The Complete Works of Saint John of the Cross

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COMPLETE WORKS

OP

SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS,

OF THE

ORDER OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL S1'\M>H

BY

DAVID LEWIS, ESQ. M.A.

EDITED BY THE OBLATE FATHERS OF SAINT CHARLES.

WITH A PREFACE

BY

His 1 \IINENCE CARDINAL WISEMAN.

VOL II

LONDON:

LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, ROBERTS, & Gl:

18

IDE INSTITUTE OF HFPIAEVAL S1UOIL3

10 ELMSLEY Ft

TORONTO - )A.

OCT 3 1 1931

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AND CHRIST.

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SPIRITUAL CANTICLE

BETWEEN

THE SOUL AND CHRIST.

A

srmrruAL CANTICJ

BETU I

THE SOUL AND CHRIST.

PROLOGUE.

As tlii- < antiele seems to have been written in a fervour of love

for God, Whose love and wisdom are so infinite as, in the

words of Scripture, to reach ' from end to end ;' \* and as the

soul, under its influence, manifests a somewhat similar force

and amplitude in speak ,1 do not intend to explain the

grandeur and richness which a mind fruitful in love may find

It would be gross ignorance to think that the out-

pourings of love and of the mystical intelligence the subjeet

of these stanzas could be des< -riln d hy any words of man;

for,assaith the Apostl. -i.irit of (iod. Who 'helpeth >ur

infirmities,' dwelling io us, with unspeakable

liat we can neither understand n>r compre-

liend. Who then can d- that \\hieh He reveals to

those loving souls in whom He dwells ? Who can express

in words their feelings and their d. ; redly no one,

not even ' mselves, who have such e\i- r< :.<.>. Thi>

reason why men hide tlieii neath figures,

\\.-i ritt. i. t l; JO.

II. L

A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

PROLOGUE.

of tlu-

:t,

dty

Example of

the Canti.-le

of Solomon.

Tlie Author's

farptm.

The reader's

liberty.

Finis

<>\ ri-. -

< anta-.

comparisons, and similitudes, and in the abundance of the

spirit utter mysteries and secrets rather than explain them-

selves in intelligible words. And if these similitudes be

not received in the simplicity of a loving mind, and in the sense

in which they are uttered, they will seem to be effusions of

folly rather than of reason ; as any one may see in the Divine

Canticle of Solomon, and in others of the Sacred Books,

wherein the Holy Ghost, because of the incapacity of ordinary

language to convey His meaning, uttered His mysteries in

strange terms and similitudes. It follows from this, that

after all that the holy Doctors have said on the subject, and

indeed after all they may say hereafter, no words can explain

it ; words can do little here ; and so, in general, all that men

may write falls far short of the matter of which they treat.

The stanzas that follow having been written under the

influence of that love which proceeds from the overflowing

mystical intelligence, cannot for this reason be fully ex-

plained. Indeed I do not purpose any such thing, for my

sole object is to throw some general light over them, which

in my opinion is the better course. It is better to leave the

outpourings of love in their own fulness, that every one may

apply them according to the measure of his spirit and power,

than to pare them down to one particular sense which is not

suited to the taste of every one. And though I do put f>rth

a particular explanation, still others are not to be bound by

it. The Mystical Wisdom that is, the love, of which these

stanzas speak does not require to be distinctly understood

in order to produce the effect of love and tenderness in the

soul, for it is in this respect like Faith, which enables us to

love God without a clear comprehension of Hun.

I shall therefore be very concise, though now and th< -n

unable to avoid some prolixity where the subject requin- it,

and when the opportunity is offered of discussing certain

points and effects of prayer: many >f which being referred to

MATTER AND MKTIK'D <F T1IK \\<>KK.

in these stanzas, I must not omit ;ill .t' th.-m. I shall, PROLOGUE.

however, pass over the more ordinary ones, and treat lri -tly

of the more extraordinary ones to which they are subject

who, by the mercy of God, have advanced beyond the state

of beginners. This I do for two reasons : the first is, that

much is already written concerning beginners ; and the

second is, that I am addressing those who have received

from our Lord the grace of being led on from the elementary

state and carried inwards to the bosom of His Divine love.

I therefore trust, though I may discuss some points of the

Scholastic Theology relating to the interior commerce of the

soul with God, that I am not using such language altogether

in vain, and that it will be found profitable for pure

iKility. For though some maybe altogether ignorant

of Scholastic Theology by which the Divine verities are ex-

plained, yet they are not ignorant of Mystical Theology, a

science of love, by which those verities are not only

learned, but at the same time relished also.

And in order that what I am going to say may be the The Jodg,

better received, submitting myself to higher judgments, and

unreservedly to that of our holy mother the Church, I intend

to say nothing in reliance on my own personal experience, nor

on what I have observed in other spiritual persons, nor on what

I have heard them say though I intend to profit by all this

unless I can confirm it with the sanction of tli< l>i\ine

r least on those points which are the most

nit <.f cninj.irh. n>i..M. The method I propose to follow

in the matter is, first of all, to cite the express words of Scrip-

, and then to give that explanation of them which belongs

to the subject before me. I shall now transcribe all the

stanzas, and place them at the beginning of this treatise.

In tli. next place I shall take each of them separately, and

explain them line by line, each line in iU proper place.

n j

A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

MALOnt'E.

: and

M. .,-:::.< a-

tion.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE SOUL AND CHRIS'I

I

THE BRIDE.

Whore hast Tliou hidden Thyself?

Why hast Thou forsaken me in my groaning, O my

Beloved ?

Thou didst fly like the hart, away,

When Thou hadst wounded me.

I ran after Thee, crying ; but Thou wert gone.

Eamost

ii

O shepherds, you who go

Through the sheepcots up the hill,

If you shall see Him

Whom I love,

Tell Him I languish, agonize, and die.

Conrnjre and

Resolution.

Ill

In search of my Love

I will traverse mountains and strands ;

I will gather no flowers,

I will fear no wild beasts ;

And I will overpass the mighty and the front irrs.

Mflitatii.il.

IV

Ye groves and thickets

Planted by the hand of the Beloved ;

Ye verdant meads

Enamelled with flowers ;

Tell me, has He passed by you ?

ANSWER OF THE CREATURES.

A thousand graces diffusing

lie passed through the grove

And beholding them only

A.- lie paased,

He clothed them with His beauty.

DIALOOUB,

THK

() who can li-;il me ?

Give me perfectly Thyself,

Send me no more

A messenger

Who cannot tell me what I seek.

All they who ?

a thousand graces of Thee ;

all wound me more and more,

And they leav ing,

While they babble I know not what.

VIII

But how thou perseverest, O life

Not living where thou livest ;

Tho arrows bring death

Which thou receivest

From thy conceptions of the Beloved.

IX

Why, after wounding

heart, hast Thou not healed

And why, after stealing

Hast Thou thus abandoned

And not carried away what Thou hast st /.

eh Thou my troubles,

For none else can do so ;

.yes behold Thee

light,

alone I would use them.

A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

DIALOGUE.

The Spiritual

Betrothal.

M

Reveal Thy presence,

And let the vision of Thy beauty kill mo.

Behold, the disease

Of love is incurable

Except in Thy presence and in the light of Thy

countenance.

XII

O Fount of crystal !

that on Thy silvered surface

Thou wouldest mirror forth at once

Those eyes desirable

Which I have in my heart delineated !

XIII

Turn them away, O my Beloved !

1 fly away.

THE BRIDEGROOM.

Return, My Dove 1

The wounded hart

Looms on the hill

In the air of thy flight and is refreshed.

XIV

THE BRIDE.

My Beloved is the mountains,

The solitary wooded valleys,

The strange islands,

The roaring torrents,

The whisper of the amorous gales ;

xv

The tranquil night

At the approaches of the dawn,

The silent music,

The murmuring solitude,

The supper which revives, and enkindles love.

TIII-: Di:>iui: PO s WITH cm;

XVI DIALOOUR

xes,

For our vineyard liath

While of roses

ike a nosegay,

Ami let no one appear on the hill.

XVII

Cease, O thou killing north wind !

i \\iud, thou that awaki-nest love !

Blow through my garden,

And 1ft its odours flow,

ved shall feed amoi

XVIII

O nyni] ; '>-a 1

Wliih- amid tl. and tin- rose-trees

Tin- amber s<

^uburbs,

And touch not my thiv.-hold.

XIX

Hid.- Thyself, O my IV

Let Thy iace nhinr on tlu- mount.

Do not tell it,

. -ard the companions

Of her who traverses strange islands.

XX

THE BRIDEGROOM.

Lions, fawns, bounding <

tiu terrors that k

A SPIRITUAL CAMICLK.

XXI

By the soft lyres

And the siren strains, I adjure you,

Let your fury cease,

And touch not the wall,

That the Bride may sleep in peace.

XXII

The Bride has entered

The pleasant and desirable garden,

And there reposes to her heart's content ;

Her neck reclining

On the sweet arms of her B ! -v. !.

xx n i

Beneath the apple-tree

I espoused thee :

There I gave thee My hand,

And thou wert there redeemed

Where thy mother was corrupted.

XXIV

THE BRIDE.

Our bed is of flowers

By the dens of lions encompassed,

Hung with purple,

Made in peace,

And crowned with a thousand shields of gold.

XXV

In Thy footsteps

The young ones run Thy way ;

At the touch of the lire,

And by the spiced wine,

The Divine balsam flows.

LOVE )i-

.\\vi

In the inmost cellar

Of my Beloved have I drunk; and when I weir

Over all the plain

1 knew nothing,

And lost the flock I followed bef

.\\VII

There lie gave me His breasts,

There He taught me the science full of sweetness.

there I gave to Him

twithout reserve ;

I promised to be His Bri<l-.

XXVIII

My soul is occupied,

And all my substance in His service ;

Now I guard no flock,

Nor have I any other employment :

My sole occupation is love.

X X ! \

If, then, on the common

I am no longer seen or found,

Say that I am 1

That, being enamoured,

I lost myself; and yet I gained.

x\\

Of emeralds, and of flowers

In the early morning cullrd,

We will make the garlands,

Flowering in Thy love,

And bound together with one hair of my head.

10 -I'IRITUAL CANTICLE.

DIALOGUE. XXXI

By that one hair

Thou hast observed fluttering on my neck,

And hast regarded on my neck,

Thou wert captivated ;

And wounded by one of my eyes.

XXXII

When Thou didst regard me,

Thine eyes imprinted Thy grace in me :

For this didst Thou love me again,

And thereby mine eyes did merit

To adore what in Thee they saw.

XXXIII

Despise me not,

For if I was swarthy once

Thou canst regard me now ;

Since Thou hast regarded me,

Grace and beauty hast Thou given me.

xxxiv

THE BRIDEGROOM.

The little white dove

Has returned to the ark with the bough ;

And now the turtle-dove

Her desired mate

On the green banks has found.

xxxv

In solitude she lived,

And in solitude built her nest ;

And in solitude, alone

Hath the Beloved guided her,

In solitude also wounded with her love.

Tin-: IJKATIFIC M' 3 OF TIII-: I.NVAKNATIOX. n

oxn

THE BRIDE.

Let us rejoice, O my Beloved !

Let us go forth to see ourselves in Thy beauty,

To the mountain and the hill,

Where the pure water flows ;

Let us enter into the heart of the thicket

XXXVII

We shall go at once

To the lofty caverns of the rocks

Which are all secret,

There we shall enter in

And taste of the new wine of the pomegra

XXXVIII

There Thou wilt show me

What my soul desired ;

An<l there Thou wilt give at once,

O Thou, my life 1

What Thou gavest me the other day,

XXXIX

The breathing of the air,

The song of the sweet nightingale,

The grove and its beauty

In the serene night,

With the fin that consumes, but without pain.

XL

None saw it ;

N if her did Aminadab appear.

siege was intermitted,

And the cavalry dismounted

At the vision of the waters.

A .Sl'IKHTAL C'AM!

ARGUMENT.

These stanzas describe the career of the soul from its

entrance on the service of God till it comes to tin- final

state of perfection the spiritual marriage. They refer to

the three conditions of the spiritual life the Purgative, II I u-

miiiative, and Unitive ways; some properties or effects of

which they explain.

The first part relates to beginners to the purgative way.

The second to the advanced to the state of spiritual espousal,

that is, the illuminative way. The next part relates to the

unitive way that of the perfect, where the spiritual marriage

is brought to pass. The unitive way, or that of the perfect,

follows the illuminative, which is that of the advanced,

last stanzas treat of the beatific state, which only the already

perfect soul aims at.

EXPLANATION OF THE STANZAS.

INTRODUCTION.

The soul, considering the obligations of its state, seeing

\*ke ^ a y 8 ^ man are 8 ^ ort '\* tnat tne wa y ^ ete rnal

life is strait ;f that \* the just man shall scarcely be saved ;'J

that the things of this world are empty and deceitful ; that

all die and perish like water poured on the ground ; that

time is uncertain, the last account strict, perdition most easy,

and salvation most difficult: and recognising also, on tin-

other hand, the great debt that is owing to God, V h-

created it solely for Himself, for which the service of it>

whole life is due, Who has redeemed it for Himsrlt' alone, for

Job xiv. 5.

1 S. l'< t. iv. 18.

t s - Miitth. vii. 11.

2 i\ 1 J.

GDI' ilALLY HID1. l:i

which it UWL-.S Him all else, and the corresponder > will K

ve; and remembering <>tli-r innume: <\*ssings

for which it acknowledges itself indebted to God even before .Bymoti

/rf -ji itl \_-\_L.

it was bora: and also that a great part of its life has been nJS

wasted, and that it will have to render an account of it all

trnm the beginning unto the end, to the repayment of 'the

last farthing, 10 when God shall 'search Jerusalem with

lamps ;' f that it is already late, and perhaps the end of the

day : in order to remedy so great an evil, especially when it is

conscious that God is grievously offended, and that He has

hidden His face from it, because it would forget Him for the

creatun-, the soul, now touched with sorrow and inward sink-

of the heart at the sight of its imminent risks and ruin,

renouncing everything and casting them aside without de-

ug for a day, or even an hour, with fear and groanings

uttnvd from the heart, and wounded with the love of God,

invokes the Beloved and says :

\N/A r.

Where hatt Thou hidden Thytdf!

Why hast Thoufortakcn me in my groaning, my Beloved f

Thou didttfiy like the hart, away,

v. i y/. JUU "- MM '.

/ ran after Thee, crying; but 7%o\* wert gone.

EXPLANATION.

I (t-re the soul, enamoured of the Word, the Son of God, the Tiwnai

Hi idegroom, desiring to be united to Him in the clear and 2\*S\*

substantial \ i>in, sets before Him the anxieties of its love,

complaining of His absence. And this the more so because,

now and wounded with love, for which it had aban-

d all things, even itself, it has still to end ure His absence,

unreleawd from tin- burden of the hYsh, unable to enjoy Him

in the glory of eternity. H.-n<v it eries cut, \Vhm- hast

i hidd.-n Thyteli

S. Matth. v. 20. t Soph.

14

A BPIBITUAL CA.NTICU-:.

STANZA. It is as if the soul said, Show me, O thou Word, my I>ride-

groom, the place where Thou art hidden. It asks fr the

in this life revelation of the Divine Essence ; for the place where the S..n

any clear

the'Sirtne \* ^ ^ 0( ^ \* 8 ^^den ^ 8 > according to S. John, ' the bosom of the

fcJJSSbie, Father,' \* the Divine Essence, transcending all mortal vision,

and concealed from all human understanding, as the Prophet

saith, 'Verily Thou art a hidden God.'f Remember, thru,

that the communications and sense of His presence, how-

ever great they may be, and the most sublime and profound

conceptions of God which the soul may have in this life, are

not God essentially, neither have they any affinity with Him,

for in very truth Jle is still hidden from the soul ; and it is

therefore expedient for it, amid all these grandeurs, always to

consider Him as hidden, and to seek Him in His hiding

place, saying, s Where hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

state of the Neither sublime communications nor sensible devotion

eoulnottobe . .

judged by furnish any certain proof of His gracious presence ; nor is the

absence thereof, and aridity any proof of His absence from the

soul. ' If He come to me, I shall not see Him; if He depart,

I shall not understand.' J That is, if the soul have any great

communication, or impression, or spiritual knowledge, it

must not on that account persuade itself that what it then

feels is to enjoy or see God clearly and in His Essence, or

that it brings it nearer to Him, or Him to it, however deep

such feelings may be. On the other hand, when all these

sensible and spiritual communications fail it, when it is itself

dried up, obscured, and abandoned, it must not on tl.at

account suppose that God is far from it; for in truth tin- pre-

sence of these things is no sign of its being in a state of gr.

nor is the absence thereof a sign that it is not; for \* man

knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hat ml.'

emotions.

S. Johni. 18.

J Job. ii. 11.

t Is. \\\ . 16,

Ecclr.-. ix. 1.

THI-: "M.y-r.i:'. i.-,

Th. ehi.-f ..1-jeet of the soul here is not only to ask for that ST

and sensible de\ herein there is no certainty "

: -h-nee of th; possession of tin- Bridegroom in this lite; My\*-yof

but principally for that clear presence and vision of His f?l

Essence, of whir h it longs to be assured and satisfied in the

. too, was the object of the Bride who, desiring to

be united to tin- Divinity of the Bridegroom V iyed to

the Fath.-r, saying, 'Show me where Thou feedest, where

n liest in the midday. 1 \* To ask to be shown the place

wh< <1 was to ask to be shown the Essence of the

i, the Son ; for the Father feedeth nowhere else

but in His only begotten Son, Who is the glory of the Father.

In asking to be shown the place where He lay in the midday,

she asked the same thing, for the Son is the sole delight of

the Father, Who lieth in no other place, and is comprehended

l.y no othei thin^, but in and by His beloved Son, in W'hom

II reposeth wholly, communicating to Him His whole

Essence. The ' midday' is eternity, where the Father is ever

begetting and the Son ever begotten.

This pasture, then, is the Bridegroom Word, where the

< edeth in infinite glory. He is also the bed of flowers

whereon He profoundly reposes with infinite delight of love,

and hidden from all mortal vision and every created thing.

- is the meaning of the Bride-soul when she says, ' Where

hast Thou l.i.l.leii Thyself?'

thirsty soul may tino! i^room, and be united

i" Him in thH life so far as that is possible and quench

\\ith that ih ink uhi.-h it is possible to drink of at II

Is in this life, it will be as well since that is what the

soul asks of Him that we should answer ir Him, and point

the spe< where II Men, that He may be

perfection and sweetness, of \vhi.-h this

is capable, and that the soul may not l-.it.-r uselessly in

(

Ifi A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

NV.A the footsteps of its companions. Rrinnnbrr, therefore, that

the Word, the Son of God, together with the Father and Ihr

f;o,un,M ( n Holy Ghost, is hidden in essence and in presence, in t IK-

HI the soul.

inmost being of the soul. That soul, therefore, that will

find Him, must go out from all tilings in will and affection,

and enter into the profoundest self-recollection, and all things

must be to it as if they existed not. Hence, S. Augustine

saith : < I found Thee not without, Lord, I sought Thee

S55\*. without in vain, for Thou art within.'\* God is therefore

?u?a maiT ni> bidden within the soul, and the true contemplative will seek

Him there in love, saying, ' Where hast Thou hidden Thy-

rati t0 \*' self?'

thou soul, most beautiful of creatures, who so earnestly

longest to know the place where thy Beloved is, that tin >u

1 vest seek Him, and be united to Him ! Thou art thyself

that very tabernacle where He dwells, the secret chamber

joy of being of His retreat where He is hidden. Rejoice, therefore, and

close to God. \*'

exult, because all thy good and all thy hope is so near thee

as to be within thee ; yea, rather rejoice that thou canst not 1 r

without it, < for lo, the kingdom of God is within you.' f So

saith the Bridegroom Himself, and His servant, S. Paul,

adds: \* You are the temple of the living God.' J What joy

for the soul to learn that God never abandons it even in

mortal sin, how much less in a state of grace ? What more

canst thou desire, what more canst thou seek without,

seeing that within thou hast thy riches, thy delight, thy

satisfaction, thy fulness and thy kingdom, that is, thy

Beloved whom thou desirest and seekest. Rejoice thru,

and be glad with interior recollection, seeing that thou hast

Him so near. Then love Him, then desire Him, then adore

Him, and go not out of thyself, for that will l>r but distraction

and weariness, and thou shalt not find Him; l.rc.-msr there is

jio fruition of Him more certain, more ready, or more n

\* Sbliloq. c. 31. Opp. Ed. Ben. torn. vi. app. p. 98.

t S. Luke xvii. 21. J 2 Cor. vi. 16. Gtantel, I!k. 9

Till: IIII'IMl.V TK 17

than that \vliicli is witliin. One difficulty al .ains: FT

\_h lie is within. \.-t 1I- is hidden. Hut it is a great

;o know the place of His secret rest, that He may tlu n

be searched after the more certainly. Tin\* knowledge of

this is what thou askest for, Osoul, when with loving affection

thou eriest: 'Where hast Th..u hidden Thyself?'

"i u will still urge and say, How comes it, then, that

I find Him not, if He is within my soul? How comes

ii at I do not feel His presence? It is because He is Ood \*

hidden, and because thou also hidest not thyself that

thou mayest find Him and feel Him ; for he that will seek

that which is hidden must enter secretly into the secret

place where it is hidden, and when he finds it, he is hi n is\* If

hidden like the object of his search. Seeing, then, that the

legroom whom thou lovest is \* the treasure hidden in th"

field ' \* of thy soul, for which the wise merchant gave all

that he had, so thou, if thou will find Him, must forget all

that is thinr, withdraw from all created things, and hide thy-

self in the secret retreat of the spirit, shutting the door upon

thyself that is, denying thy will in all things and praying

to thy Father in secret, f Then thou wilt be conscious of

II j -ence, and love Him; then wilt thou enjoy Him in

secret, and delight in Him in secret, in a way that no tongue

or language can express. Courage, then, soul most beau-

t it'ul, thou knowest now that thy Beloved, whom thou desire

dwelleth hidden within thy breast; strive, therefore, to be

liidd.-n with Him, and then thou shalt embrace Him, and be

conscious of His presence with loving affection. Consider

also that He invites thee Himself to His secret hiding-place,

saying, 'Go, .t. thy chambers, shut thy doors upon

the\* is, all thy faculties, so that no created thing shall

enter: 4 hide thyself a little for a moment,' { that is, for the

a Mutt! t Ib. vi.O. 20..

. II.

18 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA time of this mortal life ; for, if now during this brief interval,

thou wilt 'with all watchfulness keep thy heart,'\* God will

most assuredly give thee, as He hath promised by His pro-

phet, ' the hidden treasures and the concealed riches of secret

places.' f The substance of these concealed riches is God

Himself, for He is the substance of faith, and faith is the

secret and the mystery. And when that which faith conceals

shall be revealed, or, as the Apostle saith, ' When that which

is perfect is come,' { then shall be revealed to the soul the

substance and mysteries of these secrets,

now and Though in this mortal life the soul will never reach to the

where God ia .

seen in this interior secrets as it will in the next, however much it may

hide itself, still, if it will hide itself with Moses, \* in the hole

of the rock ' which is a real imitation of the perfect life of the

Bridegroom, the Son of God protected by the right hand of

God, it will merit the vision of the ' back parts ; ' that is,

it will reach to such perfection here, as to be united with, and

transformed in, the Son of God, the Bridegroom, by love.

So effectually will this be wrought that the soul will feel itself

so united to Him, so learned and so instructed in His secrets,

that, so far as the knowledge of Him in this life is concerned,

it will be no longer necessary for it to say : ' Where hast Thou

hidden Thyself?'

Faith and Thou knowest then, O soul, how thou art to demean

love lead to

cbamterof thyself ^ thou wilt find the Bridegroom in his secret p!

But if thou wilt hear it again, hear this one word full of sub-

stance and unapproachable truth : Seek Him in faith and love,

without seeking to satisfy thyself in aught, or to understand

more than is expedient for thee to know; faith and love are

the two guides of the blind, they will lead thee by a way thou

knowest not to the secret chamber of God. Faith, the secret

\* Prov. iv. 23. t Is. xlv. 3.

} 1 Cor. xiii. 10. Exod. xxxiii. 2:>. 2:',.

FAITH AM) VIS; 19

of which I the foot that journeys onwards to

<Jnd, and love is the -nidc pointing <>ut the way. Ami \vhi li-

the soul meditates on the in of faith, it will

merit the revelation, on the part of love, of that which faith

involves, namely, the Hridegroom whom it Jongs for, in this

jM'ritual irrace and the Divine union, and in the next

in essential glory, face to face, when lie can be no longer

hidden.

In the meanwhile, however, though the soul attains to

in i inn, the highest estate possible in this life, yet inasmuch as

11 liidden from the soul in the bosom of the Father,

\_; for Him in the life to come, ever cries:

hast Thou hidden Th\>elf ?'

Thou doest well, then, O soul, in seeking Him always in FtH and

lace ; for thou greatly magnifiest God, and

drawest near unto Him, esteeming Him as far beyond all fecUu \*-

thnu cai lot, therefore, neither wholly nor in

. ..n what thy faculties can embrace; never seek to satisfy

thyself with what thou comprehendest in God, but rather with

what thou comprehendest not ; and do not rest on the love of

that which thnu canst understand and feel, but rather on that

which is l.eyond thy understanding and feeling: this is to

seek Him by faith. Gnd is inaccessible and hidden, and

i\_rh it may seem that tlmu hast found Him. felt Him, and

I Him, yet tlmu must ever regard Him as

hidden, serve II M hidden in secret. Be not thou like the

nnwi>e, wlm, with h.w views of God, think that when they

QOl comprehend Him, or be conscious of His prOMO

that He ui then farther away and more hidden when the

that He is nearer to them when they

least aware of it is \\ritten, 4 He made darkness

' Th us, when thou art near unto Him, the very

\* I', Rftf, [ft

c 2

20 A SIMR1TTAL CAXTICLK.

\ZA infirmity of thy vision makes the nl.seurity palpable; tliou

doest well, therefore, at all times, in prosperity as well as in

adversity, spiritual or temporal, to look upon God as hidden,

and to say unto Him, ' Where hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

God must be 'Why hast thou forsaken me in my groaning, my

i ,i i,,v,,i Beloved ? ' The soul calls Him ' my Beloved, 1 the more to

move Him to listen to its cry, for God most readily listens to

the voice of him who loves Him. Thus He speaks Himself:

'If you abide in Me . . . you shall ask whatever \m

will, and it shall be done to you.' \* The soul may then call

Him Beloved, when it is wholly His, when the heart has no

attachments but Him, and when all the thoughts are con-

tinually directed to Him. It was the absence of this that,

Dalila'observed in Samson when she said, ' How dost thou say

thou lovest me when thy mind is not with me ? 'f The mind

comprises the thoughts and the feelings. Some there are

who call the Bridegroom their Beloved, but He is not really

beloved, because their heart is not wholly with Him. Tin Mi-

prayers are, therefore, not effectual before God, and they

shall not obtain their petitions until, persevering in prayer,

they fix their minds upon God and their hearts wholly in

Love obtains loving affection upon Him, for nothing can be obtained from

allthing\*.

God but by love.

' Why hast Thou forsaken me in my groaning?' implies that

the absence of the Beloved is the cause of continual sad

in him who loves; for as such an one loves none else, so, in

the absence of the object beloved, nothing can console or

Tct to relieve him. This is, therefore, a test to discern the true

., ..

true lovers of lovers of God. Are they satisfied with anything le>s than

God, what. J J

God? Do I say content? Yea, if a man possess all tlr

he cannot be content, the greater his possessions the less

will be his contentment, for the heart cannot be satisfied with

S.John xv. 7. t Juclg. xvi. LV

VI. PAIN OF II'

possessions, but rati and in

poverty <>t spirit. Ami as the perfection of love wherewith

fruition of God < ;n this poverty, the soul

livi-; theivin with a special j i thi< life, when it has

in.-d to it with a certain contentment. Imt not satiety;

Da\id, i. mdin^ all his perfection, hoped for that

in Heaven, saying, \* I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall

appear.' \*

Tli . the peace and tranquillity, and the satisfaction ;

ot't IK- li.-art, t<> which the soul may attain in this life, are not uwytbo

sufficient to relieve it from i ior groaning peaceful

and painless though it be, while it hopes for that which is

1 wanting. Groaning belongs to hope, as the Apostle

teaches us, saying, \* Ourselves also, who have the first-fruits

of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselv

for the adoption of the sons of God.' f The soul

groans whose heart is enamoured, for where love wounds

re is heard the groaning of the wounded one, com-

plaining feelingly of the absence of the Beloved, MpeoUlij

wh. n<r of the sweet converse of the Bridegroom,

it find- it >. If alone, in Midd. n aridity.

In this state it cries out, ''1 ri lied like the 1

away,' comparing Him to a roe or a young hn Be- drynaof

loved is like a roe or a young hart.' J This comparison ex-

is not only i II being like a stranger, solitary and

lining company, as the hart, but also to His rapid hiding

iod revealing of Himself in II > to devout souls for the

purpose of comfort and encoura-\_r -m. -nt. and in Hi- r. tiring

!, hiimili itioii, and instruction. In

nee of this. His absence is most keenly felt, as it

i- \\ liich foil

\* NVi ! u.-uiidrd in,-.' It is as if it said. It

' r nrl 15. t ll'Mi. MI. 38.

U A sriiinvAL CAXTH u:.

PT.VNVA was not enough tliat I should feel the pain and grief whk-h

Thy absence causes, and from which I am continually suf-

fering, but Thou must, after wounding me with the arrow of

Thy love, and increasing my sufferings, run away from me

with the swiftness of the hart, and not permit me to emk

Thee, even for a moment.

Tranrforma- For the clearer understanding of this expression we are to

! tin-

desire\* and keep in mind that, beside the many kinds of God's visits

affections in J

Diviuc Love. fa tne gou j j j n w hi cn jj e WO unds it with love, there are

certain secret touches of love, which, like a fiery arrow, pierce

and penetrate the soul, and kindle it with the fire of love.

These are properly called the wounds of love, and it is of

these the soul is here speaking. These wounds inflame

the will, and the soul becomes so enveloped with fire as to

appear consumed thereby. They make it go forth out of

itself, and be renewed, transformed into another mode of ex-

istence, like the phoenix from the fire. David, speaking of 1 1 1 i s,

saith, ( My heart hath been inflamed, and my reins have been

changed; and I am brought to nothing, and I knew not.'\*

The desires and affections, called the reins by the Prophet,

are all stirred and divinely changed in this burning of

the -heart, and the soul, through love, melts into nothing,

knowing nothing but love. And now the changing of the

reins is a great pain, and longing for the Vision of God, and it

seems to the soul that God treats it with intol -ral.le severity,

not because He has wounded it for that it considers to be its

salvation but because He leaves it in the pangs of love,

because He has not wounded it to the quick so as to ca

death, that it may be united to Him in the life of pei :

love. The soul, therefore, magnifying its sorrows, or re-

vealing them, says, \* When Thou hadst wounded me.'

The soul says in effect, Thou hast abandoned UK alter

P. Ixxii. L'l, L'\_'

DESIDKKH'M VIDKNTKM VIDKNDI. 23

w.mnding me, and Th'-u ha-t l-i'r m\*- ilyin^ of love; and

t In MI Thou hast hidden Thyself as a hart swiftly running away.

Tliis impression is most profound in the soul : f..r by the

wound of love the affections of the will lead most rapidly

the possession of the Beloved, whose touch it felt, and in the

same degree also, His absence. And now the soul cannot

have the fruition of Him as it desired. Thereupon succeed

the sighs because of His absence ; for these visitations of God

are not like those which recreate and satisfy the soul, but

they are rather for wounding than for healing more for

afflicting than for satisfying it, seeing that they tend rath

to quick i -n the knowledge, and increase the desire, and con-

sequently pain, and the longing for the Vision of God.

They are called tin- >piritual wounds of love, most sweet to

the soul and desirable; and therefore when it i-< thus wounded

the soul would willingly die a thousand deaths, because these

wounds make it go forth out of itself, and enter into God,

which is the meaning of the words that follow :

I ran after Thee, crying; but Thou wert gone.' Then\* is i.,thrh

no remedy for the wounds of love but from Him who inflicted uiwoundi

i\ K\f

ih- in. And KO the soul, urged by the vehemence of that

l>uniin'\_r which the wounds of love occasion, ran after the

Beloved, crying unto Him for relief. This spiritual running

i rod has a twofold meaning. The first is a going forth L

of all created things hating and despising tin-in : the

second, a going forth out of oneself, self-forget timr. f-r tho j.sif.

love of God. For when the love of God touches the soul

with that vividness of which we are speaking, it so elevnt

it goes forth not only out of itself in selt-t r-. t fulness,

irawn away fi \\n judgment, natural v\..

and inclinations, crying after <il. O my Spouse, it seem\* to

say, tou.-h ,,f Thine and wound of love hast Thou

\vn me away not "ill ill created thin--. 1

self for, in truth, M ml and l>ody seem now to \

24 \ SPIRITUAL (ANTiri.i:.

STANZA and raised me up to Thyself, crying after Thee in detachment

- from all things that I might be attached to Thee.

painful sense < Thou wert gone.' That is, when I sought to embrace

of tin. absence

Thee, I found Thee not; and I was detached from all things

without being able to cling to Thee borne painfully by tin\*

gales of love without help in Thee or in myself. This going

forth of the soul in search of the Beloved is the rising of the

Bride in the Canticle : \* I will rise and go about the city ; in

the streets and the broad ways I will seek Him whom my

soul loveth. I sought Him and I found Him not.' \* The

rising of the Bride-soul speaking spiritually is from that

which is mean to that which is noble ; and is the same with

the going forth of the soul out of its own ways and inferior

love to the ennobling love of God. The Bride says that she

was wounded because she found Him not ; f so the soul also

says of itself that it is wounded with love and forsaken ; that

is, the loving soul is ever in pain during the absence of the

Beloved, because it has given itself up wholly unto Him,

hoping for the reward of its self-surrender, the possession of

the Beloved; still the Beloved withholds Himself while the

soul has lost all things, and even itself, for Him; it obtains

no compensation for its loss, seeing that it is deprived of Him

whom it loveth.

This painfulness, this sense of the absence of God, is wont

to be so oppressive in those who are going onwards to t In-

state of perfection, that they would die if God did not in-

terpose when the Divine wounds are inflicted upon th<-m.

As they have the palate of the will wholesome, and the mind

pure and disposed for God, and as they taste in some de-

of the sweetness of Divine love, which they supremely <!

so they also suffer pain supremely; for having but a glim

of an infinite good which they are not permitted to enj<>y.

that is to them an ineffable pain and torment.

Cant. iii. '2. + H- r, ' ; . 7

OF Til

i II.

tkepher > go

\* shfcpcvt\*

't shaft see

EXPLANATION.

TM K soul would now employ intercessors and mediators between

t ami the Beloved, praying them to make its sufferings

nown. One in love, when he cannot converse

nally with the object of his love, will do so in the b

Thu> the soul employs its affections, de-ires, and

groanings as messengers well able to manifest the secret of

heart to the 1 "-rb r ? ^ calls upon them to

doth: \_: : ' O shepherds, you who go.'

shepherd- are the a tVeet ions, and desires, and groanings

of the soul, for they feed it with spiritual good things. A theui,

is one who feeds : and by means of such God com-

munieates Himself to the soul and feed- it in the I>ivine

past i- without these groans and d- -:; I! eoininuni-

ll slightly with it. 'You who go,' you \\ i th

i pure love; for all desires and affections do not reach

. l>ut only thn which proceed from sincere love,

k Through the sheepcots up the hill/ The sheepcota are

hit-rarchi.--, the aii^rlic choirs, ly whose ministry,

\* h"ir, our prayers and sighs ascend to God:

to the k hill,' for He is the highest fininrnce, and

in Him, as on a hill, we observe and behold all '

ier ,-ind the lo\ver sheepcots. To him our p

ascend, .. tV.-red up i.y Angels, as the An^' to Tobi

' \\'lien th. -II did.-t pray with tears, and did>t bury the dead

. . . I hy prayer to the Lord/

i,. Xii. lL.

A SPIRITUAL CAXTICLK.

STANZA

II.

Pastoral

office of the

Aapk,

Prayer

answered in

due- time.

Two

examples.

The shepherds are also the Angels themselves, who not only

carry our petitions to God, but also bring down the gnuvs .f

God to our souls, feeding them like good shepherds with the

sweet communications and inspirations of God, Who empl

them in that ministry. They also protect us and defend us

against the wolves, which are the evil spirits; And thus,

whether we understand the affections or the Angels by the

shepherds, the soul calls upon them both to be its messengers

to the Beloved, and thus addresses them all : ' If you shall

see Him.'

' If you shall see Him: ' if, to my great happiness, you shall

come into His presence, so that He shall see you and luar

your words. God, indeed, knoweth all things, even the very

thoughts of the heart, as He said unto Moses,\* but then it is

that He beholds our necessities when He relieves them, and

hears our prayers when He grants them. God does not see

all necessities and hear all petitions until the time appointed

shall come ; then we say that He hears and sees them, as in

the case of the children of Israel, who after four hundred

years of misery were heard : ' I have seen,' saith He, ' the

affliction of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their cry,

and ... I am come down to deliver them.'f And yet

He had seen it always. So also the Angel Gabriel bade

Zacharias not to fear, because God had heard his prayer, and

granted him a son, for which he had prayed many years ; J yet

God had always heard him. Remember, therefore, that God,

though He does not at once grant our petitions, will still

succour us in His own time, for He is ( a helper in due time

in tribulation,' if we do not become fainthearted and c<

to pray. This is what the soul means by saying, 'If 3011

shall see Him,' if the time is come when it shall be His good

pleasure to grant my petitions.

Deut. xxxi. 21.

S. Luke i. 13.

i. ;ii. r. 3,

Ps. ix. 10.

" '

TlIK MESSAl.i 27

Hove:' that is, whom I love more than all <

is true of the soul when nothing is able to frighten it

away from His service. And when the soul can truly say

what follows; that is a sign that it loves Him above all

tbinj

\* Tell Him I languish, agonize, and die.' These are three Threefold

necessities of the soul : namely, languor, agony, and death,

for the soul that truly loves God with a love in some degree

perfect, suffers threefold in His absence in the three powers "; ; ' 1-, : ; .

tin- intellect, the will, and the memory. In the intellect it

languishes because it does not see God, Who is the salvation

of it, as the Psalmist saith : \* I am thy salvation.' \* In the

\vill it agonizes, because it possesses not God, Who is its com-

fort and delight, as it is written : ' Thou shalt make them

drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure.'! In the memory it

dies, because it remembers its privation of all the goods of

intellect, which an- tin- \ "i>i<ni of God, and of the delights

of the will, which are the fruition of Him, and that it is very

possible also that it may lose Him for ever, because of the

dangers and chances of this life. In the memory, theref

the soul labours under a sensation like that of death, because

it sees itself without the certain and perfect fruition of God,

Who is the life of the soul, as it is written, ' He is thy life/ J

Jeremias also speaks of these three necessities, praying nio\*?tedtqr

the poverty,

God, and saying :' Remember my poverty . . . the ^J^5fS'

wormwood and the gall/ Poverty relates to the intellect, to

v, liioh appertain the riches of the knowledge of the Son of

God,' in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and

knowledge.' | The wormwood, which is a most bitter her)\*,

tes to the will, to which appertains the sweetness of the

fruit i. ii of God, deprived of which it abides in hittnii, -.

! am in the Apocalypse that bitterness appertains spiri-

t lb. xx\ : i

$ Lam. i; || Coloee. .

-M A SPIRITUAL CAXTH

STAN/A tually to the will, for the Angel said to S.John: 'Tak,- tin-

book and eat it up ; and it shall make thy belly bitter.' \*

Here the belly signifies the will. The gall relates not only to

the memory, but also to all the powers and faculties of tliu

soul, for it signifies the death thereof, as we learn from Moses

speaking of the damned : \* Their wine is the gall of dragons,

and the venom of asps, which is incurable.' f This signifies

the loss of God, which is the death of the soul.

These three necessities of the soul are grounded on the

three theological virtues, faith, charity, and hope, which r< -late,

in the order here assigned them, to the three faculties of

we pray best the soul intellect, will, and memory. Observe here that the

\\hrii

reasons.

8OU ^ ^ oes no more th an represent its necessities to the Beloved :

for he who loves wisely is not anxious to ask for that which

he wants and desires, being satisfied with hinting at his n<

sities, so that the Beloved may do what shall to Him seem

good. Thus the Blessed Virgin at the marriage feast of Cana

asked not directly for wine, but only said to her Beloved Son,

'They have no wine.'J The sisters of Lazarus sent to Him,

not to ask Him to heal their brother, but only to say that he

whom He loved was sick: 'Lord, behold, he whom Tin HI

Three lovest is sick.' There are three reasons for this. Our Lord

knows what is expedient for us better than we do oursel .

Secondly, the Beloved is more compassionate towards us when

He sees our necessities and our resignation. Thirdly, wo an-

more secured against self-love and self-seeking when we

simply represent our necessity, than when we ask for that

which we think we need. It is in this way that the soul

represents its three necessities; as if it said: Tell my

Beloved, that as I languish, and as He is my sole salvation, to

. i , a-

^P me ; that as I am agonizing, and as He is my sole jo\,

to give me joy ; that as I am dying, and as He is my sole life,

to give me life.

\* Apoc.x. 9. t Deut. xxxii. 33. J S. John ii. 3, Ib. .\i. &

I COM MEN< i:D.

\N/A III.

>rch of my Love,

I will traverse mountains and strands;

I wilt gather no flowers,

I wi/lftar no wild beasts ;

1 will overpass the mighty and tl

EXPLANATION.

TIM: -"ul, observing that its sighs and prayers are not enough STANZA

lor finding the Beloved, and that it has not been assisted Prayertobe

rithi-r ly the messengers it invoked in the first and second

stanzas, will not, because its searching is real and its love great,

e undone anything itself can do. The soul that really

loves God is not dilatory in its efforts to find the Son of God,

if- l'..-!oved; and, even when it has done all it could, it is still

.thinking it has done nothing. Accordingly, the

soul is now actively seeking the Beloved, and the present

stanza describes the nature of its search. It has to practise

all virtue and the spiritual exercises of t! and con-

t.lativr lit. : t>r this end it ivjrcts all delights and all

comforts; and all the power and wiles of its three enemies

th. \\-orl.l, tin drvil, and the flesh are unable to delay it or

impede its present course.

search of my Love.' Here we are distinctly taught,

that it' wr would find God it is not enough to pray with tin-

heart and the tongue, or. to have recourse to the help of

s; we must work ourselves, according to our power.

God values our <> tl more than those of others in our

behalf; and the soul here recollects the saying of the

Beloved, 'Seek and you shall find.' It is resolved on

to seek Him, because it cannot rest without

finding Him, as many do who will not that God should cost

30

A SPIUITTAL CAXTKLK.

STANZA

III.

God not

found in

Night and

day in the

search for

God, what.

them anything but words, and even those carelessly uttered.

Some, too, will not leave for His sake a place which is to t h-ir

taste, expecting to receive all the sweetness of God fully in

their heart without moving a step, without mortifying them-

selves by the abandonment of a single pleasure or useless

delight But until they go forth out of themselves to seek

Him, however loudly they may cry, they will not find Him ;

for the Bride once sought Him in this way, but she found

Him not t In my bed by night I sought Him whom my soul

loveth : I sought Him and found Him not. I will rise and

will go about the city : in the streets and broad ways I will

seek Him whom my soul loveth.'\* She afterwards adds,

that when she had endured certain trials she f found Him.'f

He that seeks God, consulting his own ease and comfort,

seeks Him by night, and therefore finds Him not. But he

who seeks Him in the practice of virtue and of good works,

casting aside the comforts of his own bed, seeks Him by day ;

such an one shall find Him, for that which is not seen by

night is visible by day. The Bridegroom Himself teaches us

this, saying, ' Wisdom is glorious and never fadeth away, and is

easily seen by them that love her, and is found by them that

seek her. She preventeth them that covet her, so that she

first sheweth herself unto them. He that awaketh early to

seek her shall not labour; for he shall find her sitting at his

door.'J The soul that will go out of the house of its own

will, and abandon the bed of its own satisfaction, will find

the Divine Wisdom, the Son of God, the Bridegroom, sitting

at the door without.

The soul says in search of its Beloved, 'I will traverse

mountains and strands.' Mountains are lofty, and they sig-

nify virtues, partly on account of their height, and partly on

account of the toil and labour of ascending them, which is

\* Cant. iii. 1.

t Ib. iii. 4.

