella, aunque claramente ve que entiende y gusta aquella sabrosa y peregrina sabiduría.

Bien así como el que viese una cosa nunca vista, cuyo semejante tampoco jamás vio,

although he might understand [~~its nature~~] and have experience of it [gustase], he would be unable to give it a name, or say what it is, however much he tried to do so, and this in spite of its being a thing which he had perceived with the senses.

How much less, then, could he describe **a thing that has not entered through the senses!** For **the language of God**⁸ has this characteristic that, since it is **very intimate and spiritual** in its relations with the soul, it **transcends every sense** and at once makes all harmony and capacity of the outward and inward senses to cease and be dumb.

4. For this we have both **authorities** and **examples** in the Divine Scripture. For the incapacity of man to speak of it and describe it in words was shown by Jeremias,[214 (Jer 1:6)] when, after God had spoken with him, he knew not what to say, save '*Ah, ah, ah!*' This **interior incapacity** -- that is, of the interior sense of the imagination --

and also that of the exterior sense corresponding to it was also demonstrated in the case of **Moses**, when he stood before God in the bush:[215 (Ex 4:10)] not only did he say to God that after speaking with Him he knew not neither was able to speak, but also that not even (as is said in the Acts of the Apostles)[216 (Acts 7:32)] with the interior imagination did he dare to meditate, for it seemed to him that his imagination was very far away and was too dumb, not only to express any part of that which he understood concerning God, but even to have the capacity to receive aught therefrom.

Wherefore, inasmuch as **the wisdom of this contemplation is the language of God to the soul, addressed by pure spirit to pure spirit, naught** that is less than spirit, such as the senses, **can perceive it**, and thus to them it is **secret**, and they know it not, neither can they say it,[217]⁹ nor do they desire to do so, because **they see it not**.

que, aunque la entendiese y gustase, no le sabría poner nombre ni decir lo que es, aunque más hiciese, y esto con ser cosa que la percibió con los sentidos;

cuánto menos se podrá manifestar lo que **no entró por ellos**. Porque esto tiene **el lenguaje de Dios**, que por ser **muy íntimo** al alma y **espiritual**, en que **excede todo sentido**, luego hace cesar y enmudecer toda la armonía y habilidad de los sentidos exteriores e interiores.

4. De lo cual tenemos autoridad y ejemplos juntamente en la divina Escritura. Porque la cortedad del manifestarlo y hablarlo exteriormente mostró Jeremías (1, 6), cuando, habiendo Dios hablado con él, no supo qué decir, sino: a, a, a. Y la cortedad interior, esto es, del sentido interior de la imaginación,

y juntamente la del exterior acerca de esto, también la manifestó Moisés delante de Dios en la zarza (Ex. 4, 10), cuando, no solamente dijo a Dios que después que hablaba con él, **no sabía ni acertaba a hablar**, pero aun, según se dice en los Actos de los Apóstoles (7, 32), con la imaginación interior no se atrevía a considerar, pareciéndole que la imaginación estaba muy lejos y muda, no sólo para formar algo de aquello que entendía en Dios, pero ni aun capacidad para recibir algo de ello.

De donde, por cuanto la sabiduría de esta contemplación es lenguaje de Dios al alma de puro espíritu a espíritu puro, **todo lo que es menos que espíritu**, como son los sentidos, **no lo reciben**, y así les es secreto y no lo saben ni pueden decir, ni tienen gana porque no ven cómo.

⁸ "The Father uttered one Word; that Word is His Son: and he utters Him for ever in everlasting silence, and in silence the soul has to hear it." Maximes 147 (21) / Sayings n°100: "The Father spoke one Word, which was His Son, and this Word He always speaks in eternal silence, and in silence must It be heard by the soul." Also Ascent II,22,3: "For, in giving us, as He did, His Son, which is His Word -- and He has no other -- He spake to us all together, once and for all, in this single Word, and He has no occasion to speak further." And: "in the other there is communicated to it all the wisdom of God in general, which is the Son of God, Who communicates Himself to the soul in faith." (Ascent II,29,6)

⁹ Or: 'and they know not how to say it nor are able to do so.'

5. We may deduce from this the reason why certain persons -- good and fearful souls -- who walk along this road and would like to **give an account of their spiritual state to their director**,^[218] are **neither able to do so nor know how**.

For the reason we have described, they have a **great repugnance in speaking of it**, especially **when their contemplation is of the purer [simple] sort**, so that **the soul itself is hardly conscious [siente] of it**.

Such a person is only able to say that he is satisfied, tranquil and contented and that he feels God [sienten a Dios], and that, as it seems to him, all is going well with him;

but he cannot describe the state of his soul, nor can he say anything about it save in general terms like these.

It is a different matter when the **experiences [que tiene] of the soul are of a particular kind**, such as **visions, feelings, etc.**, which, being ordinarily **received under some species** wherein **sense participates**, can be **described under that species**, or by some other similitude. But this capacity for being described **is not in the nature of pure contemplation**, which is **indescribable**, as we have said, for the which reason it is called *secret*.

6. And not only for that reason is it called *secret*, and is so, but likewise because this **mystical knowledge [wisdom] has the property of hiding the soul within itself** (i.e. the knowledge).

For, besides performing its ordinary function, it sometimes **absorbs the soul and engulfs it in its secret abyss**, in such a way that **the soul clearly sees that it has been carried far away from every creature** and has become most remote therefrom¹⁰;

so that it considers itself as **having been placed in a most profound and vast retreat [solitude¹¹]**, to which **no human creature can attain**, such as an **immense desert**, which nowhere has any boundary, a desert the more

5. De donde podríamos sacar la causa por que algunas personas que van por este camino, que, por tener almas buenas y temerosas, querrían dar cuenta a quien las rige de lo que tienen, no saben ni pueden.

De aquí tienen en decirlo grande repugnancia, mayormente cuando la contemplación es algo más sencilla, que la misma alma apenas la siente;

que sólo saben decir que el alma está satisfecha y quieta y contenta, o decir que sienten a Dios y que les va bien, a su parecer;

mas no hay decir lo que el alma tiene ni la sacarán más que términos generales semejantes a éstos.

Otra cosa es cuando **las cosas que el alma tiene son particulares**, como **visiones, sentimientos**, etc., las cuales, como ordinariamente se reciben debajo de alguna **especie** en que participa **el sentido**, que entonces debajo de aquella especie se puede, o de otra semejanza, decir. Pero este poderlo decir ya no es en razón de **pura contemplación**, porque ésta es indecible, como habemos dicho, y por eso se llama *secreta*.

6. Y no sólo por eso se llama y es *secreta*, sino porque también esta **sabiduría mística** tiene propiedad de esconder al alma en sí.

Porque, demás de lo ordinario, algunas veces de tal manera **absorbe al alma y sume en su abismo secreto**, que el alma echa de ver claro que está **puesta alejadísima y remotísima de toda criatura**;

de suerte que le parece que **la colocan en una profundísima y anchísima soledad, donde no puede llegar alguna humana criatura**, como un **inmenso desierto** que por ninguna parte tiene fin, tanto más deleitoso,

¹⁰ Lit., 'that is set most far away and most remote from every creatures.'

¹¹ The notion of solitude is unique. SC Stanza 35: "In solitude she lived, / And in solitude built her nest; / And in solitude, alone /Has the Beloved guided her, /In solitude also wounded with love."

delectable, pleasant and lovely **for its seereey [mas profundo]**, vastness and **solitude**, wherein, the more the soul is **raised up above all** temporal creatures, the more **deeply** does it find itself hidden [tan secreta].

And so greatly does this abyss of wisdom raise up and exalt the soul at this time, **making it to penetrate the veins of the science of love**, that it not only shows it **how base are all properties of the creatures** by comparison with **this supreme knowledge and Divine feeling** [sentir], but likewise it learns how **base and defective, and, in some measure, how inapt**, are all the terms and words which are used in this life to treat of Divine things, and how **impossible** it is, in any natural way or manner, however learnedly and sublimely they may be spoken of, to be able to **know and perceive** [sentir] them as they are, save by the illumination of this **mystical theology**.

And thus, when by means of this illumination the soul discerns this **truth**, namely, that it cannot reach it, still less explain it, by common or human language, it rightly calls it *secreta*.

7. This property of *secrecy* and being above the natural capacity, which belongs to this **Divine contemplation**, belongs to it, not only because it is **supernatural**, but also inasmuch as it is a **road that guides and leads** the soul **to the perfections of union with God**;

which, as they are things unknown after a human manner, must be **approached, after a human manner** [humanly], **by unknowing and by Divine ignorance** [not knowing and divinely ignoring].

For, **speaking mystically**, as we are speaking here, **Divine things and perfections** are known and understood **as they are**, not when they are being sought after and practised [ejercitando], but **when they have been found and practised** [experienced].

To this purpose speaks the prophet Baruch concerning this **Divine wisdom**: *'There is none that can know her ways nor that can imagine her paths.'* [220 (Baruch 3:31)]

Likewise the royal Prophet speaks in this manner concerning this **road of the soul**, when he says to God: *'Thy lightnings lighted and illumined the*

sabroso y amoroso, **cuanto más profundo, ancho y solo**, donde el alma se ve **tan secreta** cuando se ve **sobre toda temporal criatura levantada**.

Y tanto levanta entonces y engrandece este abismo de sabiduría al alma, **metiéndola en las venas de la ciencia de amor**, que le hace conocer no solamente quedar **muy baja toda condición de criatura** acerca de este **supremo saber y sentir divino**, sino también echar de ver **cuán bajos y cortos y en alguna manera impropios** son todos los términos y vocablos con que en esta vida se trata de las cosas divinas, y cómo es **imposible**, por vía y modo natural, aunque más alta y sabiamente se hable en ellas, poder **conocer ni sentir** de ellas como ellas son, sin la iluminación de esta **mística teología**.

Y así, viendo el alma en la iluminación de ella esta verdad, de que no se puede **alcanzar** y menos **declarar** por términos vulgares y humanos, con razón la llama *secreta*.

7. Esta propiedad de ser *secreta* y sobre la capacidad natural esta **divina contemplación**, tiénela no sólo por ser cosa **sobrenatural**, sino también es cuanto es **vía** que **guía** y **lleva** al alma a las perfecciones de la unión de Dios;

las cuales, como son cosas no sabidas **humanamente**, hase de caminar a ellas **humanamente** no sabiendo y divinamente ignorando.

Porque, **hablando místicamente**, como aquí vamos hablando, las cosas y perfecciones divinas no se conocen ni entienden **como ellas son** cuando las van buscando y ejercitando, sino **cuando las tiene halladas y ejercitadas**.

Porque a este propósito dice el profeta Baruc (3,31) de esta **Sabiduría divina**: *No hay quien pueda saber, dice, sus vías, ni quien pueda pensar sus sendas.*

También el profeta real de este **camino del alma** dice de esta manera, hablando con Dios: *Y tus ilustraciones lucieron y alumbraron a la*

round earth; the earth was moved and trembled. Thy way is in the sea and Thy paths are in many waters; and Thy footsteps shall not be known. [221 (Ps 76:19-20)]

8. All this, **speaking spiritually**, is to be understood **in the sense wherein we are speaking**.

For the *illumination of the round earth*[222] by the *lightnings* of God is the enlightenment which is produced by this **Divine contemplation in the faculties of the soul**;

the *moving and trembling of the earth* is the painful purgation which is caused therein;

and to say that *the way and the road of God* whereby the soul journeys to Him **is in the sea**, and *His footprints are in many waters* and for this reason shall not be known, is as much as to say that **this road whereby the soul journeys to God is as secret and as hidden from the sense of the soul** as the way of one that walks on the sea, whose paths and footprints are not known, is hidden from the sense of the body.

The steps and footprints **which God is imprinting upon the souls** that He desires to **bring near to Himself**, and to make **great in union with His Wisdom**, **have also this property, that they are not known**.

Wherefore in the Book of Job mention is made of this matter, in these words: *'Hast thou perchance known the paths of the great clouds or the perfect knowledges?'* [223 (Job 37:16)]

By this are understood the ways and roads whereby God continually exalts souls and perfects them in His Wisdom, which **souls** are here understood by the **clouds**.

It follows, then, that **this contemplation** which **is guiding the soul** to God is **secret wisdom**.

CHAPTER 18

Explains how this secret wisdom is likewise a ladder.

redondez de la tierra, conmovióse y contremió la tierra. En el mar está tu vía, y tus sendas en muchas aguas, y tus pisadas no serán conocidas (Sal.76,19-20).

8. Todo lo cual, hablando espiritualmente, se entiende al propósito que vamos hablando.

Porque *alumbrar* las coruscaciones de Dios a *la redondez de la tierra* es a ilustración que hace esta divina contemplación en las potencias del alma;

y "*conmoverse y tremar la tierra*" es la purgación penosa que en ella causa;

y decir que "*la vía y camino de Dios*", por donde el alma va a él, es "**en el mar**", y sus "*pisadas*" "*en muchas aguas*" y que por eso "*no serán conocidas*" es decir que este camino de ir a Dios es **tan secreto y oculto** para el sentido del alma como lo es para el del cuerpo el que se lleva por la mar, cuyas sendas y pisadas no se conocen.

Que esta propiedad tienen los pasos y pisadas que Dios va dando en las almas que Dios quiere llegar a sí, haciéndolas grandes en la unión de su Sabiduría, que no se conocen.

Por lo cual, en el libro de Job (37,16) se dicen, encareciendo este negocio, estas palabras: *¿Por ventura, dice, has tú conocido las sendas de las nubes grandes o las perfectas ciencias?;*

entendiendo por esto las vías y caminos por donde Dios va engrandeciendo a **las almas** y perfeccionándolas en su sabiduría, las cuales son aquí entendidas por **las nubes**.

Queda, pues, que esta contemplación, que va guiando al alma a Dios, es sabiduría secreta.

CAPITULO 18

Declárase como esta sabiduría secreta sea también escala.

1. IT now remains to consider the second point--namely, how this **secret wisdom** is likewise **a ladder**. With respect to this it must be known that we can call this secret contemplation **a ladder for many reasons**.