! \Vis<l. vi.

n. ;.y TIII: i:<> \. - 31

Ice of the o.nt.-iMjil.-itivr life. Tin- strands are li.\\ .

and signify mm-tr . penances, and the spiritual exer- ^

cises of the active life, together ^ith those of the contempla- J^g^

i both are necessary in seeking after God and in '

;i<< [Hiring virtue. The soul then says, in effect, In search-

ing after my Beloved I will practise heroic virtue, and abase

myself by lowly mortifications and acts of humility ; for the

way to seek God is to do good works in Him, and to mortify

v i 1 in ourselves.

4 1 will gather no flowers.' He that will seek after God

must have his heart detached, resolute, and free from all fro

go

evils, and from all goods which are not simply God ; that is the

meaning of these words. The words that follow describe the

liU-rty and courage which the soul must possess in searching

after God. Here the soul declares that it will gather no

flowers by the way the flowers are all the delights, satis-

ions, and pleasures which this life offers, and which,

if the soul sought or accepted, would ruin its spiritual

ney.

-e flowers are of three kinds temporal, sensual, and i.

1. All of them occupy the heart, and stand in the . spiritual.

way of spiritual detachment required in the way of Christ, if

we regard them or rest in them. The soul, therefore, says

it will not stop to gather any of them, that it may seek

after God. It seems to say, I will not set my heart upon

cs or the goods of this world ; I will not indulge in the

satisfactions and ease of the flesh, neither will I consult the

taste and comforts of my mind, which will detain me in my

search after my Love on the toilsome mountains of Virtue.

s means that it accepts the counsel of the prophet David

to those who travel on this road: ..-8 abound, set

;irt upon them.'\* This is applicable to sensual

EH ixi. n

SI

A SIMRIITM. < \\TICLF,

STANZA

III.

The throe

I. The world.

Three liona

in the way ;

1. Lorn of

favour.

2. Loss of

pleasure.

3. ConK-mpt

from others.

satisfactions as well as ( t. mporal Broods and spiritual r"in-

forts. Remember, it is not only temporal goods and bodily

pleasures that hinder us on the road to God, but spiritual

delight and consolations also, if we attach ourselves to tin -m

or seek them; for these things are obstacles in the way <>t

the Cross of Christ, the Bridegroom. He, therefore, that will

go onwards must not only not stop to gather flowers, but he

must also have the courage and resolution to say as fol-

lows: 'I will fear no wild beasts; and I will overpass the

mighty and the frontiers.' Here we have the three enemies

of the soul which make war against it, and make its way full

of difficulties. The wild beasts are the world; the mighty,

the devil ; and the frontiers are the flesh.

The world is the wild beasts, because in the beginning

the heavenly journey the imagination pictures to us t

world like wild beasts, threatening and fierce, principally

three ways. The first is, we must forfeit the world's favou

lose friends, credit, reputation, and property ; the second

not less cruel : we must suffer the perpetual deprivation <

all the comforts and pleasures of the world ; and the third i

still worse: evil tongues will rise against us, mock us, and

speak of us with contempt This strikes some person

vividly, that it becomes most difficult for them, I do not say to

persevere, but even to enter on this road at all. But then\*

are generous souls who have to encounter wild beasts of a

more interior and spiritual nature difficulties, temptations,

tribulations, and afflictions of divers kinds, through which

they must pass. This is what God sends to those whom

He is raising upwards to high perfection, proving them and

trying them as gold in the fire ; as it is written : \* Many are

the afflictions of the just; but out of them all will tin-

deliver them.'\* But the truly enamoured soul, preferring

Ps. xxxiii.

THI: I;M:MY. 33

the Beloved to all things, relying on His love and favour, STANZA

finds no difficulty in saying: \* I will fear no wild beasts.'

' And I will overpass the mighty and the frontiers.' Evil \*. TIM

spirits, the second enemy of the soul, are called the mighty, be-

cause they strive with all their might to seize on the passes of

the spiritual road ; and because the temptations they suggest

.irder to overcome, and the craft they employ more diffi-

cult t d t<ct, than all the seductions of the world and the flesh;

and because also they strengthen their own position by the

help of the world and the flesh in their mighty warfare against

the soul. Hence the Psalmist calls them mighty, saying:

' The mighty have sought after my souL'\* The Prophet Job

also speaks of their might : ( There is no power upon earth

that can be compared with him who was made to fear no

one.'f There is no human power that can be com pared with

the power of the devil, and therefore the Divine power alone

can overcome him, and the Divine light alone can penetrate

his devices. No soul therefore can overcome his might with- Tob^

out prayer, or perceive his illusions without humility and

mortification. Hmce the exhortation of the Apostle : 'Put

i on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand t

against the deceits of the d<\il : t'r our wrestling is not against

flesh and blood.'} Blood here is the world, and the armour

of God is prayer and the Cross of Christ, wherein consist the

humility and mortification of which I have spoken.

The soul says also that it will cross the frontiers: these s.Thfc\*.

are the natural resistance and rebellion of the flesh against

\*, t'.-r the 'flesh lusteth against the spirit,' and sets

itself as a t \_r its spiritual progress. This

tii.- soul must cross, surmounting difficulties, and

trampling under foot all sensual appetites and all natural

i\* with great courage and resolution of spirit : for while

r fJobxU.24. t Eph. vi. 11. $G\*Ut>

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34 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

they influence the soul, the mind will be impeded by them

T}w ^ f& to from advancing to the true life and spiritual delight. This

iSoveS, \* 8 se ^ c ^ ear ly before us by S. Paul, saying : \* If by the spirit

you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.' \* This,

then, is the way to seek the Beloved: a firm resolution t<>

gather no flowers by the way ; courage so as not to fear tin

wild beasts, and strength to overpass the mighty and the

frontiers ; having set before us only the road over the moun-

tains and the strands, in the way just explained.

STANZA IV.

Ye groves and thickets,

Planted by the hand of the Beloved;

Ye verdant meads

Enamelled with flowers,

Tell me, has He passed by you ?

EXPLANATION.

THE disposition requisite for entering on the spiritual

journey, abstinence from joys and pleasure, being now de-

scribed ; and the courage also with which we have to overcome

temptations and trials, wherein consists the practice of self-

knowledge, which is the first step to the knowledge of God,

the soul now begins to advance through the knowledge of

creatures to the knowledge of the Beloved their Creator.

For the consideration of the creature, after the practice of

self-knowledge, is the first in order on the spiritual road to

the knowledge of God, Whose grandeur and magnificence they

foreshadow, as it is written : \* For the invisible things of Him

from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being un

stood by the things that are made.' f The invisible things of

God are made known by created things, visible and invisil.lt>.

\* Rom. viii. 13. : I;..ID. i. 20.

Till: l.MV! OXED ABOUT GOD. 35

Here the soul addresses it -elf to created things, demand-'

And here we observe with 8. Augustine

i:.-. mnftlf

that tin- inquiry addressed to created things is of

the Creator which they suggest. Now the soul considers the

el<-ment> au<l other . i l.elnw them, the heavens and

i i icli God has created in them, and

y the heavenly host, saying:

'Ye groves and thickets.' The groves are the elements,

. air, and fire. As the most pleasant groves are

(1 with plants and shrubs, so the elements are thick with ^JSJjJ? 1

creatures. Tin elements are called thickets because of the

number and variety of creatures in each. The earth contains

innumerable varieties of animals and plants, the water of

irds, and fire concurs with all in animating

ami sustaining them. Each kind of animal lives in its proper

. planted there, as a tree in a grove, win-re it is born

and nourished.

And, in truth, God so ordered it at the creation of them;

11- commanded the earth to bring forth herbs and animals;

- rs and the sea, fish; and the air He gave as an

:ati.n t< hinls. The soul, considering that this is the

t .,t' His commandm opt, ' Planted bj tb i.;ind

ie Belov.

-e words imply that the hand of the Beloved only

cnuld have created and nurtured all these varieties and

wonderful things. The soul says deliberately \* by the hand

cause God doeth many things by the

da of others, as of Angela and men ; bat the work <i region \*

.and nerer is, tin- w..rk of any other

n. Thus the soul considering th creation,

,'i-nfoundly stirred up to love God the Beloved, for it

ds all things to be the work of His hands.

' Y. v.-rdant meads.' These are the heavens ; for the things .- <>fti\*

i < i - : ..i..

iicavens are of in.- -imp-:

D 2

36

CANTICU:.

STAX7A

IV.

Constitnat

te Christus .

m ' M

virentia.'

Anpelg and

Saints the

flowers of

freshness, which neither perish nor wither with timo, \\hriv

the just are refreshed as in the green pastures. The pr< i,t

consideration includes all the varieties of the stars in their

beauty, and the other celestial creations.

The Church also applies the term ' verdure ' to heavenly

things ; for while praying to God for the departing soul, it

addresses it as follows : ' May Christ, the Son of the living

God, give thee a place in the ever pleasant verdure of Hi s

Paradise.'\*

The soul adds that this verdant mead is ' enamelled with

flowers.' The flowers are the Angels and the holy souls

adorning and beautifying that place as curious enamel on

a vase of pure gold.

'Tell me, has He passed by you?' This inquiry is the

consideration of the creature just spoken of, and is in effect :

Tell me, what perfections has He created in you ?

STANZA V.

ANSWER OF THE CREA.TUBES.

A thousand graces diffusing

He passed through the groves in haste,

And beholding them only

As He passed,

He clothed them with His beauty.

EXPLANATION.

THIS is the answer of the creatures, which, according to

creaturarum,

attestatio S. Augustine, is the testimony which they furnish to the

grandeur and perfections of God. This is the result of the

soul's meditation on created things. The meaning of this

stanza is, in substance, as follows: God created all tin

with great ease and rapidity, and left upon them traces of

His presence, not only by creating them out of nothing, but

\* Ordo commendationis aniin.n .

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by endowing them with innumerable graces and

qualities, making them beautiful in admirable order a;

1 i-.-i

easing mutual dependence. All this Jl Hu&Sf\*\*\*

wisdom, by which He created them, which is the Word, 1 1

only begotten SKM

\* A thousand graces diffusing.' These graces are the

multitude of His creatures. The term ' thousand ' denotes

tli. ir in mi her, but the impossibility of numbering them.

They are called graces, because of the qualities with which

II has endowed them. He is said to diffuse them because

II fills the whole world with them.

' He passed through the groves in haste.' To pass through T ^., Trttg .

'

the groves is to create the elements; through which He is

said to pass diffusing a thousand graces, because He adorned

tin-in with creatures which are all beautiful. Moreover, He

(iifTused among them a thousand graces, giving the power of

generation and self-conservation. He is said to pass through,

because the creatures are, as it were, traces of the passage

| rod, revealing His greatness, power, and wisdom, and

other Divine attributes. He passed in haste, because

the creatures are the least of the works of God : He made

them, as it were, in passing. His greatest works, wherein ood\*

11' is most visible and at rest, are the Incarnation of the Word work. UM

..

and the mysteries of the Chii 'h, in comparison with

\\hich all His other works were works wrought in passing \*

and in haste.

1 beholding them only as He passed, He clothed

th.i,, with II The Son of God is the 'bright- '

ness of His glory and the figure of His substance.' \* God

saw all things in the face of His Son. This was to gi

> their natural being, bestowing upon them many graces

and natural qualities, and making them perfect, as it is

H

38 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA written, ( God saw all the things that He had made: and

they were very good.'\* To see all things very good w,

make them very good in the Word His Son. He not only

gave them their being and their natural graces when He

beheld them, but He also clothed them with beauty in the

Theincarna- face of His Son, communicating to them a supernatural

supernatural being when He was made man, and exalted him to the beauty

beauty to the

of God, and, by consequence, all creatures in him, because He

united Himself to the nature of them all in man. For this

cause the Son of God Himself said, \* And I, if I be lifted

up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself.' f And

thus in this exaltation of the Incarnation of His Son, and

the glory of His Resurrection according to the flesh, the

Father not only made all things beautiful in part, but also,

we may well say, clothed them with beauty and dignity.

INTRODUCTION.

MOREOVER, speaking according to the sense and feeling of

the uncreated

of nature a

reflection of contemplation, the soul beholds, in the vivid contemplation

and knowledge of created things, such a multiplicity of graces,

powers, and beauty in them, that they seem to it to be clothed

with admirable beauty, and supernatural virtue derived from

the infinite supernatural beauty of the face of God, Whose

beholding of them clothed the heavens and the earth with

beauty and joy ; as it is written: 'Thou openest Thy hand

and fillest with blessing every living creature.' J Hence th<

soul, wounded with love of that beauty of the Beloved which

it traces in created things, and anxious to behold that beauty

which is the source of this visible beauty, sings forth as in tl it-

following stanza :

Genes, i. 31. t S. John xii. 32. J Ts. cxliv. !>

Tin; U:I-;ATU;I: EXCITES i>vj-: PR Tin; < I;I;ATOR. 39

v/A VI.

:;: UUIDB.

'10 can ktalme?

Give me perfectly

Send me no more

itttenger

cannot tell me what I seek.

KXI'LANATION.

While created things furnish to the soul traces of the STANZA

y j

ved, and exhibit the impress of His beauty and magni-

ficence, the love of the soul increases, and consequently the

\ ' ' T

P.I in .f His absence: for the greater the soul's knowledge of God.

God, the greater its desire to see Him, and its pain when it

cannot: and while there is no remedy for this pain except in

ill-- presence and vision of the Beloved, the soul, distrustful

of every other remedy, prays for tlu\* fruition of His presence.

It says, in effect : Entertain me no more with any knowledge

, or with Thy communications, or impressions of Thy

grandeur, for these do but increase my longing, and the pain

I hy absence, for Thy presence alone can satisfy my will and

desi' will cannot be satisfied with anything Jess than

>n of God, ami therefore the soul prays that He may

be pleased to give Himself to it perfert ly in t ruth, in the con-

f love.

' who can heal me ? ' That is, there is nothing in all the

\_:hts of the world, nothing in the satisfaction of the senses,

iiiLT in the swrrtnrss !' the spirit that can heal or content

:

ve me perfectly Tli\-ltV No soul that really loves

can be satisfied or content short of the fruition of God. For

thing else not only does not suti>t\ the soul, but rather

ises the hunger and t hirst of seeing Him as He is. Thus

v glimpse of the Ik'luv knowledge and hnpression,

40 A SPIRITUAL CAXTKIJ 1 ..

STANZA, or communication from Him these are the messengers sug-

gestive of Him increase and quicken the soul's desire after

Him, as crumbs of food stimulate the appetite. The soul

therefore mourning over the misery of being entertained by

matters of so little moment, cries out : ' Give me perfectly

Thyself.'

^ ow \*^ our knowledge of God in this life, how great

8oever it ma y be, is not a perfectly true knowledge of Him,

b ecause ft j s partial and incomplete ; but to know Him es-

sentially is true knowledge, and that it is which the soul

prays for here, not satisfied with any other kind. Hence it

says:

( Send me no more a messenger.' That is, grant that I may

no longer know Thee in this limited way by the messengers

of knowledge and impressions, which are so distant from that

which my soul desires ; for these messengers, as Thou well

knowest, my Spouse, do but increase the pain of Thy

absence. They renew the wound which Thou hast inflicted by

the knowledge of Thee which they convey, and they seem to

delay Thy coming. Henceforth do Thou send me no more of

these inadequate communications, for if I have been hitherto

satisfied with them, it was owing to the slightness of my

knowledge and my love: now that my love has become gr at,

I cannot satisfy myself with them ; do Thou, therefore, give

me perfectly Thyself. It is as if it said : Lord, my Spouse,

Who didst give me Thyself partially before, give me Thy> It

wholly now : Thou 'who didst show glimpses of Thyself before,

show Thyself clearly now: Thou who didst communir.it.

Thyself hitherto by the instrumentality of messengers it

was as if Thou didst mock me give Thyself by Thyself now.

Sometimes when Thou didst visit me Thou gavest me tlui

pearl of Thy possession, and when I began to examine it, \<>,

it was gone, for Thou hadst hidden it Thyself: it was like a

mockery. Give me then Thyself in truth, Thy whole self,

GOD Till-: [i 41

I may have Thee wholly to myself wholly, and send me s>~.

rs no more.

\* Who cannot tell me what I seek.' I seek Thee wholly, inu

and Thy messengers neither know Thee wholly, nor can they J

speak of Thee wholly, for there is nothing in earth or heaven Md medtam '

can furnish that knowledge to the soul which it longs

They cannot tell me what I seek. Instead of these

messengers, therefore, be Thou the messenger and the message

Thyself.

STANZA VII.

All tkfy who ten\*

Relate a thousand grace\* of Thee;

A,,. i ,:! |RMM4 ' HOTI MM) M /.

And they fan\* nu dying,

While they babble I know not what.

EXPLANATION.

>oul is described in the foregoing stanza as wounded or

sick with love of the Bridegroom, because of the knowledge ^52

Him which the irrational creation supplies, and in tl it-

present, as wounded with love because of the higher know-

ledge which it derives from the rational creation, nobler than

the other, that is, from Angels and from men. This is not

all, tor the soul now says that it is dying of love, because of

that marvellous immensity not wholly but partially revealed

to it through the rational creation. This it calls ' I know

not what,' because it cannot be described, and because it i-

such that the soul dies of it.

I seems from this that there are three kinds of pain in th-

soul's love of the Beloved corresponding to the three kinds of j

knowledge that it has of Him. The first is called a wound ;

not deep, quickly passing away like a wound which heals.

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A SPIRITUAL CAXTICLi:.

STANZA

VII.

1. By the

wona <;

Nature.

2. By the

[BOHMfti

and the

Church.

3. By an

btani

supernatural

knowledge

This is the act of that knowledge of God which the creatures

supply, which are His inferior work. This wounding of the

soul, called also sickness, is thus spoken of by the Bride :

\*I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my

Beloved, that you tell Him that I languish with love.'\* The

daughters of Jerusalem are the creatures.

The second is called a sore which enters deeper than a wound

into the soul, and, therefore, of longer continuance, because it

is a wound festering, on account of which the soul feels that it

is dying of love. This sore is the act of the knowledge of the

operations of the Incarnation of the Word, and the mysteries

of the Faith. These being the greatest works of God, and

involving a greater love than those of creation, produce a

greater effect of love in the soul. If the first kind of pain

be as a wound, this must be like a festering continuous sore.

Of this speaks the Bridegroom, addressing Himself to the

Bride, saying : \* Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my

spouse, thou hast wounded my heart with one of thy eyes,

and with one hair of thy neck.' f The eye signifies faith in

the Incarnation, and the one hair is the love of the same.

The third kind of pain is like dying ; it is as if the whole

soul were festering because of its wound. It is dying a living

death until love, having slain it, shall make it live the life of

love, transforming it in love. This dying of love is < t

by a single touch of the knowledge of the Divinity. This i>

the ' I know not what,' of which the creatures can but babble.

This touch is not continuous nor protracted, but quick in its

course, for otherwise soul and body would part. Hence the

soul is dying of love, and dying the more when it sees that it

cannot die of love. This is called impatient love, of which

we have an illustration in Rachel, who, because of her love

of children, said to Jacob, 'Give me children, othenv

\* Cant. v. 8.

t Caut. iv. '..

()F RATIONAL < 43

shall die;'\* and in Job, saying: ' Wlm will ^rant ....

that If..- that hath begun may deM r'|

These two kinds of pain, the fevering sore and dy

here said ' d from the :

sore. soul says that t' -ion rela\*

inn-. toei <>t' the Beloved in the mysteries of the

Faith and the knowledge of God which th- t he pain of

dyinic, because it says of the rational creation that it bahbles,

that is e-ives furth an impression and notion of the Divinity

which is sometimes revealed to the soul in what it hears said

! they who serve.' Th; ! ie rational creation, HOW Angela

Angels and mm: t >r th. se alone are they who serve God, \*em\*\*

' rerealGod.

understanding by that word intelligent service. That is to

say, all they who serve God: some by contemplation and

fruition in Heaven, as the . others by loving and

longing for Him on earth, as men. And because the soul

us to know God more distinctly through the rational

inn, wh.-ther by considering its superiority over the rest

of creation, or by what ,es us of God the Ange

. iorly by secret in-; , and men exteriorly by

truths -it says: They 'relate a thousand

graces/ TI y speak of the wonderful things >t Thy

e and mercy in the Incarnation, and in the truth> >f Faith

win declare and ever relate of Tlree ; for the more

y reveal Thy graces.

\* And all wound me more and more.' The more the Angels orator

1 . . . i . r

me, the more men teach me, the more do I love tore.

ill wound me more and more with love,

eave me dying, while they l.ahl.h- I kn-\v not

'ion wounds me ly relating

thousand graces ; but that is not all, there is something

' < Jenea. xxx. 1 \*, 0.

44 A sl'iKHTAL CANTICLE.

\ZA still more, I know not what, that remains unspoken, SOUK -

- thing still to be uttered, a certain profound impression of

Jhe 8 know- f ^^ s ^ \* be traced, a certain deep knowledge of God inef-

h)d \* fable, the 'I know not what.\* If what I can comprehend

inflicts the wound and festering sore of love, what I cannot

comprehend but feel profoundly, kills me. This happens oc-

casionally to souls already advanced, whom God favours in

what they hear, or see, or understand and sometimes without

these means with a certain profound knowledge, in which

they feel or apprehend the greatness and grandeur of God.

In this state they judge so highly of God as to see clearly

that they know Him not, and in their perception of His

Immensity they recognise that not to comprehend Hiii

the highest comprehension. And thus, one of the great c.-t

favours of God, bestowed transiently on the soul in this life,

is to enable it to see so distinctly, and to feel so profoundly,

that it clearly understands it cannot comprehend Him at all.

TO know These souls are herein, in some degree, like the Blessed in

know He u Heaven ; there they who know Him most perfectly perceive

most clearly that He is infinitely incomprehensible. To know

God best is to know He is incomprehensible; for those wlm

have the less clear vision, do not perceive so distinctly as the

others, how greatly He transcends their vision. This is clear

to none who have not had experience of it. But the ex-

perienced soul, comprehending that there is something furtli< r

of which it is profoundly sensible, calls it, 'I know not what.'

As that cannot be understood, so neither can it be described,

though it be felt, as I have said. Hence the soul says t hat t h<

creature 'babbles,' because it cannot perfectly utt< r what it

attempts in babbling; as infants babble, who cannot explain

distinctly or speak intelligibly that which they would convey

to others.

IH:ATII IN T;

INTRODUCTION.

I soul derives light also from the other portions of

VTO

creation, though not always so clear, when God is pleased to -

reveal to it the knowledge and significance of the meaning

that is in them. They seem to set forth the greatness of

God, but not perfectly ; it is as if they revealed something

which still they have not, and so they babble I know not

what The soul proceeds with its complaint, and, addressing

its own life, speaks as in the stanza before us :

-/A VIII.

But kow thou ptr(v<rc\*t, O life \*

Not living wktre tkou liwst ;

The arrows bring death

Wkick thou receipt

From tky conception\* of the Btlotxd.

EXPLANATION.

The soul perceiving itself to be dying of love, and yet not TO th

ng so as to have the free enjoyment of its love, complains of iu in the

the continuance of its bodily life, by which the spiritual lift\* is 5 r f |

1. Here the soul addresses itself to the life it is living

i <arth, magnifying the sorrows of it. The meaning of

herefore is as follows : my life, how canst thou

persevere in this life of the flesh; seeing th. ad

ition of the true spiritual life of God, in Whom thou

-tance, love, and desire, more truly than in the

body ? And if this were not reason enough to depart, and

thyself from the body of this death, so as to live and

\ th.- lit.- ..f thy God, how canst thou still persevere in a

body so frail; when, in addition, those wounds, which the

love of the grandeurs cnnmiunicated by the Beloved in-

<>d upon thee, are sufficient to destroy life? And

all thy |M-iv.-|iti.ns "f Him. all the impressions !!

46 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

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

that kill.

' But how ttou perseverest, life ! not living where thou

Hvest.' We must keep in mind, for the better understanding

of this, that the soul lives there where it loves, rather than

in the body which it animates. The soul does not live by

the body, but, on the contrary, gives it life, and lives by

love in that which it loves. For beside the life of love

God is to the which it lives in God Whom it loves, the soul has its radical

soul its two-

i?ofbehig, anc \* essential life in God, like all created things, according to

the saying of S. Paul : < In Him we live and move and are ;'\*

that is, our life, motion, and being is in God. S. John also

says that all that was made was life in God : \* that which

was made, in Him was life.'f When the soul sees that its

essential life is in God through the being He has given it, and

its spiritual life also because of the love it bears Him, it

breaks forth into lamentations, complaining that so frail a

life in a mortal body should have such power as to hinder it

from the fruition of the true, real, and beatific life, which it

lives in God by being and by love. Earnestly, therefore,

The enjoy- does the soul insist upon this : it tells us that it suffers

ment of this

im^JdeVby between two contradictions its natural life in the body, and

iif/SuSS 1 it 8 spiritual life in God; contrary the one to the other,

because of their mutual repugnance. The soul living this

double life is of necessity in great pain ; for the painful life

impedes the beatific, so that the natural life is as death,

seeing that it deprives the soul of its spiritual life, wherein is

its whole being and life by essence, and all its operations and

feelings by love. The soul, therefore, to depict more vividly

the cruel nature of this fragile life, adds :

\* Acts xvii. 28.

t The Saint adopts a punctuation different from the usual one. lie

reads thus : Omnia per Ipsum facta stint, et sine Ipso factum est nihil :

Quod factum est, in Ipso vita erat. All things were made by Him, and

without Him nothing was made : What was made in Him was lil- .

COMPLAINT OF TIIF. Y\ L. 47

'The arrows In : i which thou receivest.' Th

it seems to say, How canst thou continue in the body, seeing

that tin- touches of love these are the arrows with which the

Beloved pierces thy heart are alone sufficient to deprive th

of life ? These touches of love make the soul and the heart

so fruitful of the knowledge and love of God, that they may

well !)' called conceptions of God.

' I-Y..IH thy eniMvptinns of the.Beloved.' That is, of His

greatness, beauty, wisdom, grace, and power.

INTRODUCTION.

As the h.nt wounded with an arrow cannot rest, but seeks

relief on all sides, plunging into the waters here and again

th'iv. whilst the arrow, notwithstanding all its attempts

ks deeper in, till it reaches the heart, and occa-

sions death ; so the soul, pierced by the arrow of love, never

ceases from seeking to alleviate its pains. Not only does it

not succeed, but its pains increase, let it think, and say, and

do what it may ; and knowing this, and that there is no oth< r

n-im-dy hut to resign itself into the hands of Him Who

wnimdrd it, that Be may relieve to oil . and effectually

it through th- violence of its love, it turns towards the

bridegroom Who i> the cause of all, and says :

STAN/A IX.

after won>

ktart, hast T%ou not kealtd itJ

ng it,

f Thou thtu abandoned it,

And not carried away what T%ou hast stolen f

\.\\.\ I I< >.\.

th- >"iil r-timi< ti t hr I>eloved,8t

r that ini]iatieiit l>\e whii-li the SOlll lm\v e\hi!

48 A SPIKITl-.M,

STANZA admits of no rest or cessation from pain ; so it sets forth its

griefs in all manner of ways until it finds relief. The soul

seeing itself wounded and lonely, and having no other phy-

sician or cure but the Beloved Who has wounded it, asks why

He, having wounded its heart with the knowledge of His

love, does not kill it in the vision of His presence ; and why

He abandons the heart which He has stolen through the

love with which it is inflamed, after having deprived the

soul of all power over it. The soul has now no power over

the heart for he who loves has none because it is sur-

rendered to the Beloved, and yet He has not taken it to

Himself in the pure and perfect transformation of love in

glory.

Deeper the < Why, after wounding this heart, hast Thou not healed

wound .

?^Ind!tedre ^ e enamoure d sou l complains not of the wound itself,

the d vffin\*Sf for the deeper the wound the greater is its joy, but that the

wd \* heart, being wounded, is not healed by being wounded unto

death. The wounds of love are so deliciously sweet, that, if

they do not kill, they cannot satisfy the soul. They are so sweet

that it desires to die of them, and hence it is that it says :

'Why, after having wounded this heart, hast Thou not heal. .1

it ?' That is, why hast Thou struck it so sharply as to wound it

so deeply, and yet not healed it by killing it utterly with love ?

As Thou art the cause of its pain in the affliction of love, be

Thou also the cause of its health by a death from love ; so tin-

heart, wounded by the pain of Thy absence, shall be healed

in the delight and glory of Thy sweet presence.

'And why, after stealing it, hast Thou thus abandoned it ': "

Stealing is nothing else but the act of a robber in dispossess-

ing the owner of his goods, and possessing them himself.

Here the soul complains to the Beloved that He has robin <!

it of its heart lovingly, and taken it out of its own power

and possession, and then abandoned it, without taking it into

His own power and possession as the thief does with the

LOVI; Tin: KI:\VAUD OP LOVI:. 4-j

'linn away with liiin. He who is in PTA\

love is said t. have lust his heart, or to have it -t-.U-n l.y the

object of his love ; because it is no longer in his own posses-

. hut in the power of the object of his love, and so his

not his own, lnt tin- |.n>]>rrty of the person he loves.

Tliis ri.nsiderati.in will enable us to determine whether we

love God simply or not. If we love Him, our heart will not

1 f, nor look to its own pleasure or profit, but to

honour, glory, and pleasure of God ; for the more the

M nip i,d with self, the less is | i 1 with God.

Whether <n>d has really stolen our heart may be ascertained Tworfgnaf

it her of these two signs : Is it anxiously seeking after <\*\*

I ? and has it no pleasure in anything but in Him, as the

soul here says ? The reason of this is that the heart cannot

rest in peace without the possession of something ; and when

s are once placed, it has neither the possession

nor of anything else ; neither does it perfectly possess

it loves. In this state its weariness is proportional to its

r.ii.h

loss, until it shall enter into possession and be satisfied; for iwt

until then, the soul is as an empty vessel waiting to be filled,

as a hungry man eager for food, as a sick man si-Inn-- for

health, and as a man suspended in the air without support

to 1 . Such is the state of the loving heart, and

-..ill through experience Why hast thou

- abandoned it ?' that is, empty, hungry, lonely, wounded,

in the pangs of love, suspend- . 'And hast not carried

away what Th >u hast stolen ? ' Why dost Thou not carry away

heart whirl. Thy love has stolen, to fill it, to heal it, and to

giving it iest in Thyself?

taring f the sake of greater conformity with

th<- 1'.. 'loved, cannot cease to desire the recompense and

love for the sake of which it serves the Beloved,

rwise it could not be true love, for the recompense of

I ig else, and the soul seeks : !>-, hut gn-a-

VOL. ii. i:

50 A SPIRITUAL CASTICLE.

love until it reaches the perfection of love ; for the sole

reward of love is love, as we learn from the prophet Job,

who, speaking of his own distress, which is that of the soul now

referred to, says : 'As a servant longeth for the shade, as the

hireling looketh for the end of his work ; so I also have had

empty months, and have numbered to myself wearisome

nights. If I lie down to sleep, I shall say, When shall I

arise ? and again, I shall look for the evening, and shall be

filled with sorrows even till darkness.' \*

The soui asks Thus, then, the soul on fire with the love of God longs for

not for rest

e P er ^ ec ^ on &n & consummation of its love, that it may be

H-ork;i f .e. completely refreshed. As the servant wearied by the heat of

the day longs for the cooling shade, and as the hireling looks

for the end of his work, so the soul for the end of its own.

Observe, Job does not say that the hireling looks for the end

of his labour, but only for the end of his work. He teaches

us that the soul which loves looks not for the end of its

labour, but only of its work ; because its work is to love, and

it is the end of this that it longs for, namely, the perfection

of the love of God. Until it attains to this, the words of Job

will be always true of it its months will be empty, and its

nights wearisome and tedious. It is clear, then, that the soul

which loves God seeks and looks for no other reward of

service than to love God perfectly.

INTRODUCTION.

THE soul, having reached this degree of love, resembles a sick

man exceedingly wearied, whose appetite is gone, and to

whom his food is loathsome; to whom all things are an

annoyance, and who, amidst all things around him that pre-

sent themselves to his thoughts, or feelings, or sight, Loagl

Job vii. 2-4.

GOD AL"\ THK BOUL, 51

for nothing l.ut health : and to whom every tl.' I does K

thereto is wearisome and oppressive. The soul

XhM i- .

in pain hreanse nf its love of God has three peculiarities :

1. l\*nder all eiivnm-tan<.v>, ami in all affairs, the thought of

health that is the Beloved is ever present ud

though it is obliged to attend to them because it can resist

no longer, still He is ever present in its heart. 2. The

second peculiarity, namely, a loss of pleasure in everything,

arises from . :>. The third also is a consequence of

second, all things become wearisome, and all affairs

full of vexation and annoyance.

The reason is, that the palate of the will having tuuehed

and tasted of the food of the love of God, the will instantly,

under all rim i instances, regardless of every other considei

tion, set u of the Beloved. It is with the soul now

as it was with Mary Magdalen, \vheu in her burning love she

look' 1 1 ini in the garden. She, thinking Him t<> be the

gardener, spoke t< Him without further P lit rt ion, saying:

Him hence, t< 11 me where thu hast laid

Hii will take Him away.'\* The soul is under the

iniliiene,- ,,[' a like ; . Him iu all things, and Howthe

finding Him immediately, as it denies- but rather the J^\*"\*"

rse not only has no pleasure in them, but is even t..r-

liy them, and sometimes exceedingly so u-h

souls suffer greatly in their intercourse with men and in

ions of the world, because these things bin

r than help them in their search.

tie Canticle shows us that she had these three

when she was seeking the Bridegroom. ' I

ind luimd Him n..t : the keepers that go abou\* the

\ Mniek me and wounded me : the keepers

>k away my veil from me.'f The keep.

i \\. I"). t Cant v.

I. -2

X.

'2 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA that go about the city are the conversation of this world, which,

when it 'finds' a soul seeking after God, inflicts upon it

many wounds of pain, and grief, and loathing ; for the soul

not only does not find in it what it seeks, but rather an

impediment to its seeking. They who keep the wall of con-

templation, so that the soul may not enter that is, evil

spirits and worldly affairs take away the veil of peace and

the quiet of loving contemplation. All this inflicts infinite

vexation on the soul enamoured of God ; and while it remains

on earth without the Vision of God, there is no relief, great

or small, from these afflictions, and the soul therefore

continues to complain to the Beloved, saying :

STANZA X.

Quench Thou my troubles,

For none else can do so ;

And let my eyes behold Thee

Who art- their light,

And it is for Thee alone I would use them.

Here the soul continues to beseech the Beloved to put an

end to its anxieties and distress none other than He can do

so and that in such a way that its eyes may behold Him ;

for He alone is the light which they regard, and there is

none other but He whom they desire to behold.

'Quench Thou my troubles.' The desire of love has this

peculiarity, that everything said or done which does not

harmonise with its object, wearies and annoys the will;

which is rendered peevish when it sees itself disappointed in

its desires. This state of things is here called ' troubles ; ' that

is, the soul's longing after the Vision of God. These troubles

nothing can remove except the fruition of the Beloved ; lx IK

the soul prays Him to quench them with His presence, to cool

their feverishness, as the cooling water him who is wearied

by the heat. The soul makes use of the expression ' quench,'

to denote its sufferings from the fire of Jove.

Till: r.\< KKATKI) LIMIT. 53

1 Ise can do BO.' The soul, in order to move and STANZA.

tiade the Beloved to grant its petition, says: As none QodTi||tu

ut Thou can satisfy my needs, do Thou quench my \*\*\*

I es. Remember here that God is then close at hand, to

comfort the soul and to satisfy its wants, when it has and

seeks no other satisfaction or comfort out of Him. The soul

finds no pleasure out of God cannot be long unvisited

lie Beloved.

' And let my eyes behold Thee.' Let me see Thee face to

face with the eyes of the soul.

- \Vho art their light' God is the supernatural light of

the soul ; without which it abides in darkness. And now,

in the excess of its affection, it calls Him the light of its

eyes, after the manner of earthly lovers when they would

exhibit the affection they bear to the object of their love.

The soul says in effect : Since my eyes have no other light,

< it her of nature or of love, but Thee, let them behold Thee,

Who in every way art their light. David was regretting this

t when he said in his trouble : ' The light of my eyes itself

is not with me ;' \* and Tobias when he said : 'What manner

of joy shall be to me who sit in darkness, and see not tlu'

light of heaven ?'f He was longing for the clear Vision of

God; for tin- light of Heaven is the Son of God; as it is

: 'And tin ity hath no need of the sun, nor of the

moon to shine in the glory of God hath i-nli^ht\* n 1

it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof.' J

'And it is for Thee alone I would use them.' The soul

seeks to constrain the Bridegroom to permit it to see the

it of its eyes, not only on the ground that it would be in

darkness without it, but also on the ground that it will not

look upon anything else but on Him. For as the soul is

ed of this Divine light if it fixes the eyes of the

i' ma 11. t Tub. v \poc.xxi.3a,

54 A SPNinTAL CAXTlci.r..

will on any other li^ht, proceeding from anything that is not

God, for then its vision is confined to that object; so also the

soul by a certain fitness deserves the Divine light, if it shuts

its eyes against all objects whatever, and opens them only

for the Vision of God.

Presence of

God as an

answer to

prayer.

INTRODUCTION.

BUT the loving Spouse of souls cannot bear to see them suffer

lo"ng in their isolation, for ' he that toucheth you,' saith He,

'toucheth the apple of My eye;'\* especially when their

sufferings proceed from their love for Him. ' It shall come

to pass that before they call, I will hear ; as they are yet

speaking, I will hear.'f And the wise man saith that the

soul that seeketh Him as treasure shall find Hira.J God

grants a certain spiritual presence of Himself to the fervent

prayers of the loving soul which seeks Him more earnestly

than treasure, seeing that it has abandoned all things, and

even itself, for His sake. In that presence of Himself, He

shows certain profound glimpses of His Divinity and Beaut v,

whereby He still increases the soul's anxious desire to behM

Him. For as men throw water on the coals of the forge to

cause intenser heat, so our Lord in His dealings with certain

souls, in the intervals of their love, shows them some of His

own grandeur to quicken their fervour, and to prepare them

for those graces which He intends for them afterwards. Thus

the soul, in that obscure presence of God, behMin^ anl

feeling the supreme good and beauty hidden there, dies of

its desire for the Vision, saying :

Zach. ii. 8.

t Is. Uv. 24.

I Prov. ii. 4, 6.

SOUL ASKS GOD AM> 1UK. 65

STAN /.A

/?rti/ Thy pretence,

And Ut the vision of Thy beauty kilt me.

Behold, the disease

Of low it incurable

rctence and in the light of Thy countenance.

The soul, anxious to be possessed by the great God, Whose STANZA

love has wounded and stolen its heart, and unable to suffer ~

more, beseeches Him directly to reveal Himself, and to show

-that is, the Divine Essence and to slay it in

ion, sepai from the body, which hinders the

desired vision and fruition of Him. And further, setting

it the pain and sorrow of its heart, which continues to

because of its love, and unable to discover any other

i the glorious vision of the Divine Essence, cries

Keveal Thy presence.'

ree ways in which God is present in the soul, ood prmt

to the tool

first is His presence in essence, not in holy souls only, in three

a wretched and sinful souls as well, and also in all aJSL?\*

tilings; for it is this presence that gives life and "

\_r. and if it were once withdrawn all things would return

to nothing. This presence never fails in the soul. The second ' By OHM\*

presence by grace, win -n lit- dwells in the soul, pleased Jj^\* 011 \* 1

and satisfied with it. This presence is not in all souk .

dl into mortal sin lose it, and no soul can know

in a natural way whet In -r it has this presence or n.-t. The j. BJIBM.

presence of spiritual affection. God is wont to

onee in many devout souls in divers ways of

refreshment, joy, and ^ludnes> ; yet this, like th- nther>, i>

secret, fa M-- does not show Himself as He is, because the

mortal life does not admit of it. Thus thi.>

pray< : -oul may be understood of any one of these ways

A SPIRITUAL CAXTICLi:.

STANZA

XI.

The soul

)>r;i>~ f..r

the thirxl

Presence.

'Reveal Thy presence.' Inasmuch as it is certain tliat

God is ever present in the soul, at least in the first way, the

soul does not say : Be Thou present; but, Reveal and manit'ot

Thy hidden presence, whether natural, spiritual, or affective,

in such a way that I may behold Thee in Thy Divine Essence

and Beauty. The soul prays Him that as He by His essential

presence gives it its being, and perfects it by His presence of

grace, so also He would glorify it by the manifestation of His

glory. But as the soul is now loving God with fervent affec-

tions, the presence, for the revelation of which it prays, is

chiefly the affective presence of the Beloved. Such i

nature of this presence that the soul felt in it a hidden

infinite something, whereby God communicated to it certain

obscure visions of His own Divine beauty. Such was the

effect of these visions that the soul longed and fainted away

with the desire of that which is hidden beneath that presence.

This is in harmony with the experience of David, when he

said : \* My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of

the Lord.'\* The soul now faints away with desire of IxMiiLC

absorbed in the Supreme Good which it feels to be present

and hidden ; for though it be hidden, the soul is profoundly

conscious of the good and delight which are there. The soul

is attracted to this good with more violence than matter to

its centre, and is unable to contain itself, by reason of the

force of this attraction, from saying : Reveal Thy presence.

Moses on Mount Sinai in the presence of God saw such

glimpses of the grandeur and beauty of His hidden Divinity

that, unable to endure it, he prayed twice for the vision of

His glory, saying : \* Whereas Thou hast said : I know thee by

name, and thou hast found favour in my sight. If, therefore,

I have found favour in Thy sight, shew me Thy face, that 1

may know Thee and find grace before Thy eyes ;'f that is

Ps. Ixxxiii. 1.

Exod. xxxiii. IL', l-'J.

MA: <.OD AND LIVI:. 57

the grace which he longed for, to attain to the perfect love of STANZA

the glory of God. The answer of the Lord was : ' Thou canut

not see My face, for man shall not see Me and live.'\* It is

as if God had said : Moses, thy prayer is difficult to grant ; the

beauty of My face is so great, and the joy of the vision of it

so intense, that if I grant it, thy soul cannot endure it in thy

life which is so frail. The soul, conscious of this truth,

whether through the words addressed to Moses, or through

what it feels hidden in this presence, namely, that in this life

it cannot gaze upon His beauty since the mere glimpse of

Him makes it faint away anticipates the answer thatjnay be

given to it, as it was to Moses, and says : ' Let the vision of

Thy beauty kill me.' That is, since the vision of Thee and

beauty is so full of delight that I must die in the act of

beholding, let the vision of Thy beauty kill me.

> visions are fatal to man, because he cannot bear them

and live. One, that of the basilisk, at the sight of which men

are said to die at once. The other is the vision of God ; but

there is a great difference between them. The former kills

by poison, the other with infinite bliss and glory. It is,

fore, nothing strange for the soul to desire to die by

beholding the beauty of God in order to enjoy Him for ever.

It the soul had but one single glimpse of the grandeur and

beauty of God, it would not only desire to die once in order

to behold Him, but would endure joyfully a thousand most

i deaths to behold Him even for a moment, ami having

seen Him would suffer as many deaths again to see Him for

.

is necessary to observe, that the soul is speaking con-

liti..nally, when it prays that the vision of God's beauty may

; it assumes that the vision must be preceded by death,

: it were possible before d -uth, the >-ul would not pray

:. 20.

: I1ITUAL CANTICLE.

XI.

Din-ctly to

a natural

imper-

fection.

To see God

taaded

under the

Old Law,

why?

1. Christ had

not died.

2. Love was

not perfect.

for death, because the desire of death is a natural imperfec-

tion. The soul, therefore, takes it for granted, that this cor-

ruptible life cannot coexist with the incorruptible life of God,

and says : ' Let the vision of Thy beauty kill me.'

S. Paul teaches the same doctrine when he says : ' We

would not be unclothed, but clothed upon, that that which

is mortal may be swallowed up by life.' \* That is, we desire

not to be divested of the flesh, but to be invested with glory.

But reflecting that he could not live in glory and in a mortal

body at the same time, he says in another place : ' having a

desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ,' f

Here arises this question, Why did the people of Israel

dread the vision of God under the old Law, and avoid it, that

they might not die, as it appears they did from the words of

Manue to his wife, ' We shall certainly die, because we have

seen God,' J when the perfect soul desires to die through that

vision ? To this question two answers may be given.

1. In those days men could not see God, though dying in

the state of grace, because Christ had not come. It was

therefore more profitable for them to live in the flesh,

increasing in merit, and enjoying their natural life, than to

be in Limbus, incapable of meriting, suffering in the darkness

and in the spiritual absence of God. They therefore consi-

dered it a great blessing to live long upon earth.