In the **first** place, because, just as men mount by means of ladders and climb up to possessions and treasures and things that are **in strong places**, even so also, by means of this **secret contemplation**, **without knowing how**, the soul **ascends and climbs** up to a knowledge and **possession** of[224] the good things and treasures of Heaven.

This is well expressed by the royal prophet David, when he says: *'Blessed is he that hath Thy favour and help, for such a man hath placed in his heart ascensions into the vale of tears in the place which he hath appointed; for after this manner the Lord of the law shall give blessing, and they shall go from virtue to virtue as from step to step, and the God of gods shall be seen in Sion.'*[225 (Psalm 83:6-8)] This God is the treasure of the strong place of Sion, which is happiness.

2. We may **also** call it a *ladder* because, even as the ladder has those same steps in order that men may mount, it has them also that they may descend; even so is it likewise with this **secret contemplation**, for those same communications which it causes in the soul **raise it up to God**, yet **humble it with respect to itself**.

For communications which are indeed of God **have this property**, that they **humble the soul** and **at the same time exalt it**. For, upon this road, **to go down is to go up**, and **to go up, to go down**, for he that humbles himself is exalted and he that exalts himself is humbled. [226 (Lk 14:11)]

And besides the fact that **the virtue of humility**¹² **is greatness**, for the exercise of the soul therein, God is wont to make it **mount by this ladder**

1. Pero resta ahora ver lo segundo, conviene saber, cómo esta sabiduría secreta sea también escala. Acerca de lo cual es de saber que por muchas razones podemos llamar a esta secreta contemplación escala.

Primeramente, porque así como con la escala se sube y escalan los bienes y tesoros y cosas que hay **en las fortalezas**, así también por esta **secreta contemplación**, **sin saberse cómo**, sube el alma a escalar, conocer y poseer los bienes y tesoros del cielo.

Lo cual da bien a entender el real profeta (Sal. 83,6-8), cuando dice: *Bienaventurado el que tiene tu favor y ayuda, porque en su corazón este tal puso sus subidas en el valle de lágrimas en el lugar que puso; porque de esta manera el señor de la ley dará bendición, e irán de virtud en virtud como de grado en grado, y será visto el Dios de los dioses en Sión*, el cual es el tesoro de la fortaleza de Sión, que es la bienaventuranza.

2. Podemos también llamarla escala porque, así como la escala, esos mismos pasos que tiene para **subir**, los tiene también para **bajar**, así también esta **secreta contemplación**, esas mismas comunicaciones que hace al alma, que **la levanta en Dios**, **la humillan en sí misma**.

Porque las comunicaciones que verdaderamente son de Dios esta propiedad tienen: que de una vez levantan y humillan al alma; porque en este camino el bajar es subir, y el subir, bajar, pues el que se humilla es ensalzado, y el que se ensalza, humillado (Lc. 14, 11).

Y, demás de esto de que **la virtud de la humildad es grandeza**, para ejercitar al alma en ella, suele Dios **hacerla subir por esta escala para**

¹² Re. God's humility : SCB Stanza 27 : "1 GOD communicates Himself to the soul in this interior union with a love so intense that the love of a mother, who so tenderly caresses her child, the love of a brother, or the affection of a friend bear no likeness to it, for so great is the tenderness, and so deep is the love with which the Infinite Father comforts and exalts

so that **it may descend**, and to make it descend so that **it may mount**, that the words of the Wise Man may thus be fulfilled, namely: *'Before the soul is exalted, it is humbled; and before it is humbled, it is exalted.'*[227 (Proverbs 18:12)]

3. Speaking now **in a natural way**, the soul that desires to consider it will be able to see how **on this road** (we leave apart the spiritual aspect, of which the soul is ~~not conscious~~ [no se siente]) **it has to suffer many ups and downs**, and how **the prosperity** which it enjoys is followed immediately by certain **storms and trials**;

so much so, that it appears to have been given that period of calm **in order that it might be forewarned and strengthened** against the poverty which has followed;

just as after misery and torment there come abundance and calm.

It seems to the soul as if, before celebrating that festival, it has first been made to keep that vigil. **This is the ordinary course and proceeding of the state of contemplation** until the soul arrives at **the state of quietness**; it never remains in the same state for long together, but is ascending and descending continually.

4. The reason for this is that, as **the state of perfection**, which consists in the **perfect love of God and contempt for self**, cannot exist unless it have these **two parts**, which are **the knowledge of God and of oneself**, the soul has of necessity to be practised first in the one and then in the other, now

que baje, y hacerla bajar **para que suba**, para que así se cumpla lo que dice el Sabio (Pv. 18, 12), es a saber: *Antes que el alma sea ensalzada, es humillado; y antes que sea humillada, es ensalzada.*

3. Lo cual, hablando **ahora naturalmente**, echará bien de ver el alma que quisiere mirar en ello, y cómo en este camino (dejando aparte lo espiritual que no se siente) echará de ver cuántos altos y bajos padece, y cómo tras la prosperidad que goza, luego se sigue alguna tempestad y trabajo,

tanto, que parece que le dieron aquella bonanza **para prevenirla y esforzarla** para la siguiente penuria,

y cómo también, después de la miseria y tormenta, se sigue abundancia y bonanza;

de manera que le parece al alma que, para hacerla aquella fiesta, la pusieron primero en aquella vigilia. Y éste es el ordinario estilo y ejercicio del estado de contemplación hasta llegar al **estado quieto**: que nunca permanece en un estado, sino todo es subir y bajar.

4. Y la causa de esto es que, como el estado de perfección, que consiste en perfecto amor de Dios y desprecio de sí, no puede estar sino con estas dos partes, que es conocimiento de Dios y de sí mismo, de necesidad ha de ser el alma ejercitada primero en el uno y en el otro, dándole ahora a gustar lo

the humble and loving soul. O wonders worthy of all awe and reverence! He humbles Himself in reality before that soul that He may exalt it, as if He were its servant, and the soul His lord. He is as anxious to comfort it as if He were a slave, and the soul God. So great is the humility and tenderness of God. In this communion of love He renders in a certain way those services to the soul which He says in the Gospel He will perform for the elect in heaven. "Amen, I say to you, that He will gird Himself and make them sit down to meat, and passing will minister to them."

2. This very service He renders now to the soul, comforting and cherishing it, as a mother her child whom she nurtures in her bosom. And the soul recognizes herein the truth of the words of Isaiah, "You shall be carried at the breasts, and upon the knees they shall caress you." What must the feelings of the soul be amid these sovereign graces? How it will melt away in love, beholding the bosom of God opened for it with such overflowing love. When the soul perceives itself in the midst of these delights, it surrenders itself wholly to God, gives to Him the breasts of its own will and love, and under the influence thereof addresses the Beloved in the words of the bride in the Canticle, saying: "I to my Beloved, and His turning is towards me. Come, my Beloved, let us go forth into the field, let us abide in the villages. Let us rise early to the vineyards, let us see if the vineyard flourish, if the flowers are ready to bring forth fruits, if the pomegranates flourish; there will I give You my breasts" —that is, "I will employ all the joy and strength of my will in the service of Your love."

being given to taste of the one--that is, exaltation--and now being made to experience the other--that is, humiliation--until it has **acquired perfect habits**; and then this ascending and descending **will cease**, since the soul will have **attained to God and become united with Him**, which comes to pass at **the summit of this ladder**, for **the ladder rests and leans upon Him**.

For this **ladder of contemplation**, which, as we have said, comes down from God, is **prefigured** by that ladder which Jacob saw as he slept, whereon angels were **ascending and descending**, from God to man, and from man to God, Who Himself was leaning upon the end of the ladder.[228 (Gn 28:12)]

All this, says Divine Scripture, took place **by night**, when Jacob slept, in order to express **how secret is this road and ascent to God**, and how different from that of man's knowledge.

This is very evident, since ordinarily that which is of the greatest profit in it -- namely, to **be ever losing oneself** and ~~becoming as nothing~~ **[anihilating oneself]** -- is considered the worst thing possible; and that which is of least worth, which is for a soul to find consolation and sweetness (wherein it ordinarily **loses rather than gains**), is considered best.

5. But, **speaking now somewhat more substantially and properly** of this ladder of **secret contemplation**, we shall observe that the **principal** characteristic of contemplation, on account of which it is here called a *ladder*, is that **it is the science of love**.

This, as we have said (see DN II,17,2), is **an infused and loving knowledge of God**, which enlightens the soul **and at the same time** enkindles it with love, until it is raised up step by step, even unto God its Creator.

For **it is love alone that unites and joins the soul with God**.

To the end that this may be seen more clearly, we shall here indicate **the steps** of this Divine ladder **one by one**, pointing out briefly **the marks and effects** of each, so that the soul **may conjecture** hereby **on which of them** it is standing.

We shall therefore distinguish them by **their effects**, as do Saint Bernard

uno engrandeciéndola, y haciéndola ahora probar lo otro y humillándola, hasta que, **adquiridos los hábitos perfectos**, cese ya el subir y bajar, habiendo ya llegado y viéndose con Dios, que está en el fin de esta escala, en quien la escala se arrima y estriba.

Porque esta **escala de contemplación**, que, como habemos dicho, se deriva de Dios, es figurada por aquella escala que vio Jacob durmiendo, por la cual subían y descendían ángeles de Dios al hombre y del hombre a Dios, el cual estaba estribando en el extremo de la escala (Gn. 28, 12).

Todo lo cual dice la Escritura divina que pasaba de noche y Jacob dormido para dar a entender cuán secreto y diferente del saber del hombre es este camino y subida para Dios.

Lo cual se ve bien, pues que, ordinariamente, **lo que en él es de más provecho**, que es **irse perdiendo y aniquilando a sí mismo**, tiene por peor, y lo que menos vale, que es hallar su consuelo y gusto, en que ordinariamente antes pierde que gana, si a eso se hace, tiene por mejor.

5. Pero, hablando ahora algo más sustancialmente de esta escala de contemplación secreta, diremos que la propiedad principal por que aquí se llama *escala* es porque la contemplación es **ciencia de amor**,

la cual, como habemos dicho, es **noticia infusa de Dios amorosa**, que juntamente va ilustrando y enamorando el alma, hasta subirla de grado hasta Dios, su Criador,

porque sólo el amor es el que une y junta al alma con Dios.

De donde, porque más claro se vea, iremos aquí apuntando los grados de esta divina escala, diciendo con brevedad las señales y efectos de cada uno, para que por allí pueda conjeturar el alma en cual de ellos estará.

Y así, los distinguiremos por sus efectos, como hace san Bernardo y santo

and Saint Thomas¹³, for **to know them in themselves is not possible after a natural manner**, inasmuch as this ladder of love is, as we have said, **so secret** that

God alone is He that measures and weighs it.

CHAPTER 19

*Begins to explain the ten steps¹⁴ of the **mystic ladder of Divine love**, according to Saint Bernard and Saint Thomas. The first five are here treated.*

1. WE observe, then, that the steps of this ladder of love by which the soul mounts, one by one, to God, are **ten**.

[Beginning of this new contemplation]

The first step of love causes the soul to **languish**, and this to its advantage. The Bride is speaking from this step of love when she says: *'I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, that, if ye find my Beloved, ye tell Him that I am sick with love.* [232 (Ct. 5:8)] This sickness, however, is not unto death, but for the glory of God, for in this sickness the soul swoons as to sin and as to all things that are not God, for the sake of God Himself, even as David testifies, saying: *'My soul hath swooned away* [233 (Ps 142:7)]--that is, with respect to all things, for Thy salvation. For just as a sick man **first of all loses his appetite and taste for all food**, and his colour changes, so likewise in this degree of love the soul loses **its taste and desire for all things** and changes its colour and the other accidentals of its past life, like one in love. The soul falls not into this sickness if excess of heat be not

Tomás: ; porque conocerlos en sí, por cuanto esta escala de amor es, como habemos dicho, tan secreta

que sólo Dios es el que la mide y pondera,

no es posible por vía natural.

CAPITULO 19

Comienza a explicar los diez grados de la escala mística de amor divino según San Bernardo y Santo Tomás. Pónense los cinco primeros.

1. Decimos, pues, que los grados de esta escala de amor, por donde el alma de uno en otro va subiendo a Dios, son diez.

El primer grado de amor hace enfermar al alma provechosamente. En este grado de amor habla la Esposa (Ct. 5, 8) cuando dice: Conjúroos, hijas de Jerusalén, que, si encontráredes a mi Amado, le digáis que estoy enferma de amores. Pero esta enfermedad no es para muerte, sino para la gloria de Dios, porque en esta enfermedad desfallece el alma al pecado y a todas las cosas que no son Dios, por el mismo Dios, como David (Sal.142,7) testifica diciendo: Desfalleció mi alma, esto es, acerca de todas las cosas a tu salud. Porque así como el enfermo pierde el apetito y gusto de todos los manjares y muda de color primero, así también en este grado de amor pierde el alma el gusto y apetito de todas las cosas, y muda como amante el color y accidente de la vida pasada. Esta enfermedad no cae en ella el alma si de arriba no le envían el exceso de calor, según se da a

¹³ 'Ut dicit Bernardus, Magna res est amor, sed sunt in eo gradus. Loquendo ergo aliquantulum magis moraliter quam realiter, decem amoris gradus distinguere possumus' (D. Thom., De dilectione Dei et proximi, cap. xxvii. Cf. Opusc. LXI of the edition of Venice, 1595).

¹⁴ The word translated 'step' may also (and often more elegantly) be rendered 'degree.' The same word is kept, however, throughout the translation of this chapter except where noted below.

communicated to it from above, even as is expressed in that verse of David which says: *Pluviam voluntariam segregabis, Deus, haereditati tuae, et infirmata est*, [234 (Ps 67:10)] etc.

This sickness and swooning to all things, which is the beginning and the **first step** on the road to God, we clearly described above, when we were speaking of the annihilation wherein the soul finds itself when it **begins to climb**¹⁵ this ladder of contemplative purgation, when it can find no pleasure, support, consolation or abiding-place in anything soever. Wherefore from this step it begins at once to climb to the second.

2. **The second step** causes the soul to **seek God without ceasing**. Wherefore, when the Bride says that she sought Him by night upon her bed (when she had swooned away according to the first step of love) and found Him not, she said: *I will arise and will seek Him Whom my soul loveth*. [236 (Ct. 3:2)] This, as we say, the soul does **without ceasing** as David counsels it, saying: *Seek ye ever the face of God, and seek ye Him in all things, tarrying not until ye find Him*; [237 (Ps 104:4)] like the Bride, who, having enquired for Him of the watchmen, passed on at once and left them (Ct. 3:3-4). Mary Magdalene did not even notice the angels at the sepulchre. [238 (John 20:14)]

On this step the soul now walks so anxiously that **it seeks the Beloved in all things**. In whatsoever it thinks, it thinks at once of the Beloved. Of **whatsoever** it speaks, in **whatsoever** matters present themselves, it is speaking and communing at once with the Beloved. When it eats, when it sleeps, when it watches, when it does aught soever, **all its care is about the Beloved**, as is said above with respect to the *yearnings of love*.

And now, as **love begins to recover its health and find new strength** in the love of this second step, it begins at once to mount to the third, by means of a certain degree [step] of **new purgation** in the night, as we shall afterwards describe, which produces in the soul the following effects.

entender por este verso de David (Sal. 67, 10), que dice: *Pluviam voluntariam segregabis, Deus, haereditati tuae, et infirmata est*, etc.

Esta enfermedad y desfallecimiento a todas las cosas, que es el principio y primer grado para ir a Dios, bien lo habemos dado a entender arriba, cuando dijimos la aniquilación en que se ve el alma cuando **comienza a entrar** en esta escala de purgación contemplativa, cuando en ninguna cosa puede hallar gusto, arrimo, ni consuelo, ni asiento. Por lo cual, de este grado luego va comenzando a subir al segundo grado, y es

2. **El segundo grado** hace al alma buscar sin cesar. De donde, cuando la Esposa dice que, buscándole de noche en su lecho, cuando según el primer grado de amor estaba desfallecida, y no le halló, dijo (Ct. 3, 2): *Levantarme he, y buscaré al que ama mi alma*. Lo cual, como decimos, el alma hace sin cesar, como lo aconseja David (Sal. 104, 4), diciendo: *Buscando siempre la cara de Dios, y, buscándole en todas las cosas, en ninguna repare hasta hallarle, como la Esposa, que, en preguntando por él a las guardas, luego pasó y las dejó* (Ct. 3, 3-4). María Magdalena ni aun en los ángeles del sepulcro reparó (Jn 20, 14).

Aquí, en este grado, tan solícita anda el alma, que en todas las cosas busca al Amado; **en todo** cuanto piensa, luego piensa en el Amado; en cuanto habla, en cuantos negocios se ofrecen, luego es hablar y tratar del Amado; cuando come, cuando duerme, cuando vela, cuando hace cualquier cosa, **todo su cuidado es en el Amado**, según arriba queda dicho en las ansias de amor.

Aquí, como va ya el alma convaleciendo y cobrando fuerzas en el amor de este segundo grado, luego comienza a subir a tercero por medio de **algún grado** de nueva purgación en la noche, como después diremos, el cual hace en el alma los efectos siguientes.

¹⁵ Lit., 'to enter (upon).'

3. **The third step of the ladder of love** is that which **causes** the soul to **work** and gives it fervour so that it fails not. Concerning this the royal Prophet says: *'Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, for in His commandments he is eager to labour greatly.'* [Ps 111:1]

Wherefore **if fear**, being **the son of love**, causes within him this **eagerness to labour**,¹⁶ **what will be done by love itself?**

On this step the soul **considers great works undertaken for the Beloved as small; many things as few; and the long time** for which it serves Him as **short**, by reason of **the fire of love wherein it is now burning**.

Even so to Jacob, though after seven years he had been made to serve seven more, they seemed few because of the greatness of his love.[242 Gn 29:20]

Now if the love of a mere creature could accomplish so much in Jacob, what will **love of the Creator** be able to do when on this third step it takes possession of the soul?

Here, for the great love which the soul bears to God, **it suffers great pains and afflictions** because of **the little that it does for God**; and if it were lawful for it to be destroyed a thousand times for Him it would be comforted.

Wherefore it considers itself **useless in all** that it does and thinks itself to be **living in vain**.

Another wondrous effect produced here in the soul is that it considers itself as being, most certainly, **worse than all other souls**:

first, because love is continually **teaching it how much is due to God** [Lit., 'how much God merits.'];

and **second**, because, as the works which it here does for God are **many** and it knows them **all to be faulty and imperfect**, they all bring it **confusion and affliction**, for it realizes in how **lowly a manner** it is working for God, Who is so high.

On this third step, the soul is very far from vainglory or presumption, and from condemning others. These anxious effects, with many others like them, are **produced in the soul by this third step**; wherefore **it gains**

3. **El tercer grado de la escala amorosa** es el que hace al alma obrar y la pone calor para no faltar. De esto dice el Real Profeta (Sal. 111, 1) que: *Bienaventurado el varón que teme al Señor, porque sus mandamientos codicia obrar mucho.*

Donde, si el temor, por ser hijo del amor, le hace esta obra de codicia, ¿qué hará el mismo amor?.

En este grado las obras grandes por el Amado tiene por pequeñas, las muchas por pocas, el largo tiempo en que le sirve por corto, por el incendio de amor que ya va ardiendo.

Como a Jacob, que, con haberle hecho servir siete años sobre otros siete, le parecían pocos por la grandeza del amor (Gn. 29,20).

Pues si el amor con Jacob, con ser de criatura, tanto podía, ¿qué podrá el del Criador cuando en este tercer grado se apodera del alma?.

Tiene el alma aquí, por el grande amor que tiene a Dios, grandes lástimas y penas de lo poco que hace por Dios; y, si le fuese lícito deshacerse mil veces por él, estaría consolada.

Por eso se tiene por inútil en todo cuanto hace, y le parece vive de balde.

Hácele aquí otro efecto admirable, y es que se tiene por más mala averiguadamente para consigo que todas las otras almas:

lo uno, porque le va el amor enseñando **lo que merece Dios**;

y **lo otro**, porque, como las obras que aquí hace por Dios son muchas, y todas las conoce por faltas e imperfectas, de todas saca confusión y pena, conociendo **tan baja manera** de obrar por un tan alto Señor.

En este tercer grado, muy lejos va el alma de tener vanagloria o presunción y de condenar a los otros. **Estos solícitos efectos causa** en el alma, con otros muchos a este talle, **este tercer grado**; y por eso en él cobra ánimo y

¹⁶ Lit., 'makes in him this labour of eagerness.'

courage and strength from them in order to mount to the fourth step, which is that that follows.

4. **The fourth step of this ladder of love** is that whereby there is caused in the soul **an habitual suffering** because of the Beloved, **yet without weariness**.

For, as Saint Augustine says, **love makes all things that are great, grievous and burdensome to be almost naught**.

From this step the Bride was speaking (Ct. 8:6) when, desiring to attain to **the last step**, she said to the Spouse: *'Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love-- that is, the act and work of love--is strong as death, and emulation and importunity last as long as hell.'*

The spirit here has **so much strength** that it has **subjected the flesh** and takes as little account of it as does the tree of one of its leaves. In no way does the soul here seek its own **consolation or pleasure**, either in God, or in aught else, nor does it desire or seek to pray to God for **favours**, for **it sees clearly that it has already received enough of these**, and all its anxiety is set upon **the manner** wherein it will be able to **do something that is pleasing to God and to render Him some service such as He merits** and in return for what it has received from Him, although it be greatly to its cost.

The soul says in its heart and spirit:

Ah, my God and Lord! How many are there that go to seek in Thee their own consolation and pleasure, and desire Thee to grant them favours and gifts; but those who long to do Thee pleasure and to give Thee something at their cost, setting their own interests last, **are very few**.

The failure, my God, is not in Thy unwillingness to grant us new favours, but in our neglect to use those that we have received in Thy service **alone**, in order to constrain Thee to grant them to us continually.

Exceeding lofty is this step of love; for, as the soul goes ever after God with love so true, imbued with **the spirit of suffering for His sake**, His Majesty **oftentimes and quite habitually grants it joy, and visits it sweetly and delectably in the spirit**; for the boundless love of Christ, the Word, cannot suffer the afflictions of His lover without succouring him.

fuerzas para subir hasta el cuarto, que es el que sigue.

4. **El cuarto grado de esta escala de amor** es en el cual se causa en el alma, por razón del Amado, un ordinario sufrir sin fatigarse.

Porque, como dice san Agustín, todas las cosas grandes, graves y pesadas, casi ningunas las hace el amor.

En este grado hablaba la Esposa (Ct.8, 6), cuando, deseando ya verse en el último dijo al Esposo: *Ponme como señal en tu corazón, como señal en tu brazo; porque la dilección, esto es, el acto y obra de amor, es fuerte como la muerte, y dura emulación y porfía como el infierno*.

El espíritu aquí tiene **tanta fuerza**, que tiene tan sujeta a la carne y la tiene tan en poco como el árbol a una de sus hojas. En ninguna manera aquí el alma busca su **consuelo ni gusto**, ni en Dios ni en otra cosa, ni anda deseando ni pretendiendo pedir mercedes a Dios, porque ve claro que hartas las tiene hechas, y **queda todo su cuidado en cómo podrá dar algún gusto a Dios y servirle algo** por lo que él merece y de él tiene recibido, aunque fuese muy a su costa.

Dice en su corazón y espíritu:

¡Ay, Dios y Señor mío, cuán muchos hay que andan a buscar en ti consuelo y gusto y a que les concedas mercedes y dones, mas los que a ti pretenden dar gusto y darte algo a su costa, pospuesto su particular, son muy pocos.

Porque no está la falta, Dios mío, en no nos querer tú hacer mercedes de nuevo, sino en no emplear nosotros las recibidas sólo en tu servicio, para obligarte a que nos las hagas de continuo!

Harto levantado es este grado de amor, porque, como aquí el alma con tan verdadero amor se anda siempre tras Dios con espíritu de padecer por él, dale Su Majestad muchas veces y muy de ordinario el gozar, visitándola en espíritu sabrosa y deleitablemente, porque el inmenso amor del Verbo Cristo no puede sufrir penas de su amante sin acudirle. Lo cual por

This He affirmed through Jeremias, saying: *'I have remembered thee, pitying thy youth and tenderness, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness.'* [Jer 2:2] **Speaking spiritually**, this denotes **the detachment** which the soul now has interiorly from every creature, so that it rests not and nowhere finds quietness. This fourth step enkindles the soul and makes it to **burn in such desire for God** that it causes it to mount to the fifth, which is that which follows.

5. **The fifth step of this ladder of love** makes the soul to **desire and long for God impatiently**.

On this step **the vehemence** of the lover to comprehend the Beloved and be united with Him **is such** that **every delay**, however brief, becomes very long, wearisome and oppressive to it, and it continually believes itself to be finding the Beloved.

And when it sees its desire **frustrated** (which is at almost every moment), it swoons away with its yearning, as says the Psalmist, speaking from this step, in these words: *'My soul longs and faints for the dwellings of the Lord.'* [Ps 83:2] On this step **the lover must needs see that which he loves, or die**; at this step was Rachel, when, for the great longing that she had for children, she said to Jacob, her spouse: *'Give me children, else shall I die.'* [Gn 30:1]

Here men **suffer hunger like dogs** and go about and surround the city of God [Ps 58:7]. On this step, which is one of **hunger**, [248] **the soul is nourished upon love**; for, even as is its hunger, so is its abundance; so that it rises hence to the sixth step, producing the effects which follow.

CHAPTER 20

Wherein are treated the other five steps of love.

1. ON **the sixth step** the soul **runs swiftly to God** and touches Him again and again; and it runs without fainting by reason of its hope. For here **the love that has made it strong makes it to fly swiftly**. Of this step the prophet Isaias speaks thus: *'The saints that hope in God shall renew their*

Jeremías (2, 2) lo afirma él, diciendo: *Acordádome he de ti, apiadándome de tu adolescencia y ternura cuando me seguiste en el desierto.* **Hablando espiritualmente es el desarrimo** que aquí interiormente trae el alma de toda criatura, no parando ni quietándose en nada. Este cuarto grado **inflama de manera al alma y la enciende tal deseo de Dios**, que la hace subir al quinto, el cual es el que se sigue.

5. **El quinto grado de la escala de amor** hace al alma **apetecer y codiciar a Dios impacientemente**. En este grado el amante tanta es la vehemencia que tiene por comprender al Amado y unirse con él, que toda dilación, por mínima que sea, se le hace muy larga, molesta y pesada, y siempre piensa que halla al Amado;

y cuando se ve frustrado su deseo, lo cual es casi a cada paso, desfallece en su codicia, según hablando en este grado lo dice el Salmista (Sal. 83, 2), diciendo: *Codicia y desfallece mi alma a las moradas del Señor.*

En este grado el amante no puede dejar de **ver lo que ama o morir**; en el cual Raquel, por la gran codicia que tenía a los hijos, dijo a Jacob su esposo: Dame hijos; si no, yo moriré (Gn. 30, 1).

Padecen aquí hambre como canes y cercan y rodean la ciudad de Dios (Sal. 58, 7). En este **hambriento** grado se ceba el alma en amor, porque según la hambre es la hartura. De manera que de aquí puede subir al sexto grado, que hace los efectos que se siguen.

CAPITULO 20

Pónense los otros cinco grados de amor.

1. **El Sexto grado** **hace correr al alma ligeramente a Dios** y dar muchos toques en él, y sin desfallecer corre por la esperanza, que aquí el amor (que) la ha fortificado la hace volar ligero. En el cual grado también dice el profeta Isaiás: Los santos que esperan en Dios mudarán la fortaleza,

strength; they shall take wings as the eagle; they shall fly and shall not faint. [Is 40:31] as they did at the fifth step. To this step **likewise** alludes that verse of the Psalm: *'As the hart desires the waters, my soul desires Thee, O God.* [Ps 41:2] For the hart, in its thirst, runs to the waters **with great swiftness.** **The cause** of this **swiftness in love** which the soul has on this step is that **its charity is greatly dilated** within it, since the soul is here **almost wholly purified**, as is said likewise in the Psalm, namely: *Sine iniquitate cucurri.* [Ps 58:5]

And in another Psalm: *'I ran the way of Thy commandments when Thou didst enlarge my heart'*; [118:32] and thus from this sixth step the soul at once mounts to the seventh, which is that which follows.