2. The second answer is founded on considerations drawn

from the love of God. They, in those days, were not so con-

firmed in love, neither did they draw so near to God in love

as to be without fear of the vision of God ; but now, under

the law of grace, when, on the death of the body, the soul

may behold God, it is more profitable to live but a short time,

and then to die in order to see Him. And even if the \

were withheld, the soul that really loves God will not be afraid

\* 2 Cor. v. 4.

t I'hil. i. 1'::.

} Judjr. xiii. L'I.

:ATII Tin: FRIEND. 59

ight of Him ; for true love accepts with perfect STANZA.

resignation and in the same spirit, and even with joy, wb.

ever comes to it from the hands of the Beloved, whether

prosperity or adversity yea, and even chastisements such as

He shall be pleased to send, for, as the Apostle saith, ' perfect

charity casteth out fear.'\*

Tli us, then, there is no bitterness in death to the soul that Death kmd

loves, when it brings with it all the sweetness and delights of

love, there is no sadness in the remembrance of it when it

opens the door to all joy; the thought of it is not painful and

oppressive, when it is the end of all unhappiness and sorrow,

and the beginning of all good. Yea, the soul looks upon it as a

friend and its bride, and exults in the recollection of it as the

day of espousals; it yearns for the day and hour of deatli

more than the kings of the earth for principalities and king-

doms. It was of this kind of death that the wise man said :

4 death, thy sentence is welcome to the man in need't If

the sentence of death is welcome to the man in need, though

it does not supply his wants, but rather deprives him even of

what he hath, how much more welcome will that sentence

be to the soul in need of love and crying for more, when

ill not only not rob it of the love it hath already, but

will be the occasion of that fulness of love which it yearns

for, and the supply of all its necesK

It is not without cause, then, that the soul is bold to say:

' Let the vision of Thy beauty kill me ;\* for it knows well that

in the instant of that vision it will be itself absorbed and

^formed into that beauty, and be made beautiful like it,

enriched, and abounding in beauty as that beauty itaelt\*.

i is in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saint\*,' {

saith the Psalmut ; l.ut that could not be so if they did not be-

comes partakers of His greatness, t is nothing precious

1 S. John if. la t Ecclua. ill a t IV. cxv. 15.

60 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA in the eyes of God except that which He is Himself, and tli

fore the soul, when it loves, fears not death, but rather de>'

Death feared

Soiled. & But the sinner is always afraid to die, because he suspects

that death will deprive him of all good, and inflict upon him

all evil ; for \* the death of the wicked is very evil,' \* and there-

fore, as the wise man saith, the very thought of it is bitt i :

' death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man

that hath peace in his possessions!'! The wicked love this

life greatly, and the next but little, and are therefore afraid

of death ; but the soul that loves God lives more in the next

life than in this, because it lives rather where it loves than

where it dwells, and therefore, esteeming but lightly its present

bodily life, cries out : ' Let the vision of Thy beauty kill me.'

\* Behold, the disease of love is incurable, except in Thy

presence and in the light of Thy countenance.' The reason

why the sickness of love admits of no other remedy than the

presence and countenance of the Beloved is, that the sickness

of love differs from every other sickness, and therefore requi n s

a different remedy. In other diseases, according to sound

Love for philosophy, contraries are cured by contraries ; but love is

God the

health of the n ot cured but by what is in harmony with itself. The reason

is, that the health of the soul consists in the love of God, and

so when that love is not perfect, its health is not perfect, and

the soul is therefore sick, for sickness is nothing else but a

NO love, failure of health. Thus, that soul which loves not at all is

jjjjjj {5J f dead; but when it loves a little, how little soever that may

be, it is then alive, though exceedingly weak and sick bee.

it loves God so little. But the more its love increases, tin-

greater will be its health, and when its love is perfect, tln-n,

too, its health also is perfect. Love is not perfect until tin

lovers become so on an equality as to be mutually transfer i

into one another ; then love is wholly perfect

Ts. xxxiii. 22. t Ecclus. xli. 1.

Till: <TRi: OF IMITi. 61

A nd because tli <<>\\\ is n\\ conscious of a certain adumbra- STANZA.

<.f l..\v, tlie sickness of which it speaks, and yearns to be -

made like to Him of whom it is a shadow, that is the Bride-

groom, the Word of God, the ' splendour of His glory, and the

figure of His substance ; ' \* and because it is into this figure

it desires to be transformed, it cries out : \* Behold, the disease

of love is incurable except in Thy presence, and in the light

of Thy countenance.' The love that is imperfect is rightly

called a disease, because as a sick man is enfeebled and cannot

work, so the soul that is weak in love is also enfeebled and

cannot practise heroic virtue.

Another explanation of these words is this : he who feels

this disease of love, that is, a failure of it, has an evidence in

himself that he has some love, because he ascertains what is

ii-nt in him by that which he possesses. But he who is

not conscious of this disease has evidence therein that he has

no love at all, or that he has already attained to perfect love.

INTRODUCTION.

THE soul now conscious of a vehement longing after God,

like a stone rushing to its centre, and like wax which has

begun to receive the impression of the seal, which it cannot

perfectly represent, and knowing, moreover, that it is likr a

re lightly sketched, crying for the artist to finish his

work, and having its faith so clear as to trace most distinctly

certain Divine glimpses of the grandeurs of God, knows not

what to do but to turn inward to that Faith as involving

and veiling the face and beauty of the Belovedfrom whirl.

h received those impressions and pledges of love, and

;i it thus addresses:

A SPIRITUAL CANTKU:.

STANZA

XII.

Faith, the

only medium

of true union

with fiod in

this life;

Resembles

a clear

fountain of

pure water.

STANZA XII.

O Fount of crystal!

O that on thy silvered surface

Thou wouldest mirror forth at once

Those eyes desirable

Which I have in my heart delineated.

The soul vehemently desiring to be united to the Bridegroom,

and seeing that there is no help or succour in created things,

turns towards Faith, as to that which gives it the most vivid

vision of the Beloved, and adopts it as the means to that end.

And, indeed, there is no other way of attaining to true union,

to the spiritual espousals of God, according to the words of

the prophet: ' I will espouse thee to Me in faith.' \* In t his

fervent desire it cries out in the words of this stanza, which

are in effect this: Faith of Christ, my Spouse! that

thou wouldest manifest clearly those truths of the Beloved,

secretly and obscurely infused for faith is, as theologian

an obscure habit so that thy informal and obscure com-

munications may be in a moment clear ; that thou wouldest

separate thyself formally from these truths for faith is a

veil over the truths of God and reveal them perfectly in

glory.

' Fount of crystal !' Faith is called crystal for two reasons :

1. Because it is of Christ the Bridegroom. 2. Becau

has the property of crystal, pure in truth, a limpid fountain

clear of error and of natural forms. It is a fountain because

the waters of all spiritual goodness flow from it into the soul.

Christ our Lord, speaking to the woman of Samaria, calls

faith a fountain, saying : ' the water that I will give him shall

become in him a fountain of water springing up into life

everlasting.' f This water is the Spirit, which they who

\* Os. ii. 20.

t S. Johniv. 14.

l> IN Ti 1 TAIN >T I'AITII.

f the

which t: F8 who b Him.'\*

'0 that on t ice.' The articles and defini- G<,;

tionsof the Faith Ivered si, Faith is com-

r as to the propositions which it teaches, as to the

truth and substance it involves, to gold. This very substance

which we now believe, concealed by the silver veil <>f faith,

-hall behold and enjoy hereafter when it shall be revealed,

gold of faith made manifest. Tims the Psalm i

speaking of : \\ h. n ye sleep in the midst of your

borders, ye shall be as a boM wings are covered with

!id h.-r pinions with tlainin^ gold.' | That is, if we

: against all things above us and

' - is to sleep in the midst of our borders

, which is the dove, whose wings that is, the

it are covered \\ith for in this li; .is

its truths before us ly beneath a veil. This is the

rea- ^ >\\ vered sin The golden

of faith means the time when faith .shall have be< n

of God ; then the substance

of 1 having been removed, will shine as

to us God Himself, but concealed beneath

, I. ut it reveals God none the less. So if a

n gives us a vessel covered with silvn. uade of

gives us in i i vessel of gold, though the gold

be covered over. Thus, when the Bride in the Canticle was

longing 1, H promised it to her so far

as the state of this life admitted of it, sayiiu : \* \\ ' \, ill make

tins of gold inlaid \\ i . : I ! promised Him-

the veil of faith, li ,e soul addressee

t h, saying : ' that on thy silvered surface ' the defini-

> of faith which i gold of tip nh.urs,

John vii mt i. 10.

64

A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA

XII.

what we

become.

wliich are the desirable eyes 'thou wouldest mirror forth

at once those eyes desirable ! '

The eyes are the splendours and truths of God, which are

set before us hidden and informal in the definitions of the

faith. Thus the words say in substance: that Thou would-

est formally and explicitly reveal to me those hidden truths

which Thou teachest implicitly and obscurely in the defini-

tions of the Faith ; according to my earnest desire. Those

truths are called eyes, because of the special presence of tin-

Beloved of which the soul is conscious, believing Him to be

perpetually looking through them.

\* Which I have in my heart delineated.' The soul here

says that these truths are delineated in the heart, that is, in

the intellect and the will. It is through the intellect that

these truths are infused into the soul by faith. They are said

to be delineated because the knowledge of them is not per-

fect. As a sketch is not a perfect picture, so the knowledge

of faith is not a perfect understanding. The truths, there-

fore, infused into the soul by faith, are as it were sketches,

and when the clear vision shall be granted, then they will

be as a perfect and finished picture, according to the words of

the Apostle: 'When that which is perfect shall come, that

which is in part shall be done away.'\* 'That which is

perfect ' is the clear vision, and ' that which is in part ' is the

knowledge of faith.

Beside the delineation of faith, there is another delineation

of love in the soul that loves, that is, in the will, in whic-h

the face of the Beloved is so deeply and vividly pictured,

when the union of love occurs, that it may be truly said,

the Beloved lives in the loving soul, and the loving soul in

the Beloved. Love produces such a resemblance by tin-

transformation of those who mutually love that one may be

1 Cor. xiii. 10.

LOVi: I MJ UNI'

th.- otli.-r, and both but one. The reason is, that .s

in the union and transformation of love, one gives himself up

the other as his possession, and each resigns, abandons,

and exchanges himself for the other, and both become

but one in the transformation wrought by love.

This is the meaning of S. Paul when he said : ' I live, now, Union with

not I, but Christ liveth in me.'\* In that he saith : \* I live,

now, not I,' his meaning is, that though he lived, yet the

he lived was not his own, because he was transformed

i : that hi- life was Divine rather than human ; and

accordingly, he saith : it was not he that lived, but Christ

Who lived in him. We may therefore say, according to

ikeness of transformation, that his life and the life of

i.st were one by the union of love. This will be peri.

in the Divine life of all those who shall merit

Vision ; for, transformed in God, they will live

>f God and not their own, since the life of God will

be tin-ire. Then they will say in truth: We live, but not

we ourselves, for God liveth in us.

Now this may take place in this life, as in the case of The

d, but not perfectly and completely, though the soul

i to such a transformation of love as shall be

ial marriage, which is the highest estate it can

life; because all this is but the sbad

i of love, if compared with the perfeet image of trans\*

i in glory. Yet, \\li.-u this shadow of transforma-

is attained in this lit,, it is a great blessing, because

Beloved is so greatly pleased therewith. He desires

the Bride should have Kim thus delineated in her

heart: t-r II. saith unto her: 'Put Me as a seal upon thy

heart, as a seal upon thy arm.' f The heart here signifies

(i<>d in this life dwells as an impr<

\* Oalat. u. 20. t Cant % .

.u. r

GG A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA of tli- M-,'l of faith, and the arm is the resolute will, where

He is as the impressed signet of love.

Such is the state of the soul at this time. I speak hut

little of it, not willing to leave it altogether untouched,

though no language can describe it.

Thiret for The very substance of soul and body seems to be dried up

the water of J

f?cS'~~ ky thirst a ft er this living fountain of God, for the thirst resem-

bles that of David when he cried out, 'As the hart panteth

after the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth after Thee,

God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God ;

when shall I come and appear before the face of God ?'\* So

oppressive is this thirst to the soul, that it counts it as no-

thing to break through the camp of the Philistines, like the

valiant men of David, to draw ' water out of the cistern of

Love thinks Bethlehem,' t which is Christ. The trials of this world, the

nothing of

obstacles. ra ge of the devil, and the pains of hell, are nothing to pass

through, in order to plunge into this fathomless fountain of

love. To this we may apply those words in the Canticle :

' Love is strong as death, jealousy is hard as hell.'J It is

incredible how vehement are the longings and sufferings of

the soul when it sees itself on the point of tasting this good,

and at the same time sees it withheld; for the nearer tin-

object desired, the greater the pangs of its denial: 'Before J

eat,' saith Job, ' I sigh, and as overflowing waters so is my

roaring ' for my food. God is meant here by food; for in

proportion to the soul's longing for food, and its knowledge

of God, is the pain it suffers.

INTRODUCTION.

THE source of the grievous sufferings of the soul at this

time, is the consciousness of its own emptiness of God while

it is drawing nearer and nearer to Him and also tin- thirk

darkness with the spiritual fire, which dry and purify it, so thai ,

\*Ps.xli. 1,2. t lPand.xi.18. \ Cant. viii. <;. Jobiii. L'l.

UAKK AlTKn.M II T<> IMVINK I.KiiiT.

. it may )>e united with (rod. For until

forth a special ray of Divine light into the son

is to it intolerable darkness when He is even near to it in

supernatural liirht \>\ its very brightness ol>-

he mere natural light. David referred to this when he

: ' Clouds an<l darkness are round -about Him .... a

shall go before Him.'\* And again : 'He made darkness

His pavilion round about Him, dark waters in

i. in N ,,f the air. At the brightness that was before Him

the clouds passed, hail and coals of fire.'f The soul that

roaches God feels Him to be all this more and more the

it advances, until He shall cause it to enter within

the Divine brightness throuj- 1 1 1 h . t ransformation of love. But A\* dark UM

the comfort and consolations of God are, by His infinite good-

ness, proportional to the darkness and emptiness of the soul,

as it is written, ' The darkness thereof, and the light thereof,

ilike to Thee.' J And because He humbles souls and wearies

i, whih- Hr is < -Milting them and making them glorious,

sends into the soul, in the midst of its weariness, certain

ine rays from Himself, in such gloriousness and strength

>ve as to p from its very depths, and to change its

\\hole natural condition. Tim- tin soul, in great fear and

ml awe, addresses the Beloved in the first words of the

wing stanza, the remainder of which i> His reply:

STANZA Mil.

Turn thftn away, O my Beloved I

I fly

Loom\* on tke kill

' '/J1i, f tt and if rrfrc1ud.

Amid tlmse fervent affections of love, such as the soul has

o in the ] 1 1. ceding stanzas, the Beloved is won

r s

C8 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA. His bride, tenderly, lovingly, and with ^n-.-it >tivngth of love;

' for ordinarily the graces and visits of God are great in propor-

tion to the greatness of those fervours and longings of lo\v

which have gone before. And, as the soul has so anxiously

prayed for the Divine eyes as in the foregoing stanza the

Beloved reveals to it some glimpses of His grandeur ami

Flight of the Godhead, according to its desires. These Divine rays strike

Bcstauy, its the soul so profoundly and so vividly, that it is rapt into an

ecstasy which in the beginning is attended with great physical

suffering and natural fear. Hence the soul, unable to endure

its ecstasies in a body so frail, cries out, Turn away thine

eyes from me.

'Turn them away, my Beloved!' that is, Thy Divine

eyes, for they make me fly away out of myself to the heights of

contemplation, and my natural force cannot endure them. Th is

the soul says because it thinks it has escaped from the burden

of the flesh, which was the object of its desires ; it therefore

prays the Beloved to turn away His eyes ; that is, not to show

them in the body, where it cannot endure or enjoy them as it

would, but to reveal them to it in its flight from the b<>d\.

The Bridegroom denies the request and impedes the flight,

saying : ' Keturn, My Dove 1 ' for the communications I

make to thee now are not those of the state of glory ; but

return to me, for I am He whom thou, wounded with love,

art seeking, and I, too, as the hart, wounded with thy 1

begin to show Myself to thee in the heights of contemplation,

and am refreshed and delighted by My love for thy regard.

' Turn them away, my Beloved !' The soul, because of its

intense longing after the Divine eyes, that is, the Godhead,

receives interiorly from the Beloved such communications and

knowledge of God as compel it to cry out, ' Turn them a\

my Beloved!' Such is the wretchedness of our mortal

nature, that we cannot endure even when it is offered to us

but at the cost of our life, that which is the very lift- <>t

QLA9CI <r Tin: IMVIV;

1)1, Krai, and the object of ita earnest desires, n

knowledge of the Beloved. Thus the soul is compelled to say, -

with regard to the eyes so earnestly, so anxiously sought for,

and in so many ways when they become visible 'Turn

them away.'

So great, at times, is the suffering of the soul during these

ecstatic visitations and there is no other pain which so

wrenches the very bones, and which so oppresses our natural

s that, were it not for the special interference of God,

death would ensue. And, in truth, such it is to the soul, the

object of these visitations, for it seems as if it were released

1 1 the body and a stranger to the flesh. Such graces cannot

be perfectly received in the body, because the spirit of man

tied up to the communion of the Spirit of God, Who visits

soul, and it H therefore of necessity, in some measure, a

stranger to the body. Hence it is that the flesh suffers, and

consequently the soul in it, by reason of their union in one

person. The great agony of the soul, therefore, in these

visitations, and the great fear that overwhelms it when God

deals with it in the supernatural way, forces it to cry out,

Turn them away, my Beloved!'

it is not to be supposed, however, that the soul really wh\*tupin

to theftohte

wishes Him to turn away His eyes ; I nothing else but

expression of mere- natural awe. Yea, rather, cost they

what they may, the soul would not willingly miss these visit

!< and favours of the Beloved; for though the natural

man may suffer, the spiritual man flies to this supernatural

recollection, in order to enjoy tin- >]>int of the Beloved, the

object of its prayers and desires. Still, the soul will not

lit df these visitations in the body when it cannot have

perfect fruition of them, except in a slight degree and in

pain but in the flight of the disembodied spirit when it can

hem freely. Hence it says, Turn away from n

that is, do not visit me in t!u flesh.

70

A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA

XIII.

The soul

absorbed in

God, bodily

functions

Highest per-

fection free

from

This subject

treated by

BADTT

'I fly away;' that is, out of the flesh, that Thou mayest

show them to me out of the body for they force me to fly-

away out of the body. We must remember, in order to

have a clearer conception of this flight of the soul, that the

spirit of man, in this visitation of the Spirit of God, is rapt

upwards in Divine communion; the body IB abandoned, all

its acts and feelings are suspended, because the soul is ab-

sorbed in God. Thus the Apostle, speaking of his own ecstasy,

saith : ' Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot

tell.'\* But we are not to suppose that the soul really abandons

the body, and that the natural life is destroyed, but only that

its actions have then ceased. This is the reason why the

body remains insensible in raptures and ecstasies, and un-

conscious of the most painful inflictions. These are not like

the swoons and faintings of the natural life, which cease on

the application of pain. They who have not yet arrived at

perfection are liable to these visitations, for they happen to

those who are walking in the way of proficients. They who

are already perfect receive these Divine visitations in peace

and in the sweetness of love : their ecstasies cease, for they

were only graces to prepare them for this more perfect

condition.

This is an appropriate opportunity for discussing tlir

difference between raptures, ecstasies, other elevations and

subtile flights of the spirit, to which spiritual persons are

liable ; but, as my object is to do nothing more than explain

this canticle, as I undertook in the prologue, I leave the

subject for those who are better qualified than I am. I

do this the more readily, because our mother, the blessed

Teresa of Jesus, has written admirably on this matter, whose

writings I hope to see soon published. The flight of the

soul in this place, then, is to be understood of ecstasy, and of

its being rapt up to God.

2 Cor. xii. :.

op Tin: I;I:I/>\T.I>. 71

The Beloved replies, Return, My Dove.' The soul was

fully quitting tin- lly in its spiritual flight, thinking that

its natural life was over, and that it was about to enter into

tin- everlasting fruition of the Bridegroom, and remain with

Him without a veil between them. He, however, restrains it

in its flight, saying, \* Return, My Dove.'

It is as if He said, My Dove, return from thy lofty and

rapid flight of contemplation, in the love wherewith thou art

inflamed, in the simplicity wherein thou goest these are Three i

1 1 1 n -e characteristics of the dove from that eminence where

tin ni aimet at the true fruition of Myself the time is not

yet come for knowledge so high return, and submit thyself to

that lower degree of it which I communicate in thy raptures.

\* The wounded hart' The hart is the Bridegroom, to which chrut

i ! compares himself here. The hart climbs up naturally to t

places, and hastens, when wounded, to the cooling \*

waters. If he hears his consort moan, and sees that she is

wounded, he runs to her at once, comforts, and caresses her.

the Bridegroom now caresses the Bride; for, seeing her

wounded with His love, He too, hearing her moaning, is

wounded Himself with her love ; for among lovers the wound

of one is the wound of the other, and they have the same

feelings in common. The Bridegroom, therefore, saith in

effect : Return, my Bride, to me ; for as thou art wounded

with the love of me, I too, like the hart, am wounded by love

llu <. I am like the hart, looming on the top of the hill.

' Looms on the hill ;' that is, on the heights of contempla-

li the soul attains in its flight Contemplation is

lofty eminence where God, in this litV, begins to cominu-

nicate Himself to the soul, and to show Himself, but not

M.-tly. Hence it is said, 'Looms on the hill," because he

does not appear clearly. However profound the knowledge

I imsi -If which God may grant to the soul in this life, it is,

i nil, but an indistinct vision. We now come to the third

72 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA characteristic of the hart, which is referred to in the following

Mil.

Charity in \* In the air of thy flight, and is refreshed.' The flight of

the soul, as

the Holy the soul is ecstatic contemplation, and the air is that spirit of

^ ove wn i c h & produces, and which is here appropriately

taowiedge. called ' air ;' for the Holy Ghost, who is Love, in Holy Scrip-

ture, is compared to air, because He is the Breath of the

Father and the Son. As then the Holy Ghost is the Air of

flight, that is as He proceeds and is breathed forth by the way

of love from the Contemplation and Wisdom of the Father

and the Son ; so here the Bridegroom calls the love of the

soul ' air,' because it proceeds from the contemplation and

knowledge of God which it has at this time.

Observe, that the Bridegroom does not say He comes at

the flight, but at the air of the flight of the soul; because,

properly speaking, God does not communicate Himself

because of that flight, that is, the knowledge it has of G>d,

'"".'" ], u t because of the love which is the fruit of that knowle-

recreationis.

For as love is the union of the Father and the Son, so is it

also of God and the soul.

union with Notwithstanding the highest knowledge of God, and con-

b n io^Sf and t em pl a ti n i^lf, together with the knowledge of all mystoi

the soul without love is nothing worth, and can do nothing,

as the Apostle saith, towards its union with God.\* In another

place he saith : ' Have charity, which is the bond of perfec-

tion.'! This charity and love of the soul makes the

Bridegroom run to the fountain of the Bride's love, as the

cooling waters attract the thirsty and the wounded hart

refresh himself therein.

'And is refreshed.' As the air cools and refreshes him who

is wearied with the heat, so the air of love refreshes and

comforts him who burns with the fire of love. The fire of

\* 1 Cor. xiii. -J. t Coloes. iil 14.

IA CARI. 73

love hath this peculiarity, that the air which cook and STANZA

refreshes it is an increase of the fire itself. To him who '-

loves, love is a flame that 1 turns with the desire of burning

more and more, like the flame of material fire. The con-

. mati'mi >f this desire of burning more and more, with the

love of the Bride, whicli is the air of her flight, is here called

'sbmenk The Bridegroom says in substance: I burn

more and more because of the ardour of Thy love, for love

kindles love.

God does not establ ish I f is grace and love in the soul but in

proportion to the good will of that soul's love. He, therefore, of s 00 \* \*&

that will love God must strive to love Him more and more,

t his love fail not ; for so, if we may thus speak, will he

move God to show him more love, and to take greater corn-

in his souL In order to attain to such a degree of love,

!" must practise those things of which the Apostle speaks,

Baying: 'Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth u

'<-th not perversely; is not puffed up, is not ambitious,

seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no

vil. r. joiceth not in iniquity, but rejoice! h with the truth;

beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things,

endureth all things.'\*

INTRODUCTION.

\* NN 'MEN the dove that is, the soul was flying on the gales of

love over the waters of the deluge that in the weariness and

longing of its love and ' not finding where her foot might

rest,'t the compassionate Noe, in this last flight, put forth the

hand of his mercy, and caught her, and brought !.

the ark of his love. Thus God does when He says to th.-

urn, My dove.' \\\. thus takes it : II

' 1 1-7. t Genes, viii

74 A SPIRITUAL CAXTK LK.

hands, the soul finds all it desired, and more than it can

ever express, and so it begins to siug the praises of the

Joy at the

Beloved, celebrating the magnificence which it feels and

enjoys in that union, saying :

STANZAS XIV., XV.

THK BBIDB.

My Beloved is the mountain\*,

The solitary wooded valleys,

The strange islands,

The roaring torrents,

The whisper of the amorous gal

The tranquil night

At the approaches of the dawn,

The silent music,

The murmuring solitude,

The supper which revives, and enkindles love,

Before I begin to explain these stanzas, I must observe, in

order that they and those which follow may be better under-

stood, that this spiritual flight signifies a certain high

and union of love, whereunto, after many spiritual exercises,

God is wont to elevate the soul : it is called the Spiritual Es-

pousals of the Word, the Son of God. In the very beginning

of this, the first time that God so elevates the soul, He reveals

to it great things of Himself, makes it beautiful in majesty

and grandeur, adorns it with graces and gifts, and endows it

with honour, and with the knowledge of Himself, as a luide

is adorned on the day of her espousals. On this happy day

the soul not only ceases from its anxieties and loving com-

plaints, but is, moreover, adorned with all grace, entering

into a state of peace and delight, and of the sweetness of love,

as it appears from these stanzas, in praise of the magnificence

of the Beloved, which the soul recognises in Him, and enjoys

in the union of the espousals.

In the stanzas that follow, the soul speaks no more of its

anxieties and sufferings, as before, but of the sweet and

:n: nuim;-S'n.. 75

peaceful intercourse of love with the Beloved; for now all FTAXZAS

roubles are .se two stanzas, which 1 am about to "

explain, contain all that God is wont at this time to bestow

upon the soul ; but we are not to suppose that all souls, thus

advanced, receive all that is here described, either in the

same way or in the same degree of knowledge and of con-

sciousness. Some souls receive more, others less ; some in

one way, some in another ; and yet all may be in the state of

the spiritual espousals. All that is given is here described,

so that these stanzas may comprehend the whole.

As in the ark of Noe there were many chambers for the The DMI\*

ark of the

different kinds of animals, and ' all food that may be eaten,' 9 nomof

God contains

so the soul, in its flight to the Divine ark of the bosom of

God, beholds there not only the many mansions of its

r's house, but also all the food, that is, all the grandeurs

in which the soul may rejoice, and which are here referred to

by the common terms of these stanzas. These are substan-

ti, -illy as follows:

In this Divine union the soul has a vision and foretaste of

abundant and inestimable riches, and finds there all the

repose and refreshment it desired ; it attains to the secrets

d, and to a strange knowledge of Him, which is the

food of those who know Him most; it is conscious of the

awful power of God beyond all other power and might,

tastes of the wonderful sweetness and delight of the spirit,

finds its true rest and the Divine light which shines forth in

the harmony of the creatures and works of God; it

itself filled with all good, emptied and delivered from all evil,

and, above all, rejoices in the inestimable banquet of love

i confirms it in love. This is the substance of these two

tona&

here says that her Beloved in Himself and to

L'l.

76 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZAS her is all the objects she enumerates; for in the ecstatic

communications of God, the soul feels and understands the

n mio DIG, truth of the saying of S. Francis : My God and my all.' And

ed in Ksso ho J J

tutte le ooae. 1 because God is all, and the soul, and the good of all, the

communication involved in this ecstasy is made known by the

similitude of the goodness of all things, as I shall show when I

God is aii, as explain the words of these stanzas. All that is here set forth

1. Cause and ..,-,.,,. . ^ .^ ,

support- is in God eminently in an infinite way, or rather, every one

2 Measure ^ ^ Dese grandeurs is God, and all of them together are God.

fectkln Inasmuch as the soul is united to God, it feels all things to

be God according to the words of S. John, ' What was made,

'finaiiter. in Him was life.' \* But we are not to understand this con-

sciousness of the soul as if it saw the creatures in God as

we see material objects in the light, but that it feels all

things to be God in this fruition of them ; neither are we to

imagine that the soul sees God essentially and clearly because

it perceives Him so profoundly ; for this is only a strong and

The loving abundant communication from Him, a glimmering light of

enjoys God in what He is in Himself, by which the soul discerns this good-

every thing.

ness of all things, as I proceed to explain.

\*My Beloved is the mountains.' Mountains are high,

fertile, extensive, beautiful, lovely, flowery, and odorous.

These mountains my Beloved is to me.

God is to the ( The solitary wooded valleys.' Solitary valleys are tranquil,

mountnir pleasant, cooling, shady, abounding in sweet waters, and by

valley. ^he variety of trees growing in them, and by the melody of

the birds that frequent them, enliven and delight the senses ;

their solitude and silence procure us a refreshing rest. These

valleys my Beloved is to me.

' The strange islands.' Strange islands are girt by the sea;

they are also distant and unknown to the commerce of men.

They produce things very different from those with which \\c

\* S. John i. 3, 4. See Stanza via. p. 40.

GOD IS THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY. 77

are conversant, in strange . d with qualities hitherto .-

unknown, so as t<> those who behold them, and to till

tin-in with wonder. Thus, then, by reason of the great ami

' vellous wonders, and the strange knowledge, far beyond

:inon notions of men, which the soul beholds in God,

dls Him the strange i \V- say of a man that he is

\_; e for one of two reasons : either because he withdraws TWO rawm

why God U

If from the societv of his fellows, or because he is strange to

theaouL

..ular or distinguished. For these two reasons together

God is called strange by the soul. He is not only all that is

strange in undiscovered islands, but His ways, judgments,

and works are also strange, new, and marvellous to men\*

\_r wonderful that God should be strange to men God never

who have never seen Him, seeing that He is also strange to the \*\*

\_;els and the holy souls who behold Him ; for they neither men -

nor shall ever behold Him perfect 1\. Yea, even to the

he last Judgment they will see in Him so much that

isne.v in His deep judgments, in His works of mercy and

;is to excite their wonder more and more. Thus God

^e islands not to men only but to the Angels

: only to Himself is He neither strange nor new.

\* The roaring torrents. 1 Torrents have three characteristics, oodfcto

the aoal M

1. They overflow all that is in their course. 2. They fill all tornmt '

hollows. :J. They overpower all sounds by their own. And

(e the soul, feeling most sweetly that th>e three charac-

belong to God, says : vMy Beloved is the roaring

nts.'

As to the first characteristic, the soul feels itself to be so i. neow.

flow\* all

: \shelmed with the tonvnt of the Spirit of God, and so

t!\ overpowered by it, that all the waters in the world

have surrounded it, and to have drowned all its

His actions and passions. Though this be violent, yet there

nt ul in it, tor these rivers are rivers of peace,

I will Itrin^' upon her, as it ueiv, a river of

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZAS

XIV., XV.

2. He fills its

capacity.

3. His voice

penetrates it.

Examples

from Holy

Scripture;

1. The

Apoittm,

2. Our Lord

Jt>US.

peace, and as an overflowing torrent the glory of the Gen-

tiles.'\* That is, I will bring upon the soul, as it were, a

river of peace, and a torrent overflowing with glory. Thus

this Divine overflowing of the soul fills it, like the roaring

torrents, with peace and glory. As to the second charac-

teristic, the soul feels that this Divine water is now filling

the vessels of its humility and the emptiness of its desires, as

it is written : He hath exalted the humble, and filled the

hungry with good.' f The third characteristic which the soul

is now conscious of is a spiritual sound and voice above all

other sounds and voices in the world. The explanation of

this will take a little time.

This voice, or this murmuring sound of the waters, is an

overflowing so abundant that it fills the soul with good, and

a power so mighty seizing upon it as to seem not only the

sound of many waters, but a most loud roaring of thunder.

This voice is a spiritual voice, unattended by material sounds

or the pain and torment of them, but rather coming with

grandeur, power, might, delight, and glory ; it is, as it were,

a voice, an infinite interior sound, which endows the soul

with power and might. The Apostles heard in spirit this

voice when the Holy Ghost descended upon them in tlir

sound < as of a mighty wind.'J In order to mark this

spiritual voice, interiorly spoken, the sound was heard exte-

riorly, as of a rushing wind, by all those who were in Jeru-

salem. This exterior manifestation reveals what the apostles

interiorly received, namely, fulness of power and might.

So also our Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father

because of His distress and the rage of His enemies, heard an

interior voice from Heaven, comforting Him in His Sacred

Humanity. The sound, solemn and grave, was heard exte-

riorly by the Jews, some of whom ( said that it thundered,

\* Is. Ixvi. 12.

t S. Luke i. 52.

Acts ii. 2.

VOICE Of <<)!> rroN Till-: \ 79

said an Anirrl h.v n to Him.'\* The voice FT

\ardly hrard outward sign and expression of that L

:i^th and power which Christ then inwardly received in 1 i

human nature. We are not to suppose that the soul does

not hear in spirit the spiritual voice because it is also

outwardly heard. The spiritual voice is the effect on the

soul of the audihle voice, as material sounds strike the ear,

and impress the meaning of it on the intellect This is the 3. DTM.

\_T of David when he said, ' He will give to His voice

the voice of power ; ' f this power is the interior voice. He

will give to His voice, that is, the outward voice, audibly

heard, the voice of power which is felt within. God is an

infinite voice, and communicating Himself thus to the soul

produces the effect of an infinite voice.

s voice was heard by S. John, saying : ' I heard a voice 4. s, John.

u Heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of

great thunder.' And, lest it should be supposed that a voice

so strong was painful and harsh, he adds immediately, ( The

voiee which I ln-a id was as the voice of harpers harping on

their harps.'J Ezechiel says that the sound of many waters 5.

was ' as it were the voice of the Most High God,' profoundly

1 sweetly communicated in it. This voice is infinite,

. as I have said, it is God who communicates Himself ;

in the soul, He adapts Himself to each soul, giving

the voice of power according to th -ir y, and

filling tin-in with grandeur and delight. And so the Bride

\_;\* in the Canticle : \* Let Thy voice sound in my ears, for

u is sweet\* ||

<} whisper of the amorous gales.' Two things are to be

-gales and the whisp amorous gales

and graces of the Beloved, which, because of

lion with the Bridegroom, play around the soul, and

D \ii. 1'-. .

at 11. 1 1.

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZAS

XIV.. XV.

Spiritual

touch and

hearing of

the soul

beatified by

the whisper

of Cud.

most lovingly sent forth, touch it in its inmost substamv.

The whisper of the gales is a most sublime, and s\\

understanding of God and of His attributes, which over-

flows into the intellect from the contact of the attributes of

God with the substance of the soul. This is the most supreme

delight of which the soul is capable in this life.

That we may understand this the better, we must keep in

mind, that as in a gale two things are observable the touch

of it, and the whisper or sound so there are two things

observable also in the communications of the Bridegroom

the impression of delight, and the understanding of it. As the

touch of the air is felt in the sense of touch, and the whisper

of it heard in the ear, so also the contact of the virtues of the

Beloved is felt and enjoyed in the touch of the soul, that is,

in the substance thereof, through the instrumentality of the

will, and the understanding of the attributes of God felt in

the hearing of the soul, that is, in the intellect. The gale is

said to blow amorously when it strikes deliciously, satisfying

his desire who is longing for the refreshing which it ministers ;

for it then revives and soothes the sense of touch, and while the

sense of touch is thus soothed, that of hearing also rcjoi-

and delights in the whisper of the gale more than that of tin-

touch, because the sense of hearing is more spiritual, or, to

speak with greater correctness, is more nearly connected uith

the spiritual than that of touch, and the delight thereof is

more spiritual than is that of the touch. So also, inasmuch

as this touch of God greatly satisfies and comforts the sub-

stance of the soul, sweetly fulfilling its desire, that is,

admitting it to union; this union, or touch, is called

amorous gales, because, as I said before, the virtues of tli<

Beloved are by it communicated to the soul lovingly and

sweetly, and through it the whisper of intelligence to the- in-

tellect It is called whisper, because, as the whisper of the air

penetrates subtilely into the organ of hearing, so this most

OF Tin: <;K\TIJ: AIR. si

an.l delicate intelligence enters with marvellous STANZAS

sweetness and delight into the inmost substance of the soul, -

\\l\ich is the highest of all delights.

The reason of this is that substantial truth is now com- commtmfcm-

tt :. pn

n n mi rated intelligibly and denuded of all accidents and {JjJfJ

images, and is communicated to that intellect which philo-

gophers call passive or passible, because it is inactive and

'iout any natural efforts of its own during this communi-

>n. This is the highest delight of the soul, because it is

in the intellect, which is the seat of fruition, as theologians

teach, and fruition is the vision of God. Some theologians ^

think, inasmuch as this whisper signifies the substantial intel-

ic.-, that our father Elias had a vision of God in the

ifate whisper of the air, which he heard at the mouth

of the cave. The Holy Scriptmv (alls it 'the whirling of a

because knowledge is beg<tt<-n in the intellect by

the -til .tile and delicate communication of the Spirit. The

1 calls it here the whisper of the amorous gales, because it

! <> the intellect from the loving communication'of the

>:es nt" the Beloved. This is why it i called the whisper

>t t lie amorous gales.

ine whisper which enters in by the ear of the soul

>t only substantial intelligence, but a manifestation also of

ruths of the Divinity, ;u.<l a revelation of secret mysteries

K<r in general, in the Holy Scriptures, every com- intellect the

muii < ation of God said to enter in by the ear is a manifesto- I?\*\*\*\*

< of pure truth> t.. the intellect, or a revelation of the

see-rets of God. These are revelations or purely spiritual

n, ami are communicated directly to the soul without the

he senses, and thus, what God communicates

h tin\* spiritual ear is most profound and most certain.

n 8. Paul would express the greatness of th- n \< lations

3 Kings xix. 12.

N. <,

82 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

FTAXZAS made to him he did not say, I R~w or I perceived secret

XIV. .XV. J '

words : but, ' I heard secret words which it is not granted to

Exampieofs. man to utter.' \* It is thought from these words that S. Paul

Paul and

J ob. saw God, as our father Elias, in the whisper of a gentle air.

For as ' faith cometh by hearing,' so the Apostle teaches

that is by the hearing of the material ear, so also that

which faith involves, the intelligible truth, cometh by

spiritual hearing. The prophet Job, speaking to God, when

He revealed Himself unto him, teaches this truth distinctly,

saying : \* With the hearing of the ear I have heard Thee, but

now my eye seeth Thee.' f It is then clear that to hear with

the ear of the soul, is to see with the eye of the passive

intellect. It is not said with the hearing of the ears, but with

the hearing of the ear ; nor, with the seeing of the eyes, but

with the eye of the intellect ; the hearing of the ear is, there-

fore, the vision of the intellect.

Perfect Still we are not to think that what the soul perceives,

though pure truth, can be the perfect and clear fruition

of Heaven. For though it be free from accidents, it is

not clear, but rather obscure, because it is contemplation,

and that, as S. Dionysius saith, ' is a ray of darkness, 7 and

thus we may say that it is a ray and an image of fruit i>n.

because it occurs in the intellect, the seat of fruition. This

substantial truth, called here a whisper, is the desirable eyes

which the Beloved showed to the Bride, who unable to 1. ar

the vision therefore cried, ( Turn away Thine eyes from me.' J

There is a passage in the book of Job very much to the

purpose, and strongly corroborative of what I have

rapture and espousals. I shall cite the whole passage I

then briefly explain those parts of it which refer to tin'

subject before me, and that done, I shall then explain

the other stanza. 'Now there was a word spoken to me in

' fo xii. I. t Jol xlii. o. t Cnnt. vi. I.

u

vate,' saith Kliphax tl Tlu-manite, ' and my ears by stealth STANZAS

as it were, received the veins of its whisper. In the horror

vision by night, when deep sleep is wont to hold

in\* n, fear seized upon me and trembling, and all my

bones were affrighted : and when a spirit passed before me

the hair of my flesh stood up. There stood one whose

countenance I knew not, an image before my eyes, and I

heard a voice as it were of a gentle wind.' \* This passage

contains almost all I said about raptures in the thirteenth

stanza, which begins : \* Turn them away, O my Beloved.' The

' word spoken in private ' to Eliphaz is that secret communi-

cation which the soul was not able to endure, and, therefore,

'1 urn th -i 11 away, my Beloved.' Eliphazsayn that

his 'ear by stealth as it were, received the veins of its whisper.'

.it is meant the pure substance of truth which tin- intel-

-ceives, for the ' veins ' here denote the interior essence.

The whisper is that communication and touch of the virtu.-s

the said substance of truth is communicated

to tin- int.-lltvt. It is called a whi>p-r because of its great

ness. And the soul calls it tin- amorous gales because

it is so lovingly communicated. It is said to be received as it

-a 1th, tor that which is stolen is alienated, so this

secret is alien to man, speaking in the order of na

because tl: ! he received does not appertain to him

naturally, and thus it was beyond the power of nature to

receive it : neither was it granted to S. Paul to repeat what

he heard. For this reason the I'rophrt suith twice: My

secret to myself, my secret to myself.' t

When Kliphaz speaks of the horror of the vision by night,

and of the fear and tivmMinu'that sei/ed upon him, he refers

awe and dread that riin.i,ip:i>.s the soul when it tails

iu ecstasy, win. 1. in it> natural strength it is unable to

Job iv. 1210. t U xxiv. 10.

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZAS

XIV., XV.

Terror in-

spired by

Ripernatnral

The soul nei-

ther knows

nor beholds

the Essence

at God.

endure. The Prophet gives us to understand that, as when

sleep is about to fall upon men, a certain vision which they

call a nightmare is wont to oppress and terrify them in the

interval between sleeping and waking which is the moment of

the approach of sleep, so in the spiritual passage from the

sleep of natural ignorance to the waking of the supernatural

understanding, which is the beginning of an ecstasy, the spi-

ritual vision then revealed, makes the soul fear and tremble.

' All my bones were affrighted,' that is, were shaken and

disturbed ; by this he meant a certain dislocation of the bones

which takes place when the soul falls into an ecstasy. This

is clearly expressed by Daniel when he saw the Angel, saying :

' my lord, at the sight of thee my joints are loosed.' \* ' When

a spirit passed before me,' that is, when I was forced to

transcend the ways and limitations of nature in ecstasies and

raptures. ' The hair of my flesh stood up,' that is, my body

was elevated from the ground, and the flesh contracted like

that of a dead man.

' There stood One,' that is God, Who reveals Himself after

this manner. ' Whose countenance I knew not ; ' in these

communications or visions, however high they may be, the

soul neither knows nor beholds the face and Essence of God.

( An image before my eyes ; ' that is, the knowledge of the

secret words was most deep, as it were the image and face of

God ; but still this is not the vision of His essence. ' I heard

the voice as it were of a gentle wind,' this is the whisper

of the amorous gales that is, of the Beloved of the soul.

But it is not to be supposed that these visits of God arc

always attended by such terrors and shocks of nature, as in

the case of those who are entering in to the state of illu-

mination and perfection, and as in this kind of communica-

tions, namely of ecstasies and raptures; for in others th- \

take place with great sweetness.

\* Dan. x. 10.

LVG TW1LIG1

V XV.

4 THE tranquil night. 1 In this spiritual sleep in the bosom STANZAS

Beloved the soul enters into the possession and fruition

of all the calmness, repose, and quiet of a peaceful night,

and receives at the same time in God a certain unfathomable

obscure Divine intelligence. This is the reason why the soul

Beloved the tranquil night.

' At the approaches of the dawn.' This tranquil night is AUTO of ob.

not like a night of obscurity, but rather like the night when

tin- sunrise is drawing nigh. This tranquillity and repose

od is not all darkness to the soul, as the Obscure Night,

rather tranquillity and repose in the Divine light and

in the new knowledge of God, whereby the mind, most

sweetly tranquil, is elevated upwards to Divine light This

ine light is here very appropriately called the approaches

of the dawn, that U the twilight; for as the twilight of the

mom disperses the obscurity of the night and reveals the

it of day, so the mind, tranquil and reposing in God.

raised up from the darkness of natural knowledge to the

morning light of the supernatural knowledge of God, not

clear, indeed, as I have said, but obscure, like the night at

tin- approaches of the dawn. For as it is then neither

wholly night nor wholly day, but twilight, so this solitude

and Divine repose is neither perfectly illuminated by the

te light, not yet perfectly alien tnm it.

his tranquillity the int. 11. it is elevated in a strange

way above its natural comprehension to the Divine light : it

i ke a man who after a profound sleep opens his eyes to

xpected light. This knowledge is referred to by David

u he say B : \* I have watched, and am become as a sparrow,

h..u .t..j.: \* that is, I opened the eyes of

P

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A SPimTAL CANT1CLK.