2. **The seventh step** of this ladder makes the soul to become **vehement in its boldness.** Here love employs not its judgment in order to hope, nor does it take counsel so that it may draw back, neither can any shame restrain it; for **the favour** which God here grants to the soul **causes it to become vehement in its boldness.**

Hence follows that which the Apostle says, namely: *That charity believeth all things, hopeth all things and is capable of all things.* [1 Cor 13:7]

Of this step spake Moses, when he entreated God to pardon the people, and if not, to blot out his name from the book of life wherein He had written it. [Ex 32:31-32]

Men like these obtain from God that which they beg of Him with desire. Wherefore David says: *'Delight thou in God and He will give thee the petitions of thy heart.* [Ps 36:4] On this step the Bride grew bold, and said: *Osculetur me osculo oris sui.* [Ct 1:1] To this step it is not lawful for the soul to **aspire boldly**, unless **it feel the interior favour of the King's sceptre extended to it**, lest perchance it fall from the other steps which it has mounted up to this point, and wherein it must ever possess itself in humility.

From **this daring and power** which **God grants to the soul** on this seventh step, so that **it may be bold with God in the vehemence of love**, follows the eighth, which is that wherein **it takes the Beloved captive and is united with Him**, as follows.

3. **The eighth step** of love causes the soul to seize Him and hold Him fast

tomarán alas como de águila y volarán y no desfallecerán (Is.40,31), como hacían en el grado quinto. A este grado pertenece también aquello del salmo (41,2): Así como el ciervo desea las aguas, mi alma desea a ti, Dios; porque el ciervo en la sed con gran ligereza corre a las aguas. La causa de esta ligereza en amor que tiene el alma en este grado es por **estar ya muy dilatada la caridad en ella**, por estar aquí el alma poco menos que purificada del todo, como se dice también en el salmo (58,5), es a saber: *Sine iniquitate cucurri;*

y en otro salmo (118,32): *El camino de tus mandamientos corrí cuando dilataste mi corazón.* Y así, de este sexto grado se pone luego en el séptimo, que es el que sigue.

2. **El séptimo grado** de esta escala hace atrever al alma con vehemencia. Aquí el amor ni se aprovecha del juicio para esperar, ni usa de consejo para retirarse, ni con vergüenza se puede enfrenar, porque el favor, que ya Dios aquí hace al alma, la hace atrever con vehemencia.

De donde se sigue lo que dice el Apóstol (1 Cor. 13, 7), y es: La caridad todo lo cree, todo lo espera y todo lo puede. De este grado habló Moisés (Ex. 32, 31-32), cuando dijo a Dios que perdonase al pueblo, y, si no, que le borrara a él del libro de la vida en que le había escrito.

Estos alcanzan de Dios lo que con gusto le piden. De donde dice David (Sal. 36, 4): *Deléitate en Dios, y darte ha las peticiones de tu corazón.* En este grado se atrevió la Esposa (Ct. 1, 1) y dijo: *Osculetur me osculo oris sui.* A este grado no le es lícito al alma atreverse, si no sintiere el favor interior del cetro del rey inclinado para ella (Est. 6, 11), porque por ventura no caiga de los demás grados que hasta allí ha subido, en los cuales siempre se ha de conservar en humildad.

De esta osadía y mano, que Dios la da al alma en este séptimo grado para atreverse a Dios con vehemencia de amor, se sigue el octavo, que es hacer ella presa en el Amado y unirse con él, según se sigue.

3. El octavo grado de amor hace al alma asir y apretar sin soltar, según la

without letting Him go, even as the Bride says, after this manner: *'I found Him Whom my heart and soul love; I held Him and I will not let Him go.'* [Ct 3:4 257] On this step of union the soul satisfies her desire, but not continuously. Certain souls climb some way,[258] and then lose their hold; for, if this state were to continue, it would be glory itself in this life; and thus the soul remains therein for very short periods of time. To the prophet Daniel, because he was a man of desires, was sent a command from God to remain on this step, when it was said to him: *'Daniel, stay upon thy step, because thou art a man of desires.'* [Dn 10:11 259] After this step follows the ninth, which is that of souls now perfect, as we shall afterwards say, which is that that follows.

4. **The ninth step** of love makes the soul to burn with sweetness. This step is that of **the perfect**, who now **burn sweetly in God**. For this **sweet and delectable ardour** is caused in them by the Holy Spirit by reason of **the union** which they have with God.

For this cause Saint Gregory says, concerning the Apostles, that when the Holy Spirit came upon them visibly they burned inwardly and sweetly through love.¹⁷ Of the **good things and riches of God** which the soul enjoys on this step, **we cannot speak**; for if many books were to be written concerning it **the greater part would still remain untold**¹⁸. For this cause,

Esposa dice (Ct. 3, 4) en esta manera: Hallé al que ama mi corazón y ánima, y túvele, y no le soltaré. En este grado de unión satisface el alma su deseo, mas no de continuo, porque algunos llegan a poner el pie y luego lo vuelven a quitar; porque si durase, sería cierta gloria en esta vida, y así muy pocos espacios causa el alma en él. Al profeta Daniel (10, 11), por ser varón de deseos, se le mandó de parte de Dios que permaneciese en este grado, diciéndole: Daniel, está sobre tu grado, porque eres varón de deseos. De este grado se sigue el nono, que es ya el de los perfectos, como diremos después, que es el que se sigue.

4. **El nono grado de amor** hace arder al alma con suavidad. Este grado es el de los perfectos, los cuales arden ya en Dios suavemente, porque este ardor suave y deleitoso les causa el Espíritu Santo por razón de la unión que tienen con Dios.

Por esto dice san Gregorio de los Apóstoles que, cuando el Espíritu Santo visiblemente vino sobre ellos, que interiormente ardieron por amor suavemente. De los bienes y riquezas de Dios que el alma goza en este grado, **no se puede hablar**; porque, si de ello escribiesen muchos libros, **quedaría lo más por decir**. Del cual, por esto y porque después diremos

¹⁷ “Dum Deum in ignis visione suscipiunt, per amorem suaviter arserunt” (Hom. XXX in Evang.).

¹⁸ “And if these similitudes are not received in the simplicity of a loving mind, and in the sense in which they are uttered, they will seem to be effusions of folly rather than the language of reason; as anyone may see in the divine Canticle of Solomon, and in others of the sacred books, wherein the Holy Spirit, **because ordinary and common speech could not convey His meaning**, uttered His mysteries **in strange terms and similitudes**. It follows from this, that **after all that the holy doctors have said, and may say, no words of theirs can explain it; nor can words do it; and so, in general, all that is said falls far short of the meaning.**” (SC, Prologue, 3)

“Notwithstanding the marvellous mysteries which holy doctors have discovered, and holy souls have understood in this life, **many more remain behind. There are in Christ great depths** to be fathomed, for **He is a rich mine**, with many recesses full of treasures, and however deeply we may descend we shall never reach the end, for in every recess new

and because we shall say something of it hereafter, **I say no more** here than that after this follows the tenth and last step of this ladder of love, which **belongs not to this life**.

5. **The tenth** and last step of this secret ladder of love **causes the soul to become wholly assimilated to God**, by reason of the clear and **immediate** [i.e., direct, not mediate] vision of God which it then possesses; when, having ascended in this life to the ninth step, **it goes forth from the flesh**.

These souls, **who are few**, **enter not into purgatory**, since **they have already been wholly purged [purgad[isimos] by love**. Of these Saint Matthew says: *Beati mundo corde: quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt*. [Mt 5:8]

And, as we say, this vision is the cause of **the perfect [total] likeness of the soul to God**, for, as Saint John says, we know that we shall be like Him. [1Jn 3:2] Not because the soul will come to have **the capacity of God**, for that is impossible; but because **all that it is will become like [semejante] to God**, for which cause it **will be called**, and will be, **God by participation**.¹⁹

6. This is the *secret ladder* whereof the soul here speaks, although upon these higher steps it is **no longer very secret to the soul**, since much is **revealed [descubre]** to it by love, **through the great effects** which love produces in it.

But, on this last step of **clear vision**, which is the last step of the ladder whereon God leans, as we have said already, there is naught that is hidden from the soul, by reason of its **complete assimilation**.

Wherefore Our Saviour says: *'In that day ye shall ask Me nothing,'* etc. [Jn 16:23] But, until **that day**, however high a point the soul may reach, **there remains something hidden from it -- namely, all that it lacks for total**

alguna cosa, aquí no digo más sino que de éste se sigue el décimo y el último grado de esta escala de amor, que ya no es de esta vida.

5. El décimo y último grado de esta escala secreta de amor hace el alma asimilarse totalmente a Dios, **por razón de la clara visión de Dios que luego posee inmediatamente el alma**, que, habiendo llegado en esta vida al nono grado, sale de la carne.

Porque éstos, pocos que son, por cuanto ya por el amor están purgad[isimos], no entran en el purgatorio. De donde san Mateo (5, 8), dice: *Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt*, etc.

Y, como decimos, esta visión es la causa de **la similitud total del alma con Dios**, porque así lo dice san Juan (1 Jn 3,2), diciendo: Sabemos que seremos semejantes a él, no porque el alma se hará tan capaz como Dios, porque eso es imposible, sino porque todo lo que ella es se hará **semejante a Dios**; por lo cual se llamará, y lo será, Dios por participación.

6. Esta es la *escala secreta* que aquí dice el alma, aunque ya en **estos grados de arriba no es muy secreta para el alma**, porque **mucho se le descubre el amor por los grandes efectos** que en ella hace.

Mas en este último grado de clara visión, que es lo último de la escala donde estriba Dios, como ya dijimos, ya no hay cosa para el alma encubierta, por razón de la **total asimilación**;

de donde nuestro Salvador (Jn. 16, 23) dice: *En aquel día ninguna cosa me preguntaréis*, etc. Pero hasta este día todavía, aunque el alma más alta vaya, te queda algo encubierto, y tanto cuanto te falta para **la asimilación**

veins of new treasures abound in all directions: **"In Whom,"** according to the Apostle, **"are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."** (SC 37,3)

¹⁹ Maintained in SCA and LFA/B. Re "semejanza" (likeness) see "beauty".

assimilation in the Divine Essence.

After this manner, by this **mystical theology** and **secret love**, the soul continues to rise [saliendo] above all things and **above itself**, and to mount upward to God. For **love is like fire**, which ever **rises upward** with the desire to be **absorbed in the centre of its sphere**.

CHAPTER 21

Which explains the word 'disguised,' and describes the colours of the disguise of the soul in this night.²⁰

1. Now that we have explained the reasons why the soul called this **contemplation** a '*secret ladder*,' it remains for us to explain likewise the word '*disguised*,' and the reason why the soul says also that it went forth by this '*secret ladder*' in '*disguise*.'
2. For the understanding of this it must be known that to disguise oneself is naught else but **to hide and cover oneself beneath another garb and figure** than one's own -- sometimes in order to show forth, under that garb or figure, the will and purpose which is in the heart to gain the grace and will of one who is greatly loved; sometimes, again, to hide oneself from one's rivals and thus to accomplish one's object better. At such times a man assumes the garments and livery which **best represent** and **indicate** the affection of his heart and which best conceal him from his rivals.
3. The soul, then, **touched with the love of Christ the Spouse**, and **longing to attain to His grace and gain His goodwill**, goes forth here disguised with **that disguise which most vividly represents the affections of its spirit** and which will protect it most securely on its journey from its **adversaries and enemies, which are the devil, the world and the flesh**.

total con la divina esencia.

De esta manera, por esta **teología mística** y **amor secreto**, se va el alma saliendo de todas las cosas y de sí misma y subiendo a Dios. Porque el amor es asimilado al fuego, que siempre sube hacia arriba, con apetito de engolfarse en el centro de su esfera.

CAPITULO 21

Declárase esta palabra "disfrazada", y dícense los colores del disfraz del alma en esta noche.

1. Resta, pues, ahora saber, después que habemos declarado las causas por que el alma llamaba a esta contemplación secreta escala, acerca de la tercera palabra del verso, conviene a saber disfrazada, por qué causa también dice el alma que ella salió por esta secreta escala disfrazada.
2. Para inteligencia de esto conviene saber que disfrazarse no es otra cosa que disimularse y encubrirse debajo de otro traje y figura que de suyo tenía: ahora por debajo de aquella forma y traje, mostrar de fuera la voluntad y pretensión que en el corazón tiene para ganar la gracia y voluntad de quien bien quiere; ahora también para encubrirse de sus émulos, y así poder hacer mejor su hecho. Y entonces aquellos trajes y librea toma que más represente y signifique la afección de su corazón, y con que mejor se pueda acerca de los contrarios disimular.
3. El alma, pues, aquí tocada del amor del Esposo Cristo, pretendiendo caerle en gracia y ganarle la voluntad, aquí sale disfrazada con aquel disfraz que más al vivo represente las afecciones de su espíritu y con que más segura vaya de los adversarios suyos y enemigos, que son: demonio, mundo y carne.

²⁰ This chapter shows the connection between this book and Ascent Books II,III where the theological acts are explained.

Thus the livery which it wears is of **three chief colours**--white, green and purple--denoting **the three theological virtues, faith, hope and charity**.

By these the soul will not only gain the grace and goodwill of its Beloved, but **it will travel in security and complete protection** from its three enemies:

[Faith]

for **faith** is an inward tunic of a whiteness so pure that it completely dazzles the eyes of the mind.[265] And thus, when the soul journeys in its vestment of faith, **the devil** can neither see it nor succeed in harming it, since it is well protected by faith--more so than by all the other virtues--against the devil, who is at once **the strongest and the most cunning of enemies**.

4. It is clear that Saint Peter could find no better protection than faith to save him from the devil, when he said: *Cui resistite fortes in fide*. [1P 5:9] And in order to gain the grace of the Beloved, and union with Him, the soul cannot put on a better vest and tunic,[interior tunic 267] to serve as a foundation and beginning of the other vestments of the virtues, than this white Garment [He 11:6] of faith, for *without it*, as the Apostle says, *it is impossible to please God*, and with it, it is impossible to fail to please Him. For He Himself says through a prophet: *Sponsabo te mihi in fide*. [Hos 2:20 269] Which is as much as to say: **If thou desirest, O soul, to be united and betrothed to Me, thou must come inwardly clad in faith**.

5. This white garment of faith was worn by the soul on its going forth from this dark night, when, walking in interior constraint and darkness, as we have said before, it received **no aid, in the form of light, from its mind, neither from above**, since Heaven seemed to be closed to it and **God hidden from it, nor from below**, since those that taught it satisfied it not.

It suffered with constancy and persevered, passing through those trials

Y así, la librea que lleva es de tres colores principales, que son blanco, verde y colorado, por los cuates son denotadas las tres virtudes teologales, que son: fe, esperanza y caridad,

con las cuales no solamente ganará la gracia y voluntad de su Amado, pero irá muy amparada y segura de sus tres enemigos.

Porque la fe es una túnica interior de una blancura tan levantada, que disgrega la vista de todo entendimiento. Y así, yendo el alma vestida de fe, no ve ni atina el demonio a empecerla, porque con la fe va muy amparada, más que con todas las demás virtudes, contra el demonio, que es el más fuerte y astuto enemigo.

4. Que, por eso, san Pedro (1 Pe. 5, 9) no halló otro mayor amparo que esta para librarse de él, cuando dijo: *Cui resistite fortes in fide*. Y para conseguir la gracia y unión del Amado no puede el alma haber mejor túnica y camisa interior, para fundamento y principio de las demás vestiduras de virtudes, que esta blancura de fe, porque sin ella, como dice el Apóstol (Heb. 11, 6), imposible es agradar e Dios, y con ella es imposible dejarle de agradar, pues él mismo dice por el profeta Oseas (2, 20); *Desponsabo te mihi in fide*. Que es como decir: Si te quieres, alma, unir y desposar conmigo, has de venir interiormente vestida de fe.

5. Esta blancura de fe llevaba el alma en la salida de esta noche oscura, cuando caminando, como hemos dicho arriba, en tinieblas y aprietos interiores, no dándole su entendimiento algún alivio de luz, ni de arriba, pues le parecía el cielo cerrado y Dios escondido, ni de abajo, pues los que la enseñaban no le satisfacían,

sufrió con constancia y perseveró, pasando por aquellos trabajos sin

without fainting or failing the Beloved, Who in trials and tribulations **proves the faith** of His Bride, so that afterwards she may truly repeat this saying of David, namely: *'By the words of Thy lips I kept hard ways.'* [Ps 16:4]

[Hope]

6. Next, over this white tunic of **faith** the soul now puts on **the second colour**, which is a **green** vestment. By this, as we said, is signified the virtue of **hope**, wherewith, as in the first case, the soul is delivered and protected from **the second enemy**, which is **the world**.

For this green colour of **living hope in God** **gives the soul such ardour and courage and aspiration** [lifting power] **to the things of eternal life** that, by comparison with what it hopes for therein, **all things of the world** seem to it to be, as in truth they are, **dry** and **faded** and **dead** and nothing worth.

The soul now divests (deprives, rids) and strips itself (*desnuda*) of all these worldly vestments and garments, **setting its heart** upon **naught** [that is in the world] and **hoping** for naught, whether of that which is or of that which is to be, but living clad **only** in **the hope of eternal life**.

Wherefore, when [keeping] the heart ~~is thus~~ [so] lifted up above the world, not only can **the world neither touch the heart** nor lay hold on it, but it cannot even come within sight of it.

7. And thus, in this green livery and disguise, **the soul journeys in complete security from this second enemy**, which is **the world**.

For Saint Paul speaks of hope as the helmet of salvation [1 Thes 5:8] -- that is, **a piece of armour that protects the whole head**, and covers it so that there remains uncovered only a visor through which it may look.

And hope has this [property], that it covers all the senses of the head of the soul, so that there is **naught soever** pertaining to the world **in which they can be immersed**,

desfallecer y faltar al Amado; el cual en los trabajos y tribulaciones prueba la fe de su Esposa, de manera que pueda ella después con verdad decir aquel dicho de David (Sal. 16, 4), es a saber: *Por las palabras de tus labios yo guardé caminos duros.*

6. Luego, sobre esta túnica blanca de fe se sobrepone aquí el alma el segundo color, que es una almilla de verde, por el cual, como dijimos, es significada la virtud de la esperanza; con la cual, cuanto a lo primero, el alma se libra y ampara del segundo enemigo, que es el mundo.

Porque esta verdura de esperanza viva en Dios da al alma una tal **viveza y animosidad** y **levantamiento** a las cosas de **la vida eterna**, que, en comparación de lo que allí espera, todo lo del mundo le parece, como es la verdad, seco y lacio y muerto, de ningún valor.

Y aquí se despoja y **desnuda** de todas estas vestiduras y traje del mundo, **no poniendo su corazón en nada**, ni **esperando nada** de lo que hay o ha de haber en él, viviendo **solamente** vestida de esperanza de vida eterna.

Por lo cual, **teniendo** el corazón **tan** levantado del mundo, no sólo no le puede tocar y asir el corazón, pero ni alcanzarle de vista.

7. Y así, con esta verde librea y disfraz va el alma muy segura de este segundo enemigo del mundo.

Porque a la esperanza llama san Pablo (1 Tes. 5, 8) yelmo de salud, que es una arma que ampara **toda** la cabeza y la cubre de manera que no la queda descubierto sino una visera por donde ver.

Y eso tiene la esperanza, que todos los sentidos de la cabeza del alma cubre, de manera que **no se engolfan en cosa ninguna** del mundo,

nor is there an opening through which **any arrow of the world** can wound them.

It has a visor, however, which the soul is permitted to use so that **its eyes** may look **upward, but nowhere else**; for **this is the function which hope habitually performs in the soul**, namely, the **directing of its eyes upwards to look at God** [alone], even as David declared that his eyes were directed, when he said: *Oculi mei semper ad Dominum*. [Ps 24:15] He hoped for no good thing elsewhere, save as he himself says in another Psalm: *'Even as the eyes of the handmaid are set upon the hands of her mistress, even so are our eyes set upon our Lord God, until He have mercy upon us as we hope in Him.*' [Ps 122:2]

8. For this reason, because of this green livery **(since the soul is ever looking to God and sets its eyes on naught else, neither is pleased with aught save with Him alone)**, the Beloved has such great pleasure with the soul that it is true to say that

the soul obtains from Him as much as it hopes for from Him.

Wherefore the Spouse in the Songs tells the Bride that, by looking upon Him with **one eye alone, she has wounded His heart**. [Ct 4:9] Without this green livery of **hope in God alone** it would be **impossible** [no le convenia] for the soul **to go forth** to encompass this loving achievement, for it would have **no success**, since

that which moves and conquers is the importunity of hope.

9. With this livery of hope the soul journeys in disguise through **this secret and dark night** whereof we have spoken; for it is **so completely voided of every possession and support** that **it fixes its eyes and its care upon naught but God, putting its mouth in the dust**, if so be there may be hope -- to repeat the quotation made above from Jeremias. [Lm 3:29²¹]

ni les quede por donde les pueda herir alguna saeta del siglo.

Sólo le deja una visera para que el ojo pueda mirar hacia arriba, y no más, que es **el oficio que de ordinario hace la esperanza en el alma**, que es levantar los ojos a mirar a Dios, como dice David (Sal. 24, 15) que hacía en él cuando dijo: *Oculi mei semper ad Dominum*, no esperando bien ninguno de otra parte, sino, como él mismo en otro salmo (122,2) dice: *Que así como los ojos de la sierva están en las manos de su señora puestos, así los nuestros en Nuestro Señor Dios, hasta que se apiade de nosotros, esperando en él.*

8. Por esta causa, (es) esta librea verde, porque siempre está mirando a Dios y no pone los ojos en otra cosa ni se paga sino sólo de él; **se agrada tanto el Amado del alma**, que es verdad decir que

tanto alcanza de él cuanto ella de él espera.

Que por eso el Esposo en los Cantares (4, 9) le dice a ella, que en solo el mirar de un ojo le llagó el corazón. Sin esta librea verde de **sólo esperanza de Dios no le convenía** al alma **salir** a esta pretensión de amor, porque **no alcanzara nada**, por cuanto

la que mueve y vence es la esperanza **porfiada**³⁸.

9. De esta librea de esperanza va **disfrazada** el alma por esta **oscura y secreta** noche que habemos dicho, pues que **va tan vacía de toda posesión y arrimo**, que **no** lleva los ojos **en otra cosa** ni el cuidado **si no es en Dios**, poniendo en el polvo su boca si por ventura hubiere esperanza, como entonces alegamos de Jeremías (Lm. 3, 29)

²¹ For the quotation, see Book II, chap. 8, 1, above.

[Charity]

10. Over the white and the green vestments, as **the crown and perfection of this disguise and livery**, the soul now puts on **the third colour**, which is **a splendid garment of purple**.

By this is denoted the third virtue, which is charity.

This not only **adds grace** to the other two colours, but **causes the soul to rise to so lofty a point that it is brought near to God**, and **becomes very beautiful and pleasing to Him**, so that it makes bold to say: *'Albeit I am black, O daughters of Jerusalem, I am comely; wherefore the King hath loved me and hath brought me into His chambers [lecho: bed].'* [Ct 1:4]

This livery of **charity**, which is that of **love**, and **causes greater love in the Beloved**, not only protects the soul and hides it from **the third enemy**, which is **the flesh**

(for where there is true love of God there enters neither love of self nor that of the things of self),

but **even gives worth to the other virtues, bestowing on them vigour and strength to protect the soul, and grace and beauty to please the Beloved** with them, for **without charity no virtue has grace before God**.

This is the **purple** which is spoken of in the Songs, [Ct 3:10] **upon which God reclines** [, viéndose en el alma].

Clad in this purple livery the soul **journeys** when (as has been explained above in the first stanza) **it goes forth from itself** in the dark night, **and from all things created**, *'kindled in love with yearnings,'* by this secret ladder of contemplation, to the perfect union of love of God, its beloved salvation [health].

11. This, then, is **the disguise** which the soul says that it wears in **the night**

10. Sobre el blanco y verde, para el remate y perfección de este disfraz y librea, lleva el alma aquí el tercer color, que es **una excelente toga colorada**,

por la cual es denotada la tercera virtud, que es caridad,

con la cual no solamente da **gracia** a los otros dos colores, pero **hace levantar tanto al alma de punto**, que la pone cerca de Dios **tan hermosa y agradable**, que se atreve ella a decir: *Aunque soy morena, ¡oh hijas de Jerusalén!, soy hermosa;* y por eso me ha amado el rey, y metí dome en su lecho (Ct. 1, 4).

Con esta librea de caridad, que es ya la del amor, **que en el Amado hace más amor**, no sólo se **ampara y encubre** el alma del **tercer enemigo**, que es **la carne**

(porque donde hay **verdadero amor** de Dios, no entrará amor **de sí** ni de sus cosas),

pero **aun hace válidas** a las demás virtudes, **dándoles vigor y fuerza** para amparar al alma, y **gracia y donaire para agradar al Amado** con ellas, porque **sin caridad ninguna virtud es graciosa delante de Dios**;

porque ésta es **la púrpura** que se dice en los Cantares (3, 10), **sobre que se recuesta Dios**, viéndose en el alma.

De esta **librea colorada va el alma vestida**, cuando, como arriba queda declarado en la primera canción, en la noche oscura **sale de sí y de todas las cosas criadas**, *con ansias en amores inflamada*, por esta secreta escala de contemplación, a la perfecta unión de amor de Dios, su amada salud.

11. Este, pues, es **el disfraz** que el alma dice que lleva en **la noche de fe** por

³⁸ Insistent, stubborn, obstinate.

of faith, upon this secret ladder, and these are its **three colours**.

They constitute a **most fit preparation for the union of the soul** with God, according to its three faculties, which are **mind, memory and will**.

For **faith voids and darkens** the mind as to all its [natural] intelligence, and herein prepares it for union with Divine Wisdom.

Hope voids and withdraws the memory from all creature **possessions**; for, as Saint Paul says, *hope is for that which is not possessed*; [Rm 8:24 280] and thus it **withdraws** the memory from that which it is capable of possessing, and **sets** it on that for which it hopes.

And for this cause **hope in God alone** prepares the memory **purely** for union with God.

Charity, in the same way, **voids and annihilates** the affections and desires of the will for **whatever is not God**, and **sets them upon Him alone**; and thus this virtue **prepares** this faculty and **unites** it with God through love.

And thus, since **the function of these virtues** is the **withdrawal** of the soul **from all that is less than God**, [~~their function~~] is consequently that of **joining** it with God.

12. And thus, **unless** it journeys earnestly, clad in the garments of these three virtues, **it is impossible for the soul to attain to the perfection of union with God through love**.

Wherefore, in order that the soul might attain that which it desired, which was this **loving and delectable union with its Beloved**, this disguise and clothing which it assumed was **most necessary and convenient**.

And likewise to have succeeded in thus clothing itself and **persevering** [**with it**, i.e. wearing it] **until it should obtain** the end and aspiration which **it had so much desired**, which was **the union of love**, was a **great** [and

esta secreta escala, y éstas son las tres colores de él;

las cuales son una **acomodadísima disposición** para unirse el alma con Dios según sus tres potencias, que son: **entendimiento, memoria y voluntad**.

Porque la fe oscurece y **vacía** al entendimiento de toda su inteligencia y en esto le dispone para unirle con la Sabiduría divina.

Y la esperanza **vacía** y aparta la memoria de toda **la posesión** de criatura, porque, como dice san Pablo (Rm 8,24), *la esperanza es de lo que no se posee*, y así aparta la memoria de lo que se puede poseer, y pónela en lo que espera.

Y por esto **la esperanza de Dios sola** dispone la memoria **puramente** para unirle con Dios.

La caridad, ni más ni menos, **vacía y aniquila** las afecciones y apetitos de la voluntad de **cualquiera cosa que no es Dios**, y **sólo se los pone en él** así esta virtud **dispone** esta potencia y **la une** con Dios por amor.