Pr.nl in con-

.!.].' r i >!!

Ba

parrow,

l\\> MM

STANZAS my intellect, nn<l was raised up above all n:itural cmnpre-

- hension, and I am become solitary, deprived thereof, on tin\*

housetop, lifted up above all earthly considerations. He says

tli it li. \\.-is 'become as a sparrow,' all alone, because in this

kind of contemplation the spirit of man is invested with

certain characteristics of the sparrow. These are five in

number:

1. It frequents high places, and the spirit of man in this

state rises to the highest contemplation.

2. It is ever turning its face in the direction of the wind,

and the spirit of man turns its affections towards the biv;ith

of love, which is God.

3. It is in general solitary, abstaining from the companion-

ship of others, and flying away when they approach it : so

the spirit in contemplation is far away from all worldly

thoughts, lonely in its avoidance of them; neither does it

consent to anything except to this solitude in God.

4. It sings most sweetly, and so also does the spirit at this

time sing unto God ; for the praises which it offers up proceed

from the sweetest love, in themselves most pleasing and most

precious in the sight of God.

5. It is of no definite colour ; so also is the perfect spirit,

which in this ecstasy is not only without any tinge of

sensual affection or self-love, but also without any particular

consideration of the things of heaven or earth ; neither can

it give any account whatever of them, because it has en\*

into the abyss of the knowledge of God.

' The silent music/ In this silence and tranquillity of the

night, and in this knowledge of the Divine light, the soul

discerns a marvellous arrangement and disposition of God's

wisdom in the diversities of His creatures and operations.

All these, and each one of them, have a certain corre-

spondence with God, whereby each, by a voice peculiar to

itself, proclaims what there is in itself of God, so as to form a

t:.r,-n

lor God,

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ert of the sublimest melody, transcending all the bar- STANZAS

DV., XV.

lies of the world. This is the silent music, because it is

O\*M) In TTf\*

lligence tranquil and in repose, without audible voice;

and thus the sweetness of music and the repose of silence concert o

are enjoyed in it. The soul says that the Beloved is the

silent music, because this harmony of spiritual music is in

Hi MI understood and felt\*

\* The murmuring solitude.' This is almost the same as

the silent music. For though the music is inaudible to the

senses and the natural faculties, it is a solitude most full of

sound to the spiritual powers. These powers being in soli-

tude, emptied of all forms and natural apprehensions, may

well receive in spirit, like a resounding voice, the spiritual

impression of the majesty of God in Himself and in His

creatures ; as it happened to S. John, who heard in spirit as

it were 'the voice of harpers harping on their harps.'\*

S. John heard this in spirit: it was not material han>s that he

-..- : ; ,j

heard, but a certain knowledge that he had of the praises of

the Blessed, which everyone of them, each in his own degree

of glory, is continually singing before God which is as it

were music. For as every one of the Saints had the gifts of

in a different way, so every one of them sings His

praises in a <litT. rent way, and yet all harmonize in one con-

cert of love, as in mu

In the same way, in this tranquil contemplation, the soul

beholds all creatures, not only the highest, but the lowest

also, each one according to the gift of God to it, sending

forth the voice of its witness to what God is. It I .(holds

each one magnifying Him in its .\\n way, and possessing

Him according to ite particular capacity; and thus all these

voices to- mite in one strain in praise of God's

greatness, wisdom, and marvellous knowledge. This is

xj.xiv.2.

58 A Sl'IlMTTAL CANTICLE.

STAN /AS the meaning of those words of the Holy Ghost : \* The Spirit

- of the Lord hath filled the whole world, and that which

containeth all things hath knowledge of the voice.'\* <T'nr

e ood. voice ' is the murmuring solitude, which the soul is said to

know, namely the witness which all things bear to God.

Inasmuch as the soul hears this music only in solitude and

in estrangement from all outward things, it calls it silent

music and murmuring solitude. These are the Beloved.

' si\*- 'The supper which revives, and enkindles love.' Lovers

tajVi-i'-n : find recreation, Satisfaction, and l.>v<- in feasts. And

in which

the Beloved in this sweet communication produces these three

effects in the soul, He is here said to be the supper that

revives, and enkindles love. In Holy Scripture supper sig-

nifies the Divine vision, for as supper is the conclusion of the

day's labours, and the beginning of the night's repose, so the

soul in this tranquil knowledge is made to feel that its trials

are over, the possession of good begun, and its love of God

increased. Hence, then, the Beloved is to the soul the supper

that revives, in being the end of its trials, and that enkin-

dles love, in being the beginning of the fruition of all good.

For a clearer perception how the Bridegroom is the

supper of the soul, we must refer to those words of the

Beloved in the Apocalypse : \* Behold, I stand at the gate and

knock. If any man shall hear my voice, and open to me

the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and

he with Me.' f It is evident from these words, that He bri

the supper with Him, which is nothing else but His own

sweetness and delights, wherein He rejoiceth Himself, and

which He, uniting Himself to the soul, communicates to it,

making it a partaker of His joy ; for this is the meaning of

' I will sup with him, and he with Me.' These words describe

the effect of the Divine union of the soul with God, wherein

\Visd. i. 7. t Ayuc. iii. '20.

SIMKITTAL i;.\.\<>n:T OF Lcr. 89

res the very goods of God Himself, Who communicates si

u graciously and abundantly to it. Thus the Beloved is

1 1 mself the supper which revives, and enkindles love, refresh-

the soul with His abundance, and enkindling its love in

His graciousness.

before I proceed to explain the stanzas which follow, I

must observe, that in the state of betrothal, wherein the soul

enjoys this tranquillity, and wherein it receives all that it can \* ndMar -

receive in this life, we are not to suppose its tranquillity to be

t, but reaching only to the higher part of it ; because the

M-n-itivr ] tart, except in the state of the spiritual matrimony,

never loses all its imperfect habits, and its powers are never

wholly subdued, as I shall show hereafter. What the soul

receives now, is all that it can receive in the state of betrothal,

i that of matrimony the blessings are greater. Though

tin- liride-Boul has great joy in these visits of the Beloved in

the state of betrothal, still it has to suffer from His absence,

to endure trouble and afflictions in the lower part, and at

the hands of the devil. But all this ceases in the state of

.-pi ritual marriage.

INTRODUCTION

Now that tin- Hiiile has the virtues of her soul in tlu-ir per-

ii, wherein she rejoices in the peaceful visits of her

li< loved, she enjoys at tim--. in a most sublime way, the

sweetness and fragrance of those virtues, because the Beloved

touches tli< in ; just as we perceive the fragrance and beauty

t flowers when we touch them in thrir full bloom. In many

.t thrs- visits of the Beloved, the soul is in spirit conscious

..t th.'S.- \ irtucs with wliich God has endowed it, by His giving

it ii-hi i<>r that end. And then the soul with marvellous joy

a IK I sweet love unites them all together, and offers them to the

>ved as a nosegay of beautiful Howcrs. T . ed, in

90 1'iunrAL CANTO LI:.

accepting the offering for He accepts it then accepts a

great service of the soul. All this occurs within the soul,

who then feels the Beloved within as on His own couch, for

the soul offers itself, together with all its virtues, which is the

greatest oblation it can make, and this is the highest delight

it receives in the interior converse with God from this gift of

the Beloved.

Maiico of the The devil, beholding this prosperity of the soul, and in his

great malice envying all the good he sees in it, employs all

his power, and has recourse to all his devices, in order "to

thwart it, if possible, even in the slightest degree. He thinks

it of more consequence to keep back the soul, even for an

instant, from the glorious riches of this delight, than to pre-

cipitate others into many mortal sins. Other souls have little

or nothing to lose, while such a soul has much, having gained

great treasures ; for the loss of one grain of refined gold is

greater than the loss of many of the baser metals.

The devil here has recourse to the sensitive appetites. 1 1 mu^l i

they can help him now in general but little or nothing,

because they are mortified, and because he cannot turn them

to any great account in distracting the imagination. Some-

times he stirs up many movements in the sensitive part of the

soul, and causes other vexations, spiritual as well as sensitive,

from which the soul is unable to deliver itself until our Lord

shall send His Angel, as it is written, \* The Angel of tin-

Lord shall encamp round about them that fear Hi in, and

shall deliver them;'\* and so establish peace, both in tin-

spiritual and sensitive parts of the soul. With a view to show

forth this truth, and to ask this favour, the soul, apprehen-

sive by experience of the craft which the devil makes

of to thwart this good, addressing itself to the Angels, whose

function it is to succour it, and to put the evil spirits to flight,

speaks in the words of the following stanza :

\* Pa xxxiii. 8.

I). 91

STAN/ A XVI.

Catch us thffoxe\*,

our vineyard hath flourished ;

WkiUofrote\*

We make a noetgay,

And let no one appear on the hill.

The soul anxious that this interior delight of love, which si

ie vineyard, should not be interrupted, either by envious

and malicious devils, or the raging desires of sensuality, or

the various comings and goings of the imagination, or any

consciousness or presence of created things, calls upon

the Angels to seize and hinder all these from interrupting

its practice of interior love, in the joy and delight of which

the soul and the Son of God mutually communicate and

enjoy their virtues and graces.

\* Catch us the foxes, for our vineyard hath flourished.'

The vineyard is the plantation in this holy soul of all the

\irtne-i whieh minister to it the wine of sweet smell. The

vineyard of the soul is then flourishing when it is united

11 to the Bridegroom, and delighteth in Him in all

the virtues. Sometimes, as I have said, the memory and

the fancy are assailed by various forms and imaginings, and

divers motions and desires trouble the sensitive part The

great and diversity of these made David say, when

he felt the inconvenience and the trouble of them as he

was drinking of the sweet wine of the spirit, thi;

!y after God : For Thee my soul hath thirsted, for

Thee my flesh, o how many way>.

.. .soul calls the whole troop of desires and sen-

sitive < m.,ti..ns, foxes, because of the great resemblance be-

tween them at this time. As foxes pretend to be asleep

IXUii. 2.

92

A SPIKriTAL (. \.\TICLE.

Tho flesh re-

turns to com -

bat with the

spirit.

Two plans of

attack by evil

Bpirits;

1 To excite

desire and

imagination.

?. To inflict

bodily or

spiritual

that they may pounce upon their prey when it mmes in

their way, so all the desires and sensitive energies of the

soul are asleep until the flowers of virtue grow, flourish, and

bloom. Then the desires and sensitive energies awake to

resist the Spirit and to try to rule over the soul. \* The flesh

lusteth against the spirit,' \* and as the inclination of it is

towards the sensitive desires, it is disgusted as soon as it

tastes of the Spirit, and herein the desires prove extremely

troublesome to spiritual sweetness.

' Catch us the foxes.' The evil spirits now molest the soul in

two ways. They vehemently excite the desires, and then

employ them with other imaginations to assail t lie peaceful

and flourishing kingdom of the soul. In the second place,

and this is much worse, when they do not succeed in stirring

up the desires, they assail the soul with bodily pains and

noises in order to distract it. And, what is still more serious,

they fight with spiritual horror and dread, and sometimes

with fearful torments, which, at this time, if God permits

them, they can now effectually bring about, for inasmuch as the

soul is now spiritually detached so as to perform its spiritual

exercises, the devil being himself a spirit presents himself

before it with great ease.

At other times the evil spirit assails the soul with other

horrors, before it begins to have the fruition of the sweet

flowers, when God is beginning to draw it forth out of the

house of sense that it may enter on the interior exercises in the

garden of the Bridegroom, for he knows well that once entered

into this state of recollection it is there so protected that, not-

withstanding all he can do, he cannot hurt it. Wry nftm,

too, when the devil goes forth to meet the soul, the soul In-

comes quickly recollected in the secret depths of its interior,

where it finds great sweetness and protection ; then t

GaL v. 17.

Tin: NOSEGAY or : 93

. di-tant that ill.- ly produce STAN

no fear, hut are even the occasion of peace and joy. The -

le, in the canticle, speaks of these terrors saying: 'My

soul ariots of Aminadab.' \* Amin-

adab is the evil spirit, and his chariots are his assaults upon

the soul, which he makes with great violence, noise, and

confusion.

The Bride also says what the soul says here, namely :

the little foxes that destroy the vines; for our

vineyard hath flourished.' f She does not say, Catch me, but,

h us, because she is speaking of herself and the Beloved ;

because they are one, and enjoy the flourishing of the vine-

yard together.

The reason why the vineyard is said to be flourishing and Fiowcwin

bearing fruit is this : the soul in this life has the frui- fruitinthe

<f virtues, however perfect they may be, only in th

flower, because the fruit of them is reserved for the life to

('.inc.

While of roses we make a nosegay.' Now, at this time, The out

make\* a

\\hilr the snul is rejoicing in the fluri>hiMg of the vineyard, r ;

and (Icli-htin^ itsrlt' in the IH.SMIH of the Beloved, all its "\*\*\*"\*

axe perfect, exhibiting themselves to the soul, and

sending forth great sweetness and delight. The soul feels

u to be in itself and in God so as to seem to be a most

flourishing and pleasing vineyard belonging to both, wherein

1 feed and delight Then the soul unites all iN virtues

in one, makes acts of love in each of them separately, and in

all t..;;.-thrr, and then offers them all to the Beloved, with

great tenderness of love and sweetness, and in this the

\ i-d l.< Ips it, for without His help and favour, it cannot

make this union and oblation to the Belov. 1 1 < nee it says:

4 we make a nosegay/ that is the Beloved and my.-

ion of th<- viiturs is called a nosegay; for as a

Cant, fill

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A SIM RITUAL CA.NTI'

STAXZA

XVI.

from goods

of Hcnse and

of spirit.

nosegay is cone-like in form, and a cone is strong, containing

and embracing many pieces firmly joined together, so this

cone-like nosegay of the virtues which the soul makes for the

Beloved, is the uniform perfection of the soul which firmly and

solidly contains and embraces many perfections, great virtues,

and rich endowments ; for all the perfections and virtues of

the soul unite together to form but one. And while this

perfection is being accomplished, and when accomplished,

offered to the Beloved on the part of the soul, it becomes

necessary to catch the foxes that they may not impede this

mutual interior communication. The soul prays not only

that this nosegay may be carefully made, but also adds:

' And let no one appear on the "hill.'

This Divine interior exercise requires solitude and detach-

ment from all things, whether in the lower part of the soul,

which is the sensitive nature of man, or in the higher, which

is the rational. These two divisions comprise all the faculties

and senses of man, and are here called the hill ; becau

our natural notions and desires are in them, as quarry on a

hill, and also because the devil lays in wait among tl

HiJvuury, notions and desires, in order that he may injure the soul.

\* And let no one appear on the hill ;' that is, let no repre-

sentation or image of any object whatever, appertaining to

any of these faculties or senses, appear in the presence of the

soul and the Bridegroo'm : in other words, let the spiritual

faculties of the soul, memory, intellect, and will, be divested

of all notions, particular inclinations or considerations ; and

let all the senses and faculties of the body, interior as \\cll as

exterior, such as the imagination, the fancy, the sight and

hearing, and the rest, be divested of all occasions of distrac-

tions, of all forms, images, and representations, and of all

natural operations whatsoever.

The soul speaks in this way because it is necessary for tin-

perfect fruition of this communication of God, that all the

senses and faculties, both interior and exterior, should 1><-

: OF Tin: UKART. 95

nciiinlM red and emptied f their proper objects and STAN

operations ; for if they now be suffered to be active, so much -

tin greater will be the hindrance which they will occasion.

The soul, having attained to the interior union of love, the in perfect

onion the

itual faculties of it are no longer active, and still less pintod f\*.

those of the body ; for now that the union of love is actually "\*

brought ahoiit, tin faeidties of the soul cease from their

exertions, because now that the goal is reached, all employ-

ment of means is at an end. What the soul at this time has

Isactirein

to do is to wait lovingly upon God, and this waiting is love tove \*

in a continuation of unitive love. Let no one, therefore,

appear on the hill, but the will only waiting in the offering

up of self and of the virtues in the way described.

INTRODUCTION.

rer understanding of the following stanza, we

muM kerp in mind that the absence of the Beloved, from

\\hieh tin- soul suffers in the state of spiritual espousals, is an

exceedingly great affliction, and at times greater than all

other tr 'ever. The reason is this: the love of the

soul for God is now so vehement and deep, that the pain of

! 1 i - absence is vehement and deep also. This pain is increased

also by the annoyance which arises from intercourse with

. whirh is very great; for the soul, under the pres-

sure of its (put kcned desire of union with God, finds all

nversation most painful and difficult to endure. It is

like a stone in its flight to the place whither it is rapidly tend-

ing; every obstacle it meets with occasions a violent shock.

And as the soul has tasted of the sweetness of the Beloved's

\*. \\hii-li are more desirable than gold and all that is

i; it'ii I, it therefore dreads even a momentary absence, and

iddresaes itself as follows to aridities, and to tl of the

\_ r ro in i :

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A SPIRITUAL CAST I'

STANZA.

s iritnai

STAN/A XVII.

Cease, thou killing north wind !

C<nf, south wind, thou that awakcnest love !

Blow through my garden,

And let its odours flow,

And my Beloved shall feed among the flowers.

What I have spoken of in the foregoing stanza is not all

that can impede the interior sweetness of the soul.

Spiritual dryness has the same effect; and the soul afnml

f this ^ ias recourse to two expedients in order to prevent

dryness of spirit. First, it shuts the door against it by con-

tinual prayer and devotion. Secondly, it invokes the Holy

Ghost, Who drives away aridity from the soul, Who supports it,

and increases its love of the Bridegroom, and Who also guides

it into the interior practice of virtue, in order that the Son of

God, the Bridegroom, may rejoice and delight the more in tin-

soul, whose efforts are all directed to please the Beloved.

\* Cease, thou killing north wind.' The north wind is

exceedingly cold ; it dries up and parches flowers and plants,

and at the least, when it blows, causes them to draw in and

shut up. So, because dryness of spirit and the sensible

absence of the Beloved produce the same effect on the soul,

exhausting the sweetness and fragrance of virtue, it is here

called the killing north wind ; for all the virtues and affective

devotions of the soul are as dead. Hence the soul addresses

itself to it saying : Cease, Thou killing north wind. These

words mean that the soul applies itself to spiritual exercises,

in order to escape aridity. But as the communications of

God are now so interior that no exertion of the soul's facul-

ties can possibly attain to them if the Spirit of the Bridegroom

do not cause these movements of love, the soul addresses

Him, saying: 'Come, south wind, thou that awakenest

.Til ANh SOUTH WIMs. 07

The south wind is another wind commonly called the .-

:.:. I' if ^nitle, and brings rain; it makes the -

grass and plants grow, flowers to blossom and scatter their per-

fume abroad ; and, in short, it is the very opposite in its effects s

of the north wind. By it is meant here the Holy Ghost, Who

awakeneth love ; for when this Divine Breath breathes in the

soul, it so inilames and refreshes it, it so quickens the will,

and stirs up the desires, which were before low and asleep as

lie love of God, that it may be said of it that it quickens

the love between Him and the soul. The prayer of the soul

he Holy Spirit is, \* Blow through my garden.'

This garden is the soul itself. For as the soul said of

itself before that it was a flourishing vineyard, because the

tlowers of virtue which are in it give forth the wine of swe-

ness, so here it says of itself that it is a garden, because the

flowers of perfection and the virtues are planted in it,

and there flourish, and grow.

Observe, too, that the expression is 'blow through my

garden,' not blow in it. There is a great difference between j

God's breathing into the soul, and through it. To breathe

into the soul is to infuse into it graces, gifts, and virtues ; to

ie through it is, on the part of God, to toueh and move

rtues and perfections, renewing them and stirring them

in such a way that they send forth their marvellous fragrance

and sweetness. Thus aromatic spices, when shaken or

touched, give forth the odours which are not otherwise per-

!. The soul is not always in the conscious fruition of

its acquired and infused virtues, because, in this life, they are

like flowers in seed, or in bud, or like aromatic spices

covered over, the perfume of which is not perceived till they

are exposed and shaken.

1 5ut (iod sometimes is BO merciful to the H ride-soul, as

the Holy Ghost breathing mean\\hile through the flourishing

garden to open these buds of virtue and expose the aromatic

VOL. n. M

A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

XVII.

The soul

made con-

scious of ito

l-uuty.

Virtues of

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Rhine before

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of the

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Example of

The Holy

Spirit |,re-

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oul for

Gtetafc,

herbs of the soul's gifts, perfections, and riches, to manifest

to it its interior treasures and to reveal to it all its beauty.

It is marvellous to behold, and sweet to feel, the abundance of

the gifts now revealed in the soul, and the beauty of the

flowers of virtue now flourishing in it. No language can

describe the fragrance which every one of them diffuses, each

according to its kind. This state of the soul is referred to in

the words, ' let its odours flow.'

So profuse are these odours at times, that the soul seems

enveloped in delight and bathed in inestimable glory. Not

only is it conscious itself of them, but they even overflow it,

so that those who know how to discern these things can per-

ceive them. The soul in this state seems to them as a

delectable garden, full of the pleasures and riches of God.

This is observable in holy souls, not only when the flowers

open, but almost always ; for they have a certain air of

grandeur and dignity which inspires the beholders with awe

and reverence, because of the supernatural effects of their

close and familiar converse with God. We have an illustra-

tion of this in the life of Moses, the sight of whose face the

people could not bear, by reason of the glory that rested upon

it the effect of his speaking to God face to face. \*

While the Holy Ghost is breathing through the garden

this is His visitation of the soul the Bridegroom Son of God

communicates Himself to it in a profound way, enamoured

of it. It is for this that He sends the Holy Spirit lx {UK

Him as He sent the Apostles f to make ready the chamber

of the soul His bride, comforting it with delight, setting its

garden in order, opening its flowers, revealing its gifts, and

adorning it with the tapestry of graces. The Bride-soul

longs for this with all its might, and therefore charges tin-

north wind not to blow, and invokes the south wind to blow

xxxiv. 30.

t S. L,uk- xxii.

r Tin; SWI:I:T-S.\II:LLL\<, n.n\\ I:RS.

t}n..ii-h the garden, because it ^ins many things here at STAN

once. The Bride now gains the fruition of all her virtues in

V.-;. - ,,f

t h< -ir sweetest exercise. She gains the fruition of her Beloved l

M M u-;

in them, because it is through the instrumentality of her SStJISod,

virtues that He converses with her in most intimate love,

and grants her favours greater than any of the past. She

gains, too, that her Beloved delights more in her because of HOW it

profits by

the actual exercise of virtue, which is what pleases her mo

namely, that her Beloved should be pleased with her. She

gains also the permanent continuance of the sweet fragrance

which remains in the soul while the Bridegroom is present,

and the Bride entertains Him with the sweetness of virtue,

as it is written : ' While the King was at His repose,' that is,

in the soul, 'my spikenard sent forth the odour thereof.'\*

The spikenard is the soul, which from the flowers of its

\i rt lies sends forth sweet odours to the Beloved, Who dwells

within it in the union of love. It is therefore very much to

be desired that every soul should pray the Holy Ghost to

1.1. \v tli rough ite garden, that the Divine odours of God may

flow. And as this is so necessary, so glorious and profitable

lie soul, tin- Hride desires it, and prays for it, saying:

' Arise, north wind, and come, south wind ; blow through

n iy garden, and let the aromatical spices tin -reef flow.'f

The soul prays fur this, not because of the delight and glory why it

1 \ .

consequent upon it. hut because of the delight it ministers to

tii-- Beloved, and because it prepares the way and announces

the presence of the Son of God, Who cometh to rejoice in it.

he soul adds:

4 And my Beloved shall feed among the flowers.' Th<

lit \\hich the Son of God finds now in tin- soul is

described as pasture. This word expresses most forrihly tin-

cause pastii i l>ut also suataiiu th.

Cant i. 11. Cant iv. 10.

100 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA Thus the Son of God delights Himself in the soul, in the

delights thereof, and is nourished by it, that is, He abides

within it as in a place which pleases Him exceedingly,

because the place itself really delights in Him. This, I

believe, is the meaning of those words recorded in the

Proverbs of Solomon: 'My delights were to be with the

children of men;'\* that is, when they delight to be with

Me, Who am the Son of God. Observe, also, that it is not

said that the Beloved shall feed on the flowers, but that He

shall feed among the flowers. For, as the communications of

the Beloved are in the soul itself, through the adornment of

the virtues, it follows that what He feeds on is the soul which

He transformed into Himself, now that it is prepared and

adorned with these flowers of virtues, graces, and perfections,

which are the things whereby, and among which, He feeds.

These, too, by the power of the Holy Ghost, send forth in

the soul the odours of sweetness to the Son of God, that He

may feed there the more in the love thereof ; for this is the

love of the Bridegroom, to be united to the soul amid the

fragrance of its flowers.

The Bride in the Canticle has observed this, for she had

experience of it : ' My Beloved is gone down into His garden,

to the bed of aromatical spices, to feed in the gardens, and to

gather lilies. I to my Beloved, and my Beloved to me, Who

feedeth among the lilies,' that is, Who feedeth and deli^ht-

eth in my soul, which is His garden, among the lilies of my

virtues, perfections, and graces.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the state of spiritual espousals, the soul contemplating

its own riches and grandeur but unable to enter into the

\* Prov. viii. 81

fAL < A1T1V1-; IN I'K! HI

possession and fruition of them as it desires, because it is STAKZA

XVII I.

still in the flesh, suffers exceedingly, and then more particu-

lurly when its knowledge of them becomes more profound.

1 r hen sees itself in the body, like a prince thrown into prison,

sul.jirt to all misery, whose authority is disregarded, whose

\*ries and wealth are confiscated, and who, of his former

substance receives but a miserable dole ; whose household is

no longer obedient, and whose slaves and servants, forgetting

all respect, plunder him of the scanty provisions of his table.

Thus is it with the soul in the body, for when God mercifully

admits it to a foretaste of the good things which He has pre-

pared for it, the wicked servants of desire in the sensitive part,

now the slave of disorderly motions, now of other rebellious

movements, rise up against it in order to rob it of its good.

The soul feels itself as if it were in the land of enemies, Exile of the

-

tyrannised over by the stranger, like the dead among the

dead. Its feelings are those which the prophet Baruch J<

gave vent to when he described the misery of Jacob's capti-

\ it y : ' How happeneth it, Israel, that thou art in thy

enemies' land ? Thou art grown old in a strange country, thou

art defiled with the dead : thou art counted with them that

go down into hell.' \* This misery of the soul, in the captivity

.f the body is thus spoken of by Jeremias, saying : 'Is Israel

a bondman or a home-bora slave ? Why then is he become

a prey ? The lions have roared upon him, and have made a

noise.' f The lions are the desires and the rebellious motions

<>f the tyrant king of sensuality. In order to express the

tr<>ii hie which this tyrant occasions, and the desire of the soul

to see this kingdom of sensuality \vith all its hosts destroyed,

..r wholly subject to the spirit, the soul lifting up its eyes to

the Bridegroom, as to one who can effect it, speaks against

-o rebellious motions in the words of the next stanza.

llaruch iii. 10, 11. t Jerem. u. 14, 15.

102 A si'luriVAL CANTICLE.

STANZA XVIIL

O nymphs of Judea!

While amid the flowers and the rose-trees

The amber sends forth its perfume,

Tarry in the suburbs,

And touch not my threshold.

It is the Bride that speaks, who seeing herself, as to the

higher part of the soul, adorned with the rich endowments

of her Beloved, and seeing Him delighting in her, desires to

preserve herself in security, and in the continued fruition of

the blessings which He has given her. Seeing also that

hindrances will arise, as, in fact, they do, from the sensitive

part of the soul, which will disturb so great a good, she com-

mands the operations and motions of the soul's lower nature

to cease, in the senses and faculties of it, and sensuality not to

overstep its boundaries to trouble and disquiet the higher and

spiritual portion of the soul : not to hinder even for a moment

the sweetness she enjoys. The motions of our lower nature,

and their energies, if they show themselves during the enjoy-

ment of the spirit, are so much more troublesome, the more

active they are.

\* nymphs of Judea.' The lower, that is the sensitive part

of the soul, is called Judea. It is called Judea because it is

weak, and carnal, and blind, like the Jewish people. All the

imaginations, fancies, motions, and inclinations of the lower

part of the soul are called nymphs ; for as nymphs with their

beauty and attractions enticed men to love them, so the

operations and motions of sensuality softly and earnest 1 \

strive to entice the natural will, to withdraw it from that

which is interior, and to fix it on what is exterior, to which

they are disposed themselves. They also strive to influence

the intellect to join with them in their low views, and to

bring down reason to the level of sense by the attractions

LOH \T TIN; ITV.

of the lattor. The soul, therefore, says in ef; -ensual BTAKZA.

xviii.

operations and motions.

1 NVhih- amid the flowers and the rose-trees.' The flowers,

as I have said, are the virtues of the soul, and the rose-trees

are its faculties, memory, intellect, and will, which produce

and nurture the flowers of Divine conceptions, acts of love

and the virtues, while the amber sends forth ite perfume in

the virtues and the faculties of the soul.

\* The amber sends forth its perfume.' The amber is the

Divine Spirit of the Bridegroom Who dwells in the soul.

To send forth the perfume among the flowers and the rose-

trees, is to diffuse and communicate Himself most sweetly in

the powers and virtues of the soul, scattering abroad the per-

fume of the Divine sweetness. While the Divine Spirit sends

forth the spiritual sweetness in the soul, the soul cries out:

\* Tarry in the suburbs ' of Judea, which is the inferior part n\* mmm.

or sensitive nature of the souL The suburbs are the interior

senses, namely, memory, fancy, and imagination, where forms

and images of things collect, by the help of which the sensitive

nature of man stirs up concupiscence and desires. These forms

are the nymphs, and while they are quiet and tranquil the

desires are also asleep. They enter into the suburbs of tin-

interior senses by the gates of the exterior senses, of sight,

hearing, smell, ^.-. \Ve give the name of suburbs to all

the powers and interior or exterior senses of the sensitive part

<>t the soul, because they are outside the walls of the ci 1

That part of the soul which may be called the city is that

\\hich is most interior, the rational part, which is capable of

converse with God, the operations of which are superior

to those of sense. But there is a natural intercourse be-

n those who dwell in the suburbs of the sensitive part

that is the nymphs and those who dwell in the higher

part, whi.-h i\* tl, ,-ity itself; and therefore, what takes place

in the lower part is ordinarily felt in the higher, and conse-

)04 A SPimTAl. CAXTICLK.

XZA quently disturbs the spiritual operation which is convei>

- with God. Hence the soul bids the nymplis tarry in the

suburbs, that is, to remain at rest in the exterior and interior

senses of the sensitive part.

involuntary ' And touch not my threshold.' Let not your first move-

ments touch the higher part, for the first movements of the

soul are the threshold of it. When the first movements

have passed into the reason, they have crossed the threshold,

but when they remain as first movements only they are then

said merely to touch the threshold, or to cry at the gate, which

is the case when reason and sense contend over an unreason-

Lead n\* not able act. The soul here not only bids these not to touch it, but

tion.' a ig charges all considerations whatever which do not minister

to ite repose and the good it enjoys to keep far away.

INTRODUCTION.

THE soul is now so hostile to the lower part, and to the

operations thereof, that it would have God communicate

nothing to it when He communicates with the higher. If

He will communicate with the lower, it must be in a slight

degree, or the soul will be unable to endure it without faint-

ing away, because of its natural weakness, and consequently

the spirit cannot rejoice in peace, because it is then

troubled. ' For,' as the wise man says, ' the corruptible body

is a load upon the soul.'\* And as the soul longs for the

highest and noblest converse with God, which is impossible

in the presence of the sensitive part, it begs of God to deal

with it without the intervention of the senses. That sublime

vision of S. Paul in the third heaven, wherein, he says, he

saw God, but yet knew not whether he was in the body or

out of the body, must have been, be it what it may, inde-

e,

\ TIII: MOUXTA 105

] ii' 1- nt of the body ; for if the body had any share in it, he STANZA

must then have known it, and the vision could not have been -

what it was, seeing that he \* heard secret words which it is

not granted to man to utter.' \* The soul also, knowing well

th.it graces so great cannot be received in a vessel so mean,

and longing to receive them out of the body, or at least with-

out it, addresses the Bridegroom in the words that follow :

STANZA XIX.

Hide Thystlf, O my Beloved/

Let Thy face shine on the mountains.

Do not tell if,

But regard the companions

Of her who traverses strange islands.

Here the Bride presents four petitions to the Bridegroom : Poor peti-

1. She prays that He would be pleased to converse with her wi;

most interiorly in the secret chamber of the soul. 2. That

He would invest and inform her faculties with the glory and

grandeur of His Divinity. 3. That He would converse with her

so profoundly as to surpass all knowledge and expression, and

in such a way that her lower and sensitive nature may not

perceive it. 4. That He would love the many virtues and

graces with which He has crowned her, adorned with which she

is ascending upwards to God in the deepest knowledge of the

I )i\ in it y, and in transports of love most strange and singular,

surpassing those of ordinary experience.

Hide Thyself, my Beloved!' my Spouse, most i. \*\*

beloved, hide Thyself in the secret of my soul, communi-

ug Thyself to it in secret, and manifest ini; Thy hidden

wonders which no mortal eyes may see.

'Let Thy face shine on the mountains.' The face of

God is His Divinity. The mountains are the powers of

tlu' soul, memory, intrlh-rt, and will. Thus tin- meaning of

2 Cor. xii. l>-4.

106 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA these words is : Enlighten my intellect with Thy Divinity, am 1

intelligence, fill my will with Divine love,

Fortran\*

ofTSTj^wers an( ^ my memory with the Divine possession of glory. Tin-

Bride here prays for all that may be prayed for ; for she is

not content with that knowledge of God once granted t.

Moses \* the knowledge of Him by His works for she prays

to see the face of (rod, which is the essential communication

of His Divinity to the soul, without any intervening medium,

by a certain knowledge thereof in the Divinity. This is

something beyond sense, and divested of accidents, inas-

much as it is the contact of pure substances, that is, of the

soul and the Divinity.

^irtoiS? 1 \*\*\* ' ^ no \* ^ e ^ ^' ^ Before \* wnen Thy converse with me was

2 > o I jJ unic \*' known to the outward senses, for it was once such as to

be comprehended by them ; it was not so profound but

they could fathom it. Now let Thy converse with me be

so deep and so substantial, and so interior, as to be beyond

the capacity of the senses; for the substance of spiritual

truth is incommunicable to sense, and the communication

made through the senses, especially in this life, cannot be

purely spiritual, because the senses are not capable of such.

The soul therefore, longing for that substantial and essential

communication of God, of which sense cannot be cognizant,

prays the Bridegroom not to tell it : that is, that the depth

of the secret of the spiritual union may be such as to escape

the notice of the senses, like the secret which S. Paul heard,

and which is not granted to man to utter, f

4. For the \* But regard the companions.' The regard of God is love

loving n- \_\_

gardofGod. and grace. The companions here are the many virtues of

the soul, its gifts, perfections, and other spiritual graces with

which He has crowned it, as with the ornaments of espousals.

Thus the meaning of the words seems to be this : Turn Th<>u

Thy face to the interior of my soul, my Beloved, enamoured

Exod. xxxiii. 23. t 2 Cor. xii. 4.

I\Ti:rJ"K n.NVKKSI-: \\ITH (iOD. 107

of the treasures which Thou hast laid up there, so that, STANZA.

enamoured of them, Thou mayest hide Thyself among them

and there dwell ; for though in truth they are all Thine, yet

they are mine also, because Thou hast given them.

' Of her who traverses strange islands. 1 That is, of my soul to it.

1 ing towards Thee through strange knowledge of Thee,

by strange ways strange to sense and to the ordinary percep-

tions of nature. It is as if the Bride said, by way of con-

ninir Him to yield: Seeing that my soul is tending

towards Thee through knowledge which is spiritual, strange,

unknown to sense, do Thou therefore communicate Thyself

to it so interiorly and so profoundly that the senses may not

observe it.

INTRODUCTIO

IN order to the attainment of a state of perfection so high as

this of the spiritual marriage, the soul that aims at it HUM

not only be purified and cleansed from all the imperfections,

rebellions, and imperfect habits of its inferior nature, which is

now the old man being put away subject and obedient

to the higher, l.ut it must also have great courage and most

exalted love for so vigorous and close an embrace of God.

in this state the soul not only attains to exceeding pureneas

ami ln-aut y, hut also acquires a terrible strength by reason of

t hat strict and close bond which in this union binds it to God.

The soul, therefore, in order to come near unto God, must

have at tain. -il t.. the height of purity, strength, and adequate

love. The Holy Ghost, Who is the author of this spiritual

nni >! us that the soul should attain thus far in

to merit it, addresses Himself to the Father and the

Son, saying: ' Our sister is little, and hath no breasts. What

.-hall we do to our sister in the day u hen she is to be spoken

to? If she be a wall, h t us build ujxm it bulwarks of silver;

108

A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

Heroic

Perfection.

STANZAS if she be a door, let us join it together with boards of

XX., XXI.

- cedar.'\*

The \* bulwarks of silver ' are heroic virtues comprised in

faith, which is signified by silver, and these heroic virtues

are those of the spiritual matrimony, which are built upon

the soul, signified by the wall, relying on the strength of

which, the peaceful Bridegroom reposes undisturbed by any

infirmities. The ' boards of cedar ' are the affections and

characteristics of this deep love which is signified by the

cedar-tree, and this is the love of the spiritual matrimony.

In order \* to join it together,' that is, to adorn the Bride, it

is necessary she should be as the door for the Bridegroom to

enter through, keeping the door of the will open in a perfect

and true consent of love, which is the consent of the be-

trothal given previous to the spiritual marriage. The breasts

of the bride are also this perfect love which she must have

in order to appear without defect in the presence of Christ

her Bridegroom.

It is written in the Canticle that the Bride immediately

replied, saying : ' I am a wall : and my breasts are as a tower.'

That is, my soul is strong and my love most deep ; that He

may not fail her on that ground. The Bride, too, had ex-

pressed as much in the preceding stanzas, out of the fulness

of her longing for the perfect union and transformation, and

particularly in the last, wherein she set before the Bride-

groom all the virtues, graces, and good dispositions with

which she was adorned by Him, and that with the object of

making Him the prisoner of her love.

Now the Bridegroom, to bring this matter to a close, replies

in the two stanzas that follow, which describe Him as per-

fectly purifying the soul, strengthening and disposing it,

both as to its sensitive and spiritual nature, for this estate.

Cant. viii. 8.

THE BRIDEGROOM GUARDS HIS BRIDK. 109

uirges all resistance and rebellion, both of the flesh and STANZAS

of th.- <!' vil. not to approach the soul, saying:

STANZAS XX., XXI.

THE BRIDEGROOM.

It-winged birds,

Lion\*, fawns, bounding deer,

Mountains, valleys, strands,

Waters, winds, fires,

And the terrors that keep watch by night ;

By the soft lyres

And siren strains, I adjure you,

Let your fury cease,

And touch not the wall,

That the Bride may sleep in peace.

Here the Son of God, the Bridegroom, leads the Bride into

r>^t< !> tho

the enjoyment of peace and tranquillity in the conformity of

lit -r lower to her higher nature, purging away all her imper-

fections, subjecting the natural powers of the soul to reason,

and mortifying all her desires, as it is expressed in these two

stanzas, the meaning of which is as follows. In the first

place the Bridegroom adjures and commands all vain dis-

tractions of the fancy and imagination from henceforth to

cease, and controls the irascible and concupiscible. faculties

\vhich were hitherto the sources of so much affliction. He

1 -rings, so far as it is possible in this life, the three powers of

memory, intellect, and will, to the perfection of their several

objects. And then he adjures and commands the four

passions of the soul, joy, hope, grief, and fear, to be still,

and bids them from henceforth be moderate and calm.

All these passions and faculties are comprehended under

the expressions employed in the first stanza, the acts of

which, full of trouble, the Bridegroom subdues by that great

sweetness and courage which the Bride enjoys in the spi-

ritunl surrender "t Himself to her \\hu-li God makes at t

110 A Sl'IKITTAL CANTK U!.

time; under the influence of which, localise God transforms

the soul effectually in Himself, all the faculties, desires and

movements of the soul lose their natural imperfection and

become Divine.

T -.,.; ' Light-winged birds.' These are the distractions of the

imagination, light and rapid in their flight, from one subject

taJJtaatton. to another. When the will is tranquilly enjoying the sweet

converse of the Beloved, these desultory distractions produce

weariness, and quench the soul's spiritual delight. The

Bridegroom adjures them by the soft lyres. That is, seeing

that the sweetness of the soul is so abundant and so con-

tinuous that they cannot interfere with it, as they did before

when it was not so great, He adjures them, and bids them

cease from their disquieting violence. The same explana-

tion is to be given of the rest of the stanza.

2. From < Lions, fawns, bounding deer.' By the lions I mean the

anger, dodre, t J

timidi[tjr,aixi raging violence of the irascible faculty, which in its acts is

bold and daring as a lion. The \* fawns and bounding deer '

are the concupiscible faculty, that is, the power of desire, tin-

qualities of which are two timidity and rashness. Timidity

betrays itself when things do not turn out according to our

wishes, for then the mind retires within itself discouraged,

and in this respect the soul resembles the fawns. For as

fawns have the concupiscible faculty stronger than otln-r

animals, so are they more retiring and more timid. Rashness

betrays itself when we have our own way, for the mind is

then neither retiring nor timid, but desires boldly, and

gratifies all its inclinations. This quality of rashness is com-

pared to the deer, who so eagerly seek what they desire that

they not only rim but even leap after it ; hence they are

described as bounding deer.

Thus the Bridegroom, in adjuring the lions, retrains tin

violence and controls the fury of rage ; in adjuring tin- fa\\ n-.

He strengthens the concupiscible faculty against timidity and

YIKTIT.. Till: MKAV: VICI.. t>K M'FECT. Ill

irresolution: ami in adjuring the deer, He satisfies and subdues STANZAS

60 which were restless before, leaping, like deer, from

one object to another, to satisfy that concupiscence which is

now satisfied by the soft lyres, the sweetness of which it enjoys,

and by the siren strains, in the delight of which it revels.

Hut the Hriilegroom does not adjure anger and concupis-

cence themselves because these passions never cease from the

soul but their vexatious and disorderly acts, signified by the

' lions, fawns, and bounding deer,' for it is necessary that

these disorderly acts should cease in this state.

'Mountains, valleys, strands.' These are the vicious and 3.

disorderly actions of the three faculties of the soul memory, in \*Tn

!< < t, and will. These actions are disorderly and vicious

when they are in extremes, or, if not in extreme, tending to

one extreme or other. Thus the mountains signify those

actions which are vicious in excess, mountains l>eing high ;

the valleys, being low, signify those which are vicious in the

extreme of defect Strands, which are neither high nor low,

l>ut, inasmuch as they are not perfectly h\vl, tend to one

me or other, signify those acts of the three powers of

tin- soul which depart slightly in either din <-ti. .11 from the

1 1 tie mean and equality of justice. These actions, though not

rd.-Hy in the extreme, as they would be if they amounted

to mortal sin, are nevertheless disorderly in part, tending to-

wards venal sin or imperfection, however slight that tendency

may !, iit the intellect, memory, and will. He adjures also

all these actions which depart from the true mean, and bids

th'-m cease before the soft lyres and the siren strains, which

so effectually charm the powers of the soul as to occupy them

hl.tely in their true and proper functions, so that they

shall not only avoid all extremes, but also the slightest ten-

dency to th. in.

Wat.-rs, winds, fires, and the terrors that keep watch

These are the affections of the four passions,

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A SPIRITUAL CAXTICLE.

STANZAS

vfetaHi

grief, hope, joy, and fear.' The waters are the

^ %\*\*\*\* which afflict the soul, for they rush into it like

water. 'Save me, God,' saith the Psalmist, 'for the

waters are come in even unto my soul.' \* The winds are the

affections of hope, for they rush forth like wind, desiring that

which is not present but hoped for, as the Psalmist saith :

' I opened my mouth and panted : because I longed for Thy

commandments.' f That is, I opened the mouth of my hope,

and drew in the wind of desire, because I hoped and longed

for Thy commandments. The fires are the affections of joy

which, like fire, inflame the heart, as it is written : ' My heart

grew hot within me ; and in my meditation a fire shall flaim

out;'J that is, while I meditate I shall have joy. The

\* terrors that keep watch by night' are the affections of fear,

which, in spiritual persons who have not attained to the state

of spiritual matrimony are usually exceedingly strong. These

come from God at those times when He is about to bestmv

some great favours upon men whose nature is not perfect and

strong, and habituated to such favours. Then indeed fear

and dread fall upon them, and flesh and sense are shaken.