Y así, porque estas **virtudes tienen por oficio apartar** al alma **de todo lo que es menos que Dios**, le tienen consiguientemente de juntarla con Dios.

12. Y así, **sin caminar a las veras** con el traje de estas tres virtudes, **es imposible** llegar a la perfección de unión con Dios por amor.

De donde, para alcanzar el alma lo que pretendía, que era **esta amorosa y deleitosa unión con su Amado**, **muy necesario y conveniente** traje y disfraz fue este que tomó aquí el alma.

Y también atinársele a vestir y **perseverar con él** hasta conseguir pretensión y fin tan deseado como era **la unión de amor**, fue gran *ventura*, y por eso nos lo dice este verso:

happy] *chance*, wherefore in this line the soul also says:

Oh, happy chance!

CHAPTER 22

Explains the third²² line of the second stanza.

1. IT is very clear that it was a *happy chance* for this soul to go forth with such an enterprise as this, for it was its going forth that delivered [freed] it from the **devil** and from the **world** and from **its own sensuality**, as we have said.

Having attained **liberty of spirit**, **so precious and so greatly desired by all**, it went forth

from low things to high;
from terrestrial, it became celestial;
from human, Divine.

Thus it came to have its conversation in the heavens (Phil 3:20), as has the soul in **this state of perfection**, even as we shall go on to say in what follows, although with rather more brevity.

2. For the most important part [of my task], and **the part which chiefly led me to undertake it** [this], was **the explanation of this night** to **many souls** who pass through it and yet **know nothing about it**, as was said in the prologue.

Now this explanation and exposition has already been half completed.

Although **much less has been said of it than might be said**, we have shown **how many are the blessings** [bienes] **which the soul bears with it** through the night and **how happy is the chance** whereby it

¡Oh dichosa ventura!

CAPITULO 22

Explicase el tercer verso de la segunda canción.

1. Bien claro está que le fue *dichosa ventura* al alma **salir** con una tal empresa, como ésta su salida fue; en la cual se libró del demonio y del mundo y de su misma sensualidad, como habemos dicho,

y, alcanzado la **libertad dichosa y deseada de todos**, **del espíritu**, salió

de lo bajo a lo alto,
de terrestre se hizo celestial,
y de humana, divina,

viniendo a tener su conversación en los cielos (Fil. 3, 20), como acaece en **este estado de perfección** al alma, como en lo restante se irá diciendo, aunque ya con alguna más brevedad.

2. Porque lo que era de más importancia, y por **lo que yo principalmente me puse en esto**, que fue declarar esta noche a **muchas almas** que, pasando por ella, estaban de ella **ignorantes**, como en el prólogo se dice,

está ya medianamente declarado, y dado a entender,

aunque harto menos de lo que ello es:

cuántos sean los bienes que consigo trae al alma, y **cuán dichosa ventura** le sea al que por ella va, para que, cuando **se espantaren con el horror de**

²² i.e., in the original Spanish and in our verse rendering of the poem in The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross, Ed. by E. Allison Peers, Vol. II (The Newman Press, Westminster, Md.).

passes through it, so that, **when a soul is terrified by the horror of so many trials**, it is also **encouraged by the certain hope** of so many and such precious blessings of God as it gains therein.

And furthermore, for yet another reason, this was a *happy chance* for the soul; and this reason is given in the following line:

In darkness and in concealment.

CHAPTER 23

Expounds the fourth line²³

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.

1. '*IN concealment*' is as much as to say 'in a hiding-place,' or 'in hiding' [hiding or covered]; and thus, what the soul here says (namely, that it went forth '*in darkness and in concealment*') is a **more complete** explanation of **the great security** which it describes itself in the first line of the stanza [as possessing], by means of this dark contemplation upon **the road of the union** of the love of God.

2. When the soul, then, says '*in darkness and in concealment*,' it means that, inasmuch as it journeyed in darkness after the manner aforementioned, it went **in hiding and in concealment from the devil and from his wiles and stratagems.**

The reason why, as it journeys in the darkness of this contemplation, the soul **is free, and is hidden** from the stratagems of the devil, is that **the infused contemplation** which it here possesses **is infused into it passively and secretly, without the knowledge of the senses and faculties, whether**

tantos trabajos, se animen con la cierta esperanza de **tantos y tan aventajados bienes** de Dios como en ella se alcanzan.

También, demás de esto, le fue *dichosa ventura* al alma por lo que dice luego en el verso siguiente, es a saber:

A oscuras y en celada.

CAPITULO 23

Declárase el cuarto verso.

Dice el admirable escondrijo en que es puesta el alma en esta noche, y cómo, aunque el demonio tiene entrada en otros muy altos no en éste.

1. *En celada* es tanto como decir: escondido o encubierto. Y así, lo que aquí dice el alma, conviene a saber, que *a oscuras y en celada* salió, es **más cumplidamente** dar entender **la gran seguridad** que ha dicho en el primer verso de esta canción que lleva por medio de esta **oscura contemplación en el camino de la unión de amor de Dios.**

Decir, pues, el alma *a oscuras y en celada*, es decir que, por cuanto iba a oscuras de la manera dicha, iba **encubierta y escondida** del demonio y de sus cautelas y asechanzas.

2. La causa por que el alma en la oscuridad de esta contemplación va **libre y escondida** de las asechanzas del demonio, es porque **la contemplación infusa**, que aquí lleva, **se infunde pasiva y secretamente en el alma a excusas de los sentidos y potencias interiores y exteriores de la parte**

²³ i.e., in the original Spanish and in our verse rendering of the poem in *The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross*, Ed. by E. Allison Peers, Vol. II (The Newman Press, Westminster, Md.).

interior or exterior, of the sensual part.

And hence it follows that, not only does it journey in hiding, and is free from **the impediment which these faculties** can set in its way because of its natural weakness, but likewise from **the devil**; who, **except through these faculties of the sensual part, cannot reach or know that which is in the soul, nor that which is taking place within it.**

Wherefore, **the more spiritual, the more interior and the more remote from the senses is the communication, the farther does the devil fall short of understanding it.**

3. And thus **it is of great importance for the security of the soul** that its inward communication with God should be of **such a kind** that **its very senses of the lower part** will remain in darkness²⁴ and be without knowledge of it, and attain not to it:

first, so that it may be possible for the spiritual communication **to be more abundant**, and that the weakness of its sensual part **may not hinder the liberty of its spirit**;

secondly because, as we say, the soul journeys **more securely** since the devil cannot penetrate so far.

In this way we may understand that passage where Our Saviour, **speaking in a spiritual sense**, says: *'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.* [Mt 6:3] Which is as though He had said: Let not thy left hand know that which takes place upon thy right hand, which is the higher and spiritual part of the soul; that is, let it be of such a kind that the lower portion of thy soul, which is **the sensual [sensitiva] part**, may not attain to it; **let it be a secret between the spirit and God [alone].**

sensitiva.

Y de aquí es que no sólo del impedimento, que con **su natural flaqueza** le pueden ser estas potencias, va **escondida y libre**, sino también **del demonio**, el cual, **si no es por medio de estas potencias de la parte sensitiva, no puede alcanzar ni conocer lo que hay en el alma, ni lo que en ella pasa.**

De donde, **cuanto la comunicación es más espiritual, interior y remota de los sentidos, tanto menos el demonio alcanza a entenderla.**

3. Y así, **es mucho lo que importa para la seguridad del alma** que el trato interior con Dios sea de manera que sus mismos sentidos de la parte inferior queden a oscuras y ayunos de ello y no lo alcancen:

lo uno, porque haya lugar que la comunicación espiritual sea más abundante, no impidiendo la flaqueza de la parte sensitiva la libertad del espíritu;

lo otro, porque, como decimos, va más segura, no alcanzando el demonio tan adentro.

De donde podemos entender a este propósito aquella autoridad de nuestro Salvador (Mt. 6, 3), **hablando espiritualmente**, conviene a saber: *No sepa tu siniestra lo que hace tu diestra*, que es como si dijera: Lo que pasa en la parte diestra, que es **la superior y espiritual del alma**, no lo sepa (la siniestra), esto es, sea de manera que **la porción inferior** de tu alma, que es **la parte sensitiva**, no lo alcance; **sea sólo secreto entre el espíritu y Dios.**

²⁴ The Spanish also admits of the rendering: 'remain shut off from it by darkness.'

4. It is quite true that oftentimes, when these **very intimate and secret spiritual communications** are present and take place in the soul, although the devil cannot get to know of what kind and manner they are, yet **the great repose and silence** which some of them cause in **the senses and the faculties of the sensual part** make it clear to him that they are taking place and that the soul is receiving a certain blessing from them.

And then, as he sees that he cannot succeed in thwarting them in **the depth of the soul**, **he does what he can to disturb and disquiet the sensual part--that part to which he is able to attain**--now by means of **afflictions**, now by **terrors and fears**, with intent to **disquiet and disturb the higher and spiritual part of the soul** by this means, with respect to that blessing [bien] which it then receives and enjoys.

But often, when **the communication of such contemplation** makes **its naked** [puro] **assault upon the soul** [espíritu] and exerts its strength upon it, **the devil**, with all his diligence, is **unable to disturb it**;

rather the soul receives a new and a **greater advantage** and a **securer peace**.

For, when it feels the disturbing presence of the enemy, then --wondrous thing!-- without knowing how it comes to pass, and without any efforts of its own, **it enters farther into its own interior depths**, feeling that it is indeed being set in a **sure refuge**, where it perceives itself to be most completely withdrawn and hidden from the enemy.

And thus its **peace and joy**, which the devil is attempting to take from it, are **increased**;

and all the fear that assails it remains without [por defuera];

and it becomes clearly and exultingly conscious of its **secure enjoyment of that quiet peace and sweetness of the hidden Spouse**, which neither the

4. Bien es verdad que muchas veces, cuando hay en el alma y pasan estas **comunicaciones espirituales muy interiores y secretas**, aunque el demonio no alcance cuáles y cómo sean, por la gran pausa y silencio que causan algunas de ellas en los sentidos y potencias de la parte sensitiva, por aquí hecha de ver que las hay y que recibe el alma algún bien.

Y entonces, como ve que no puede alcanzar a contradecirlas **al fondo del alma**, **hace cuanto puede por alborotar y turbar la parte sensitiva**, que **es donde alcanza**, ahora con dolores, ahora con horrores y miedos, con intento de desquietar y turbar por este medio a **la parte superior y espiritual del alma**, acerca de aquel bien que entonces recibe y goza.

Pero muchas veces, cuando la comunicación de la tal contemplación tiene su **puro embestimiento en el espíritu** y hace fuerza en él, no le aprovecha al demonio su diligencia para desquietarle,

antes el alma entonces recibe nuevo provecho y mayor y más segura paz.

Porque, en sintiendo la turbadora presencia del enemigo, ¡cosa admirable!, que, sin saber cómo es aquello y sin ella hacer nada de su parte, **se entra ella más adentro del fondo interior**, sintiendo ella muy bien que se pone en cierto refugio, donde se ve estar más alejada del enemigo y escondida,

y allí aumentársele la paz y el gozo que el demonio le pretendía quitar.

Y entonces todo aquel temor le cae por defuera,

sintiéndolo ella claramente y holgándose de verse **tan a lo seguro gozar de aquella quieta paz y sabor del Esposo escondido**, que ni mundo ni

world nor the devil can give it or take from it.

In that state, therefore, it realizes the truth of the words of the Bride about this, in the Songs, namely: *'See how threescore strong men surround the bed of Solomon, etc., because of the fears of the night.'* [(Ct3:7-8)285] It is conscious of this **strength and peace**, although it is often equally conscious that its flesh and bones are being tormented from without.

5. At other times, when **the spiritual communication** is not made in any great measure **to the spirit**, but **the sense [s]** have a part therein, the devil more easily succeeds in **disturbing** the spirit and raising a tumult within it, by means of the senses, with these terrors.

Great are the torment and the affliction which are then caused in **the spirit**; at times they exceed all that can be expressed.

For, when there is a **naked contact of spirit with spirit**, **the horror** is intolerable which the evil spirit causes in the good **spirit** (I mean, **in the soul**), when its tumult reaches it.

This is expressed likewise by the Bride in the Songs, when she says that it has happened thus to her at a time when she wished to descend to interior recollection in order to have fruition of these blessings [bienes]. She says: *'I went down into the garden of nuts to see the apples of the valleys, and if the vine had flourished. I knew not; my soul troubled me because of the chariots'* -- that is, because of the chariots and the noise of Aminadab, which is the devil. [(Ct 6:10) 286]

6. At other times it comes to pass that the devil is occasionally able to see certain favours which God is pleased to grant the soul when they are bestowed upon it **by the mediation of a good angel**;
for of those favours which come through a good angel God habitually allows the enemy to have knowledge:

partly so that he may do that which he can against them **according to the measure of justice**, and that thus he may not be able to allege with truth that no opportunity is given him for conquering the soul, as he said concerning Job. [Job 1:9-11; 2:4-8]

demonio puede dar ni quitar,

sintiendo allí el alma la verdad de lo que la Esposa a este propósito dice en los Cantares (3,7-8), es a saber: Mirad que al lecho de Salomón cercan sesenta fuertes, etc., por los temores de la noche. Y esta fortaleza y paz siente, aunque muchas veces siente atormentar la carne y los huesos por defuera.

5. Otras veces, cuando la comunicación espiritual no comunica mucho en el espíritu, sino que participa en el sentido, con más facilidad alcanza el demonio a turbar el espíritu y alborotarle por medio del sentido con estos horrores.

Y entonces es grande el tormento y pena que causa en **el espíritu**, y algunas veces más de lo que se puede decir;

porque, como va de espíritu a **espíritu desnudamente**, es intolerable el horror que causa el malo en el bueno, digo en el del ánima, cuando le alcanza su alboroto.

Lo cual también da a entender la Esposa en los Cantares (6, 10), cuando dice haberle a ella acaecido así al tiempo que quería descender al interior recogimiento a gozar de estos bienes, diciendo: *Descendí al huerto de las nueces para ver las manzanas de los valles y si había florecido la viña; no supe; conturbóme mi alma por las cuadrigas*, esto es, por los carros y estruendos de Aminadab, que es el demonio.

6. Otras veces acaece, y esto cuando es por medio del ángel bueno, que algunas veces el demonio echa de ver alguna merced que Dios quiere hacer al alma. Porque las que son por este medio del ángel bueno, ordinariamente permite Dios que las entienda el adversario:

lo uno, para que haga contra ellas lo que pudiere **según la proporción de la justicia**, y así no pueda alegar el demonio de su derecho, diciendo que no le dan lugar para conquistar al alma, como hizo de Job (1, 9-11; 2, 4-8);

This would be the case if God allowed not **a certain equality** between the two warriors -- namely, the good angel and the bad -- when they strive for the soul, so that the victory of either may be of the greater worth, and the soul that is victorious and faithful in temptation may be the **more [abundantly] rewarded**.

7. We must observe, therefore, that it is for this reason that, **in proportion** [in the same measure and modality] as God is guiding the soul and communing with it, He gives the devil leave to act with it after **this manner**.

When the soul has genuine visions **by the instrumentality** [means] **of the good angel** (for it is by this instrumentality that they habitually come, even though Christ reveal Himself, for He scarcely ever appears in His actual person),

God **also gives** the wicked angel leave to present to the soul **false visions** of this very type in such a way that the soul which is **not cautious** may easily be **deceived** by their outward appearance, as many souls have been. Of this there is a figure in Exodus, [Ex 7:11-12; 8:7] where it is said that all the genuine signs that Moses wrought were wrought **likewise** in appearance by the magicians of Pharaoh. If he brought forth frogs, they brought them forth **likewise**; if he turned water into blood, they did **the same**.

8. And not only does the evil one imitate God in this type of **bodily vision**, but he also **imitates and interferes in spiritual communications** which come through the **instrumentality of an angel**, when he succeeds in seeing them, as we say (for, as Job said [Job 41:25]: *Omne sublime videt*).

These, however, as they are **without form and figure** (for **it is the nature of spirit to have no such thing**), he cannot imitate and counterfeit like those others which are presented **under some species or figure**.

And thus, in order to attack the soul, **in the same way** as that wherein it is

lo cual sería si no dejase Dios lugar a que hubiese **cierta paridad** en los dos guerreros, conviene a saber, el ángel bueno y el malo, acerca del alma. y así la victoria de cualquiera sea más estimada, y el alma victoriosa y fiel en la tentación sea **más premiada**.

7. Donde nos conviene notar que ésta es la causa por que, **a la misma medida y modo** que va Dios llevando al alma y habiéndose con ella, da licencia al demonio para que de esa **misma manera** se haya él con ella:

que, si tiene visiones verdaderas por medio del ángel bueno (que ordinariamente son por este medio, aunque se muestre Cristo, porque él en su misma persona casi nunca parece),

también da Dios licencia al ángel malo para que en aquel mismo género se las pueda representar falsas, de manera que, según son de aparentes, el alma que no es cauta fácilmente puede ser engañada, como muchas de esta manera lo han sido. De lo cual hay figura en el Exodo (7, 11-12; 8, 7), donde se dice que, todas las señales que hacía Moisés verdaderas, hacían también los mágicos de Faraón aparentes; que, si él sacaba ranas, ellos también las sacaban; si él volvía el agua en sangre, ellos también la volvían.

8. Y no sólo en este género de **visiones corporales** imita, sino también en las espirituales comunicaciones, cuando son por medio del ángel, alcanzándolas a ver, como decimos, porque, como dice Job (41, 25): *Omne sublime videt*, **imita y se entremete**.

Aunque en éstas, como son sin forma y figura (porque de razón del espíritu es no tenerla), no las puede él imitar y formar como las otras que debajo de alguna especie o figura se representan.

Y así, para impugnarla, al mismo modo que el alma es visitada,

being visited, his fearful spirit presents a **similar** vision in order to attack and destroy **spiritual things by spiritual**.

When this comes to pass just as **the good angel** is about to **communicate spiritual contemplation to the soul**, it is impossible for the soul to shelter itself in the secrecy and hiding-place of contemplation with **sufficient rapidity** not to be observed by the devil;

and thus he appears to it and produces **a certain horror and perturbation of spirit** [spiritual] which at times is **most distressing** to the soul.

Sometimes the soul can **speedily** free itself from him, so that there is no opportunity for the aforementioned horror of the evil spirit to make an impression on it;

and it **becomes recollected within itself**, being favoured, to this end, by the effectual spiritual grace that **the good angel** then **communicates to it**.

9. At other times the devil prevails and encompasses the soul with a perturbation and horror which is a greater affliction to it than any torment in this life could be.

For, as this horrible communication passes direct **from spirit to spirit**, in something like **nakedness** and clearly distinguished from all that is **corporeal**, it is grievous beyond what every sense can feel;

and this lasts in the spirit for some time, yet **not for long**, for otherwise the spirit would be **driven forth from the flesh** by the vehement communication of the other spirit.

Afterwards there **remains** to it **the memory** thereof, which is sufficient to cause it great affliction.

10. All that we have here described comes to pass in the soul **passively**, **without its doing or undoing anything of itself** with respect to it.

representarla su temor espiritual para impugnar y destruir espiritual con espiritual.

Cuando esto acaece así, al tiempo que **el ángel bueno va a comunicar al alma la espiritual contemplación**, no puede el alma ponerse **tan presto** en **lo escondido y celada** de la contemplación que no sea notada del demonio

y la alcance de vista con algún horror y turbación espiritual, a veces harto penosa para el alma.

Entonces algunas veces se puede el alma despedir presto, sin que haya lugar de hacer en ella impresión en el dicho horror del espíritu malo,

y **se recoge dentro de sí**, favorecida para esto de la eficaz merced espiritual que el ángel bueno entonces le hace.

9. Otras veces prevalece el demonio y comprehende al alma la turbación y el horror, lo cual es al alma de mayor pena que ningún tormento de esta vida le podría ser;

porque, como esta horrenda comunicación va **de espíritu a espíritu**, algo **desnuda y claramente de todo lo que es cuerpo**, es penosa sobre todo sentido;

y dura esto algún tanto en el espíritu, no mucho, porque saldría el espíritu de las carnes con la vehemente comunicación del otro espíritu;

después queda la memoria que basta para dar gran pena.

10. Todo esto que habemos dicho pasa en el alma **pasivamente**, sin ser ella parte en hacer y deshacer acerca de ello.

But in this connection it must be known that, when **the good angel** permits the devil to gain this advantage of assailing the soul with this spiritual horror, he does it **to purify the soul and to prepare it by means of this spiritual vigil** for some great spiritual favour and festival which he desires to grant it, for **he never mortifies save to give life**, nor **humbles save to exalt** (1 Kings 2, 6-7), which comes to pass shortly afterwards.

Then, **according** as was the dark and horrible purgation which the soul suffered, so is the fruition now granted it of **a wondrous and delectable spiritual contemplation**, sometimes so lofty that **there is no language to describe it**.

But **the spirit** has been greatly **refined** [sutilizola] by the preceding horror of the evil spirit, in order that it may **be able to receive** this blessing [bien]; for these **spiritual visions** belong to the next life **rather** than to this, and when one of them is seen this is a preparation for the next.

11. This is to be understood with respect to occasions **when God visits the soul by the instrumentality of a good angel**, wherein, as has been said, the soul is **not so totally in darkness and in concealment** that the enemy cannot come within reach of it.

But, when God Himself visits it, then the words of this line are indeed fulfilled, and it is **in total darkness and in concealment** from the enemy that the soul receives these spiritual favours of God.

The reason for this is that, as **His Majesty dwells substantially²⁵ in the soul**, where neither angel nor devil can attain to an understanding of that which comes to pass, they cannot know the intimate and secret communications which take place there between the soul [the spirit] and God. These communications, since the Lord **Himself** works them, are

Pero es aquí de saber que, cuando **el ángel bueno** permite al **demonio** esta ventaja de alcanzar al alma con este **espiritual horror**, hácelo para purificarla y disponerla con esta vigilia espiritual para alguna gran fiesta y merced espiritual: que le quiere hacer el que nunca mortifica sino para dar vida, ni humilla sino para ensalzar (1 Re. 2,6-7). Lo cual acaece de allí a poco,

que el alma, **conforme** a la purgación tenebrosa y horrible que padeció, **goza de admirable y sabrosa contemplación espiritual**, a veces **tan subida**, que no hay lenguaje para ella;

pero **sutilizóla** mucho el **espíritu** para poder recibir este bien el antecedente horror del espíritu malo; porque estas **visiones espirituales más** son de la otra vida que de ésta, y, cuando se ve una, dispone para otra.

11. Lo dicho se entiende acerca de cuando **visita Dios al alma por medio del ángel bueno**, en lo cual **no va** ella, según se ha dicho, **totalmente tan a oscuras y en celada**, que no le alcance algo el enemigo.

Pero **cuando Dios por sí mismo la visita**, entonces se verifica bien el dicho verso, porque totalmente *a oscuras y en celada* del enemigo recibe las mercedes espirituales de Dios.

La causa es porque como **Su Majestad mora sustancialmente en el alma**, donde **ni ángel ni demonio puede llegar a entender lo que pasa**, no puede conocer las íntimas y secretas comunicaciones que entre ella y Dios allí pasan. Estas, por cuanto las hace el Señor **por sí mismo, totalmente son divinas y soberanas**, porque todos son **toques sustanciales de divina**

²⁵ Spiritual Canticle 1,3-4 ; SCA 8,2 ; 11,3ss. (most important) ; Ascent of Mount Carmel II,5,3 ; Living Flame 1,12-14 ; 3,24.

wholly Divine and sovereign, for they are all **substantial touches of Divine union**²⁶ between the soul [spirit] and God; **in one of which the soul receives a greater blessing than in all the rest**, since this is the loftiest degree²⁷ of prayer in existence.

12. For these are the touches that the Bride entreated of Him in the Songs, saying: *Osculetur me osculo oris sui*. [(Song 1:2)²⁸] Since this is a thing which takes place in **such close intimacy with God**, whereto the soul desires with such yearnings to attain, it **esteems and longs for a touch of this Divinity**²⁹ more than all the other favours that God grants it³⁰.

Wherefore, after many such favours have been granted to the Bride in the said Songs, of which she has sung therein, she is not satisfied, but entreats Him for these Divine touches, saying: *'Who shall give Thee to me, my brother, that I might find Thee alone without, sucking the breasts of my mother, so that I might kiss Thee with the mouth of my soul, and that thus no man should despise me or make bold to attack me.'* [(Song 8:1)]

By this she denotes **the communication which God Himself alone** makes to her, as we are saying, **far from all the creatures and without their knowledge**, for this is meant by *'alone and without, sucking, etc.'* -- that is, drying up and draining the breasts of the desires and affections of the sensual part of the soul.

This takes place when the soul, in intimate peace and delight, has fruition of these blessings, with **liberty of spirit**, and without the sensual part being able to hinder it, or the devil to thwart it by means thereof.

And then the devil would not make bold to attack it, for he would not reach it, neither could he attain to an understanding of these **Divine touches in**

unión entre el alma y Dios,

en uno de los cuales, por ser éste el más alto grado de oración que hay, recibe el alma mayor bien que en todo el resto.

12. Porque éstos son los toques que ella le entró pidiendo en los Cantares (1,1), diciendo: *Osculetur me osculo oris sui*, etc. Que por ser cosa que tan a lo justo pasa con Dios, donde el alma con tantas ansias codicia llegar, estima y codicia un toque de esta Divinidad más que todas las demás mercedes que Dios le hace.

Por lo cual, después que en los dichos Cantares le había hecho muchas, que ella allí ha contado, no hallándose satisfecha. dice, pidiendo estos toques divinos: *¿Quién te me dará hermano mío, que te hallase yo sola afuera mamando de los pechos de mi madre, porque con la boca de mi alma te besase, y así no me despreciase ni se me atreviese ninguno?* (8, 1).

Dando a entender por esto que, siendo la comunicación que Dios le hiciese para sí sólo, como vamos diciendo, afuera y a excusa de todas las criaturas, que esto quiere decir "solo y afuera mamando", esto es, **enjugando y apagando** los pechos de los apetitos y afecciones de la parte sensitiva

(lo cual es cuando ya con libertad de espíritu, sin que la parte sensitiva alcance a impedirlo, ni el demonio por medio de ella a contradecirlo, goza el alma en sabor y paz íntima estos bienes).

que entonces no se le atrevería el demonio, porque no lo alcanzaría, ni podrá llegar a entender estos divinos toques en la sustancia del alma en la

²⁶ See *Ascent of Mount Carmel* II,26 and 31.

²⁷ Lit., 'step.' Cf. Bk. II, chap. 19, first note, above.

²⁸ "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth – for your love is more delightful than wine."

²⁹ The touch she is yearning to is receiving at the end of the purification which corresponds to the beginning of the spiritual engagement. It is described in the Spiritual Cantic in stanza 13 : "Turn them [your eyes, i.e. your divinity] away, O my Beloved! / I am on the wing".

³⁰ Stop sending me messengers. Stanza 6 : "Oh! who can heal me? / Give me at once Yourself, / **Send me no more / A messenger / Who cannot tell me what I wish.**"

the substance of the soul in the loving substance of God.

13. To this blessing **none attains save through intimate purgation and detachment** [desnudez] **and spiritual concealment** from all that is creature;

it comes to pass in the *darkness*, as we have already explained at length and as we say with respect to this line.

The soul **is in concealment and in hiding**, in the which **hiding-place**, as we have now said, it continues to be **strengthened** in union with God through love, wherefore it sings this in the same phrase, saying: *'In darkness and in concealment.'*

14. When it comes to pass that those favours are granted to the soul *in concealment* (that is, as we have said, **in spirit only**), the soul is wont, during some of them, and without knowing how this comes to pass, to see itself so far withdrawn and separated according to **the higher and spiritual part**, from the sensual and lower portion, that it recognizes in itself **two parts so distinct from each other** that it believes that the one has naught to do with the other, but that the one is **very remote and far withdrawn from the other**.