They come also from the evil spirit, who, when he sees a soul

sweetly recollected in God, out of envy and malignity, labours

to disturb its tranquillity by exciting horror and dread, in order

to destroy so great a blessing ; sometimes even he utters his

threats, as it were, in the interior of the soul. But when he

finds that he cannot penetrate within the soul, because it is

so recollected, and so united with God, he strives at least in

the province of sense, to produce exterior distractions and

inconstancy, sensible pains and horrors, if perchance he may

in this way disturb the soul in the bridal chamber.

These are called terrors of the night, because they are the

work of evil spirits, and because Satan labours, by the help

Ps. Ixviii. 1.

t Pa. cxviii. 131.

Pa. xxxviii.4.

GOD WJl'KS AWAY TKAKS. AND FII.: 113

reof, to involve the soul in darkness, and to obscure the STANZAS

Divine light when in it n jni< vth. They are said to keep tli-

watch by night, because they waken the soul and rouse it

from its sweet interior slumber, and also because Satan, their

author, is ever on the watch to produce them. These terrors

strike the soul of persons who are already spiritual, passively, spiritual

and come either from God or the evil spirit. I do not refer to ? m

fear.

temporal or natural terrors, because spiritual men are not

subject to these, as they are to those of which I am speaking.

The Beloved adjures the affections of these four passions, The

compels them to cease and to be at rest, because He supplies

the Bride now with force, and courage, and satisfaction, by i.

the soft lyres of His sweetness and the siren strains of His longer Mt,

J excrptM\*

Jit, so that not only they shall not domineer over the 22J! tor

soul, I, ut not occasion it any distaste. Such is the grandeur

and stability of the soul, that, although formerly the waters of

grief overwhelmed it, because of its own or other men's sins

which is what spiritual persons most feel the consideration

of them now excites neither pain nor annoyance; even the sen-

sible feeling of compassion exists not now, though the effects of

iiue in perfection. The weaknesses of virtues are no

ii the soul, for they are now constant, energetic, and per-

fect. As the Angels perfectly appreciate all sorrowful tilings

w i r hout the sense of pain, and perform acts of compassion wit h-

out the sentiment of pity, so the soul in tin.- mation

:' love. God, however, dispenses sometimes, on certain occa-

, with the soul in this matter, allowing it to feel and

: hut this is that it may become more fervent in love,

and grow in inn-it, <T fr some other reasons, as He dispensed

with His Virgin Mother, S. Paul, and others. This, howev

ry rninliti'>n <-f thi - itftte.

do the desires of hope afflict the soul now, because,

in its union with God, so far as it is poesiblr in ti

. it has i, :.! nothing spiritual

.11. i

114 A SPIRITUAL CANTICUi.

to desire, seeing that it feels itself to be full of the riches nf

God though it may grow in charity and thus, whether 1 i v i i n;

always grow. or dying, it is conformed to the will of God, saying, with the

sense and spirit, Thy will be done,' free from the violence of

inclination and desires; and therefore even its longing for

the Beatific Vision ig without pain.

3. Joy of the The affections of ioy, also, which are wont to move the soul

soul like the J J '

with more or less vehemence, are not sensibly diminished ;

neither does their abundance occasion anything new. The

joy of the soul is now so abundant, that it is like the sea, which

is not diminished by the rivers that flow out of it, nor inert-:,

by those that empty themselves into it ; for the soul now con-

tains that fountain of which our Lord said, that it is ' spring-

ing up into life everlasting.' \*

The fountain I have said that the soul receives nothing new in this state

of bliss

of transformation ; it seems to lose all accidental joy, which is

not withheld even from the glorified. That is, accidental

joys and sweetness are indeed no strangers to this soul ; yea,

rather, those which it ordinarily has cannot be numbered ; yrt,

for all this, as to the substantial communication of the Spirit,

there is no increase of joy, for that which may occur anew the

soul possesses already, and thus what the soul has within itself

is greater than anything that comes anew. Hence, then,

whenever any subject of joy or rejoicing, whether exterior

or spiritually interior, presents itself to the soul, the soul

betakes itself forthwith to rejoicing in the riches it possesses

already within itself, and its joy in them is far greater th;m

any which these new accessions minister, because, in a certain

ood the sense, God is become its possession, Who, though He delights

in all things, yet in nothing so much as in Himself, seeing

that He has all good eminently in Himself. Thus all accessions

of joy remind the soul that its real rejoicing is in its interior

\* S. John iv. 14.

A .)<)V I'"]; KVKK. 115

possessions, rather than in these accidental causes, because, as STANZAS

I have said, the former are greater than the latter.

very natural for the soul, even when a particular

matter gives it pleasure, that, possessing another of greater

th and gladness, it should turn to it at once and prefer

it to the former. The accidental character of these spiritual

accessions, and the new impressions they make on the soul,

may be said to be as nothing in comparison with that substan-

tial source which it has within itself; for the soul which has

attained to the perfect transformation, fullgrown, grows no

more by means of these spiritual accessions, as those souls do

who have not yet advanced so far. It is a marvellous thing that

the soul, while it receives no accessions of delight, should still

seem to do so and also to retain them. The reason is that

it is always tasting them anew, because its blessings are ever

renewed ; and thus it seems to be continually the recipient

of new accessions, while it has no need of them whatever.

But if we speak of that light of glory which in this, the God in tho

out, like the

soul's embrace, God sometimes produces within it, and which >> shining

ontbeooeui.

is a certain spiritual communion wherein He causes it to

behold and enjoy at the same time the abyss of delight and

rirhrs \\ hich He has laid up within it, there is no language

to express any degree of it. As the sun when it shines upon

the sea illuminates its great depths, and discovers the pearls,

and gold, and precious stones therein, so the Divine Sun,

the r.ri.l.-u r r-"in, turning towards the Bride, discovers in a

way the riches of her soul, so that even the Angels behold

\\ith amazement, and say: 'Who is she that cmm-th

forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the

sun, trrribli; as an army set in array.'\* This illumination

adds nothing to the grandeur of tho soul, notwithstanding iU

greatness, but onl what was already th<

Cant N .

1 \*

11G

I'lRHTAL CANTICLE.

Finally, the terrors that keep watch by night do not come

nigh unto her, because of her pureness, courage, and confl-

STANZAS

ict iov? r

dent trust m ^ 0( \* ' tne ev \*l s P ir i ts cannot shroud her in

darkness, nor alarm her with terrors, nor waken her with

their violent assaults. Thus nothing can approach her,

nothing can molest her, for she has escaped from all created

things and entered in to God, to the fruition of perfect peace,

sweetness, and delight, so far as that is possible in this

life. It is to this state that the words of Solomon are appli-

cable : \* A secure mind is like a continual feast.' \* As in a

feast we have the savour of all meat, and the sweet-

ness of all music, so in this feast, which the Bride keeps in

the bosom of her Beloved, the soul rejoices in all delight, and

has the taste of all sweetness. All that I have said, and all

that may be said, on this subject, will always fall short of that

which passeth in the soul which has attained to this blessed

Peace of God state. For when it shall have attained to the peace of God,

' which,' in the words of the Apostle, ( surpasseth all under-

standing,' f no sense or language can express its state.

' By the soft lyres and the siren strains I adjure you.' The

soft lyres are the sweetness which the Bridegroom communi-

cates to the soul in this state, and by which He makes all its

troubles to cease. As the music of lyres fills the mind with

. sweetness and delight, carries it rapturously out of itself, so

that it forgets all its weariness and grief, in like manner this

sweetness so absorbs the soul that nothing painful can ren< h

it. The Bridegroom says, in substance : By that sweetness

which I give thee, let all thy bitterness cease. The siren

strains are the ordinary joys of the soul, which it always

possesses. These are called siren strains because, as it is

said, the music of the sirens is so sweet, that he who hears it

is rapt and carried out of himself, forgetting all around him.

knowledge

And Inn-

guagc.

Prov. xv. 15.

t Philip, iv. 7.

Tin: KI:I<;\ or I:YJ:RLA>TIV<; PBAi 117

In tlie same way the delight of this union so. absorbs the soul HTANZAS

ami ivfiv>he\* it, that it becom- . -, charmed against

all tin- vexations and troubles that may assail it; it is to

the next words of the stanza refer :

\* Let your fury cease.' This is the troubles and <in\

which flow from unruly acts and affections. As anger is a

tin violence which disturbs tranquillity, overleaping its

! muds, so also all the affections and emotions that transgress

bounds of peace, and the tranquillity of the soul disturb

it whenever they touch it. Hence the Bridegroom says:

' And touch not the wall.' The wall is the territory of peace and

the fortress of virtue and perfections, which are the defences

and protection of the soul. The soul is the garden wherein

the Beloved feeds among the flowers, defended and guarded

i"i Him alone. Hence it is called in the Canticle \* a garden

inclosed.'\* The Bridegroom bids all disorderly emotions not

to touch the territory and wall of His garden.

1 i lie Bride may sleep in peace.' That she may enjoy

the full fruition of the peace and sweetness of her Beloved.

It seems, then, that there is no perfect tranquillity for the

soul unless it is able to enjoy, when and how it will, this

sweet sleep of love, as tin- IJride^room says Himself: 'I

adjure you, O daughters of Jeru>alem, by the roes and the

haits of the fields, that you stir not up nor awake my

beloved till she please.'f

INTRODUCTION.

Sr< ii was the desire of the Bridegroom to rescue His Bride

from the power of the flesh and the devil, that, having done

0, II.- no\* rejoices over her like the Good Shepherd, who

h:\im\_r f.-m.d the sheep that was lost, laid it upon his

f Cant i

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA

XXII.

The Good

cn"wn he> o

Christ! 1116 '

shoulders rejoicing; like the woman who, having found the

money she had lost, after lighting a candle and sweeping the

house, called ' together her friends and neighbours, saying :

Kejoice with me.'\* The loving Shepherd and Spouse of souls

feels a marvellous joy and satisfaction when He beholds a soul

gained to perfection lying on His shoulders, and clinging to

Him in the longed-for embraces of Divine union. He is not

alone in His joy, for He makes the Angels and the souls of the

blessed partakers of His glory, saying: ' Go forth, ye daughters

of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his

mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the

day of the joy of his heart.' f He calls the soul His crown,

bride, and the joy of His heart ; He carries it in His arms,

leads it into His bridal chamber, as we shall see in llir

following stanza :

STANZA XXII.

The Bride IMS entered

The pleasant and desirable garden,

And there reposes to her hearts content ;

Her neck reclining

On the sweet arms of her Beloved.

The Bride having prayed that the foxes maybe caught, that

the north wind may cease, that the nymphs, obstacles to the

desired union of the spiritual marriage, may forego their

troublesome importunities, and having also invoked and

obtained the favourable wind of the Holy Ghost, which is the

right disposition and means for the perfection of this estate,

it remains for me now to speak of the state of spiritual mar-

riage. It is the Bridegroom Himself Who speaks in the

stanza before us, in which He calls the soul His bride, and

speaks of two things : 1. He says that the soul has gone forth

victoriously, and has entered the delectable state of spiritual

marriage, which they had both so earnestly desired. 2. He

' S. Luke xv. 5, 8, 9. f Cant. iii. 11.

FROM PENANCE TO PERFECTION. 119

enumerates the properties of th.r -ito the fruition of STAN

which the soul has entered, namely, perfect repose, and the

:\_T of the neck on the arms of the Beloved.

< The Bride has entered.' For the better understanding of !?L t ! ial 1>ro '

(be arrangement of t -inzas, and of the way in which

til-- >oul advances till it reaches the state of spiritual marriage,

which is the very highest, and of which, by the grace of God,

1 am now about t treat, we must keep in mind that the soul,

re it enters it, must have been tried in tribulations, in '

; p mortifications, and in meditation on spiritual things.

This is the subject of the Canticle till we come to the fifth 2. contem-

plation.

./.a, beginning with the words : <A thousand graces dif-

fusing.' Then the soul enters on the contemplative life, pass-

ing tin. .u-li those ways and straits of love which are described

in the course of the Canticle, till we come to the thirteenth, i^piritna

7 Betrothal.

ith ' Turn them away, my Beloved I' This is

moment of the spiritual betrothal; and then the soul

advances by the unitive way, receiving many and very great

Miunieations from the Bridegroom, visions of Him, jewels

and gifts. The soul is now like a virgin betrothed, and

I.. -holds itsrlf growing into perfect love, as it appears from the

/.as which follow that beginning with \* Turn them away,

my Hrlovrd!' the moment of espousals, to the present one,

beginning with the w<>nl>:

k Tli has entered/ The spiritual marriage of the

i and the Son of God now remains to be accomplished.

This is, beyond all comparison, a far higher state than that

of espousals, because it is a complete nation into t

ved; and because each of them surrenders to the other

the dit ire possession of themselves in the perfect union

l.vc, wherein the soul becomes Divine, and, by participation,

ble in this lit'.-. I brlirvr that nosoul I

i attains to tbi> itata without bring continued in grace in

it, f..r the faith of both is confirmed: that of God being

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A SPI RITUAL rANTICLK.

STANZA

XXII.

The soul by

spiritual

of the Lord.

confirmed in the soul. Hence it follows, that this is the very

highest state possible in this life. As by natural marri;!^-

there are ( two in one flesh,' \* so also in the spiritual marriage

between God and the soul there are two natures in one spirit

and love, as we learn from S. Paul, who made use of the same

metaphor, saying: 'He who is joined to the Lord is one

spirit.'! So, when the light of a star, or of a burning candle,

is united to that of the sun, the light is not that of the star,

nor of the candle, but of the sun itself, which absorbs all other

light in its own.

It is of this state that the Bridegroom is now speaking, Bay-

ing: ' The Bride has entered ;' that is, out of all temporal and

natural things,out of all spiritual affections, ways, and methods,

having left on one side, and forgotten, all temptations, trials,

sorrows, anxieties, and cares, and being transformed in this

deep embrace of God.

' The pleasant and desirable garden.' That is, the soul is

transformed in God, Who is here called the pleasant garden

because of the delicious and sweet repose which the soul finds

in Him. But the soul does not enter the garden of perfect

transformation, the glory and the joy of the spiritual nuptials,

without passing first through the spiritual espousals, the

mutual faithful love of the betrothed. When the soul has

lived for some time as the affianced bride of the Son, in per-

fect and sweet love, God calls it and leads it into His

flourishing garden for the celebration of the spiritual marriage.

TWO natures, Then the two natures are so united, what is Divine is so com-

witbont any

| r i municated to what is human, that, without undergoing any

essential change, each seems to be God yet not perfectly so

in this life, though still in a manner which can neither be

described nor conceived.

We learn this truth also from the words of the Bridegroom

in the Canticle, where He invites the soul, now His bride, to

Genoa ii. iM. t 1 Cm\*, vi. 17.

[RITUAL MAKRIA 121

enter this lii-^li estate, saying: \*I am come into my garden, STANZA

my sister, my spouse : I have gathered my myrrh with my aro-

matical spices.'\* He calls the soul His sister, His spouse, for f

such in love by that surrender which it has made of itself fc

1 > fore He had called it to the state of spiritual marriage, when,

He says, He gathered His myrrh with His aromatical spices;

that is, the fruits of flowers now ripe and made ready for the

soul, which are the delights and grandeurs communicated to

it by Himself in this estate, that is Himself, for which He is

to her the pleasant and desirable garden. The whole aim and

re of the soul and of God, in all this, is the accomplishment

and perfection of this state, and the soul is therefore never

ry till it reaches it; because it finds there a much greater

al.un.lance and fulness in God, a more secure and lasting peace,

and sweetness incomparably more perfect than in the spiritual

espousals, seeing that it reposes between the arms of such a

legroom, whose spiritual embraces are so real that it now,

through them, lives the life of God. Now is fulfilled what

8, Paul ' rred to, when he said: 'I live; now not I, but

( In i>t livrth in me.'f And now that the soul lives a life so

happy and so glorious as this life of God, consider what a life

it must be a life win-re God sees nothing displeasing, and

whnv the soul ti nds nothing irksome, but rather the glory and

< 1 -light of God in the very substance of itself, now transformed

in Him.

- And there reposes to her heart's content; her neck strength o<

reclining on the sweet arms of her Beloved.' The neck is Jj\*"\*\*

the -tr. ii-th .f tin- soul, by means of which its union with

tin- Beloved v-^ht; for the soul could not endure so

close an embrace if it had not been very strong. And as the

ured in this strength, practised virtue, ov\*

. it is lining that it rot tln-iv from its laluun>.

lining on the sweet arms of the Url.>\.-.l.'

' Cant. \. 1.

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

PTANZA

XXII.

Love the

medium of

union and

UfcMM,

The return

This reclining of the neck on the arms of God is the union

of the soul's strength, or, rather, of the soul's weakness, with

the strength of God, in Whom our weakness, resting and trans-

formed, puts on the strength of God Himself. The estate of

spiritual matrimony is therefore most fitly designated by the

reclining of the neck on the sweet arms of the Beloved ; seeing

that God is the strength and sweetness of the soul, Who

guards and defends it from all evil, and gives it to taste

of all good. Hence the Bride in the Canticle, longing for

this estate, saith to the Bridegroom : e Who shall give

Thee to me for my brother, sucking the breast of my mother,

that I may find Thee without, and kiss Thee, and now no

man may despise me.' \* By addressing Him as her Brother

she shows the equality between them in the espousals of

love, before she entered the state of spiritual marriage.

' Sucking the breast of my mother ' signifies the drying up

of the passions and desires, which are the breasts and milk of

our mother Eve in our flesh, impediments to this estate.

The ' finding Him without ' is to find Him when the desires

are quenched, and when the Bride is in solitude, spiritually

detached from all things. \* And kiss Thee,' that is, be united

with the Bridegroom. This is the union of the nature of the

soul, in solitude, cleansed from all impurity, natural, tem-

poral, and spiritual, with the Bridegroom alone, with His

nature, through the sole medium of love of that love which

is the love of the spiritual marriage, wherein the soul, as it

were, kisses God when none despises it nor makes it afraid.

For in this state the soul ia no longer molested, either by 1 lie

devil, or the flesh, or the world, or the desires, seeing that

here is fulfilled what is written in the Canticle : \* Winter is

now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have

appeared in our land.'f

Cant viii. 1.

t Cant. ii. 11, 1 1\

TIIK TWO TREES OF PARAI>!>K AX1> OF CALVARY. 1:2:1

INTRODUCTION.

the soul has been raised up to the state of spiritual

matrimony, the Bridegroom reveals to it, as His faithful

consort, His own marvellous secrets most readily and most

fn juently, for he who truly loves conceals nothing from the

object of his affections. The principal points of His com-

munications are the sweet mysteries of His Incarnation, the

ways and means of Kedemption, which is one of the highest

works of God, and to the soul one of the sweetest Though

He communicates many other mysteries, He mentions here

1 1 i- Incarnation only, as being the chief; and thus addresses

tin\* soul :

STANZA XXIII.

Beneath the apple-tree

I espoused thee:

There I gave thce My hand,

And thou wert there redeemed

Where thy mother was corrupted.

The Bridegroom tells the soul of the wondrous way of MnWndiot

J ta f-T-

its redemption and espousal to Himself, by referring to the

way in which the human race was lost. As it was by the Cro->

forbidden tree of Paradise that our nature was corrupted in

:n and lost, so it was by the tree of the Cross that it was

redeemed and restored. The Bridegroom there stretched

forth the hand of His grace and mercy, in His death ami

passion, ' making void the law of commandments ' which

original sin had placed between us and God.

\* Beneath the apple-tree/ At the foot of the Cross, where

flu\* Son of God was conqueror, and where He betrothed our

human nature to Himself, and, by consequence, every soul of

Eph.ii 15,

A SPIKITTAL CANTKI.!..

Every soul of

MBOBMMd

to Christ by

the does.

Wisdom of

(i.Hlinbring-

from evil.

T'ir-t

Seoondw-

IM-II-.,;..

MMtton.

Difference

I- ' A, H

them.

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

His love.

'I espoused thee, there I gave thee My hand ;' help ami

grace, lifting thee up out of thy base and miserable condition

to be My companion and My bride.

\* And thou wert there redeemed where thy mother was cor-

rupted.' Thy mother, human nature, was corrupted in thy first

parents beneath the forbidden tree, and thou wert redeemed

by the tree of the Cross. If thy mother at that tree sentenced

thee to die, I from the Cross have given thee life. It is thus

that God reveals the order and dispositions of His wisdom :

eliciting good from evil, and turning that which has its origin

in evil to be an instrument of greater good. This stanza is

nearly word for word what the Bridegroom in the Canticle

saith to the Bride : \* Under the apple-tree I raised thee up ;

there thy mother was corrupted ; there she was defloured that

bare thee.'\*

It is not the espousals of the Cross that I am speaking of

now that takes place, once for all, when God gives the fir.-t

grace to the soul in baptism. But I am speaking of the

espousals in the way of perfection, which is a progressive work.

And though both are but one, yet there is a difference

between them. The latter is effected in the way of the soul,

and therefore slowly; the former in the way of God, ami

therefore once for all. The espousals of which I am speak-

ing are those of which God speaks Himself by the mouth of

the Prophet, saying: 'Thou wast cast out upon the face of

the earth in the abjection of thy soul, in the day that thou

wast born. And passing by thee, I saw that thou wast

trodden under foot in thy own blood ; and I said to thee

when thou wast in thy blood : Live : I have said to thee, Live in

thy blood. I caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field :

Cant viii.

Tin: r.Kihi: ARRAYKD FOR Tin: BBTDEGBOOM.

and tli.u did.-t increase and grow ^;

earnest to woman's ornament; thy breasts were fashioned -

J lUtutntion

and thy hair <^rew ; ami thu wast naked and full of con- JJ5Jh?

fu>ioM. And I passed by tin ami saw thee, and behold thy 1

time was the time of lovers; and I spread My garment ov

Ml covered thy ignominy. And I swore to thee; and I

red into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God; and

thor, Mine. And I washed thee with water, and

1 away thy blood fnna thee: and I anointed thee

with oil. And I clothed thee with embroidery, and shod thee

with violet-coloured shoes, and I girded thee about with fine

linen, and clothed thee with fine garments. I decked thee

with ornaments, and put bracelets on thy hands, and

iain about thy neck. And I put a jewel upon thy

Mead and ear-rin^s in thy ears, and a beautiful crown

ujM.n thy head. And th<>u wast adorned with gold and

M!\VI, and wa>t clothed with fine linen, and embroidered

work, and many oolotm: thou didst eat fine flour, and honey,

and nil, and wast made exceeding beautiful, and wast

advanced to be a <jueen. And thy renown went forth among

us f'>r thy l.eauty.'\* The>- are the words of the

Lord to the in>|, that soul of which

i now speak;

INTRODUCTION.

i; the mutual Mil-render to each other of the Biideand

the Beloved, comes the bed which receives them both.

on the Bride enters into the joy of Christ. Tin.

present stanza refers t< the lied, which is pure and chaste,

and divine, and in which the Bride li\ine, and chaste\*

'Hi\* bed is nothing less than

E/,

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA.

Christ the

and beauty.

Bliss of the

state of per-

fect union

with God.

Word, the Son of God, in Whom, through the union of l\v,

the Bride reposes. This bed is said here to be of flowers,

for the Bridegroom is not only that, but, as He says Him-

self, the very \* flower of the field and the lily of the val-

leys.'\* The soul reposes not only on the bed of flowers,

but on that very flower which is the Son of God, and which

contains in itself the Divine odours, fragrance, grace, and

beauty, as it is written: 'With Me is the beauty of the

field/ f Thus, the soul, in the stanza that follows celebrates

the properties and beauties of its bed.

STANZA XXTV.

TUB BRTOB.

Our bed is of flowers

By the dens of lions encompassed,

Hung with purple,

Made in peace,

And crowned with a thousand shields ef gold.

In two of the foregoing stanzas the fourteenth and the

fifteenth the Bride-soul celebrated the grace and magnifi-

cence of the Beloved, the Son of God. In the pi

stanza she not only pursues the same subject, but also sings

of her high and blessed state, and her own security in it.

She then proceeds to the virtues and rich gifts with which

she is endowed and adorned in the chamber of the Bride-

groom ; for she says that she is in union with Him, and is

strong in virtue. Next she says that she has attained t the

perfection of love, and then that she enjoys perfect spiritual

peace, endowed and adorned with gifts and graces, so far

as it is possible to enjoy them in this life. The first subject

of the stanza is the joy which the Bride feels in her union

with the Beloved, saying:

'Our bed is of flowers.' I have already said that this

bed of the soul is the bosom and love of the Son of (

Cant ii. 1.

f 1's. xlix. 11.

SAFE AM) L BEPOJ 111

full of flowers to the soul, who being united now to - c

\ nv.

God and reposing in Him, as His bride, shares the bosom l Theioul

and love of the Beloved. That is, the soul is admitted I^Jjioet

to the knowledge of the wisdom, secrets and graces, and

- and powers of God, which render it so beautiful, so

ri< -h, so abounding in delights, that it seems to be lying

on a bed of many-coloured Divine flowers, the touch of

which makes it thrill with joy, and the odours of which

refresh it.

<ee it follows that this union of love with God is most

appropriately called a bed of flowers, and is so called by the

le in the Canticle, saying to the Beloved : ' Our bed is of

flowers. 10 She speaks of it as ours, because the virtues

and the love, one and the same, of the Beloved are common

to both together, and the delight of both is one and the

same; as it is written: -My delights were to be with the

children of men.' f The bed is said to be of flowers, because

in this estate the virtues of the soul are perfect and heroic,

which they could not be until the bed had flowered in

perfect uiin ^ith God.

\* By the dens of lions encompassed. 1 The dens of lions Big- 2. TJ\* ui

in rirtae,

i'-s with which the soul is endowed in the state j\*rong

<! union. The dens of lions are safe retreats, protected

a all other animals, who, afraid of the boldness and

strength of the lion within, are afraid not only to cnt

I 'i it even to appear in sight. So each virtue of the soul

the state of perfection is like a den of lions where

-I dui-lls united to the soul in that virtue; and in

every one of them as a strong lion. The soul also, united

to Hint in those very virtues, is as a strong lion, because

it then assumes the < -tics of God. Thus, then, the

perfect soul is so defended, so strong in virtue, and in all

.ut. i. l.V f IV

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA

XXIV.

Satan in

dread of the

perfect soul.

The soul like

to ma will.

virtues together, reposing on the bed of flowers of its union

with God, that the evil spirits are not only afraid to

It it, but even dare not appear before it. Such is

their dread of it, when they behold it strong, courageous, an 1

mature in virtues, on the bed of the Beloved. The evil

spirits fear a soul transformed in the union of love as

much as they fear the Beloved Himself, and they dare not

look upon it, for Satan is in great fear of that soul which

has attained to perfection.

The soul's bed is encompassed by virtues : for when the

soul has advanced to perfection, the virtues which adorn

it are so joined together and bound up one with another,

each supporting the other, that no part of it is weak or ex-

posed ; not only is Satan unable to penetrate within it, but

even worldly things, whether great or little, fail to disturb or

annoy it. The soul, now free from the molestation of natural

affections, and a stranger to the worry\* of human anxi

enjoys in security and peace the participation of God.

This is the object of the Bride's desires when she says :

'Who shall give Thee to me for my brother, sucking the

breast of my mother, that I may find Thee without, and kiss

Thee, and now no man may despise me ? ' \* The \* kiss ' here

is the union of which I am speaking, whereby the soul be-

comes in a sense like God in love. This is the object it

desires when it says: 'Who shall give Thee to me for my

brother?' That is, Who shall make me resemble Thee?

' Sucking the breast of my mother ; ' that is, destroying all the

imperfections and desires of nature which the soul inherits

from its mother Eve. 'That I may find Thee without ; that

is, be united to Thee alone, away from all things, in detachment

of the will and desires. c And now no man may despise me; 1

that is, the world, the Devil, and the flesh will not venture

\* Coiit. viii. 1.

-iirj) nv DIVI.VK FLOWERS.

M! purified, and also tin;'

< rod, none of these can molest it. Thus, then, tin- BOO]

in the enjoyment now of habitual sweetness and tranquillity

:1 it.

ii;ilitu;il trail. piillity, the flowers of virtues Tbeui

ii in the soul and diffuse their odours over it, so that it {JJ

be, and is, full of the delights of God. I say that

the flowers open; because the soul, though filled with virtues

in perfection, is not always in the actual fruition of them,

ling its habitual perception of the peace and tran-

quillity which they I . We may say of these virtues

that they are like tin- budding flowers of a garden ; they ot:

a most beautiful sight opening under the in> pi rat ions of

I! >ly Ghost and diffuse most marvellous perfumes

in great v Sometimes the soul will detect in itself

n flowers t ss, grandeur, and beauty of

(J.nl intermingled with tin- lilies of the valley rest, refresh-

1 defence; and a<j i tyrant roses of the unknown

mge k IK iwledge of God ; and further, the per-

fume of the water lilies of t IK t -rrents the greatness

e whole soul. And amid all this, it enjoys

t)i. \_cranoe of the jasmine, and the whi>p r of

gales, the fruit imi of which is g

in the estate of union. Finally, it d-t cts all the other

lies and grac- . -dm knowledge, silent nm-ic, mur-

inii! id. , and tin? sweet supper of love; and the joy

iitLr in the soul is such as to make it say in truth,

bed is of fl y the dens of lions encompassed.'

Md i- that >oul which in this life deserves at times

these Divine flowers.

-II i purple/ Puipl. in Holy Scripture means i.

1 . .!.'..

in ployed for royal vestments. The bed is

with purple, 1.. cause all the virtues, riches, and blessings

d, flourish, and exult in < ad in love

. II. K

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

PTAN7A

XNIV.

Virtues pre-

served by

charity.

4. Caste out

fear.

ful, gentle,

and strong.

for the King of Heaven ; since without that love the soul can

never delight in the bed nor in the flowers thereof.

All these virtues are, in the soul, as it were hung or dis-

played in love for God, as in that which preserves them.

and they are, as it were, bathed in love ; for all and each of

them inspire the soul with love for God, and on all occasions,

and in all actions, they advance in love to a greater love for

God. This is what is meant by saying that the bed is hung

with purple.

This is well expressed in the Canticle as follows : ( King

Solomon hath made himself a litter of the wood of Libanus :

the pillars thereof he made of silver, the seat of gold, the

going up of purple ; the midst he covered with charity.' \*

The virtues and graces which God lays in the bed of the soul

are signified by the wood of Libanus : the pillars of silver and

the seat of gold are love ; for, as I have said, the virtues are

supported by love, and by the love of God and of the soul

are harmonized together and practised.

f Made in peace.' This is the fourth excellence of the

bed, and depends on the third, of which I have just spoken,

that is, perfect charity, the property of which is, as the

Apostle saith, to cast out fear;f hence the perfect peace of

the soul, which is the fourth excellence of this bed. For the

clearer understanding of this truth we must keep in mind

that each virtue is in itself peaceful, gentle, and strong, and

consequently, in the soul which possesses them, produces

peace, gentleness, and fortitude. Now, as the bed is of

flowers, formed of the flowers of virtues, all of which are

peaceful, gentle, and strong, it follows that the bed is wrought

in peace, and that the soul is peaceful, gentle, and strong,

which are three qualities unassailable by the world, Satan,

and the flesh. The virtues preserve the soul so peace ful

\* Cant. iii. 9, 10.

t 1 S. John iv. 18.

VIRTUES A CROWN AXD Di: 1:11

i so secure as to make it appear to be wholly built up

in peace. The fifth characteristic of this bed of flowers is

explained in the following words.

' Crowned with a thousand shields of gold.' The shields are J^ ?rowned

the virtues and graces of the soul, which, though they are also by \*\*

the flowers, serve for its crown, and the reward of the toil

by which they are acquired. They serve also, like strong

shields, as a protection against vice, which is overcome by the

practice of them ; and the bridal bed of flowers therefore,

that is the virtues, the crown and defence, is adorned with

them by way of reward, and protected by them as with a

shield. The shields are of gold, to show the great worth of

the virtues. The bride in the Canticle sets forth the same

truth, saying : Three score valiant ones of the most valiant

of Israel surround the bed of Solomon, all holding swords ;

. . . every man's sword upon his thigh, because of fears

in the ni^ht'\*

Thus in this stanza the Bride speaks of a thousand shields,

to express the variety of the virtues, gifts, and graces where-

with God has endowed the soul in the state of union. The

1 bridegroom in the Canticle also has employed the same ex-

pression, in order to show forth the innumerable virtues of

the soul : \* Thy neck is as the tower of David, which is built

with bulwarks; a thousand bucklers hang upon it, all

the armour of valiant men. 1 f

' INTRODUCTION.

I'Hilr of Christ, having ntt.-iin.-.l t> p.-i f.vtion, is not

<1 with magnifying and extolling the excellences of her

Beloved, the Son of God, nor with recounting and giving

Cant iii. 7, 8. t Cunt iv. 4.

Rt

132 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA thanks for, the graces she has received at His hands and the

XXV

- joy into which she has entered, but she recounts also the

Theeoul

gives thanks graces He has conferred on other souls. In this blessed union

bestowed on Q f j oye ^ Q gQU j - g ^^ ^ o con template both its own and others'

graces ; thus praising Him and giving Him thanks for the

many graces bestowed upon others, the soul sings as in the

following stanza.

STANZA XXV.

In Thy footsteps,

The young ones run Thy way ;

At the touch of the fire,

Aridity the spiced wine,

The Divine balsam flows.

Here the Bride gives praise to her Beloved for three graces

which devout souls receive from Him, by which they encou-

rage and excite themselves to love God more and more. She

speaks of them here, because she has had experience of them

1. spiritual herself in this state of union. The first is sweetness, which

nm :i.>.-.

He gives them, and which is so efficacious that it m;

2. visits of them run swiftly on the road of perfection. The second is

the visit of love, by which they are suddenly set on fire with

3. infuaod love. The third is overflowing charity infused into them,

charity. J

with which He so inebriates them, that they are as much

excited by it as by the visit of love, to utter the praises of

God, and to love Him with all sweetness.

6 In Thy footsteps.' These are the marks on the ground

by which we trace the course of one we seek. The sweetness

and knowledge of Himself which God communicates to the

soul that seeks Him, are the footsteps by which it traces an 1

Footsteps of recognises Him. Thus the soul says to the Word, the Br

God. what.

groom, 'In Thy footsteps;' in the traces of Thy sweetness

which Thou diffusest, and the odours which Thou scatter\*

'The young ones run Thy way.' Devout souls run with

youthful vigour in the sweetness which Thy footsteps com-

RUXXIN', IN Till: WAY OF LI1 133

iimnic.'itv. They run in many ways and in various directions STANZA

\ \ \ .

each according to the spirit which God bestows, and the voca-

t i. -n 1 1.- has given in the diversified forms of spiritual service \*

on the road of everlasting life, which is evangelical perfection,

where they meet the Beloved in the union of love, in detach-

r from all things. This sweetness and impression of

Himself which God leaves in the soul, renders it light and

ve, so as to run after Him ; for the soul then does little

or nothing in its own strength towards running along this Attraction\*

of Divine

road, being rather attracted by the Divine footsteps, so that i^ve.

it not only advances, but even runs by many methods. The

Bride in the Canticle, therefore, prays for the Divine attrac-

ti"M, saying: 'Draw me, we will run after Thee to the odour

-f Thy ointments ;'\* and David saith : ' I have run the way of

Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart.' f

\* At the touch of the fire, and by the spiced wine, the Divine interior\*\*

balsam flows/ I said, while explaining the previous lines,

th.it souls run in His footsteps in the way of exterior works

and practices. But the three lines I have just quoted refer

to the interior acts of the will, when souls are under the

influence of the other two graces and interior visits of the

ved. These are the touch of fire, and spiced wine; and

tin- interior act of the will, which is the result of these visits,

lie flowing of the Divine balsam. Tin\* contact of the fire

is that most ! litate touch of the Beloved which tin\* soul

- at times, even when least expecting it, and which is so

penetrating that the heart is set on fire with love. It seems

to be but a spark of fire leaping up and burning. Then

will, in an instant, like one roused from sleep, burns

with the fire of love, longs for God, praises Him and

i,'ivrs Him thanks, wm->hips and r^rcms Him, and pravs !

Him in the sweetness of its love. This is the flowing of

\* Ctnt i t I 1 \*- cxuii. 32.

A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STAN'ZA

XXV.

God toll

withaook

according to

their

spiritual

The strong

wine of love

for God.

the Divine balsam, which obeys the touch of the fire that

issues forth from the consuming love for God which that f'nv

kindled the Divine balsam which comforts the soul and

heals it with its odour and its substance.

The Bride in the Canticle speaks of this Divine touch,

saying: 'My Beloved put His hand through the key-hole,

and my bowels were moved at His touch.'\* The touch of

the Beloved is the touch of love, and His hand is the grace

He bestows upon the soul, and the hole by which His hand

penetrated is the vocation and the perfection, at least the

degree of perfection, of the soul ; for according thereto will

His touch be heavier or lighter, in proportion to its spiritual

state. The bowels that were moved are the will, in which

the touch is effected, and the moving of them is the stirring

up of the desires and affections to love and praise God, which

is the flowing of the balsam that runs forth at this contact.

c The spiced wine ' is that exceeding great grace which God

sometimes bestows upon advanced souls, when the Holy Spirit

inebriates them with the sweet, luscious, and strong wine of

love. Hence it is here called spiced wine, for as such wine is

prepared by fermentation with many and divers aromatic and

strong herbs ; so this love, the gift of God to the perfect, is

in the soul prepared and seasoned with virtues which it has

already acquired. This love, seasoned with the precious

spices, communicates to the soul such a strong abundant ine-

briation when God visits it, that it sends forth with gi

efficacy those acts of praise, love, and worship, which I

referred to before, and that with a marvellous longing to do,

and to suffer for Him.

This sweet inebriation and grace, however, do net

quickly away, like the contact of the fire, for they are of

longer continuance. The fire touches and passes, but tin

Cant v. 4.

AND OLD Wl 135

effects abide fora time. Hut -d wine at times remains STANZA

X \ V

lone, ami its effects also ; this is the sweet love of the soul, -

i i ..- .<{

and continues occasionally a day or two, sometimes even many

days together, though not always in the same degree of

intensity, because it is not in the power of the soul to control

it. Sometimes the soul, without any effort of its own, is

conscious of a most sweet interior inebriation, and of the

Divine love burning within, as David saith : ' My heart grew

hot within me, and in my meditation a fire shall flame out/\*

The outpourings of this inebriation last sometimes as long

as the inebriation itself. At other times of this inebriation

there are no outpourings ; and they are more or less intense

when they occur, in proportion to the greater or less intensity

of the inebriation itself. But the outpourings, or effects of

the fire, generally last longer than the fire which caused them;

. rather the fire leaves them behind in the soul, and they

more vehement than those which proceed from the

nation, for sometimes this Divine fire burns up and con-

sumes the soul in love.

As I have mentioned fermented wine, it will be as well to

touch upon the difference between it we call it old wine and

new wine. For since the difference between old love and

new love is the same, the comparison will furnish some hints

of doctrine for spiritually-minded men. New wine has n<>

Uou over.

settled on the lees, and therefore ferments over ; we cannot s. Quality

ascertain its quality or value before it has settled, and the 3>

fermentation ceased, for until tlu-n there is great risk of its

corruption. The taste of it is rough and sharp, and an im-

moderate draught of it intoxicates. Old wine has settled on . it u

. i

the lees, and ferments no more like new wine ; the quality of

easily ascertained, and is now safe from corruption, for

all ; \\hirli miijlit have proved pernicious has

Ps.

136

A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA

XXV.

entirely ceased. Well fermented wine is very rarely spoiled,

the taste of it is pleasant, and its strength is in its own sub-

stance, not in the palate of him who drinks it, and the use

thereof produces health and a sound constitution.

New lovers are compared to new wine these are beginners

in the service of God because the fervour of their love mani-

fests itself exteriorly in the senses ; because they have not

settled on the lees of their frail and imperfect sensitive nature ;

and because they measure the strength of love by the sweet-

ness of it. Sensible sweetness gives them ordinarily their

strength for good works, and it is by this they are influenced ;

we must, therefore, place no confidence in this love till tlu

fermentation has subsided, and the sensible emotions have

passed away. For as these fervours and this sensible warmth

may incline men to good and to perfect love, and serve as

an excellent means thereto, if men will but settle well on the

lees of their imperfections ; so also is it very easy at first,

when sensible sweetness is fresh, for the wine of love to fail,

for fervour to cool down, and sweetness to vanish. New

lovers are always anxious, sensibly tormented by their love ;

it is requisite therefore for them to moderate this state. If

they undertake much in the strength of this wine, their natural

powers will be ruined with these anxieties and fatigues of the

new wine, which is rough and sharp, and not made sweet in

the perfect fermentation, which then takes place when the

anxieties of love are over, as I shall show immediately.

The Wise Man employs the same illustration ; saying, ' A

new friend is as new wine ; it shall grow old, and thou shalt

drink it with pleasure.' \* Old lovers, therefore, those who have

been tried and proved in the service of the Bridegroom, are

like old wine settled on the lees; they have no sensible

emotions, nor overflowing bursts of exterior zeal, but they

' Ecclus. ix. 16.

Till; OLD FRIEND OF GOD. 137

sweetness of the wine of love, now thoroughly fer- STANZA

mented, free from the sensible sweetness of the love of begin-

In it rather settled within the soul in the substance and P^''

sweetness of the - 1 1 1 1 n -a 1 i t y of its acts. Such souls

as these do not seek after sensible sweetness and fervours,

do they accept them, lest they should suffer from

liing and weariness; for he who gives the reins to his

res in matters of the sensitive appetite, must of necessity

Fer pain and loathing, both in mind and body.

Old lovers therefore, free from that spiritual sweetness 2. in con-

tencyof

which has its roots in the senses, suffer neither in sense nor 10Te -

;t from the anxieties of love, and therefore scarcely ever

prove faithless to God, because they have risen above that

which mi^ht prove an occasion of falling, namely, the flesh.

These now drink of the wine of love, which is not only fer-

mented and settled on the lees, but spiced also with the

aromatic herbs of perfect virtues, which will not allow it to

ijit. M in :iy happen to new wine.

F'.r this cause an old friend is of great price in the eyes of . T

J new..;

. ' Forsake not an old friend, for the new will not be like

t" him.'\* It is through this wine of love, tried and spiced,

that the Divine ]>< loved produces in the soul that Divine

in. -1. rial i'ii. un-h-r tin influence- of which it sends forth t (Jod

sweet and delicious outpourings. The meaning of these

three lines, therefore, is as follows: 'At the touch of the

tin-' l.y which Thou stirrest up the soul, and by the spiced

\\ith which Thou dost so lovingly inebriate it, the soul

IM.IUX f,,rth the acte and movements of love which Thou pro-

-t in it.

Eccliis. ix. 1 1.

138 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

INTRODUCTION.

STANZA SUCH, then, is the state of the blessed soul in the bed of

Happy state ^ owers > where all these blessings, and mqjgpaore, are granted

n wiS? ik The s 6 ^ of that bed is the Son of God, and the hangings

of it are the charity and love of the Bridegroom Himself. The

soul now may say, with the Bride : \* His left hand is under

my head,'\* and we may therefore say, in truth, that such a

soul is clothed in God, and bathed in the Divinity, and that,

not as it were on the surface, but in the interior spirit, and filled

with the Divine delights in the abundance of the spiritual

waters of life ; it experiences that which David says of those

who have drawn near unto God, ' They shall be inebriated

with the plenty of Thy house, and Thou shalt make them

drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure, for with Thee is the

fountain of life.'f This fulness will be in the very being of

the soul, seeing that its drink is nothing else than the torrent

of delights, which is the Holy Spirit, as it is written : ' And

he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, pro-

ceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb.' J The waters

of this river, which is the very love of God, pour into the soul,

and make it drink of the torrent of love, which is the Spirit

of the Bridegroom infused into the soul in union. Thence

the soul in the overflowing of love sings the following stanza :

STANZA XXVL

In the inmost cell or

Of my Beloved have I drunk ; and when Iwcntfvrth

Over all the plain

1 knew nothing,

And lost the flock I followed before.

Here the soul speaks of that supreme grace of God i n

taking it to Himself into the house of His love, which is

the union of it with Himself, or its transformation in love.

\* Cant. ii. C. t Ps. xxxv. 9, J Apoc. xxii. 1.

ri:iin:c.T ri:.u;, ri:i:n: T LOVE, i3:>

It describes two effects proceeding therefrom : its forgetfulness

of, and detachment from, all the things of this world, and

the mortification of its tastes and desires.

\* In the inmost cellar.' In order to explain in any degree

the meaning of this, I have need of the special help of the

< i host, to direct my hand and guide my pen. The

c.-llar is the highest degree of love to which the soul may G

attain in this life, and is therefore said to be the inmost. It

I'M! lows from this that there are other cellars not so interior;

other degrees of love by which souls ascend upwards to this,

the highest. These cellars are seven in number, and the soul

has entered into them all when it has in perfection the seven

gifts of the Holy Ghost, so far as it is possible in this life.

When the soul has the spirit of fear in perfection, it has in

p. rf ction also the spirit of love, inasmuch as this fear, the

last of the seven gifts, is filial fear, and the perfect fear of a

son proceeds from his perfect love for his father. Thus when

tin- Il"l\ Sniptures would describe one as having perfect

. it says of him that he fears God. So the Prophet

Isaias, announcing the perfections of Christ, saith of Him:

4 He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.'

Holy Simeon also is described by the Evangelist as a 'just

man full of fear, 1 f and the same applies to many others.

Many souls reach and enter the first cellar, each according

to the perfection of its love, but the last and inmost cellar is

red by few in this world, because those who do so must

be in perfect union with God, the union of the spiritual

marriage, of which I am here speaking. What God com-

municates to the soul in this intimate union is utterly

ineffable, beyond the reach of all possible words just as it is

impossible to speak of God Himself, so as to convey any

idea of what He is because it is God Himself who com-

I\* f S. LuK- luatuaet timomtua.

140 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA municates Himself to the soul now in the marvellous glory of

XXVI. fe J

its transformation. In this high estate God and the soul

are united, as the window is with the light, coal with tin-

fire, and the light of the stars with that of the sun, yet, how-

ever, not so essentially and completely as it will be in the

life to come. The soul, therefore, to show what it received

from the hands of God in the cellar of wine, says nothing

else, and I do not believe that anything else could be

but the words which follow :

The soni ' Of my Beloved have I drunk.' As a draught diffuses

1 i od In

rDLaS\*\* 1 ite 6 ^ through all the members and veins of the body, so tin's

memory. communication of God diffuses itself substantially in the

whole soul, or rather, the soul is transformed in God. In

this transformation the soul drinks of God in its very sub-

stance and its spiritual powers. In the intellect it drinks

wisdom and knowledge, in the will the sweetest love, in the

memory refreshment and delight in the thought and sense

of glory. That the soul receives and drinks delight in its

very substance, appears from the words of the Bride in the

Canticle : ' My soul melted when He spoke ; ' \* that is, when

the Bridegroom communicated Himself to the soul.

That the intellect drinks wisdom is also evident from the

words of the Bride longing and praying for the kiss of union :

4 There Thou shall teach me, and I will give thee a cup of

spiced wine.'f Thou shalt teach me wisdom and knowledge

in love, and I will give Thee a cup of spiced wine, tint i ,

my love mingled with Thine. The Bride further teaches us

that the will drinks of love, saying, 4 He brought me into

the cellar of wine, and set in order charity in me,'J that is,

He gave me, accepted in love, to drink of love; or, to speak

more clearly, he set in order charity in me, tempering His

charity and suiting it to me. This is to give the soul t<>

Cant. v. 0. t Cunt. viii. } Cant. ii. 4.

WE MAY KNW I.ITTLF, AND LoYK Mp II. 141

drink of the very love of its Beloved, which the Beloved

ises into it.

There is a common notion that the will cannot love that

of which the intellect has no cognisance. This, however, is

to be understood in the order of nature, because it is

impossible, in a natural way, to love anything unless we first

know what it is. But in the supernatural order the axiom is in the 01\*\*

of grace the

not true ; for God can infuse love without infusing know- \*\*

ledge, and increase it without increasing distinct knowledge,

as is evident from the texts already quoted. Yea, many

spiritual persons have experience of this, whose love for

God burns more and more, while their knowledge grows not.

:i may know little and love much, and on the other

hand, know much and love but little. In general, spirit mil

men whose understanding in tin- tilings of God is not in-

ning, are yet advancing in the will. Faith infused by

way of the intellect suffices for them ; because by means

of it God infuses and increases charity in them and the acts

i oof, and they love Him more and more though their

knowledge is not increased. Thus the will may drink of

love without the intellect's drinking in new knowledge. In

tin- present instance, however, all the powers of the soul

together, because of the union in the inmost cellar, ilrink

of the Beloved.

As to the memory, it is clear that the soul drinks of the

Beloved in it, because it is enlightened with the li^ht of the

intellect in remembering the blessings it possesses and enjoys

in union with the Beloved.

4 And when I went forth. 1 This Divine draught deifies the

soul, elevates and inebrinti - it in God, even in the time of its

going forth, that is, when this grace has passed. Though the

soul be always in the high estate of marriage ever since God

has | ! .-.'1 it there, yet actual nnin in all its powers is i

us, though the substantial union abides. But in

substantial union the powers of the soul are most

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA

XXVI.

Not actual,

Imt habitual

union with

God, con-

tinuous.

not

..; DtrfaM

Wise

ib'uuranoe.

Ite formal

OHMf

vhat.

frequently in union, and drink of His cellar, the intellect by

understanding, the will by loving, &c. We are not, there-

fore, to suppose that the soul, though saying that it went

out, has ceased from its substantial or essential union with

God, but only from the union of its faculties, which is not,

and cannot be, permanent in this life; from this union then

it went forth when it wandered over all the plain, that is,

through the whole breadth of the world.

\* I knew nothing.' This draught of God's most deep

wisdom makes the soul forget all the things of this world.

The soul considers all its previous knowledge, and the know-

ledge of the whole world besides, but pure ignorance in com-

parison with His knowledge. Observe, here, that the form;d

cause of the soul's ignoring the things of the world, when it

has ascended to this high estate, is, that it is informed by

supernatural knowledge, in the presence of which all natural

and political science is ignorance rather than knowled^'.

Thus the soul, when raised up to this most sublime know-

ledge, understandeth thereby that all knowledge whatever

other than this, is not knowledge, but ignorance, and i

there is nothing else but this to be known. The very sann-

truth is set before us by the Apostle, when he said that ' the

wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.' \* The

therefore says of itself, that it knows nothing since it lias

drunk of the wisdom of God. This truth cannot be acknow-

ledged for according to the wisdom of men and of the world,

it is simple ignorance, and unworthy of regard except in the

truth of God in the soul, communicating this wisdom to it,

and strengthening it with the draught of love that it may see

clearly. This is the meaning of Solomon when he said : ' The

vision which the man spoke, with whom God is, and who b<

strengthened by God abiding with him, said : I am the 11.

foolish of men, and the wisdom of men is not with me.' f

1 Cor. iii. 19,

t Prov. m. 1, 2.

WISDOM AND FOLLY. 143

When the soul is elevated to this high wisdom of God, the STANZA.

wisdom of man is in its eyes the lowest ignorance : all natural

science and the works of God if accompanied by ignorance of

Him, are as ignorance; for where He is not known, there

nothing is known. ' The deep things of God are foolishness

to men.' \* Thus the divinely wise and the worldly wise are

fools in the estimation of each other ; for the latter cannot

understand the wisdom and science of God, nor the former

those of the world. The wisdom of the world, therefore, is

ignorance in comparison with the wisdom of God ; and the

wisdom of God is ignorance with respect to that of the

world.

Moreover, this deification and elevation of the soul in God Thai

whereby it is, as it were, rapt and absorbed in love, and

wholly united to God, suffer it not to dwell upon any worldly

ter. The soul is now detached, not only from all exterior

tilings, but even from itself: it is as it were annihilated,

assumed by, and dissolved in, love ; that is, it passes out of

itself into the Beloved. Thus the Bride, in the Canticle,

after speaking of her transformation by love into the Be-

loved, expresses her state of ignorance by the words ' I knew

not.' f The soul is now in a certain sense, like Adam in para-

dise, who knew no evil. It is so innocent that it sees no evil ;

neither does it consider anything amiss. It will hear much

that ia evil, and will see it with its eyes, and yet it shall i

be able to understand it, because it has no evil habits win r

to judge of it God has rooted out of it those imperfect

habits and that ignorance resulting from the evil of sin, by

the perfect habit of true wisdom. Thus, also, the soul knows

nothing on this sul.ject

Such a soul will scarcely intermeddle with the affairs of

others, because it forgets even its own ; for the Spirit of God

\* 1 Cor. ii. II. .nt. ^\.\\

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A SPIRITUAL CAXTICLE.

STANZA

XXVI.

Acquired

knowledge

perfi-cted by

infused

knowledge.

State of the

Biased in

dwelling in it inclines it to ignore all things,

such as do not minister to edification. The Spirit of God

abides within the soul to withdraw it from outward tilings

rather than to lead it among them; and thus the soul is in

a state of ignorance. We are not, however, to suppose that

it loses the habits of knowledge previously acquired, for such

knowledge is improved by the more perfect habit of super-

natural knowledge infused, though these habits be not so

powerful as to necessitate knowledge through them, and yet

there is no reason why they should not do so occasionally.

In this union of the Divine Wisdom these habits are united

with the higher wisdom of the other knowledge, as a little light

with another which is great ; it is the great light that shines

overwhelming the less, yet the latter is not therefore lost, but

rather perfected, though it be not the light which shines pre-

eminently. This, I imagine, will be the state of things in

Heaven ; the acquired habits of knowledge in the Just will

not be destroyed, though they will be of no great importance

there, seeing that the Just will know more in the Divine

Wisdom than by the habits acquired on earth.

But the particular notions and forms of things, acts of the

imagination and every other apprehension having form and

figure, are all lost and ignored in this absorbing love, and

this for two reasons. First, the soul cannot actually aft. nd

to any thing of the kind, because it is actually absorbed by

this draught of love. Secondly, and this is the principal

reason, its transformation in God so conforms it to His

purity and simplicity for there is no form or imaginary

figure in Him as to render it pure, cleansed and empty of

all the forms and figures it entertained before, being now

purified and enlightened in simple contemplation. All

spots and stains in the glass become invisible when the sun

shines upon it, but they appear again as soon as the light of

the sun is withheld. So is it with the soul ; while the t-

THi: SIIKI'IIKKD LnSKS His FLO 145

of this act of love continue, this ignorance continues also, so BTAKZA.

\ ''. ' ; .

it cannot observe anything in particular until these

s have ceased. Love has set the soul on fire and trans-

1 it into love, has annihilated it and destroyed it as to

all that is not love, according to the words of the Psalmist:

heart hath been inflamed, and my reins have been

changed; and I am brought to nothing, and I knew not'\*

The changing of the reins, because the heart is inflamed, is

the changing of the soul, in all its desires and actions, in

God, into a new manner of life, the utter undoing and

annihilation of the old man. This is what the royal Prophet

meant when he said that he was brought to nothing and

knew not

These are the two effects of drinking the wine of the cellar

<>d; not only is all previous knowledge brougl

ing, and made to vanish away, but the old life also wit'i

its imperfections is destroyed, and into the new man renewed ;

he second of the two effects mentioned here.

4 And lost the flock I followed before.' Until the soul

Of DlTUM

reaches the state of perfection, however spiritual it may l>e,

there is always a troop of desires, likings and imperfections, JJ3L 1

sometimes natural, sometimes spiritual, after which it runs,

which it strives to feed while following and satisfying

them. With regard to the intellect, there are certain im-

perfections of the denire of knowledge. With regard to the

will, e.-rtain likings and peculiar desires, whet her in temporal

things, as the wish to possess certain trifles, and attachment

to some things more than to others, certain prejudices,

con- us, and pun. tili .s, with other vaui e like

nature, still savouring of the world: or in natural things,

such as in eating and drinking, the preference of <>n<- kind

of food over another, and th ,1, -ice of what is best: or

EV Kxii. I'!.

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146 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA in spiritual things, such as seeking for sweetness, and otli-r

follies of spiritual persons not yet perfect, too numerous to

recount here. As to the memory, there are there many in-

consistencies, anxieties, unseemly reminiscences, which dniLC

the soul captive after them.

The four passions of the soul also involve it in many

useless hopes, joys, griefs and fears, after which it runs.

As to this flock, as I have called it, some men are more

influenced by it than others ; they run after and follow it,

until they enter the inmost cellar, where they lose it alto-

gether, being then transformed in love. In that cellar the

flock of imperfections is quickly lost, as rust and mould on

metal is lost in fire. Then the soul feels itself free from the

pettiness of self-likings and the vanities after which it ran

before, and sings, I have lost the flock which I followed

after.

INTRODUCTION.

infinite love GOD communicates Himself to the soul in this interior

uess of God. union with so much reality of love that a mother's love towards

her child, the love of a brother, or the affection of a friend,

are not to be compared with it. Such is the tenderness and

love with which the Infinite Father comforts and exalts tin\*

humble and loving soul. wonders worthy of all awe and

reverence ! He humbles Himself in reality before that soul

that he may exalt it, as if He were the servant, and the soul

His lord. He is as anxious to comfort it, as if He were a

slave, and the soul God. Such is the depth of the humility

and tenderness of God. In this communion of love He

renders those services to the soul which He says in the

Gospel, He will perform for the elect in Heaven. ( Amen, I

MLTfAL AM) rXKMSKRVKI) SCRRENDKR. 147

sa,y to you, that He will ^inl Himself and make them si-

down to meat, and will come and serve them.\*\*

very service He renders now to the soul, comforting

and cherishing it, as a mother her child whom she nurtures

in her bosom. And the soul recognises herein the truth of

what the Prophet said, ' You shall be carried at the breasts,

and upon the knees they shall caress you.'f What must the

feelings of the soul be amid these supreme mercies ? How

it will melt away in love, beholding the bosom of (rod opened

for it with such overflowing love. When the soul perceives

!f in the midst of these delights, it surrenders itself

wholly to God, gives to Him the breasts of its own will and

love, and under the influence thereof addresses the Beloved

in the words of the Bride saying, 'I to my Beloved, and his

turning is towards me. Come my Beloved, let us go forth into

tin- field, let us abide in the villages. Let us get up early to

tin- vineyards, let us see if the vineyard flourish, if the flowers

ready to bring forth fruits, if the pomegranates flourish ;

tlinv will I ^i\v Thee my breasts,' that is, I will employ all

thr joy and power of my will in the service of Thy love.

This mutual surrender in this union of the soul and God is

the subject of the stanza which follows:

STANZA xxvn.

There He gave me Hit breasts t

There He taught me the science full of sweetness.

And there I gave to mm

My f If without reserve;

There I promised to be Sis bride.

1 1 re the soul speaks of the two c ng parties in this

spiritual betrothal, itself and God. In the inmost cellar of

S. Lui t I\*.

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A SPIRITUAL CANTiru:.

PTAX7.A.

XXVII.

love they both met together, God giving to the soul tho

breasts of His love freely, whereby He instructs it in His

mysteries and knowledge, and the soul also actually sur-

rendering itself, making no reservation whatever either in its

own favour or in that of others, promising to be His for ever.

\* There He gave me His breasts.' To give the breast to

another is to love and cherish him and communicate one's

secrets to him as a friend. The soul says here that God

gave it His breasts, that is, He gave it His love and commu-

nicated His secrets to it. It is thus that God deals with

the soul in this state as it appears also from the words

that follow :

' There He taught me the science full of sweetness.' .This

science is Mystical Theology, which is the secret science of

God and which spiritual men call contemplation. It is most

full of sweetness because it is knowledge by love, love is the

master of it, and it is love that renders it so sweet. In.-is-

much as this science and knowledge are communicated to the

soul in that love with which God communicates Himself, it

is therefore sweet to the intellect, because the object of

intellect is science, and sweet to the will, because it comes

by love which is the object of the will.

' There I gave to Him myself wihout reserve.' The soul;

in this sweet draught of God, surrenders itself to Him most

willingly and with great sweetness; it desires to be wholly

His, and to retain nothing in itself which is unbecoming His

Majesty. God is the author of this union, and of the purity

and perfection requisite for it; and as the transformation of

the soul in Himself makes it His, He empties it of all that is

alien to Himself. Thus it comes to pass that, not in will only

Imt in act as well, the whole soul is entirely given to God

without any reserve whatever, as God has given 1 1 i

freely unto it. The will of God and of the soul are both

each given up to the other, in mutual drli^lit. BO

iIENCl 10 Till-: LAW OF U>Y&

tliat - the other in the faith and constancy of the STANZA.

X \ \ II.

thai.

'There I pf.-mised t. be His bride.' As a bride does not

her love to another. :m<l as all her thoughts and actions

' ed to her bridegroom only, so the soul now has no

affections of the will, no acts of the intellect, neither object

nor ( kind which it does not wholly refer unto

i, together with all its desires. The soul is as it were Pit

rnent\* of a

bed in (rod, and even its first movement\* have nothing gJJ^JJ 1

in th in so far as it can comprehend them which is at ChKL

with the will of God. The first movements of an

imperfect soul in general are, at least, inclined to evil, in t 1

intellect, the memory, the will, in its desires and imp MS ;

l.nt tlisr nf the soul, which has attained to the spiritual state

A hich I am speaking, are ordinarily directed to God, be-

<i of the great help and courage it derives from Him, and

effect conversion to goodness. This is set forth with irr

rness by I)avid, when he saith : 'Shall nut -my soul be

subject to God? For from Him is my salvation. For He is

my God and my Saviour ; He is my protector, I ^ha 1 1 1 e moved

nore.'\* ' Jl is my protector' means, that the soul being

now received un .1 of God and united to Him.

could be no longer liable to any movements contrary t< (i

It is quite clear from all this that the ul, whirh has Loretho

form and

tin- spiritual betrothal, knows nothing else but

the love of the Bridegroom and the delights thereof, because it

has arrived at p -rf. tion, the form and substance of which is

uvurdinir t<> S. Paul.f The more a soul loves, the

i its Live, and hence it follows, that the soul,

dy perfe ( we may say so, all love, all its

all its energies and , are love. It

up all it ha.-, like th. wise merchant in the (i>spel;J

t Colow. i. II \Iatth. zii.

150 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLH.

STANZA for this treasure of love hidden in God, and which is so

XXVII.

- precious in His sight, that the Beloved cares for nothing else

but love ; the soul, therefore, seeing this, and anxious to serve

Him perfectly, occupies itself -wholly with pure love for

God, not only because love does so occupy it, but also because

the love, wherein it is united, influences it towards love for

The soul God in and through all things. As the bee draws honey

o>iiip:in-.l t..

a bee, why. from all plants, and makes use of them only for that end,

so the soul most easily draws the sweetness of love from all

that happens to it ; it makes all things subserve it towards

loving God, whether they be sweet or bitter. The soul now

animated and protected by love, has no sense, feeling, or

knowledge, because, as I have said, it knows nothing but

love, and all its occupations and pleasures are the joys of

love for God. This forms the subject of the following stanza.

INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE said that God is pleased with nothing but love ; but

before I explain this, it will be as well to set forth the grounds

on which the assertion rests. All our works, and all our

labours, how grand soever they may be, are nothing in the

sight of God, for we can give Him nothing, neither can we

by them fulfil His desire, which is the growth of our soul ;

as to Himself he desires nothing of this, for he has need of

nothing, and so, if He is pleased with anything it is with the

growth of the soul ; and as there is no way in which the soul

grows more than in becoming in a manner equal to Him, for

this reason only is He pleased with our love. It is the

property of love to place him who loves on an equality with

the object of his love. Hence the soul, because of its perfect

love, is called the bride of the Son of God, which signifies

TIN-: SOLE OCClTATInX <>F LoVli. 1.31

MI. In this equality and friendship all tilings STANZA.

are common, as the Bridegroom Himself said to His disciples : -

'I have called you friends, because all things, wh

soever [ have heard of my Father, I have made known

to you.' \*

STANZA XXVIII.

My soul it occupied.

And all my substance in His service ;

Now 1 guard no flock,

If or have I any other employment :

My sole occupation is love.

The soul, or rather the bride, having given herself wholly to Theni

centred on

the Bridegroom without any reserve whatever, now recounts 10T -

to the Beloved how she fulfils her task. My soul and body

she says, all my abilities and all my capacities, are occupied,

not with other matters, but with those pertaining to the

service of ray Beloved. She therefore seeketh not her own

proper satisfaction, nor the gratification of her own inclina-

S neither does she occupy herself in anything whatever

whirh is alien to God; yea, even her communion with God

1 1 imself is nothing else but love, inasmuch as she has changed

mi\* r mode of conversing with Him into love.

My soul is occupied.' This refers to the soul's surrender

^Q\{ to the Beloved in this union of love, wherein it con-

secrates itself, with all its faculties, intellect, will, and memory, >WTtll 0od

to His service. The intellect is occupied in uinl\* i>tanding

what tends to His service, in order that it mi^ht be accom-

plished; the will, in loving all that is pleasing to God, and

in desiring Him in all things ; the memory, in recalling what

ministers to Him, and what maybe more pleasing nnt<> Him.

\* A i id all n iy substance in His service.' By substance here

i.- meant all that relates to the sensitive part of the soul, which

\* 8. John xv.

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STANZ.V includes the body, with all its powers, interior and cxtcri..!-.

together with all its natural capacities, that is, flic t'.mr

SeTOtedto r passions, the natural desires, and the whole substance of tlir

soul, all of which is employed in the service of the Beloved,

as well as the rational and 'spiritual part, as I explained in

the previous section. As to the body, that is now ordered

according to God in all its interior and exterior senses, all the

acts of which are directed to God ; the four passions of the

soul are also under control in Him ; for the soul's rejoicing,

hope, fear, and grief are conversant with God only; all

its appetites, and all its anxieties also, have regard only

unto Him.

The whole substance of the soul is now so occupied with

God, so intent upon Him, that its very first movements, even

inadvertently, have God for their object and their end. The

intellect, memory, and will tend directly to God ; the affect i

senses, desires, and longings, hope and joy, the whole sub-

stance of the soul, rise instantly towards God, though the

soul is not making any conscious efforts in that direction.

Such a soul as this doeth continually the work of God, is\*

intent upon Him and His works, without thinking or refl

unconscious ing on what it is doing for Him. The constant and habitual

love of the

i>crfect SOUL practice of this has suppressed all conscious reflection, and

even those acts of fervour also which were present to it in

the beginning of its conversion. The whole substance of

the soul being thus occupied, what follows cannot but be

true also.

'Now I guard no flock.' I do not now go after my likings

and desires, for having now fixed them all upon God, I n<>\\

neither feed nor guard them. The soul not only does not

guard them now, but has no other occupation than to wait

upon God.

\* Nor have I any other employment.' Before the soul sue-

,il\- RU

ceeded in effecting this gift and surrender of itself, and of all

its substance, to the Beloved, it was entangled in many

unprofitable ns, by which it sought to serve

and others. It may be said of it, that its occupations of this

kind corresponded with its habitual imperfections.

These habitual imperfections may have been unprofitable Habitnd

conversations, thoughts, and acts, and the usage of them in

a manner which did not tend to perfection. There are other

-a also, serving to the satisfaction of others, such as os-

tentation, compliments, flattering speeches, personal consi-

iou, seeking after the appearance of good, pleasing the

world at large, with many other vanities whereby we seek to

y the world, wasting herein many anxious thoughts and

and, finally, the very "substance of the soul. Such ein-

nent as thi> the soul has now abandoned, for all its

words, thoughts, and works are directed to God, and conver-

sant with Him, freed from their previous imperfections. It

is as if the soul said: I follow no longer either my own or

men's likings, neither do I occupy or entertain myself

with nseh-ss pastimes, or the things of this world.

\* My sole occupation is love.' All my occupation now is

the praetiee of love for God, all the powers of soul an<:

body,mem<>i . a nd will, interior and exterior senses,

the desires of the spiritual and of the sensitive nature, all

work in and by love. All I do is done in love ; all I su t

in the sweetness of love. This is the meaning of David

when he said : \* I will keep my strength to Thee.' \*

ii the soul has arrived at this state all the acts of its

ial and sensitive nature, whether active or passiv< .

ot whatever kind they may be, always occasion an increase

ve and delight in God : even the act of prayer and

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\ T \\ XZ V mun i n TOth God, which was once carried on by reflections

aB( \* Divers other methods, is now wholly an act of love. So

go s g ne case a e gou may awayg

whether occupied with temporal or spiritual things, ' .My

sole occupation is love.' Happy life ! happy state ! and happy

soul which has attained to it ! where all is the very substance

of love, the joyous delights of the betrothal, in which it may

address the Beloved as the Bride in the Canticle : < The new

and the old, my Beloved, have I kept for Thee.'\* All that

is bitter and painful I keep for Thy sake, all that is sweet

,- and pleasant I keep for Thee. The meaning of the words

pt \* 8 tnat \*^ e sou ^ \* n th state of spiritual espousals, is for the

most P ar t living in the union of love, that is, the will is

habitually waiting lovingly on God.

INTRODUCTION.

OF a truth the soul is now lost to all things, and gained only

to love, and the mind is now no longer occupied with any-

thing else. It is, therefore, deficient in what concerns the

active life, and other exterior duties, that it may apply in

earnest only to the one thing which the Bridegroom has

pronounced necessary; f and that is, waiting upon G<><1. and

the continuous practice of His love. So precious is this in

the eyes of God that He rebuked Martha, because she would

^ ithdraw Mary from His feet to occupy her actively in the

service of our Lord. Martha thought that she was doing

everything herself, and that Mary at the feet of Christ

doing nothing. But it was far otherwise : for there is nothing

more important or more necessary than love. Tims, in the

Canticle, the Bridegroom protects the Bride, adjuring the

iit. vii. 13. t S. l.uKc x. 49.

LOVE im.m:>T ix iMi'oiiTA.vn: AND TROTH. 155

daughters of Jerusalem, that is, all created things, not to

disturb her spiritual sleep of love, nor to waken her, nor to ~

1< -t her open her eyes to anything till she pleased. ' I adjure

you, daughters of Jerusalem, that you stir not up, nor

awake my beloved till she please.' \*

Observe, however, that if the soul has not reached the

ttw\* frw^,

state of unitive love, it is necessary for it to make acts of n\*nof

(|Ql\_\_ \_~

love, as well in the active as in the contemplative life. But to

when it has advanced so far, it is not requisite it should

occupy itself in other and exterior duties unless they be

matters of obligation which might hinder, were it but for a

moment, the life of love, though they may be most profitable

in themselves; because an instant of pure love is more pre-

cious in the eyes of God and the soul, and more profitable to

the Church than all other good works together, though it

may seem as if nothing were done. Thus, Mary Magdalen,

though her preaching was most edifying, and might have

! still more so afterwards, out of the great desire she had

to please God and benefit the Church, hid herself in the desert

t hirty years, that she might surrender herself entirely to love ;

for she considered that she would gain more in that way,

because an instant of pure love is so much more profitable

and important to the Church.

When the soul has attained in any degree to the spirit <>t

itary love, we must not interfere with it. We should

inflict a grievous wrong upon it, and upon the Church also,

it we were to occupy it, were it only for a moment, in exterior

or active duties, however important they might be. When

God himself adjures all not to waken it from its love., who

shall venture to do so, and he blameless? And after all, is it to\*

: r

is love that we are all created? Let those n

i hi nk l.\ their preaching and exterior woi

15(i A SPIRITUAL CANTICLK.

convert the world, consider that they would be miieh more

J

the Church, and more pleasing unto God setting

the good example they would give if they would

rk8 ' spend at least one half of their time in quiet prayer, even

though they have not attained to the state of unitive love.

Certainly in that case they would effect greater good, and

with less trouble, by one single good work than by a thousand :

because of the merit of their prayer, and the spiritual strength

it supplies. To act otherwise is to beat the air, to do

little more than nothing, sometimes nothing and occasionally

even mischief ; for God may give up such persons to vanity,

so that they may seem to have done something, when in

reality their outward occupations have no fruit at all ; for it

is quite certain that good works cannot be done but in the

power of God. how much might be written on this sub-

ject ! this, however, is not the place for it.

I have said this with a view to explain the stanza that

follows, in which the soul replies to those who call in question

its holy tranquillity, who will have it wholly occupied with

outward duties, that its light may shine before the world :

these persons have no conception of the fibres and the

unseen root whence the sap is drawn, and which nourish the

fruit.

STANZA XXIX.

If then on the common

I tun no longer seen or found,

Say that I am lost ;

That li-'rntj < nauimircd,

1 lost mysflf ; and yd I y,

The soul replies to a tacit objection of the world. The

worldly-minded are in the habit of censuring those wh"

themselves up in earnest to God ; they look upon them as

extravagant, in their withdrawal from the world, and in

their whole manner of life. They say also of them that they

Tin: IJKTTKII r.\i:T. i.-,:

are useless in all imp d lost to all that the en

world esteems and values. The soul replies to this objec- :

Objection of

tinn in the most perfect way, set face boldly against

nd any other which the world might invent. Having

ined to the reality of God's love it despises all this; it

even admits the censure to be true to its fullest extent, and

boasts of its extravagance, and its abandonment of the

world, and even of itself, for its Beloved. What the soul

here says, addressing itself to the world, is in substance this :

If you see me no longer occupied with the subjects that Answer

engrossed me once, with the pastimes of the world, say and

believe that I am lost to them, and a stranger to them,

yea, that I am lost of my own choice, seeking my Beloved

whom I so greatly love. And that they may see that t!

sours loss is gain, and not consider it folly and delusion,

it adds, that its loss was gain, and that it therefore lost itself

deliberately.

'If then on the common I am no longer seen or found/

The common is a public place where people assemble for

n, and where shepherds feed their tloeks. }\\- the

moo here is meant the world in general, where men

heinselves and feed the herd of their desires. The

' sayj to the worldly-minded: 'If you see me no more

\\here I used to be before I -ave m\self up wholly to God,

look upon me as lost, and say so : ' the soul ever rejoices in

that and would have men so speak of it.

' Say that I am lost.' He who loves is not ashamed in the

presence of men of what he does for God, neither does he

conceal what he do< s through a false modesty, though the

world should eondemn it. He who shall be ashamed

to confess the Son of God before men, neglecting to do His

Son of God also \\ i 1 1 be ashamed to acknowledge

such an one in the presence of His Father. \* He that shall

1 \\illalsodenyhimbefore M\ Father

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STANZA Who is in heaven.' \* The soul, therefore, in the spirit of love

glories in what ministers to the honour of the Beloved, in

that it has done anything for Him in being lost to the

things of the world.

God has few But few spiritual persons arrive at this noble courage and

resolution in their conduct. For though some attempt to

practise it, and some even think themselves proficients

therein, still they never entirely lose themselves on certain

points connected with the world or self, so as to be perfectly

detached for the sake of Christ, despising appearances and

the opinion of the world. These can never answer, 'Say

that I am lost,' because they are not lost to themselves, and

are still ashamed to confess Christ before men through

human respect ; these do not therefore really live in Christ.

' That being enamoured,' that is, practising virtues for the

love of God.

' I lost myself ; and yet I gained.' The soul remembers

well the words of the Bridegroom in the Gospel : \* No man

can serve two masters ; for either he will hate the one and

love the other,' f and therefore, in order not to lose God,

loses all that is not God, that is, all created things, "even

itself, being lost to all things for the love of Him. He who

truly loves makes shipwreck of himself in all else that he

may gain the more in the object of his love. Thus the soul

says that it has lost itself, that is, deliberately, of set

purpose.

The Boui loses This loss occurs in two ways. The soul loses itself, making

no account whatever of itself, but referring all to the Beloved,

resigning itself freely into His hands without any selfish

views, losing itself deliberately, and seeking nothing for itself.

2. AH things Secondly, it loses itself in all things, making no account of

anything save that which concerns the Beloved. This is to lose

\* S. Matth. x. 33. t Ib. vi. 24.

DISINTERESTED LOVK.

oneself, that is, to be willing that others should have all STANZA

things. Such is he that loves God ; he seeks neither gain nor -

reward, but only to lose all, even himself according to God's

will; this is what such an one counts gain. This is real

gain, for the Apostle saith, ' to die is gain ; '\* that is, to die

for Christ is my gain and profit spiritually. This is why the

soul says^ that it \* gained ; ' for he who knows not how to

, gains not, but rather loses himself, as our Saviour

lies us in the Gospel, saying, \* He that will save his life

shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for my sake shall

find it.' t

P.I it if we wish to enter into the deeper spiritual significa- oodjnUned

tion of this line, and its peculiar fitness to the subject

re us, it is as follows : When a soul has advanced so far 8plriu

on the spiritual road as to be lost to all the natural methods

of communing with God ; when it seeks Him no longer by

meditation, images, impressions, nor by any other created

ways, or representations of sense, but only by rising above

thrin all, in the joyful communion with Him by faith and

love, then it may be said to have gained God of a truth,

because it has truly lost itself as to all that is not God, and

also as to its own self.

INTRODUCTION.

TUB soul being thus gained, all ita works are gain, for all its

powers are exerted in the spiritual intercourse of most sweet

interior love with the Beloved. The interior communications

between God and the soul are now so delicious, so full of

sweetness that no mortal tongue can describe them, nor

human intellect comprehend them. As a bride on the

\* I'hil. I SI t 8. Matth. xri. 26.

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

PTAX7..V

day of her espousals attends to nothing but to the joyous

festival of her love, and brings all her jewels and ornaments

for the pleasure of her spouse, and as he too in the

way exhibits his own magnificence for the pleasure of his

bride, so is it also in the spiritual espousals where the soul

feels that which the Bride says in the Canticle, 'I to

my Beloved and my Beloved to me.' \* The virtues and

graces of the bride-soul, the grandeur and magnificence of

the Bridegroom, the Son of God, come forth into the light,

for the celebration of the nuptial feast, each communicating

to the other their goods and joys with the wine of the B

love of the Holy Ghost. The present stanza, addressed to

the Bridegroom by the soul, has this for its subject.

STANZA XXX.

Of emeralds, and of flowers

In the curly morning cidltd,

We will make the garhii!\*,

Flowering in Thy l<

And bound together with one hair of my faad.

The Bride now turns to the Bridegroom and addr

Him in the intercourse and comfort of their love. The

subject of this stanza is the solace and delight which the

bride-soul and the Son of God find in the possession of the

virtues and gifts of each other, and in the mutual practice

thereof, both rejoicing in their mutual love. Thus the

soul, addressing the Beloved, says, that they will make

garlands rich in graces and acquired virtues, obtained at the

fitting and convenient season, beautiful and gracious in the

love He bears the soul, and kept together by the love which it

itself has for Him. This rejoicingin virtue is what is meant

by making garlands, for the soul and God rejoice together in

\* Cnnt. vi. 2.

II- Of :ST. 1G1

these virtues bound up as flowers in a garland, in the STANZA

common love which each bears the other.

' Of emeralds, and of flowers.' The flowers are the virtues

of the soul ; the emeralds are the gifts it has received from

God.

4 In the early morning culled.' That is, acquired in youth,

;i is the early morning of life. They are said to be

culled, because the virtues which we acquire in youth are

chosen virtues most pleasing unto God ; because youth is the

season when our vices most resist the acquisition of them,

and when our natural inclinations are most prone to lose

them. Those virtues also are more perfect which we acquire i. j n youth.

in early youth. This time of our life is the early morning ;

for as the freshness of the spring morning is more agreeable

than any other part of the day, so also are the virtues

acquired in our youth more pleasing in the sight of God.

may by the fresh morning also understand those acts of \* By \*>

love liy which we acquire virtue, and which are more pleasing

unto God than the fresh morning is to the sons of men.

Also good works, wrought in the season of spiritual dryness

and hardness; this i> the freshness of the winter morning, s. in

ofupiriu

and what we then do for God in dryness of spirit is most

II eyes. Then it is that we acquire virtues and

graces abundantly; and what we tints acquire with toil and

1 ul.uur is better, mure perfect and durable than what we

acquire in comfort and spiritual sweetness ; for virtue sends

forth its roots in the season of dryness, toil, and trial : as it is

written, 'Virtue is made perfect in Infirmity.'\* It is with

a view to show forth the excellence of these virtues, of which

the garland is wrought for the Beloved, that the soul says of

tin in that they have been culled in the freshness of the

morning; because it is these flowers alone, with the emeralds

ii. ii.

. . II. M

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLK

The soul

^

of virtue, the choice and per . and not the im-

perfect, which are pleasing to the Beloved.

' We will make the garlands.' All the virtues and gi

which the soul, and God in it, acquire, are as a garland of

divers flowers, wherewith the soul is marvellously adorned,

as with a vesture of rich embroidery. As material flowers

are gathered, and then formed into a garland, so the spiritual

flowers of virtues and graces are acquired and set in order in

the soul; and when the acquisition is complete, the garland

of perfection is complete also. The soul and the Bridegroom

rejoice in it, both beautiful, adorned with the garland, as in

the state of perfection.

These are the garlands which the soul says they will make.

That is, it will wreathe itself with this variety of flowers, with

the emeralds of virtues and perfect gifts, that it may present

itself worthily before the face of the King, and be on an

equality with Him, sitting as a queen on His right hand : i<>r

it has merited this exaltation by its beauty. Thus David

saith, addressing himself to Christ: 'The queen stood on

Thy right hand in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety.'\*

That is, at His right hand, clothed in perfect love, surrounded

with the variety of graces and perfect virtues. The soul does

not say, I will make garlands, nor, Thou wilt make ti

TWO elements but, We will make them, not separately, but both together ;

of vin

because the soul cannot practise virtues alone, nor acquire

them alone, without the help of God ; neither does God

alone, on the other hand, create virtue in the soul, wit I K.I it

the soul's concurrence. Though it be true, as the Apo

h, that 'every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from

al.ove, eoiniug down from the Father of light,' f still th< \

enter into no soul without that soul's concurrence and con-

sent. Thus the Bride saith to the Spouse: 4 I>ra\v i

r

xliv. 10.

t S. James i. 17.

His CROWN OP CHRIST. 1' ?

will run at't.-r th .' \* Kvery inclination to good comes from

God alone, as we learn here ; but as to running, that is, good DlTinegr%oe

works, they proceed from God and the soul together, and it \*

i- therefore written, ' We will run,' that is, both together, but

not God or the soul alone.

These words may also be fittingly applied to Christ and

Church, which, as His Bride, says unto Him, We will make

the garlands. In this application of the words, the garlands

are the holy souls born to Christ in the Church. Every such

soul is by itself a garland adorned with the flowers of virtues 8

and graces, and all of them together a garland for the

head of Christ the Bridegroom. We may also understand by

these beautiful garlands the crowns formed by Christ and t

t whirh there are three kinds. The first is formed i.

Vbyiiu.

v and white flowers of the Virgins, each one with

Virginal crown, and all together forming one for th-

Bridegroom Christ. The second, of the brilliant flowers of t.

holy Doctors, each with his crown of doctor, and all

together forming one above that of the virgins on the head

of Christ. The third is composed of the purple flowers of a. Pnrpieof

the Martyrs, each with his own crown of martyrdom, and all

united into one for the final coronet on the head of Christ

rned with these garlands He will be BO beautiful, and so

lovely to behold, that Heaven itself will ivprat the words of

the Bride in the Canticle, saying : ' Go forth, ye daughters of

Sion, and see king Solomon in the diadem \\hnvwith his

mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the

day of the joy of his heart.' t These are the garlands of

i > the soul aays :

:nu r in Thy l-.vr.' Tin tl" \\i-ring of good works and

grace and power which they d- in the

love of God, without which they not only flow :

.:. 11.

ft

1G4 A SPIRITUAL CAXTK I.!

\ become even dry, and worthless in the eyes of God, though

they may be humanly perfect. But if He gives His grace

and love, they flourish in His love.

4 And bound together with one hair of my head.' The hair

here is the will of the soul, and the love it bears the Beloved.

This love performs the function of the thread that keeps the

garland together. For as a thread binds the flowers of a gar-

land, so love knits together and sustains virtues in the soul.

' Charity,' that is, love, saith the Apostle, \* is the bond of per-

fection.'\* Love binds the virtues and supernatural gifts

together, so that if love fails by our departure from God, all

our virtue perishes also, just as the flowers drop from the

garland, when the thread that bound them together is broken.

It is not enough for God's gift of virtues, that He should love

us, but we too must love Him in order to receive them, and

preserve them.

God must be The soul speaks of one hair, not of many, to show that the

loved with J '

hSrt cne88 f ^N by itself is fixed on God, detached from all other h;

that is, from strange love. This points out the great price

and worth of the garlands of virtues ; for when love is

single, firmly fixed on God, such as it is here described, the

virtues also are entire, perfect, and flowering in the love of

God ; for the love He bears the soul is beyond all price, and

the soul also knows it well.

Were I to attempt a description of the beauty of that binding

of the flowers and emeralds together, or of the strength and

majesty which their harmonious arrangement furnishes to the

soul, or the beauty and grace of its embroidered ve\*t

pressions and words would fail me ; for if God says of tin- evil

Leviathan a spirit, ' His body is like molten shields, shut close up with

scales, pressing upon one another; one is joined to another,

and not so much as any air can come between them ;'f it' t he

Colow. iii. 14. ', xli. 0,7.

KKAl'TY AND >TRr..\<.TII < F TIIK PITJ: L. 165

evil spirit be BO strong, because covered with malice thus

compacted together for the scales that cover his body, like vutoe

molten >hi<-lils, are malice, and malice is in itself but weak- JS

ness what must be the strength of the soul that is clothed

it ues so compacted and united together that no impurity

nor imperfection can penetrate between them ; each virtue

severally adding strength to strength, beauty to beauty,

wealth to wealth, and to majesty dominion and grandeur ?

What a marvellous vision will be that of the Bride-soul,

when it shall sit on the right hand of the Bridegroom-King,

crowned with graces ! ' How beautiful are thy >tep-< in shoes,

prince's daughter ! ' \* The soul is called a prince's daughter

because of the power it receives ; and if the beauty of the steps

in shoes be great, what must be that of the whole vest niv ? Not

only is the beauty of the soul crowned with adniir.il>!.- flowers,

but its strength also, flowing from the harmonious order of t i

flowers, int. i ruined with the emeralds of its innumerable

graces, is terrible : ' Terrihle as an army set in array.' f For,

as these virtues and gifts of God refresh the soul with their

tn.il perfume, so also, when united in it, do they, out of

tli-'ir substance, minister strength. Thus, in the Canticle,

when the Bride was weak, languishing with love because she

had not been able to bind together the flowers and the emera!

\s ith the hair of her love and anxious to strengthen herself

by that union of them, cries out: 'Stay me with flowers,

compass me about with apples ; because I langnMi with love.'J;

The flowers are the virtues, and the apples are the other

graces.

Cant. Nil. 1. t II.. fj I Ib. ii. -V

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A SI'IRITTAI, CANTICLE,

STAN 7. A

God and the

BOU! one, not

in essence,

bat by love.

David and

INTRODUCTION.

I BELIEVE I have now shown how the intertwining of 11 if

garlands, and their lasting presence in the soul, explains the

Divine union of love which now exists between the soul and

God. The Bridegroom, as He saith Himself, is ' the flower

of the field and the lily of the valleys,' \* and the soul's love

is the hair that unites to itself this flower of flowers. Love

is the most precious of all things, because it is the \* bond of

perfection,' and perfection is union with God. The soul is,

as it were, a sheaf of garlands, seeing that it is the subject

of glory, no longer what it was before, but the very perfect

flower of flowers in perfection, and the beauty of them all ;

for the thread of love binds so closely God and the soul,

and so unites them that it transforms them and makes them

one by love ; so that, though in essence different, yet in glory

the soul seems God and God the soul. Such is this mar-

vellous union, which baffles all description.

We may form some conception of it from the love of David

and Jonathan, whose ' soul was knit with the soul of David.' f

If the love of one man for another can be thus strong, so as

to knit two souls together, what must that love of God be

which can knit the soul of man to God the Bridegroom ? God

Himself is here the Suitor Who in the omnipotence of

His unfathomable love absorbs the soul with greater violence

and efficacy than a torrent of fire the morning dew which re-

solves itself into air. The hair, therefore, which accomplishes

such a union must, of necessity, be most strong and subtile,

seeing that it penetrates and binds together so effectually

the soul and God. In the present stanza the soul declares

the qualities of this hair.

Cant. ii. 1.

t 1 Kings xviii. I.

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STANZA XXXI.

By that one hair

Thou host obterved fluttering on my neck,

And host regarded on my neck,

Thou wert captivat>

And wounded by one of my eye\*.

There are three things mentioned here. The first is, that sr

which tin- virtues are bound together, is nothing

less than a strong love; for in truth it need be so, in order

to preserve them. The second is, that God is greatly taken

iiair of love, seeing it to be alone and strong. T

third is, that God is deeply enamoured of the soul, heh.'ldiug

purity and integrity of its faith.