And in reality, in a certain way, this is so; for **the operation** is now **wholly spiritual**, and the soul receives **no communication in its sensual part**.

In this way the soul **gradually becomes wholly spiritual**; and in this hiding-place of **unitive contemplation** its **spiritual desires and passions** are to a great degree **removed and purged away**. And thus, speaking of its **higher part**, the soul then says in this last line:

*My house being now at rest.*³¹

amorosa sustancia de Dios.

13. A este bien ninguno llega si no es por íntima purgación y desnudez y escondrijo espiritual de todo lo que es criatura.

Lo cual a oscuras, como largamente hemos dicho atrás y decimos acerca de este verso

en celada y escondido; en el cual **escondido**, como ahora hemos dicho, se va **confirmando** el alma en la unión con Dios por amor. Y, por eso lo canta ella en el dicho verso. diciendo: *a oscuras y en celada*.

14. Cuando acaece que aquellas mercedes se le hacen al alma *en celada*, que es **sólo**, como hemos dicho, **en espíritu**, suele en algunas de ellas el alma verse sin saber cómo es aquello, tan apartada y alejada según **la parte espiritual y superior** de **la porción inferior y sensitiva**, que conoce en sí **dos partes** tan distintas entre sí, que le parece **no tiene que ver la una con la otra**, pareciéndole que está muy remota y apartada de la una.

Y la verdad, en cierta manera así lo está; porque **según la operación**, que entonces es **toda** espiritual, **no comunica en la parte sensitiva**.

De esta suerte **se va haciendo el alma toda** espiritual; en estos **escondrijos de contemplación unitiva** se le acaban por sus términos de quitar **las pasiones y apetitos espirituales** en mucho grado. Y así, hablando de **la porción superior del alma**, dice luego este último verso:

Estando ya mi casa sosegada.

³¹ The word translated 'at rest' is a past participle: more literally, 'stilled.'

CHAPTER XXIV

Completes the explanation of the second stanza.

1. THIS is as much as to say: **The higher portion of my soul** being like **the lower part** also, **at rest with respect to its desires and faculties**, I went forth to **the Divine union of the love of God**.

2. Inasmuch as, by **means** of that **war of the dark night**, as has been said, the soul is **combated and purged** after **two manners** -- namely, according to its **sensual** and its **spiritual part** -- with its senses, faculties and passions, so likewise after **two manners** -- namely, according to these **two parts, the sensual and the spiritual** -- with all its faculties and desires, the soul attains to an enjoyment of peace and rest.

For this reason, as has likewise been said, the soul **twice pronounces this line** -- namely,³² in this stanza and in the last -- because of these **two portions of the soul, the spiritual and the sensual**, which, in order that they may go forth to the Divine union of love, **must needs first be reformed, ordered and tranquillized** with respect to **the sensual** and to **the spiritual**, according to the nature of the state of innocence which was Adam's.³³

And thus this line which, in the first stanza, was understood of **the repose of the lower and sensual portion**, is, in this second stanza, understood more particularly of **the higher and spiritual part**; for which reason it is **twice repeated**.

CAPITULO 24

Acábase de explicar la segunda canción.

1. Lo cual es tanto como decir: estando la porción superior de mi alma ya también, como la inferior, sosegada según sus apetitos y potencias, salí a la divina unión de amor de Dios.

2. Por cuanto de dos maneras por medio de aquella **guerra de la oscura noche**, como queda dicho, es combatida y purgada el alma, conviene a saber, según la parte sensitiva y la espiritual, con sus sentidos, potencias y pasiones, también de dos maneras, conviene saber, según estas dos partes sensitiva y espiritual, con todas sus potencias y apetitos, viene el alma a conseguir paz y sosiego.

Que, por eso, como también queda dicho, repite dos veces este verso, conviene a saber, en esta canción y la pasada, por razón de estas dos porciones del alma, espiritual y sensitiva: las cuales, para poder ella salir a la divina unión de amor, conviene que estén primero reformadas, ordenadas y quietas acerca de lo sensitivo y espiritual conforme al modo del estado de la inocencia que había en Adán.

Y así este verso, que en la primera canción es entendido del sosiego de la porción inferior y sensitiva, en esta segunda se entiende particularmente de la superior y espiritual, que por eso le ha repetido dos veces.

³² Lit., 'twice repeats'--a loosely used phrase.

³³ H omits this last phrase, which is found in all the other Codices, and in e.p. The latter adds: 'notwithstanding that the soul is not wholly free from the temptations of the lower part.' The addition is made so that the teaching of the Saint **may not be confused with that of the Illuminists**, who supposed the contemplative in union to be impeccable, do what he might. The Saint's meaning is that for the mystical union of the soul with God such purity and tranquillity of senses and faculties are **needful** that his condition resembles that **state of innocence in which Adam was created**, but without the attribute of impeccability, which does not necessarily accompany union, nor can be attained by any, save by a most special privilege of God. Cf. St. Teresa's Interior Castle, VII,2. St. Teresa will be found occasionally to explain points of mystical doctrine which St. John of the Cross takes as being understood.

3. This **repose and quiet** of **this spiritual house** the soul comes to attain, habitually and perfectly (in so far as the condition of this life allows), by means of **the acts of the substantial touches of Divine union** whereof we have just spoken³⁴;

which, in **concealment**, and **hidden** from the perturbation of the devil, and of its own senses and passions, the soul has been receiving from the Divinity, wherein it has been purifying itself, as I say, resting, **strengthening** and **confirming** itself in order to be able to receive the said union once and for all, which is the **Divine betrothal** between the soul and the Son of God.

As soon as **these two houses** of the soul have together become **tranquillized and strengthened**, with all their domestics -- namely, the **faculties and desires** -- and have put these domestics to sleep and made them to be silent with respect to all things, both **above** and **below**, **this Divine Wisdom immediately unites itself with the soul** by making a new **bond of loving possession**, and there is fulfilled that which is written in the Book of Wisdom, in these words: *Dum quietum silentium contineret omnia, et nox in suo cursu medium iter haberet, omnipotens sermo tuus Domine a regalibus sedibus.*[Wisdom 18:16-15³⁵] The same thing is described by the Bride in the Songs,[Songs 5:7; 3:4³⁶] where she says that, after she had passed by those who stripped her of her mantle by night and wounded her, she found Him Whom her soul loved.

4. The soul **cannot come to this union without great purity**, and **this purity is not gained without great detachment [desnudez] from every created thing and vigorous mortification.**

3. Este sosiego y quietud de esta casa espiritual viene a conseguir el alma, habitual y perfectamente, según esta condición de vida sufre, por medio de los actos de toques sustanciales de unión que acabamos de decir,

y que, en celada y escondida de la turbación del demonio y de los sentidos y pasiones, ha ido recibiendo de la Divinidad. en que el alma se ha ido purificando, como digo, sosegando y fortaleciendo y haciendo estable para poder de asiento recibir la dicha unión, que es el divino desposorio entre el alma y el Hijo de Dios.

El cual, luego que estas dos casas del alma se acaban de sosegar y fortalecer en uno con todos sus domésticos de potencias y apetitos, poniéndolos en sueño y silencio acerca de todas las cosas de arriba y de abajo, inmediatamente esta divina Sabiduría se une en el alma con un nuevo nudo de posesión de amor, y se cumple como ella lo dice en el libro de la Sabiduría (18,14-15) Diciendo: *Dum quietum silentium contineret omnia, et nox in suo cursu medium iter haberet, omnipotens sermo tuus, Domine, a regalibus sedibus.* Lo mismo da a entender la Esposa en los Cantares, diciendo que después que pasó los que la desnudaron el manto de noche y la llagaron (5, 7), halló al que deseaba su ánima (3, 4).

4. No se puede venir a esta unión sin **gran pureza**, y esta pureza no se alcanza sin **gran desnudez de toda cosa criada y viva mortificación.**

³⁴ See previous chapter.

³⁵ “14 The short night was half over, and all was quiet and peaceful, 15 when suddenly your threats were carried out! An invincible word of judgement sped from your royal throne in heaven, straight down to that doomed land.”

³⁶ Song 5 :7 : “The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. They beat me, they bruised me; they took away my cloak, those watchmen of the walls!” and Song 3 :4 : “Scarcely had I passed them when I found the one my heart loves. I held him and would not let him go till I had brought him to my mother’s house, to the room of the one who conceived me.”

This is signified by the stripping of the Bride of her mantle and by her being wounded by night as she sought and went after the Spouse;

for the new mantle which belonged to the betrothal **could not be put on until the old mantle was stripped off.**

Wherefore, **he that refuses to go forth** in the night aforementioned to seek the Beloved, and **to be stripped [desnudado] of his own will and to be mortified**, but seeks Him upon his bed and at his own convenience, as did the Bride, [Songs 3:1] **will not succeed in finding Him**. For this soul says of itself that it found Him by **going forth in the dark and with yearnings of love.**

CHAPTER XXV

Wherein is expounded the third stanza.

*In the happy night,
In secret, when none saw me,
Nor I beheld aught,
Without light or guide,
save that which burned in my heart.*

EXPOSITION

1. THE soul still continues the metaphor and similitude of temporal **night** in describing this its spiritual night, and continues to sing and extol the **good properties** which belong to it, and which in passing through this night it found and used, to the end that it might **attain** its desired goal **with speed and security**. Of these **properties** it here sets down three.

2. **The first**, it says, is that in this happy night of contemplation God leads

Lo cual es significado por desnudar el manto a la Esposa y llagarla de noche en la busca y pretensión del Esposo;

porque el nuevo manto que pretendía del desposorio no se le podía vestir sin desnudar el viejo.

Por tanto, el que **rehusare salir en la noche** ya dicha a buscar al Amado y ser **desnudado** de su voluntad y mortificado, sino que en su lecho y acomodamiento le busca, como hacía la Esposa, **no llegará a hallarle**, como esta alma dice de sí que lo halló, saliendo ya a oscuras y con ansia de amor.

CAPITULO 25

En que brevemente se declara la tercera canción.

CANCION 3

*En la noche dichosa,
en secreto, que nadie me veía,
ni yo miraba cosa,
sin otra luz y guía
sino la que en el corazón ardía.*

DECLARACION

1. Continuando todavía el alma la metáfora y semejanza de la noche temporal en esta suya espiritual, va todavía contando y engrandeciendo las buenas propiedades que hay en ella, y que por medio de ella halló y llevó, para que breve y seguramente consiguiese su deseado fin, de las cuales aquí pone tres.

2. La primera, dice, es que en esta dichosa noche de contemplación lleva

the soul by **a manner of contemplation so solitary and secret, so remote and far distant** from sense, that naught pertaining to it, nor any touch of created things, succeeds in approaching the soul in such a way as to disturb it and detain it on the road of the union of love.

3. **The second property** whereof it speaks pertains to the **spiritual darkness** of this night, wherein **all the faculties of the higher part of the soul are in darkness**.

The soul sees naught, neither looks at aught neither stays in aught that is not God, to the end that it may reach Him, inasmuch as it journeys unimpeded by **obstacles of forms and figures**, and of **natural apprehensions**,

which are those that are wont to **hinder the soul** from uniting with the eternal Being of God.

4. **The third** is that, although as it journeys it is supported by **no particular interior light of understanding**, nor by any **exterior guide**, that it may receive satisfaction therefrom on this **lofty road** -- it is completely deprived of all this by this thick darkness -- yet its **love alone**, which **burns** at this time, and makes its heart to **long** for the Beloved, **is that which now moves and guides it**, and makes it to soar upward to its God along **the road of solitude**, **without its knowing how or in what manner**. There follows the line:

*In the happy night*³⁷

Thus end the majority of the MSS. Cf. pp. lxxviii-lxxiii, Ascent of Mount Carmel (Image Books edition), 26-27, on the incomplete state of this treatise. The MSS. say nothing of this, except that in the Alba de Tormes

Dios el alma por tan solitario y secreto **modo de contemplación** y tan remoto y ajeno del sentido, que cosa ninguna perteneciente a él, ni toque de criatura, alcanza a llegarle al alma, de manera que la estorbase y detuviese en el camino de la unión de amor.

3. **La segunda** propiedad que dice, es por causa de las tinieblas espirituales de esta noche, en que **todas las potencias de la parte superior del alma están a oscuras**;

no mirando el alma ni pudiendo mirar en nada, no se detiene en nada fuera de Dios para ir a él, por cuanto va libre de los obstáculos de formas y figuras y de las aprehensiones naturales,

que son las que suelen empachar el alma para no se unir siempre con el ser de Dios.

4. **La tercera** es que, aunque ni va arrimada a alguna **particular luz interior del entendimiento** ni a alguna **guía exterior** para recibir satisfacción de ella en este **alto camino**, teniéndola **privada de todo** estas oscuras tinieblas; pero el amor solo que en este tiempo arde, solicitando el corazón por el Amado, es el que guía y mueve al alma entonces, y la hace volar a su Dios por el camino de la soledad, sin ella saber cómo y de qué manera. Siguese el verso:

En la noche dichosa.

³⁷ Thus end the majority of the MSS. Cf. pp. lxxviii-lxxiii, Ascent of Mount Carmel (Image Books edition), 26-27, on the incomplete state of this treatise. The MSS. say nothing of this, except that in the Alba de Tormes MS. we read: 'Thus far wrote the holy Fray John of the Cross concerning the purgative way, wherein he treats of the active and the passive [aspect] of it as is seen in the treatise of the Ascent of the Mount and in this of the Dark Night, and, as he died, he wrote no more. And hereafter follows the illuminative way, and then the unitive.' Elsewhere we have said that the lack of any commentary on the last five stanzas is not due to the Saint's death, since he lived for many years after writing the commentary on the earlier stanzas.

MS. we read:

*'Thus far wrote the holy Fray John of the Cross concerning **the purgative way**, wherein he treats of **the active and the passive** [aspect] of it as is seen in the treatise of the Ascent of the Mount and in this of the Dark Night, and, as he died, he wrote no more. And hereafter follows the illuminative way, and then the unitive.'*

Elsewhere we have said that the lack of any commentary on the last five stanzas is not due to the Saint's death, since he lived for many years after writing the commentary on the earlier stanzas.