' By that one hair Thou hast observed fluttering on my neck/ LOT\* tor God

The neck signifies that strength in which, it is said, fluttered strong.

ir of love, strong love, which bound the virtues

together. It is not sufficient for the preservation of virtues

that love be alone, it must be also strong, so that no contrary

vice may anywhere destroy the perfection of the garland :

for the virtues are so bound up together in the soul by the

lie thread be once broken, all the virtues are lost;

for where one virtue is, all are, and where one fails, all fail

also. The hair is said to flutter on the neck, because its love

of God, without any impediment whatever, flutters strongly

and lightly in the strength of the soul. As the air causes

the hair to wave and flutter on the neck, so the breath of

the Holy Ghost stirs the strong love that it may fly upwards

unto God; for without this I>i\ine wind, \\hirh excites the

powers of the soul to the practice of Divine love, all the

ties the soul may possess become ineffectual and fruit less.

The Beloved observed the hair fluttering on the neck, tl

lie considered it \\ith p <gard;

because strong love is a great at t ra.-t i. . i ,.yes of -

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A SPIKHTAL CAXTICI.i:.

STANZA.

XXXI.

( And hast regarded on my neck.' This shews us that God

not only esteems this love, seeing it alone, but also loves it,

seeing it strong ; for to say that God regards is to say that He

loves, and to say that He observes is to say that He esteems

what He observes. The word neck is repeated in this line,

because it that is, the strength of the soul is the cause

why God loves it so much. It is as if the soul said, Thou

hast loved it, seeing it strong without weakness or fear,

and without any other love, and flying upwards swiftly and

fervently.

Until now God had not looked upon this hair, so as to be

captivated by it, because He had not seen it alone, separate

from the others, withdrawn from other loves, feelings, and

affections, which hindered it from fluttering alone on the neck

of strength. Afterwards, however, when mortifications and

trials, temptations and penance had detached it, and made it

strong, so that nothing whatever could break it, then God

beholds it, and is taken by it, and binds the flowers of the

garlands with it ; for it is now so strong that it can keep the

virtues united together in the soul. I have already de-

scribed, in the treatise of the Obscure Night, what tln-si

temptations and trials are, how deeply they affect the soul,

and strengthen it so that it shall attain to this strength of

love in which God unites Himself with it. I shall also say

something on the same subject when I explain the four

stanzas which begin with the words, \* living flame of love ! '

The soul having passed through these trials, acquires such a

degree of love that it merits the Divine union.

\* Thou wert captivated.' joyful wonder ! God cap-

tive to a hair. The reason of this capture so precious is

that God was pleased to observe the fluttering of the hair on

the soul's neck; for where God regards He loves. If II. in

His grace and mercy had not first looked upon us and loved

r<>wi:i: OF rursT IN <;or>. IGD

\* as S. John saith, and humbled Himself to our vile-

ness, He never would have been taken by the fluttering of

'\* \* ' - 1

the hair of our miserable love. His flight is not so low as JSJEJjfc,.

that our love could lay hold of the Divine Bird, attract His

attention, and fly so high with a strength worthy of His

regard, if He had not first looked upon us. He, however, is

taken by the fluttering of the hair, He makes it worthy and

pleasing to Himself, and then is captivated by it. 'Thou

hast seen it on my neck, Thou wert captivated by it.' This

renders it credible that a bird which flies low may cap-

ture the royal eagle in its flight ; if the eagle should fly so

low and be taken by it willingly.

\* And wounded by one of my eyes.' The eye is faith, confidence in

God, tU

The soul speaks of but one, and that this has wounded the

Beloved. If the faith and trust of the soul in God were not

one, without admixture of other considerations, God never

rou M have been wounded by love. Thus the eye that wounds,

and the hair that binds, must be one. So strong is that 1"Y.>

which the Bride inspires in the Bridegroom by her simple

tru-t, that, if the hair of her love binds Him, the eye of her

faith imprisons Him so closely as to wound Him through that

most tender affection He bears her, which is to the Bride a

further progress in His love.

The Bridegroom him>< -If speaks of the hair and the eyes ;

saying to the Bride, ' Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister,

my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart with one of thy

eyes, and with one hair of thy neck/ f He says twice that

heart is wounded with the eye and the hair, and there-

fore the soul in this stanza speaks of them both ; because

they signify its union with God in the intellect and the will ;

the intellect is subdued by faith, signified by the eye,

and the will by love. 1 1. -re the soul exults in this union, and

1 S.Juhniv. 10. t Cantiv.O.

STANZA,

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

gives thanks to the Bridegroom for it, as it is His gift;

accounting it a great matter that He has been pleased to

requite its love, and to become captive to it. We may also

observe here the joy, happiness, and delight of the soul with

its prisoner, it having been for a long time enamoured

of Him.

INTRODUCTION.

GREAT is the power and courage of love, for God is its pri-

soner. Blessed is the soul that loves, for it has made a

captive of God who obeys its good pleasure. Such is the

nature of love, that it makes those under its influence do

what is required of them, and, on the other hand, if love be

wanting, no influence can be exercised even after many

caresses. One hair will bind those that love. The soul,

knowing this well, and conscious of blessings beyond its

merits, in being raised up to so high a degree of love,

through the rich endowments of graces and virtues, attributes

all to the Beloved, saying:

STANZA XXXII.

When Thou didst regard me,

Thine eyes imprinted Thy grace in me :

For this didst Thou love me again,

And thereby mine eyes did merit

To adore what in Thee they saw.

It is the nature of perfect love to seek or accept nothing

for itself, nor to attribute anything to itself, but to refer all

to the beloved. If this be true of earthly love, how much

more so of love for God, the reason of which is so con-

straining. In the previous stanzas it appeared as if the Bride

attributed something to herself; she said that she would make

garlands with her Beloved, and bind them with a hair of her

OF MF. KIT. 171

head ; that is a great work, and of no slight importance and STANZA

value ; afterwards she said that she exulted in having capti-

Tbesoul

vated Him by a hair, and wounded Him with one of her

eyes. All this seems as if she attributed great merits to

herself. Now, however, she explains her meaning, and re-

moves the error which might have occurred, with great care

and fear, lest any merit should be attributed to herself, and

less to God than His due, and less also than she intended.

She now refers all to Him, and at the same time gives Him

tli .-inks, saying, that the cause of His being the captive of the

hair of her love, and of His being wounded by the eye of

her faith, was His mercy in looking lovingly upon her,

thereby rendering her lovely and pleasing in His sight;

and that the loveliness and worth she received from Him

merited His love, and made her worthy to adore her Beloved,

and to bring forth good works worthy of His love and favour.

\* When Thou didst regard me.' That is, with loving affec-

tin, for I have already said, that where God regards there

He loves.

' Thine eyes imprinted Thy grace in me.' The eyes of

the Bridegroom signify here His merciful Divinity, which

mercifully inclined to the soul, imprints or infuses in it the

love and grace by which He makes it beautiful, and elevates

it to be the partaker of His Divinity. When the soul sees

to what height of dignity God has raised it, it says

For this didst Thou love me again.' To love again The ma by

is to love much ; it is more than simple love, it is a twofold n object of

Gods lore.

love, and on two grounds. Here the soul explains the two

in-.tives of the Bridegroom's love; He not only loved it

because captivated by the hair, but He loved it again,

because He was wounded with one of its eyes. He loved it

so profoundly, because He would, when He looked upon it,

give it grace to please Him, mlowing it with the hair of

love, and aniniutini: with charity the faith of the eye. And

172 A SPIRITUAL CAXTK LK.

\z\ therefore saith the soul: 'For this didst Thou love me nimin.

X XXII

To say that God shews favour to the soul is to say that He

renders it worthy and capable of His love. It is therefore

as if the soul said, Having shewn Thy favour to me, worthy

pledges of Thy love, Thou hast therefore loved me again:

that is, Thou hast given me grace upon grace; or, in the

words of S. John, ' grace for grace ; ' \* grace for the grace

He has given, that is, more grace, for without grace we cannot

merit His grace.

God the If we would clearly understand this truth, we must keep

GOO i loves, in mind that, as God loves nothing beside Himself, so loves

2. AH things He nothing more than Himself, because He loves all things

with reference to Himself. Thus love is the final cause, and

God loves nothing for what it is in itself. Consequently,

when we say that God loves such a soul, we say, in effect,

that He brings it in a manner to Himself, making it His

equal, and thus it is He loves that soul in Himself with that

very love with which He loves Himself. Every good work,

therefore, of the soul in God is meritorious of God's love,

because the soul in His favour thus exalted, merits God

Himself in every act

' And thereby mine eyes did merit.' That is, by the grace

and favour which the eyes of Thy compassion have wrought,

when Thou didst look upon me, rendering me pleasing in

Thy sight and worthy of Thy regard.

\* To adore what in Thee they saw.' That is : The powers

of my soul, my Spouse, the eyes by which I can see Thee,

although once fallen and miserable in the vileness of their

mean occupations, have merited to look upon Thee. To

look upon God is to do good works in His grace. Thus also

the powers of the soul merit in adoring because they adore

in the grace of God, in which every act is meritorious.

S. John i. 10.

TIII: A;< : :vi:.s OF I/A 173

KnlL'litened and <-. \alu-d by grace, they adored what in Him STAN

they saw. and what they saw not before, because of their blind -

Attribute\* of

ness and meanness. What then have they now seen ? The p \* een \*v

. .

greatness of His power, His overflowing sweetness, infinite

goodness, love, and compassion, innumerable benefits re-

ceived at His hands, as well now when so near Him, as

before when far away. The eyes of the soul now merit to

adore, and by adoring merit, for they are beautiful and

pleasing to the Bridegroom. Before they were unworthy,

not only to adore or behold Him, but even to look upon

Him at all : great indeed is the stupidity and blindness of a

soul without the grace of God.

a melancholy thing to see how far a soul departs from Mi\*ryof

its duty when it is not enlightened by the love of God. For

being bound to acknowledge these and other innumerable

favours which it has every moment received at His hands,

temporal as well as spiritual, and to worship and serve Him

unceasingly with all its faculties, it not only does not do so,

but is also rendered unworthy even to think of Him ; nor does

it make any account of Him whatever. Such is the misery

of those who are living, or rather who are dead, in sin.

PRODUCTION.

FOR t lit- Ixttn undri>tandin' of this and of what follows, we

rrgmrd

mii.-t kM-j iii mind that the regard of God benefits the soul of

in tnin \v;iv> : it cleanses, adorns, enriches, and enlightens it

as the sun when it shines, dries, warms, beautifies, and

>t. us the eartii. \Vh.-n (i<>d has visited the soul in the

three latter ways, whereby He renders it pleasii \_ Himself,

He remembers its form, i nncleanness and sin no more: as

. I \\i'.l i...t ivim-mU-r all hi.-\* in ;hat he

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\ <i'iKnTAL CANT;\*

We should

not forget

1. To avoid

presumption.

2. To renew

thai,-. --

giving.

3. To in-

crease trust

la God.

hath done.'\* God having once done away with our sin and

uncleanness, He will look upon them no more ; nor will He

withhold His mercy because of them, for He never punishes

twice for the same sin, according to the words of the

Prophet : 'There shall not rise a double affliction. 'f

Still, though God forgets the sin He has once forgiven,

we are not for that reason to forget it ourselves ; for the

Wise Man saith, ' Be not without fear about sin forgiven.' J

There are three reasons for this. We should always re-

member our sin, that we may not presume, that we may have

a subject of perpetual thanksgiving, and that it may give us

confidence in God that we shall receive greater favours ; for

if, when we were in sin, God showed Himself unto us so

merciful and forgiving, how much greater mercies may we

not hope for when we are clean from sin, and in His love ?

The soul, therefore, calling to mind all the mercies it has

received, and seeing itself united to the Bridegroom in such

dignity, rejoices greatly with joy, thanksgiving, and love.

In this it is helped exceedingly by the recollection of its

former condition, which was so mean and filthy that it not

only did not deserve that God should look upon it, but was

unworthy that He should even utter its name, as He saith

by the mouth of the prophet David : ' Nor will I be mindful

of their names by My lips.' Thus the soul seeing that there

was, and that there can be, nothing in itself to attract the

eyes of God, but that all comes from Him of pure grace and

good-will, attributes its misery to iteelf, and all the blessings

it enjoys to the Beloved ; and seeing further, that because of

these blessings it can merit now what it could not merit before,

it becomes bold with God, and prays for the continuance of the

Divine spiritual union, wherein its mercies are visibly mul-

tiplied. This is the subject of the following stanza.

Exech. xviii. L'L>.

Ecclu\*. \

f Xalium i. 9.

Ps. i

SOUL'S BEAUTY GOD's BUT.

>TAN/A XXXIII.

Despite me not,

For if I wot twartky once,

Thou cantt regard me now ;

Since Thou kat regarded me,

Grace and beauty hatt Thou given me.

The soul now is becoming bold, and sets value upon itself, STANZA.

\ \ \ ; 1 1 .

because of the gifts and endowments which the Beloved has Not]

bestowed upon it. It recognises that these things, while \*

itself is worthless and undeserving, are at least means of

merit for it, and consequently it ventures to say to the

Beloved : \* Do not disregard me now, or despise me ; ' for if

before it deserved contempt because of the filthiness of its sin

and the meanness of its nature, now that He has once looked

upon it, and tht.-ivby adorned it with grace and beauty, He

may well ln,,k upon it a second time and increase its grace

and beauty. That He has once done so, when the soul

deserved it not, and had no attractions fr Him, is reason

i^h why He should do so again and again.

' Despise me n >t. The soul does not say this, because it

desires in any way to be esteemed for contempt and insult

are of great price, and occasions of joy to the soul that truly

loves God but because it acknowledges that in itself it

merits nothing else, were it not for the gifts and graces

it haa received from God, as it appears from the words that

follow.

r if I was swarthy once.' If, before Tlmu didst gra-

isly look upon me, Thou didst find me in my filthiuess,

black with imperfections and sins, and naturally mean and vil. .

<u canst regard me now; since Thou hast regarded

me.' After once looking upon me, and taking away my

swarthy complexion. d< -tiled by sin and disagreeable to look

upon, when Thou didst render me lovely for the first tim<

u mayest well look upon me now ; that is, now I may

17G A si'imTAL

.7.\ be looked on and deserve to be regarded, and thcid-v (>

receive further favours at Thy hands. For Thine eyes, when

they first looked upon me, did not only take away my swarthy

complexion, but rendered me also worthy of Thy regard ; for

when Thou hadst looked upon me in love Thou didst make

me beautiful and lovely.

\* Grace and beauty hast Thou given me.' The two preced-

ing lines are a commentary on the words of S. John, ' grace for

grace,' \* for when God beholds a soul that is lovely in His

eyes, He is moved to bestow more grace upon it because He

dwells, pleased, within it. Moses knew this, and prayed for

further grace : he would, as it were, constrain God to grant

it, because he had already received so much. ' Thou hast said :

I know thee by name, and thou hast found favour in My sight:

if therefore I have found favour in Thy sight, shew me

Thy face, that I may know Thee, and may find grace 1

Thy eyes.' f Now a soul which in the eyes of God is thus

exalted in grace, honourable and lovely, is for that reason an

object of His unutterable love. If He loved that soul before

it was in a state of grace, for His own sake, He loves it now,

when in a state of grace, not only for His own sake, but also

for itself. Thus enamoured of its beauty, through its affec-

tions and good works, now that it is never without them, He

bestows upon it continually further grace and love, and the

more honourable and exalted He renders that soul, the more

is He captivated by it, and the greater His love for it.

God Himself sets this truth before us, saying to His people,

by the mouth of the Prophet, ' Since thou becamest honour-

able in My eyes, and glorious, I have loved thee.'J Tliat is,

since I have cast Mine eyes upon thee, and thereby shewed

thee favour, and made thee glorious and honourable in My

sight, thou hast merited other and further favours ; for to

\* S. John i. 10. t Exod. xxxiii. 12, 13. } Is. xliii. 1.

> HONOURS HIS o\\N WI;K. 177

say that God loves, is to say that He multiplies His grace. STANZA

The Bride in the Canticle speaks to the same effect, saying : -

I :im l.L-u-k Imt beautiful, ye daughters of Jerusalem,'\*

and the Church adds, saying : ' Therefore hath the King

loved me, and brought me into His secret chamber.' This

is as much as saying : ye souls who have no knowledge

nor understanding of these favours, marvel not that the hea-

venly King has shown such mercy unto me as to bring me

within the sphere of His interior love, for, though I am

swarthy, He has so regarded me, after once looking upon me,

that He could not be satisfied without betrothing me to

Himself, and inviting me into the inner chamber of His love.

Who can measure the greatness of the soul's exaltation Godwin not

be outdone ia

when God is pleased with it ? No language, no imagination

is sufficient for this ; for in truth t God doeth this as God,

to show that it is He who does it The dealings of God

uith such a soul may in some degree be understood; but

only in this way, namely, that He gives more to him who has

more, and that His gifts are multiplied in proportion to the

previous endowments of the soul. This is what He teaches

us Himself in the Gospel, saying: 'He that hath, to him

shall be given, and he shall abound: but he that hath not,

ti"iu him shall be taken away that also which he hath.'f

'1 In is the talent of that servant who was not in favour with

his lord was taken from him and given to another who had

gained others, so that the latter might have all, together with

tin- favour of his lord. J God heaps the noblest and the

i-hi.-fest favours of His house, which is the Church militant

as well as the Chun h triumphant, upon him who is most His

nin it thus for his greater honour and glory, as

a great light absorbs the lesser lights in itself. This is the

i :il sense of those words the prophet Isaias addressed

I Ib. x\*v. 28.

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA

XXXIII.

to the people of Israel : 'I am the Lord thy God, the II nix-

One of Israel, thy Saviour: I have given Egypt for thy at mo-

ment and Saba for thee. I will give men for thee, and people

for thy life. 1 \*

Well mayest Thou then, God, gaze upon and esteem

that soul which Thou regardest, for Thou hast made it

precious by looking upon it, and given it graces which Thou

valuest, and by which Thou art captivated. That soul, there-

fore, deserves that Thou shouldest regard it not once only

but often, seeing that Thou hast once looked upon it ; for so

is it written by the Holy Ghost : ' This honour is he worthy

of, whom the king hath a mind to honour.' f

of God and

the sou].

xalte

the humble.

INTRODUCTION.

THE sdfts of the Bridegroom to the soul in this state an-

inestimable ; the praises and endearing expressions of Divine

love which pass so frequently between them are beyond all

utterance. The soul is occupied in praising Him, and in

giving Him thanks; and He too in exalting, praising, and

thanking the soul, as we see\* in the Canticle, where He thus

speaks to the Bride : \* Behold, thou art fair, My love,

behold, thou art fair; thy eyes are as those of doves.' Tin-

Bride replies: 'Behold, Thou art fair, my Beloved, and

comely .'J These, and other like expressions, are addrc

by them each to the other. In the previous stanza the soul

despised iteelf, and said it was swarthy and unclean, pra

Him for His beauty and grace, and Who, by looking upon tin;

soul, rendered it gracious and beautiful. He, whose \

it is to exalt the humble, fixing His eyes upon the soul, ai II

was entreated to do, praises it in the following stanza. II <

does not call it swarthy, as the soul calls itself, but He ad-

\* Is. xliii. 3, 4. t Esth. vi. 11.

Cant. iv. 1, vi. ;;.

Tin; EVER-GREEN <>LI\i; i;K.\\< ll OF I'KACE. i;:

-'.'3 it as His white dove, praising it for its good dispo- STANZA

sitions, those of a dove, and a turtle-dove.

STANZA XXXTV.

THE BRIDEGROOM.

The little white dove

Hat returned to the ark with the bough ;

And now the turtle-dove

Her desired mate

On the green banks has found.

It is the Bridegroom Himself who now speaks. He cele-

brates the purity of the soul in its present state, the rich

rewards it has gained, in having prepared itself, and laboured,

for Him. He also speaks of its blessedness in having found

the Bridegroom in this union, and of the fulfilment of all

its desires, the delight and joy it finds in Him now that all

the trials of life and time are over.

'Tin- little white dove' is the soul, so called on account of its Tbewrfc\*

oulhMth\*

whiteness and purity effects of the grace it has received at

the hands of God. He calls it a dove, for this is the term He

applies to it in the Canticle, to mark its simplicity, its natural d

gentleness, and its loving contemplation. The dove is not

only simple, and gentle without gall, but its eyes are also

clear, full of love. The Bridegroom, therefore, to point out

in it this character of loving contemplation, wherein it

looks upon God, says of it that its eyes are those of a dove :

\* Thy eyes are doves' eyes.' \*

I r turned to the ark with the bough.' Here the

legroom compares the soul to the dove of Noe's ark, the

going an<l r< turning of which is a figure of what befalls the

eoul. For as the dove went forth from the ark, and returned

because she found no rest tor JUT feet on account of the waters

of the deluge, until the time when she returmd with the

e branch in her mouth a sign of the mercy of God in

Cant i?. 1.

M S

180 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

drying up the waters which had covered the earth so the

soul went forth at its creation out of the ark of God's iuni-

Ptence, and having traversed the deluge of its sins and

^ imperfections, and finding no rest for its desires, flew and

returned on the air of the longings of its love to the ark of its

Creator's bosom ; but it only effected an entrance when God

had dried up the overwhelming waters of its imperfections.

Then it returned with the olive branch, that is, the victory

over all things by His merciful compassion, to this blessed

and perfect recollection in the bosom of the Beloved, not only

triumphant over all its enemies, but also rewarded for its

merits ; for both the one and the other are symbolised by the

Reconquer olive bough. Thus the dove-soul returns to the ark of God

of innocence.

not only white and pure as it went forth when He created it,

but with the olive branch of reward and peace obtained I > v

the conquest of itself.

' And now the turtle-dove her desired mate on the green

banks has found.' The Bridegroom calls the soul the turtle-

dove, because when it is seeking after the Beloved r

like the turtle-dove when she cannot find her desired in

It is said of the turtle-dove, when' she cannot find her mate,

Thesoni that she sitteth not on the green boughs, nor drinketh of tin-

turtle-dove, cool refreshing waters, nor retireth to the shade, nor inin-

gleth with companions; but when she finds him, then she

doeth all this. Such, too, is the condition of the soul, and

that necessarily, if it is to attain to union with tin- Hridr-

groom. The soul's love -and anxiety must be such that it

cannot rest on the green boughs of any joy, nor drin;

the waters of this world's honour and glory, nor recreate

itself with any temporal consolation, nor shelter i

beneath the shade of created help and protection: it n

repose nowhere, it must avoid the society of all its incli-

nations, mourn in its loneliness, until it shall find th. J5rid--

groom to its perfect contentment.

Til 181

And because the soul, before it attained to this estate, s:

\\.\IV.

t tin Beloved in great love, and was satisfied with Jp

nothing short of Him, th.- Bridegroom here speaks of the end

of i irs, and the fulfilment of its desires, sayin

'Now the turtle-dove her desired mate on the green banks

has found.' That is : Now the Bride-soul site on the green

1... ii\_ in her B< 1"\ ,1 ; drinks <f the clear waters of

11 and of the wisdom of God ; is refreshed

by t he consolations it finds in God, and is also sheltered under

the shadow of His favour and protection, which she had so

earnestly desired. There is she deliciously and divinely com-

forted and nourished, as she saith in the Canticle : ' I sat

down und.-r I(i> shadow Whom I desired, and His fruit was

BWeet to lux palate.'\*

INTRODUCTION.

THK Bridegroom proceeds to speak of the satisfaction which

II drrivrs tr.'in the happiness whirh tin- Bride has found in

' solitude wherein she desired to live a stable peace and

unchangeable good. For when the Bride is confirmed in the

piillity of her sole and solitary love of the Bridegroom,

she reposes so sweetly in the love of God, and God also in

it she requires no other means or masters to guide

IP i in the way of God ; for God Himself is now her light and

guide, fulfilling in her what He promised by the mouth of the

I'n.pl.. . \_r : " I will lead her into the wilderness, and I

will sp.-ak to her heart.'! The meaning of this is, that it is

in solitud.- tliat He communicates Himself, and nnit<> Him-

self, to the soul, for to speak to the heart is to satisfy the

heart, and no heart can be satisfied with less than God.

Canti tO.u. 14.

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A SPIRITUAL CAXTICLE.

STANZA

XXXV.

Liberty of

spirit under

the guidance

of God.

Politti.lonf

the aoul in

pearch of

God.

STANZA XXXV.

In solitude she lived,

And in solitude hath she built her nest ;

And in solitude, alone

Hath the Beloved guided her,

In solitude also wounded with her love.

Two things are to be noticed here. In the first place, the

Bridegroom commends the solitude in which the soul de-

sired to live, for it was the means whereby the soul found tlir

Beloved, and rejoiced in Him, away from all its former anxie-

ties and troubles. For, as the soul was willing to abide in

solitude, abandoning all created help and consolation, in

order to obtain the fellowship and union of the Beloved, it

deserved thereby possession of the peace of solitude in the Be-

loved, in Whom it reposes alone, undisturbed by any anxieties.

In the second place. The Bridegroom saith that, inasmuch

as the soul has desired to be alone, far away, for His sake,

from all created things, He has been enamoured of it because

of its loneliness, has taken care of it, embraced it with His

arms, fed it with all good things, and guided it to the high

things of God. He does not merely say, that He is now the

soul's guide, but that He is its only guide, without any inter-

mediate help, either of angels or of men, either of forms or of

figures ; for the soul in this solitude has attained to true lil > -rty

of spirit, and is wholly detached from all subordinate means.

'In solitude she lived.' The turtle-dove, tint is, tin\* soul,

lived in solitude before she found the Beloved in this

of union ; for the soul that longs after God derives no conso-

lation from any other companionship, yea, until it finds

Him, all such does but increase its solitude.

'And in solitude hath she built her nest.' The previous

solitude of the soul was its voluntary self-privation of all tlir

comforts of this world, for the sake of the Bridegroom-

TIII: DOVE'S NI 183

the instance of tin- turtl. -<l.v<-~its striving after perfection, STANZA.

quiring that perfect solitude wherein it attains to union ^^

with the Word, and in consequence to complete refreshment

and repose. This is what is meant by ' nest;' and the words

of the stanza may be thus explained : \* In that solitude,

wherein the Bride formerly lived, tried by afflictions and

troubles, because she was not yet perfect there, in that

solitude, hath she now fixed her nest, because she has found

perfect rest in God.' This, too, is the spiritual sense of these

words of the Psalmist : ' The sparrow hath found herself a

li.nst , and the turtle a nest for herself, where she may lay

her young ones;'\* that is, a sure stay in God, in Whom all

i< -sires and powers of the soul are satisfied.'

'And in solitude.' In that solitude of the soul, its

perfect detachment from all things, wherein it lives alone

with God there He guides it, moves it, and elevates it to

Divin. things. He guides the intellect in the perception of

Divine things, because it is now detached from all contrary

knowledge, and alone. He moves the will freely to love

Himself, because it is now alone, disencumbered from all

>t In -r affections. He fills the memory with Divine knowledge,

because it also is now alone, emptied of all imaginations and

fancies. For the instant the soul clears and empties its facul-

ties of all earthly objects, and from attachments to higher

things, kc< ]!u\_ r them in solitude, God immediately fills them

the invisible and Divine; it being God Himself Who

guides it in this solitude. 8. Paul says of the perfect, that

they 'are led by the Spirit of God,' and that is the same as

saying : \* In solitude hath He guided her.'

' Alone hath the Beloved guided her.' That is, the Beloved

not only guides the soul in its snlitiulr, l.ut it is II. alone

Who works in it din << I v \\ith.mt iiu-dinm. It i> .f tin- nature

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA,

God> the

of the soul's union with God in spiritual matrimony, that God

works directly, and communicates Himself immediately, not

by the ministry of angels, or by the help of natural capaci-

ties. For the exterior and interior senses, all created things,

and even the soul itself, contribute little towards the recep-

tion of those great supernatural favours which God bestows

in this state; yea, rather, inasmuch as they do not fall within

the cognizance of natural efforts, ability and application, God

alone effects them. The reason is, that He finds the soul

alone in its solitude, and therefore will not give it another

companion, nor will He entrust His work to any other than

Himself. There is also a certain fitness in this ; for the soul

having abandoned all things, and passed through all the

ordinary means, rising above them unto God ; God Himself

becomes the guide, and the means of bringing it to Himself.

The soul in solitude, detached from all things, having now

ascended above all things, nothing now can profit or serve it

except the Bridegroom Word Himself, Who, because ena-

moured of the Bride, will Himself alone bestow these graces

on the soul.

' In solitude also wounded with her love.' That is, the

love of the Bride for Him ; for the Bridegroom not only loves

greatly the solitude of the soul, but is also wounded with love,

because the soul would abide in solitude and detachment, on

account of its being itself wounded with His love. He will

not, therefore, leave it alone ; for being wounded with love

because of the soul's solitude on His account, and seeing that

nothing else can satisfy it, He comes Himself to be alone its

guide, attracts it, and absorbs it in Himself. But He would

not have done so, if He had not found it in this spiritual

solitude.

Till; SOUL RITE FOR III

INTRODUCTION.

IT is a strange characteristic of persons in love, that they take

a much greater pleasure in their loneliness than in associating

with others. For if they meet together in the presence of

others with whom they need have no intercourse, and from \*

whom they have nothing to conceal, and if those others neither

address them nor interfere with them, yet the very fact of their

presence is sufficient to rob the lovers of all pleasure in their

meeting. The cause of this lies in the fact, that love is the

union of two persons, who will not communicate with each

< >t her if they are not alone. And now the soul, having reached

the summit of perfection, and liberty of spirit in God, all the

resistance and contradictions of the flesh being subdued, has

no other occupation or employment than indulgence in the

joys of its intimate love of the Bridegroom. It is written of

holy Tobias, after the trials of his life were over, that God

restored his sight, and that ' the rest of his life was in joy/ \*

So is it with the perfect soul, it rejoices in the blessings that

surround it.

The prophet Isaias says of the soul which, having been tried

in the works of perfection, has arrived at the goal desired :

\* Then shall thy light rise up in darkness, and thy darkness

shall be as the noonday. And the Lord will give thoe rest

continually, and will fill thy soul with brightness, and deliver

thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like

a fountain of water whose waters shall not fail. And the

places that have been desolate for ages shall be built in thee :

thou ahalt raise up the foundation of generation and genera-

tion ; and thou shalt be called the repairer of the fences,

turning the paths into rest. If thou turn away thy foot from

\* Tub. xiv. 4.

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STAX7A

Three peti-

tions of the

Bride-soul ;

1. For joy in

love and

P i m te

the Sabbath, from doing thy own will in My holy day, and

call the Sabbath delightful, and the Holy of the Lord glorious,

and glorify Him while thou dost not thy own ways, and thy

own will is not found, to speak a word: then shalt thou be

delighted in the Lord, and I will lift thee up above the high

places of the earth, and will feed thee with the inheritance of

Jacob thy father,'\* Who is God Himself. The soul, there-

fore, has nothing else to do now but to rejoice in the delights

of this pasture, and one thing only to desire the perfect

fruition of it in everlasting life. Thus, in the next and the

following stanzas, it implores the Beloved to admit it int.

this beatific pasture in the clear vision of God.

STANZA XXXVI.

THE BRIDE.

Let us rejoice, O^my Beloved!

Let us go forth to see ourselves in TTiy beauty,

To the mountain and the hill,

Where the pure water flows ;

Let us enter into the heart of the thicket.

The perfect union of love between itself and God being

now effected, the soul longs to occupy itself with the pro-

perties of that love. It is the soul which now speaks,

making three petitions to the Beloved. In the first place,

it asks for the joy and sweetness of love, saying : \* Let us

rejoice.' In the second place it prays to be made like Him,

saying : ' Let us go forth to see ourselves in Thy beauty.' In

the third place, it begs to be admitted to the knowledge of 1 1 is

secrets, saying : ' Let us enter into the heart of the thicket.'

' Let us rejoice, my Beloved.' That is, in the sweetness

of our love ; not only in that sweetness of ordinary union, but

also in that which flows from the active and effective love,

whether in the will by an act of affection, or outwardly, in

good works which tend to the service of the Beloved. I r

\* Is. iviii. 10-14.

MTY OF GOD IN Till: BOUL, 187

love, as I have said, wh. ' firmly mot.-d. <-v-r T\U^ w\

those joys ami delights which are the acts of exterior

and interior love. All this the soul does that it may be

made like to the Beloved.

r us go forth to see ourselves in Thy beauty.' Let us For pr-

J J i. .,..,-,.,. i

so act, that, l.y the practice of this love, we may come to see

\* in Thy beauty in everlasting life. That is : Let me be

BO transformed in Thy beauty, that, being alike in beauty, we

may see ourselves both in Thy beauty ; having Thy beauty,

so that, one beholding the other, each may see his own beauty

in the other, the beauty of both being Thine only, and mine

absorbed in it. And thus I shall see Thee in Thy beauty, and

myself in Thy beauty, and Thou shalt see me in Thy beauty ;

and I shall see myself in Thee in Thy beauty, and Thou Th

self in me in Thy beauty; so shall I seem to be Thyself in

Thy beauty, and Thou myself in Thy beauty; my beauty shall

be Thin\ Thine shall be mine, and I shall be Thou in it, and

Thou myself in Thine own beauty; for Thy beauty will be my

beauty, and so we shall see, each the other, in Thy beauty.

i> the adoption of the sons of God, who may truly say chrit,the

what the Son Himself says to the Eternal Father: 'AH My by nature:

things are Thine, and Thine an- Mine,'\* He by essence, being

the Son of God by nature, we by participation, being sons by

adoption. This He Bays not for Himself only, Who is the

Head, bnt I.T the whole mystical body, which is the ('hiuvh.

Church will participate in the very beauty of the

legroom in the day of her triumph, when she shall see God

ice. And this is the vision which the soul prays union b\*.

logroom and it>elt' may ;.. in Hi> l>.-aut\ to see.

;h. mountain and the hill.' That is, to the morning and

knowledge of God, whirl, i> the knowledge of Him

in tli. I>i\ iio, because He is so high,

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A >PIRITUAL CANTICLE.

KCAH2A

xxxvi.

God eeen In

His works

i..,<l way-,

l.;;t btd in

Hi.- .-x.n.

signified by ' the mountain.' Thus Isaias saith, calling upon

men to know the Son of God : ' Come, and let us go up to

the mountain of the Lord ; '\* and before: \* In the last <l.iy>

the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared.' f

4 And to the hill.' That is, to the evening knowledge of God,

to the knowledge of Him in His creatures, in His works, and

in His marvellous laws. This is signified by the expression

\* hill,' because it is a lower kind of knowledge than the other.

The soul prays for both when it says : ' to the mountain and

the hill.'

When the soul says : \* Let us go forth to see ourselves in

Thy beauty to the mountain,' its meaning is : Transform me,

and make me like the beauty of the Divine Wisdom, the

Word, the Son of God. When it says : to the hill,' the

meaning is : Do Thou instruct me in the beauty of this lower

knowledge, which is manifest in Thy creatures and mysterious

works. This also is the beauty of the Son of God, where-

with the soul desires to be enlightened.

But the soul cannot see itself in the beauty of God if it be

not transformed in His wisdom, wherein all things are seen

and possessed, whether in heaven or in earth. It was to

this mountain and to this hill the Bride longed to come

when she said : \* I will go to the mountain of myrrh, and to

the hill of frankincense.'J The mountain of myrrh is the

clear vision of God, and the hilt of frankincense the know-

ledge of Him in His works, for the myrrh on the mountain is

more precious than the incense on the hill.

s Where the pure water flows.' This is the wisdom and

knowledge of God, which cleanse the intellect, and detach

it from all accidents and fancies, and which clear it of the

mist of ignorance. The soul is ever influenced by this

desire of perfectly and clearly understanding the Divine

Is. ii. 3.

2.

| Cant. iv. 0.

IMIXiTi: DKITH\* OF DIVIM: TKITII. 189

' >, and the more it loves the more it desires to pene- STANZA.

XX \\ I.

them, and hence the third petition which it makes.

1. For\*

' Let us enter into the heart of the thicket ; ' into the j!id

depths of God's marv. 11 MU> works and profound judgments.

h is their multitude and variety, that they may be called a

tli irk. -t. They are so full of wisdom and mystery, that we

may not only call them a thicket, but we may even apply

to them the words of David : ' The mountain of God is a

ri.-h mountain, a mountain curdled as cheese, a rich moun-

tain.'\* The thicket of the wisdom and knowledge of God

is so deep, and so immense, that the soul, though ever know-

ing more of it, may always penetrate further within it, because

so immense and so incomprehensible. ' the depth,' cries

out the Apostle, 'of the riches of the wisdom and of the

knowledge of God I How incomprehensible are His judg-

ments, and how unsearchable His ways I ' f But the soul longs

to enter this thicket and incomprehensibility of His judg-

ments, for it faints away with the desire of entering into a

deeper knowledge of tlu-m. The knowledge of them is an

inestimal.lr <1< liirlit, transcending all understanding. David

speaking of the sweetness of them, saith : ' The judgments of

our Lord are true, justified in themselves, to be desired above

gold and many precious stones, and sweeter than honey

and the honey-comb. For Thy servant keepeth them.'\*

The soul longs to be profoundly absorbed in His judgments,

and to have a deeper knowledge of them, and for that end

would esteem it a joy and consolation to endure all sufferings

! afflictions of the world, and whatever else might con-

<IM< . tn that end, however hard and painful it might be; it

ild gladly pass through the agonies of death to ent

deeper into God.

<-e, also, th.- thick.-t, \sliicli the soul desires to ei/

P\* ra. xi 33.

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A sriKIITAL CANTICU-:.

Oat\* to the

of God-

t :.' (\_ P tf,

may be appropriately understood as signifying t)

vaf i e ty f trials and tribulations which the soul longs fur,

because suffering is most sweet and most profitable to it,

inasmuch as it is the way by which it enters more and more into

the thicket of the delicious wisdom of God. The most pure

suffering leads to the most pure and the deepest knowledge,

and consequently, to the purest and highest joy, for that is

the issue of the deepest knowledge. Thus, the soul, not

satisfied with ordinary suffering, says: ' Let us enter into tin-

heart of the thicket,' even the anguish of death, that I may

see God.

Job, desiring to suffer that he might see God, thus speaks :

'Who will grant that my request may come, and that (MM!

may give me what I look for? And that He that hath

begun may destroy me, that He may let loose His hand and

cut me off? And that this may be my comfort, that, afflict-

ing me with sorrow, He spare not.'\* that men wuuM

understand how impossible it is to enter the thicket, the

manifold riches of the wisdom of God, without entering into

the thicket of suffering which, like the wisdom of God,

has various manifestations grounding "thereon all the com-

fort and consolation of their souls ; and how that the soul

which really longs for the Divine wisdom, longs first of all

for the sufferings of the Cross, that it may enter in. For this

cause it was that S. Paul admonished the Ephesians n<

faint in their tribulations, but to take courage: 'That 1

rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to compn -

hend with all the.saints what is the breadth, and length, and

height, and depth; to know also the charity of Christ, which

surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the

fulness of God.'f The gate by which we enter into the

riches of the knowledge of God, is the Cross ; and that gate is

Job vi. 8-10.

t Ephea. iii. 17

TO KNn\V (JOD IS KTKRNAL IJIi:. i:l

m. They who desire to enter in that way are few, ?

\ \ A \ 1 .

\vhile those who <! it come by it are many.

INTRODUCTION.

of the principal reasons why the soul desires to be Biiof

Heaven to

released and to be with Christ, is, that it may see Him face to \*\*

face, and penetrate to the depths of His ways and the eternal

mysteries of His Incarnation, which is not the least important

of its blessedness ; for Christ Himself hath said : ' Now

this is eternal life : that they may know Thee, the only true

God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent.'\* As the first

act of a person who has taken a long journey is to see and

verse with him whom he was in search of, so the first

thing which the soul desires, when it has attained to the

Beatific Vision, is to know and enjoy the deep secrets and

mysteries of the Incarnation and the ancient ways of God d -

lini^ "ii tli in. Thus the soul, having said that it longed

!M- IM auty "f God, sings as in the following stanza:

STAN/ A XXXVII.

U'. -l.i'f ./ ,!' .->,:

ms of the rock

Which are all\*

Thrrt we shall enter in,

And taste of the new wine of the pomegranate.

One of the reasons which most intim-nce the soul to desire

to entrr into tin- \* thicket' of the wisdom of God, and to have

a more intimate knowledge of the beauty of the Divine

i ve said, that it may unite the intellect

with (J. knowledge of the mysteries of the Incarna-

tion, a> h-ing the highest and the most delicious knowledge

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A SPIRITUAL CANTK l.i:.

STANZA

Mysteries

of the

of all His works. And here the Bride says, that after she has

entered in within the Divine Wisdom that is, into the

Spiritual Matrimony, which is now and will be in glory,

seeing God face to face her soul united with the Divine

Wisdom, the Son of God, she will then understand the deep

mysteries of God and Man, which are the highest wisdom

hidden in God. They, that is, the Bride and the Bride-

groom, will enter in the soul ingulfed and absorbed

and both together will have the fruition of the joy which

springs from the knowledge of mysteries, namely, the attri-

butes and power of God which are revealed in those mysteries,

such as His justice, His mercy, wisdom, power, and love.

'We shall go at once to the lofty caverns of the rock.'

' This rock is Christ,' as we learn from S. PauL\* The lofty

caverns of the rock are the sublime mysteries of the wisdom

of God in Christ, in the hypostatical union of the human

nature with the Divine Word, and in the correspondence with

it of the union of man with God, and in the congruity of

God's justice and mercy in the salvation of mankind, in the

manifestation of Hia j udgments. And because His j udgments

are so high and so deep, they are here fittingly called ' lofty

caverns ;' lofty because of the sublimity of His mysteries, and

caverns because of the depth of His wisdom in them. For as

caverns are deep, with many windings, so each mystery of

Christ is of deepest wisdom, and has many windings of

His secret judgments of predestination and foreknow!

with respect to men.

'Which are all secret.' Notwithstanding the marvel-

lous 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,

i r lie is a rich mine, with many recesses full of treasure,

\* 1 Cor. x. 4.

an<l however d< may descend we shall never reach

in every recess new veins of new treasures

inl in all directions: 'In Whom,' according to tin-

Apostle, ' are hid all the treasures of wisdom and know-

ledge.' \* But the soul cannot reach to these hidden treasures

unless it first passes through the thicket of interior and

LJ: for even such a knowledge of the mys- condition\*

- -

teries of Christ as is possible in this life, cannot be had

\\ithoutgreat sufferings, and without many intellectual and

moral gifts, and without previous spiritual exercises ; but all

these gifts are far inferior to this knowledge of the mysteries

of Christ, being only a preparation for it. Thus God said to

Moses, when he asked to see His glory, \* Man shall not see

and live.' God, however, said that He would show him

.ill tli.it .-. -iiM be revealed in this world; and so He set Moses

tiopuoght

'in a hole of the rock,' which is Christ, where he might see to

K-irk parts ;'f that is, He gave him the understanding

of the mysteries of the Sacred Humanity.

The soul longs to enter into these caverns of Christ, that

it may 1 ..- 1 luis absorbed, transformed, and inebriated with love

bfl knowledge of His mysteries, hiding itself in the bosom

of the Beloved. It is into these caverns that He invites the

ter, saying: 'Arise, my love, my beautiful one,

ami come; my dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow

places of tin- wall.' \* These clefts of the rock are the caverns

nf \\hi.-h we are here speaking.

1 there we shall ent-r in.\* into this knowledge and these

mysteries. The soul says not, 'I will nt< T' alone,

uhii-h seems the most fitting seeing that the Bridegroom

has no need to ent< r in again but 'we will enter,' that is,

tin l-ride. It seems to say that this is

t th- s-.ul, I. ut of the Bridegroom with it.

ColoM. i t Exod. xxxiii. 20-23. i I

II. o

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\ SIMKITFAL CANTICLE,

STANZA.

XXXVII.

The perfect

soul does

nothing of

Joy in the

attributes

and judg-

ments of

Moreover, inasmuch as God and the soul are now united in

spiritual matrimony, the soul doeth nothing of itself without

God. And thus, to say \* we will enter,' is as much as saying,

there shall we transform ourselves: that is, I shall be trans-

formed in Thee through the love of Thy Divine and sweet

judgments ; for in the knowledge of the predestination of the

just, and in the foresight of the wicked, wherein the Father

foreknew the just in benedictions of sweetness in Jesus Christ

His Son, the soul is transformed in a most exalted and j.

feet way in the love of God according to this knowledge,

giving thanks to the Father, and loving Him again and again

with great sweetness and delight, for the sake of Jesus Christ

His Son. This the soul does in union with Christ nnd

together with Him. The delight flowing from this act of

praise is ineffably sweet, and the soul speaks of it in the

words that follow.

'And taste of the new wine of the pomegranates.' The

pomegranates are the mysteries of Christ and the judgments

of the wisdom of God; His powers and attributes which,

through the knowledge of these mysteries, are known in God to

be infinite. For as pomegranates have many grains in their

circular orb, so each one of the attributes and judgments and

powers of God involve a multitude of admirable arrangements

and marvellous issues contained within the spherical orbit of

power and mystery, appertaining to those issues. Consil T

the round spherical form of the pomegranate ; for each poi

granate signifies some one power and attribute of God, which

power or attribute is God Himself, symbolized here by the

circular figure, for such has neither beginning nor end. It

was in the contemplation of the infinite judgments and

mysteries of the wisdom of God that the bride said, Hli-

belly is of ivory set with sapphires.'\* The sapphires are the

\* Cant. T. 14.

NKW WINK OF TIIK POMFJ.RAN 195

mysteries and judgments of t! u- Wisdom, wliich is

here signified by the ' belly' the sapphire being a precious

stone of the colour of the heavens when clear and serene.

The wine of the pomegranates is the fruition and joy of the k

love of God which overflows the soul in the understanding

and knowledge of His mysteries. For as the many grains of

the pomegranate pressed together give forth but one wine, so

all the marvels and magnificence of God, infused into the

soul, issue in but one fruition and joy of love, which is the

drink of the Holy Ghost, and which the soul offers at once to

God the Word, its Bridegroom, with great tenderness of love.

Divine drink the bride promised to the Bridegroom if

He would lead her into this deep knowledge : ' There Thou

shalt lead me,' saith the bride, \* and I will give Thee a cup

iced wine, and new wine of my pomegranates.' The

.-id, indeed, calls them ' my pomegranates,' though they are

God's, Who had given them to it, and the soul offers them

to God as if they were its own, saying, \* we will taste of

the wine of the pomegranates ;' for when He tastes it He gives

it to the soul to taste, and\* when the soul tastes it, the soul

gives it back to Him, and thus it is that both taste it together.

Now the pomegranates are Divine Knowledge.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the two previous stanzas the bride sung of those blessings

which the Bridegroom is to give her in everlasting bliss,

namely. I,<T transformation in the beauty of created and

uncreated wisdom, and also in the beauty of the union oft h.

1 with flesh, wherein she shall behold His face as well as

i>ack. Accordingly two things are set before us in the

\* Ctntv.

o s

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|TANZA following stanza. The first is the way in which tin- >.nl

tastes of the Divine wine of the pomegranates ; the second is

the soul's putting before the Bridegroom the glory of its pre-

destination. And though these two things are spoken of

separately, one after the other, they are both involved in the

one essential glory of the soul.

STANZA XXXVIII.

There Thou wilt show me

What my soul desired ;

And there Thou wilt give me at once,

O Thou, my Life !

What Thou gavest me the other day.

The reason why the soul longed to enter the caverns WMS

that it might attain to the consummation of the love of (rod,

the object of its continual desires ; that is, that it might love

God with the pureness and perfection wherewith He has

loved it, so that it might thereby requite His love. Hence

in the present stanza the bride saith to the Bridegroom that

He will there show her what she had always aimed at in all

her actions, namely, that He would show her how to love

Him perfectly, as He has loved her. And, secondly, that

what He will bestow upon her there is that essential glory for

which He has predestined her from the day of His eternity.

Thenoni \* There Thou wilt show me what my soul desired.' This

lore God as it desire or aim of the soul is equality in love with God, the

is lovod by

Him. object of natural and supernatural desire. He who loves

cannot be satisfied if he does not feel that he loves as much

as he is beloved. And when the soul sees that in the trans-

formation in God, such as is possible in this life, notwith-

standing the immensity of its love, it cannot equal the

perfection of that love wherewith God loves it, it desires Un-

clear transformation of glory wherein it shall equal the per-

fection of love wherewith it is itself beloved of God ; it

desires, I say, the clear transformation of glory wherein it

LOVE roi; !. 197

shall equal His love. For though in this high estate, which

the soul reaches on earth, there exists a real union of the will,

yet it cannot reach that perfection and strength of love which

it is to reach in the union of glory ; seeing that then, accord-

ing to the Apostle, the soul will know God as it is known of

Him: 'Now I know in part ; but then I shall know even as I

am known.'\* That is, I shall then love God even as I am

loved by Him. For as the understanding of the soul will

then be the understanding of God, and its will the will of

God, so its love will also be His love. Though in Heaven the in

will of the soul is not destroyed, it is so intimately united a\*\*

\\ ith the power of the will of God, Who loves it, that it loves

Him as strongly and as perfectly as it is loved of Him ; both

wills being united in one sole will and in one sole love of

God. Thus the soul loves God with the will and strength of

God Himself, being made one with that very strength of love

wherewith itself is loved of God. This strength is of the

Holy Ghost, in Whom the soul is there transformed. He is i

given to the soul to strengthen its love ; ministering to it, Jj5,fJJ; JJJ

and supplying in it, because of ite transformation in glory,

that which is defective in it. In the perfect transformation,

also, of the estate of spiritual marriage, such as is possible on

earth, in which tlu- soul is all clothed in grace, the soul loves

in a certain way in the Holy Ghost, Who is given to it in

that nation.

We are to observe here that th I, ride does not say, Th. r.

\ult Thou give me Thy love, though th.it l>e true for that

means only that Go<l will l..\,- h.-r hut that Ho will th.-n-

I -! hw she is to love Him with that perfection at

which she aims, because there He will give her His love, and

same time show her how to love Him as He loves her.

not only teaches the soul to love Himself purely,

1 Cor. xiii. 12.

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STANZA ^th a disinterested love, as He hath loved us, but He also

enables it to love Him with that strength with which He

loves the soul, transforming it in His love, wherein He

bestows upon the soul His own power, so that it may love

Him. It is as if He put an instrument in its hand, taught

it the use of it, and played upon it together with the soul.

Per eandem This is shewing the soul how it is to love, and at the same

[dilectionem]

\*\* me en dowmg it Wl th the capacity of loving. The soul is

not satisfied until it reaches this point, neither would it be

satisfied even in Heaven, unless it felt, as S.Thomas teaches,\*

that it loved God as much as it is loved of Him. And as I

soeret, nisi

creatornrao have said of the state of spiritual matrimony of which I am

reeSieret. speaking, there is now, at this time, though it cannot be that

ntaixjr 11 fl perfect love in glory, a certain vivid vision and likeness of

sanctum.' that perfection, which is wholly indescribable.

' And there Thou wilt give me at once, Thou my Life,

what Thou gavest me the other day.' What He will give is

the essential glory which consists in the vision of God.

Before proceeding further it is requisite to solve a question

which arises here, namely : Why is it, seeing that the

essential glory consists in the vision of God, and not in loving

Him, that the soul says that its longing is for His love, and

not for the essential glory? Why is it that ^the soul begins the

stanza with referring to His love, and then introduces the

>na \* subject of the essential glory afterwards, as if it were some-

thing of less importance ? There are two reasons for tlii -.

The first is this : As the end of all is love, which inheres in the

will, the characteristic of which is to give and not to receive,

and the characteristic of the intellect, the subject of the

essential glory, being to receive and not to give, to the soul

inebriated with love, the first object that presents itself is not

the essential glory which God will bestow upon it, l>ut

\* Opusc. de Beatitudine, cap. 2.

DAY OP GOD'S TY. iw

re surrender of itself to Him in true love, without any JTAM^

regard to its own advantage.

The second reason is that the second object is included in

tl>- first, and has been taken for granted in the previous

stanzas, it being impossible to attain to the perfect love of God

\\ ithout the perfect vision of Him. The question is solved by

the first reason, for the soul renders to God by love that

which is His due, while it rather receives from Him through

utellect

I now resume the explanation of the stanza, and enquire oiory of the

what day is meant by the other day,' and what is it that gJJ\*\*\*

then gave the soul, and what that is which it prays for

afterwards in glory ? By this ' other day ' is meant the day of

the eternity of God, which is other than the day of time. In

that day of eternity God predestined the soul unto glory, and

determined the glory which He would give it, which He freely

gave it from the beginning before He created it. This now,

in a manner, so truly belongs to the soul that no event or

accident, high or low, can ever take it away, for the soul must

T that f<>r which God had predestined it from all

nity. This is that which He gave it \* the other day,' that

whii-h the soul longs now to possess visibly in glory. And

what is that which He gave it t < eye hath not seen nor

ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man

\* The eye hath not seen,' saith the Prophet, \* God besides

Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for

e.'t The soul has no words to describe it, so it says

tli the vision of God, and as there is no

expression by which we can explain what it is to see God, the

soul says only ' what Thou gavest me.'

i ay not leave the subject without saying some-

thing further concerning it, I will repeat what Christ hath

1 Cor. u. 0. f I\*, bur. 4.

200 A SPIRITUAL CAM K I.I .

STANZA said of it in many terms, phrases, and comparisons, bec;m -

" a single word once uttered cannot describe it, for there is

] f ' ;;';\_ \ K ; much .-till unsaid, notwithstanding all that Christ hath >|><>k<-n

1. The tree at seven different times. 'To him that overcometh,' saith

He, ' I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the

paradise of My God.' \* But as this does not perfectly describe

2. The crown it, He says again : \* Be thou faithful unto death ; and I \\\\\

give thee the crown of life.' f

This also is insufficient, and so He adds somewhat obscurely,

. The hidden but still explaining it: 'To him that overcometh I will give

manna, and

iite the hidden manna, and will give him a white counter, and on

counter.

the counter a new name written, which no man knoweth but

he that receiveth it.' J And as even this is still insufficient,

4. The rod of He proceeds to speak of great power and joy, saying: 'He

the morning that ghall overcome and keep My works unto the end, I will

star of joy. J

give him power over the nations, and he shall rule them with

a rod of iron, and as a vessel of the potter they shall be

broken, as I also have received of My Father, and I will give

him the morning star.' Christ is not yet satisfied with what

5. The white He hath said; and He adds: 'He that shall overcome shall

robe, and the

book of life, thus be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his

name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name

before My Father.' ||

Still, all this falls short of the reality, and so Christ pro-

ceeds with words of unutterable majesty and grandeur to

r,. The temple describe that which He gave the soul the other day: 'He

of God. and J

that shall overcome I will make him a pillar in the temple

Jenualem.

of My God, and he shall go out no more ; and I will write

upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of

My God, the new Jerusalem which cometh down out of

Heaven from My God, and My new name.' IT The seventh

\* Apoc. ii. 7. t Ib. 10. J Ib. 17.

Ib. 26-8. ,| Ib. iii. 6. f Ib. 12.

AM. ( BOH 201

ll.-.-uy-: 'To Iiiin that shall overcome, I will give to STA-

My tli rone: so I also have overcome, and am set down 7 Thethnme

with My K-ith.-r in His throne. He that ha-th an ear let him of

hrar what the Spirit >aith to tin- Churches.'\*

an the words of the Son of God; all of which ten- 1

to describe that which was given to the soul. The wor

spond most accurately with it, but still they do not

explain it, because it involves infinite good. The noblest

expressions befit it, but none of them reach it, no, not all

together.

Let us now see whether David hath said anything of it.

In one of the Psalms he saith: \* how great is the multitude

Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them

fear Thee.' f In another place he describes it as a

\* torrent of pleasure,' saying, ' Thou shalt make them drink

of the torrent of Thy pleasure.' J And as he did not consider

this enough, he says again, 'Thou hast prevented him with

blessings of sweetness.' The expression that rightly fits tu

this ' what ' of the soul, namely its predestined bliss, cannot

be found. Let us, therefore, rest satisfied with what the soul

has used in reference to it, and explain the words as follow

'Whftl '1 'I i ou gavest me,' that is, that weight of glory to

which Thou didst predestinate me, O my Bridegroom, in tin-

day of Thy eternity, when it was Thy good pleasure to decree

my civnti..n.Thoii wilt then give me in my day of my betrothal

and of my nuptials, in my day of the joy of my heart, when

i.s-d trom th<- luirden of tin- tlesh, led into the lofty

caverns of Thy bridal chamber and gloriously transformed in

Thee we drink the wine of the sweet pomegranates.

\* I | IH. xxx. 20. | Ib. xxxv. 0. $ Ib. xx. 4.

A Sl'IKlTl AL ( ANTKJU-:.

INTRODUCTION.

1nr?nr ^^ i 11 \* 8111110 ^ as the soul, in the state of Spiritual Matri-

mony, of which I am now speaking, cannot but know

something of this \* What,' seeing that because of its transfor-

mation in God something of that \* What ' must be experienced

by it, it will not omit to say something on the subject, the

pledges and signs of which it is conscious of in itself, as it is

written : ' Who can withhold the words he hath conceived ? ' \*

Hence in the following stanza the soul says something of the

fruition which it shall have in the Beatific Vision, explaining

so far as it is possible the nature and the manner of it.

STANZA XXXIX.

The breathing of the air,

The song of the sweet nightingale,

The grow and its beauty

In the serene night,

With the fire that consutnes but without pain.

The soul refers here, under five different expressions, to

that which the Bridegroom is to bestow upon it in the beatific

transformation. 1 . The aspiration of the Holy Spirit of God

after it, and its own aspiration after God. 2. Exultation in

God in the fruition of Him. 3. The knowledge of creatures

and the order of them. 4. The pure and clear contemplat i. .n

of the Divine Essence. 5. Perfect transformation in the

infinite love of God.

\* The breathing of the air.' This is a certain faculty v],i-h

S\*anftta!r ^^ w \*^ ^ nere bestow upon the soul in the communication

1 with the of the Ho jy G-h 08t) who, j ike one breathing, elevates the soul

by His Divine aspiration, informs it, strengthens it, so that it

too may breathe in God,with the same aspiration of

Job iv. 2.

tionaof

mi

1. Love of

ti, BO||

Tn:,.!-..

BREATH OF JoJ

her breathes with the Son, and the Son with the

.1, \shih is the Holy Ghost Himself: Who is breathed -

the soul in the Father and the Son in that transforma-

tion so as to unite it to Himself ; for the transformation will

l>e true and perfect if the soul is not transformed in the

Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity in a clear manifest

degree. This breathing of the Holy Ghost in the soul,

whereby God transforms it in Himself, is to the soul a joy so

deep, so exquisite, and so sublime, that no mortal tongue can

descril it. no human understanding, as such, conceive it in

any degree ; for even that which passes in the soul with

respect to the communication which takes place in its trans-

formation wrought in this life, cannot be described, because

the soul united with God and transformed in Him, breathes

in God that very Divine aspiration which God breathes Him-

self in the soul when it is transformed in Him.

In the transformation which takes place in this life, this The perfect

breathing of God in the soul, and of the soul in God, is of fiflu^jg

most frequent occurrence, and the source of the most exqui- to He \* Ten \*

site delight of love to the soul, but not however in the clear

and manifest degree which it will have in the life to come.

s in my opinion, is what S. Paul referred to when he said :

\* Because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son

y..iir hearts, crying Abba, Father.' \* The Blessed in the

to come and the perfect in this thus experience it. Nor

i to be thought impossible that the soul should be capable

so great a thing, that it .-h-.nl, l lueathe in God as God in

it, in the way of participation. For granting that God has

bestowed upon it so great a favour as to unite it to the most

H<> y, whereby it becomes like unto God, and God by

partirijKiti.nl, is italtogeth. r ii.-n-ilil.lr that it should exercise

the faculties of its intellect, perform its acts of knowledge

GtL iv. a

A Sl'IRHTAL CANTICLE.

and of love, or to speak more accurately, should have it ;ill

' done in the Holy Trinity together with It, as the Holy Trinity

The soul, in Itself? This however takes place by communication and

] '\\ T.

induJS\* 6 ' participation, God Himself effecting it in the soul, for this is

to be transformed in the Three Persons in power, wisdom, and

i . t > I ' I

Trinity. love, and herein it is that the soul becomes like unto God,

Who, that it might come to this, created it in His own image

and likeness.

How this can be so cannot be explained in any other way

than by showing how the Son of God has raised us to so hi^li

an estate, and merited for us the ' Power to be made the sons

of God.' \* He prayed to the Father saying : Father, I will

that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may !>

with Me, that they may see My glory which Thou hast given

Me.'f That is, that they may do by participation in us what I

do naturally, namely, breathe the Holy Ghost. He says also :

^ or t'kem on ^J do I P ra J> but f r th em a l so wn o through

word shall believe in Me, that they all may be on-

Thou Father in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may U

one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast scut

Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given

to them : that they may be one as We also are one. I in t In -m

and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one, and

the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved

them as Thou hast also loved Me,' \ that is in bestowing upon

them that love which He bestows upon the Son, though nt

naturally as upon Him, but in the way I speak of, in the

union and transformation of love. Nor are we to suppose

from this that our Lord prayed that the saints might become

one in essential and natural unity, as the Father and the Son

are ; but that they might become one in the union of love as

the Father and the Son are one in the oneness of their love.

\* S. John L 12. t Ib. xvii. 24. J Ib. xvii. 20-3.

THK VH-HTIMiAIJ.' 205

Tims souls have this great blessing by participation which th. a\*

Son has by nature, and are therefore really gods by partici- -

pation like unto God and of His nature. 8. Peter speaks of oodaadth\*

t h is as follows : ' Grace to you and peace be accomplished in i

the knowledge of God, and of Christ Jesus our Lord ; as all J JJjjJ^J

things of His divine power, which appertain to life and LoTe -

godliness, are given us, through the knowledge of Him Who

hath called us by His own proper glory and virtue, by Whom

He hath given us most great and precious promises: that

by these you may be made partakers of the Divine nature. 1 \*

Thus far S. Peter, who clearly teaches that the soul will be a

partaker of God Himself, Who will effect within it, together

with it, the work of the Most Holy Trinity, because of the sub-

stantial union between the soul and God. And though this

union be perfect only in the life to come, yet even in this, in

th state of perfection to which the soul is supposed now to

have reached, some anticipation of its sweetness is given it,

in th- way I am speaking of, though in a manner wholly

ineffal'l' .

O souls created for this, and called thereto, what are you HOW men

doing? What are your occupations? Your aim is meanness,

ami your enjoyments misery. Oh, wretched blindness of the

rliil'ir.-n of Adam, blind to so great a light, and deaf to so

clear a voice ; you see not that, while seeking after greatness

and glory, you are miserable and contemptible,. ignorant, and

unworthy of blessings so great I now proceed to the second

ression which the soul has made use of to describe what

II \_cave it.

' The song of the sweet nightingale.' Out of this 4 breathing s. Btrr

lie air' comes the sweet voice of the Beloved addressing j '

Iliin-.-lf t.. the soul, in \\hi.-h the soul also sends forth its own Ood -

sweet in Him. Both the one and the other are

2 a Pet i. 3-4.

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>TANZA meant by the song of the nightingale. As the song of the

^^ - nightingale is heard in the spring of the year, when the cold,

spring oome, an( j ra i Dj and storms of winter are passed, filling the car Nvitli

melody, and the mind with joy ; so, in the true intercourse

and transformation of love, which takes place in this life, tin-

bride now protected and delivered from all earthly trials and

temptations; purified and detached from the imperfections,

troubles and darkness, both of mind and body, becomes

conscious of a new spring in liberty, largeness, and joy of

spirit, when she hears the sweet voice of the Bridegroom,

Who is her sweet nightingale, renewing and refreshing the

very substance of her soul, which is now prepared for the

journey of everlasting life. That voice is sweet to her ears,

and calls her sweetly, as it is written : ' Arise, make haste,

my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come. For winter

is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have

appeared in our land, the time of pruning is come: the

voice of the turtle is heard in our land.' \* When the bride

hears the voice of the Bridegroom in her inmost soul, she

feels that her troubles are over and her prosperity begun.

In the refreshing comfort and sweet sense of this voice, the

bride herself, like the nightingale, sends forth her voice in

new songs of rejoicing unto God, in unison with Him Who

now moves her to do so.

It is for this that the Beloved gives His voice to the Bride ;

that she in unison with Him may give it unto God ; this is

the aim and desire of the Bridegroom, that the soul should

sing spiritually unto God ; and this is what He asks of the

Bride in the Canticle: ' Arise, my love, my beautiful one,

and come ; my dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow

places of the wall, shew me thy face, let thy voice sound in

my ears.' f The ears of God signify the desire He hath that

\* Cant. ii. 10-12. t Ib. ii. 13, 14.

Til: IV.

the soul should st-ud forth its voice of perfect jubilation. And &JjrA.

that thi< voice may be perfect, the Bridegroom bids the soul

to send it forth, and to let it sound in the clefts of the rock, k

i f

in th.it transformation which I spoke of in connection with eternal joy.

the mysteries of Christ. And because in this union of the

soul with God, the soul sings praises unto Him together with

Him, in tin- way I spoke of when I was speaking of love, the

-es it sends forth are most perfect and pleasing unto God ;

t'ir the acts of the soul, in the state of perfection, are most

perfect ; and thus the voice of its rejoicing is sweet unto God

as well as to itself. \* Thy voice is sweet,' \* saith the Bride-

groom, not only to thee, but also to Me, for as we are one,

voice is also in unison and one with Mine. This is the

canticle which the soul sings in the transformation which

takes place in this life, about which no exaggeration is

possible. But as this song is not so perfect as the new

song in the life of glory, the soul, having a foretaste of that

by what it feels on earth, shadows forth by the grandeur

ids tin- magnificence of that in glory, which is beyond all

:son nobler, and calls it to mind and says that what

i >n there will be, is the song of the sweet nightingale.

The grove and its beauty.' This is the third thing which s.

the Bridegroom is to give to the soul. The grove, because gjjj

it < untains many plants and animals, signifies God as the

Creator ami (liver of life to all creatures, which have their \*

i<\* and origin from Him, and which show Him to be God,

andmakr Him known as the Creator. The beauty of the grove,

1 1 the soul prays for, is not only the grace, wisdom, and

> \vlii( h flow from God over all created things, whether

in heaven or on earth, l.ut also the beauty of the mutual

harmony and wise arrangement of the inferior creation in

itself, and th< higher also in itself, and of the mutual relations

Cant i.

208 A SPIKITl'AL CANTICLE.

STANZA of both. The contemplation of this is to the soul a sul

of great joy and satisfaction. The fourth request is :

4. unclouded \* In the serene night.' That is, contemplation, in which tlu\*

vision of the

face of God. sou l desires to behold the grove. It is called night, because

contemplation is obscure ; and that is the reason why it is also

called mystical theology, that is, the secret or hidden wisdom

of God, wherein God, without the sound of words, or the

intervention of any bodily or spiritual sense ; as it were in

silence and in repose, in the darkness of sense and nature,

teaches the soul and the soul knows not how in a most

secret and hidden way. Some spiritual writers call this

\* understanding without understanding,' because it does not

take place in what philosophers call the active intellect,

which is conversant with the forms, fancies, and appre-

hensions of the physical faculties, but in the intellect as it is

passive, which, without receiving such forms, receives pas-

sively only the substantial intelligence of them free from all

imagery. This occurs in the intellect without effort or

exertion on its part, and for this reason contemplation is

called night, in which the soul, through the channel of its

transformation, learns in this life that it already has, in a

supreme degree, this Divine grove, together with its

beauty.

Still, however profound may be its knowledge of this, it is

obscure night in comparison with that of the Blessed, for

which the soul prays. Hence, while it prays for the clear

contemplation; that is, the fruition of the grove and its beauty

with the other objects here enumerated, it says let it be in the

night now serene; that is, in the clear beatific contemplation:

let the night of obscure contemplation cease here below, and

change into the clear contemplation of the serene vision .f

God above. Thus the serene night is the clear and uncloud\* <1

contemplation of the face of God. It was to this night of

contemplation that David referred, when he said: ' Ni^ht

BIJ J09

shall be my li.^ht in my pleasures ;'\* that is, when I shall STAUZA.

re my delight in the essential vision of God, the night of

contemplation will have dawned in the day and light of my

'<?ct.

4 With the fire that consumes but without pain.' The fire, \*.

. is the love of the Holy Ghost ; and \* consuming ' signi-

to make perfect. It is said that the soul is to have all o0od \*

things mentioned here given it by the Beloved, and that it

shall possess them all in perfect and consummate love all

of them, and itself together with them, absorbed therein

and that is love without pain. Now, this is to show the

re perfection of that love, for these two qualities are

necessary to constitute its perfection ; that is, it must con-

sume the soul, and transform it in God : this burning and

transformation also must be painless. Now this can never

'I>en except in the state of bliss, and where this fire is

sweet love. In that transformation of the soul both parts of it

are in a state of beatific conformity and satisfaction. There is,

then -tore, no suffering from any changes, such as increase or

decrease of love, as was the case before, when the soul had

not reached to this perfect love. Now, when it has attained

thereto, it exists in such conformable and sweet love for God,

that it knows Him only, though He is a consuming fire,f as

the Aut its consummate perfection. This is not like

the transformation which took place upon earth, \\hirh. though

most and complete in love, was still, in some degree,

consuming the soul and wearing it away. It was like fire

in 1 -u rn ing coals, for though the coals may be transformed into

. and conformed to it, and have ceased from seething, and

smoke no longer arises from them, as was the case before

they were wholly transformed into fire, still, though they

have become pet consumes them and reduces

i into ashes.

1 11. f Deuteron. iv. 24.

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA

XXXIX.

The perfect

soul in this

life still

ft H ; :;:u

aii.i km

Such is the state of the soul which in this life is tran>f<

in perfect love : for though it be wholly conformed, ;

still suffers, in some measure, both pain and lo.-s. Pain, on

account of the beatific transformation which is still wanting ;

loss, through the weakness and corruption of the flesh coming

in contact with love so strong and so deep: for everything

that is grand hurts and pains our natural infirmity, as it is

written : ' The corruptible body is a load upon the soul.' \*

But in the life of bliss there will be neither loss nor pain,

though the sense of the soul will be most acute, and its love

without measure, for God will give it power in the former and

strength in the latter, perfecting the intellect in His Wisdom

and the will in His Love.

As, in the foregoing stanzas, and in the one which follows,

the Bride prays for the boundless knowledge of God, for which

she requires the strongest and the deepest love that she may

love Him in proportion to the grandeur of His communi-

cations, she prays now that all these things may be bestowed

upon her in love consummated, perfect, and strong.

STANZA XL.

None saw it ;

Neither did Aminadab appear.

The siege was intermitted,

And the cavalry dismounted

At the vision of the waters.

The Bride perceiving that the desire of her will is now de-

tached from all things, resting upon God with most fervent

love ; that the sensitive part of the soul, with all its powers,

faculties, and desires, is now conformed to the spirit ; that all

rebellion is quelled for ever; that Satan is overcome and

driven far away in the varied contest of the spiritual struggle ;

Wisd. ix. 16.

GOI.V; UP BY TIII: DESERT OF DEATH. 211

tliat IHT smil is nnitnl and tr.-in -formed in tin- rich abundance sr.\y

bfae heavenly gifts; and that she herself is now prepared, TO eBOQlr ip

confirmed in strength, apparelled, \* leaning upon her Beloved,' '

to go up < by the desert'\* of death ; full of joy in the glorious

th rum- of her espousals, and of eager desire for the conclusion

of her nuptials, puts before the eyes of her Bridegroom, in

order to influence Him the more, all that is mentioned in the

present stanza, namely :

1. The soul detached from all things and a stranger to Fiverigna:

them.

2. The devil overcome and put to flight.

3. The passions subdued, and the natural desires mortified.

4. 5. The sensitive and lower nature of the soul changed

and purified, and so conformed to the spiritual, as not only not

to hinder the spiritual blessings, but rather to be prepared

for them, for it is even a partaker already, according to its

capacity, of those which have been bestowed upon the soul.

\* None saw it.' That is, my soul is so detached, so i. net\*\*.

denuded, so lonely, so estranged from all created things,

in heaven and earth; it has penetrated so far within into

recollection with Thee, that nothing whatever can

come within si^ht <>f thnt most intimate joy which I have in

That is, there is nothing whatever that can cause me

pleasure with its sweetness, or disgust with its vileness ; for

my soul is so far removed from all su< h things, absorbed in

such profound delight in Thee, that nothing can behold me.

I is not the whole of my blessedness, for :

itln-r did Aminadab appear.' Aminadab, in the Holy

Writ ilia's, signifies the Devil ; that is, the enemy of the soul, in

a spiritual sense, who is ever fighting against it, and disturbing

it with his innumerable artillery, that it may not enter into

the fortress and secret place of interior recollection with t

(

PS

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A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

STANZA

s. Desires

mortified,

4,5. The flesh

conformed to

the spirit.

Bridegroom. There, the soul is so protected, so strong, so

triumphant in virtue which it then practises, so defended 1 >y

God's right hand, that the Devil not only dares not approach

it, but runs away from it in great fear, and does not venture

to appear. The practice of virtue, and the state of perfection

to which the soul has come, is a victory over Satan, and causes

him such terror, that he cannot present himself before it. Thus

Aminadab appeared not with any right to disturb the soul.

' The siege was intermitted.' By the siege is meant the

array of the passions and desires, which, when not overcome

and mortified, surround the soul and fight against it on all

sides. Hence the term siege is applied to them. This siege is

' intermitted,' the passions are brought into the subjection of

reason, and the desires mortified. Under these circumstances

the soul entreats the Beloved to communicate to it those graces

for which it has prayed, for now the siege is so intermitted as

to be no impediment. Until the four passions of the soul are

ordered in reason according to God, and until the desires are

mortified and purified, the soul is incapable of seeing God.

\* The cavalry dismounted at the vision of the waters.' The

waters are the spiritual joys and blessings which the soul now

enjoys interiorly with God. By the cavalry is meant the bodily

senses of the sensitive part, interior as well as exterior, for they

cany with them the phantasms and figures of their objects.

They dismount now at the vision of the waters, because the

sensitive and lower part of the soul in the state of spiritual

matrimony is purified, and in a certain way spiritualised, so

that the soul with its sensitive powers and natural forces

becomes so recollected as to participate and rejoice, in their

way, in the spiritual grandeurs which God communicates to

the soul in the interior spirit To this did the Psalmist

refer when he said : ' My heart and my flesh have rejoia <1 in

the living God.' \*

Ps. Ixxxiii. 2.

T BY THE WATERS 0! LIFIi.

It is to be observed that the cavalry did not dismount to STANZA.

taste of the waters, but only at the vision of them, because "

the sensitive part of the soul, with its powers, is incapable of

ing substantially and properly the spiritual blessings, not

x\*ly in this life, but also in the life to come. Still,

because of a certain overflowing of the Spirit, they are

sensibly refreshed and delighted, and this delight attracts

them that is, the senses with their bodily powers towards

that interior recollection where the soul is drinking the waters

of these spiritual benedictions. This condition of the senses

is rather a dismounting at the vision of the waters than

a dismounting for the purpose of seeing or tasting them.

The soul says of them that they dismounted, not that they

went, or did anything else, and the meaning is that in the

iiuni. ation of the sensitive with the spiritual part of the

the .spiritual waters become its drink, tin- natural

operations subside and merge into spiritual recollect ion.

All these perfections and dispositions of the soul, the Bride

sets forth before her Beloved, the Son of God, longing at

tin Hune time to be translated to Him out of the spiritual

marriage, to which God has been pleased to advance her in

tin Church militant, to the glorious marriage of the Church

triumphant, Whereunto may J le lring of His mercy all those

who call upon the most sweet name of Jesus, the Bridegroom

lit ht ul souls, to Whom be all honour and glory, together

with the Father and the Holy < ' ,t scecula sceculorum.

THE

LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.

in i:

LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.

PROLOGUE.

!r in not without some unwillingness that, to satisfy the

requests of others, I enter upon the explanation of the four

stanzas which are the subject of this treatise. My unwil-

lingness arises from the fact that they relate to matters so

interior and spiritual as to baffle the powers of language. The

spiritual transcends the sensual, and he speaks but indiffe-

rently of the affections of the spirit who has not an affectionate

spirit himself. I have, therefore, in consideration of my own

defects, put off this matter until now. But now that our

Lord seems in some way to have opened to me the way of

knowledge herein, and to have given me some fervour of

spirit, I have resolved to enter on the subject. I know too

well that of myself I can say nothing to the purpose on any

-ui.j.-ct, how much less then on a matter of such depth and

substance as this ! What is mine here will be nothing but

the defects and errors, and I therefore submit the whole to

the better judgment and discretion of our Holy Mother the

Catholic Roman Church, under whose guidance no one goeth

astray. And now having said this, I will venture, in reliance

on the Holy Writings, to give utterance to what I may have

learned, warning all, at the same time, that all I say falls far

short of that which pannes in tlii- intimate union of the

soul with God

There is nothing strangt in th. tad that God bestows

218 THE LIVING FLAME OF LOVK.

PROLOGUE, favours so great and so wonderful upon those souls whom He

k pleased to comfort. For if we consider it attentively, it is

Q.^ Himself as God, and with infinite love and goodness,

Who bestows them ; and this being the case, they will not

seem unreasonable, for He hath said Himself that the Father

and the Son and the Holy Ghost ' will come to him ' that

loves Him, and will make their abode with him.\* And this is

accomplished in making such an one live and abide in the

Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the life of God, as it

shall be explained in the stanzas that follow. Though the

former stanzas spoke of the highest degree of perfection

to which it is possible to attain in this life, transformation

subject of in God ; yet these, the explanation of which I now propose

the following

to undertake, speak of that love still more perfect and

complete in the same estate of transformation. For though

it is true that the former and the present stanzas refer to

one and the same state of transformation, and that no soul

can pass beyond it as such, still with time and habits of

devotion the soul is more perfected and grounded in it. Thus,

when a log of wood is set on fire, and when it is transformed

into fire and united with it, the longer it burns and the hotter

the fire, the more it glows until sparks and flames are emitted

from it So too the soul and this is the subject of these

stanzas when transformed, and glowing interiorly in the fire

of love, is not only united with the Divine fire, but becomes

a living flame, and itself conscious of it. The soul speaks of

this with an intimate delicious sweetness of love, burning in

its own flame, and ponders over various marvellous effects

Method to be wrought within it. These effects I now proceed to describe,

following the same method : that is, I shall first transcribe

the four stanzas, then each separately, and finally each lin<

by itself as I explain them.

S. John xiv. 28.

SONG OF THE SOUL IN GOD.

STANZAS.

i

O living Flame of Love,

That woundest tenderly

My soul in ite inmost depth !

As Thou art no longer grievous,

Perfect Thy work, if it be Thy will,

Break the web in this sweet encounter.

ii

O sweet burn !

O delicious wound !

O tender hand ! O gentle touch !

Savouring of everlasting life,

And paying the whole debt,

In destroying death Thou hast changed it into life.

in

O Lamps of fire,

In whose splendours

The deep caverns of sense,

Obscure and dark,

With unwonted brightness

Give light and heat together to the Beloved.

IV

How gently and how lovingly

Thou liest awake in my bosom,

Where alone Thou secretly dwelleat;

And in Thy sweet breathing

Full of grace and glory,

v tenderly Thou fillest me with Thy love.

i:\PLANATION.

The Bride of Christ, feeling herself all on fire in the Divine

union, feeling also that 'the rivers of living water ' are flow-

ing from her as our Lord hath promised of faithful souls,\*

imagines -that as she is so vehemently transformed in God, so

8. John vii. 38.

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THE LIVING FLAME OF LOVK.

STANZA

I.

The Boni's

love and

Gho2. H ly

Great value

of acts of

perfect love.

profoundly possessed by Him, so richly adorned with gifts ;md

graces, she is near unto bliss, and that a slender veil only

separates her from it. Seeing, too, that the sweet flame of

love burning within her, each time it envelopes her, makes

her as it were glorious with its foretaste of glory, so much so

that whenever it absorbs and surrounds her, it seems to be

admitting her to everlasting life, and to rend the veil of

her mortality, she addresses herself, in her great desire, to

this flame, which is the Holy Ghost, and prays Him to destroy

her mortal life in this sweet encounter, and bestow upon her

in reality what He seems about to give, namely, perfect glory,

crying : ' living Flame of love.'

i. \* living Flame of love.' In order to express the

i 11 \* 6118 ^ ^ ner feelings, the Bride begins each of these four

stanzas with Oh ! or How ! terms indicative of deep emotion,

and which, whenever uttered, are signs of interior feelings

beyond the power of language to express. Oh ! is an excla-

mation of strong desire, and of earnest supplication, in the

way of persuasion. The soul employs it in both senses here,

for the Bride magnifies and intimates her great desire, per-

suading her Love, that she might put off her mortal life

entirely. This flame of love is the Spirit of the Bridegroom,

the Holy Ghost, of whose presence within itself the soul is

conscious, not only as fire which consumes it, and transforms

it in sweet love, but as a fire burning within it, sending forth

a flame which bathes it in glory and recreates it with the

refreshment of everlasting life. . The operation of the Holy

Ghost in a soul transformed in His love, is this : His interior

action within it is to kindle it and set it on fire ; this is the

burning of love, in union with which the will loves most

deeply, being now one in love with that flame of fire. And

thus the soul's acts of love are most precious, and even one

o f them more meritorious than many elicited not in the slat.

of transformation. The transformation in love differs from

FIKI: KIM>U:> FIRI:. -j-ji

the flame of love as a lial>it differs from H -the rjlnwin^

fuel from ih Mames it c flames lie effect of

tin- tii-.- \\l.i re 1'urning.

then we may say of a soul which is transf..rmed ifj\*\*\*

oj ;. md

in love, that its ordinary state is that of the fuel iu tin- mid.--

of the Sie acts of such a soul are the flames which

up nut of the fire of love, vehement in proportion to

the inteiiMty of the fire of union, and to the rapture and

absorption of the will in the flame of the Holy Ghost; rising

the Angel who ascended to God in the flame which

-umed the holocaust of Manue.\* And as the soul, in its

present condition, cannot elicit these acts without the special

suggestions of the Holy Ghost, all these acts must be Divine,

in so far as the soul is under the influence of God. Hence

then it seems to the soul, as often as the flame breaks forth,

ing it to love sweetly with a heavenly disposition, that

everlasting, which elevates it upwards to the Divine

operation, is about to be bestowed on it .

Tlii> is the language in which God addresses purified and

niely words of fire. 'Thy word,' saith the

- a vehement fire.'f And ' are not My words as a

.' saith the Lord.' J His 'words,' we learn from Himself,

: ' the power and efficacy of which are

felt 1)\ such souls as have ears to hear; pure souls full of

love. But those souls whose palate is not healthy, whose

desire is after other things, cannot perceive the spirit and

I i words. And therefore the more wonderful t

words of the Son of God, the more insipid they are to some

in, because of the impurity in which they 1

He announced the doctrine of the Holy

tull of sweetness and of love, ' many of

I went back.' 1 1 Mich persons as these have no

. limn nmm vehementer.

i-rem. xxiii. :.<. .. - i. li. s . 07.

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THE LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.

STANZA

to ftoinc find

to

The Fiame

called living

taste for the words of God which He speaks inwardly to them,

it is not to be supposed that all others are like them. S. Peter

loved the words of Christ, for he replied, ' Lord, to whom shall

we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' \* The woman

of Samaria forgot the water, and \* left her waterpot ' f at the

well, because of the sweetness of the words of God.

And now when the soul has drawn so near unto God as to

be transformed in the Flame of love, when the Father and the

Son and the Holy Ghost are in communion with it, is it

anything incredible to say, that it has a foretaste though

not perfectly, because this life admits not of it of everlasting

life in this fire of the Holy Ghost? This is the reason why

J J

this Flame is said to be a living flame, not because it is not

always living, but because its effect is to make the soul live

spiritually in God, and to be conscious of such a life, as it

is written, \* My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living

God.' t The Psalmist makes use of the word ' living,' not

because it was necessary, for God is ever-living, but to show

that the body and the spirit had a lively feeling of God ; and

that is rejoicing in the living God. Thus, in this Flame, the

soul has so vivid a sense of God, and a perception of Him so

sweet and delicious, that it cries out : ' living Flame of love ! '

ii. ' That woundest tenderly.' That is, Thou touchest me

tenderly in Thy love. For when this Flame of Divine life

wounds the soul with the gentle languishing for the life of

God, it wounds it with so much endearing tenderness, and so

softens it that it melts away in love. The words of the Bride

in the Canticle are now fulfilled in the souL \* My soul

melted when He spoke.' This is the effect of the words of

God in the soul.

But how can we say that He wounds the soul, when there

is nothing to wound, seeing that it is all consumed in the fire

\* S. John vi. 60. t Ib. iv. 28. J Pa. buudii. 3. Cant. v. G.

: S'H'L ' I) BY LOVK. \_>::$

of love ? It is certainly marvellous ; for as fire is never idle, LJNB

lu t in continual movement, flashing in one direction, then in LoTelnttoe

another, so love, the function of which is to wound, so as to Sieo?fl.

cause love and joy, when it exists in the soul as a living

flame, darts forth its most tender flames of love, causing

wounds, exerting joyously all the arts and wiles of love as in

the palace of its nuptials. So Assuerus exhibited his riches, TWO oinstn-

and the glory of his power at ' the marriage and wedding of

Esther; ' and so might be fulfilled what Christ hath said

of Himself: I ' was delighted every day . . . playing in the

world, and My delights were to be with the children of men,' f

that is to give myself to them. This wounding, therefore,

which is the ' playing ' of the Divine wisdom, is the flames

of those tender touches which touch the soul continually,

touches of the fire of love which is never idle. And of these

flashings of the fire it is said that they wound the soul in its

inmost substance.

iii. 'My soul in its inmost depth.' The feast of the FUTI of

Holy Ghost is celebrated in the substance of the soul, which Obo \* \* \*\*\*

is inaccessible to the devil, the world, and the flesh ; and

refore the more interior the feast, the more secure, substan-

tial, and delicious is it. For the more interior it is, the purer

it IB ; and the greater the purity, the greater the abundance,

frequency, and universality of God's communication of Him-

self ; and thus the joy of the soul and spirit is so much the

greater, for it is God Himself Who is the Author of all this,

and the soul doeth nothing of itself, in the sense I shall

immediately explain. And inasmuch as the soul cannot

lly here, nor make any efforts of its own other-

wise than through the bodily senses and by their help of

\\J.i.-]i it is in this case completely free, and from which it is

most detached the work of the soul is solely to receive what

Erth. IL 18. t Prov. riii 80, 31.

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THE LIVING FLAME OF LOVK.

STANZA

God in the

HOW depth

understood,

God communicates, Who only, in the depths of the soul,

w ^hout the help of the senses, can influence and direct it,

and operate within it. Thus then all the movements of such

a soul are Divine, and though of (rod, still they are the soul's,

because God effects them within it, with itself willing them

and assenting to them.

The expression, ( inmost depth,' implies other depths of

the sou \ } ess profound, and it is necessary to consider this.

In the first place the soul, regarded as spirit, has neither

height nor depth of greater or less degree in its own nature,

as bodies have which have bulk. The soul has no parts,

neither is there any difference between its interior and ex-

terior, for it is uniform ; it has no depths of greater or less

profundity, nor can one part of it be more enlightened than

another, as is the case with physical bodies, for the whole of

it is enlightened uniformly at once.

Setting aside this signification of depth, material and

tends to Ood

to thSfcentre measura bl e > we sa> J thai \* ne inmost depth of the soul is there

of the earth. w h ere its being, power, and the force of its action and move-

ment penetrate, and cannot go further. Thus fire, or a stone,

tend by their natural force to the centre of their sphere, and

cannot go beyond it, or help resting there, unless some

obstacle intervene. Accordingly, when a stone lies on the

ground it is said to be within its centre, because within the

sphere of its active motion, which is the element of earth,

but not in the inmost depth of that centre, the middle of the

earth, because it has still power and force to descend thither,

provided all that hinders it be taken away. So when it shall

have reached the centre of the earth, and is incapable of

further motion of its own, we say of it that it is then in its

inmost or deepest centre.

The centre of the soul is God. When the soul shall have

reached Him, according to its essence, and according to the

power of its operations, it will then have attained to its ulti-

GOD Tin: < I:\TRI: or TIII: BOUL.

\nl (1.-. ; I. This will be when th<- ><>ul

shall love Him, comprehend Him, and enjoy Him with all its "

!i-\_rth. \\ li'-n, however, thr soul has not attained to tl

iinii^h it be in God, Who is the centre of it by

grace and communion with Him, still if it can move further

and is not sati>fi !, though in the centre, it is not in the

deepest cv cause there is still room for it to advance.

Love unites the soul with God, and the greater its love the Degree- of

love for God,

deeper does it enter into God, and the more is it centred in

1 Mm. According to this way of speaking we may say, that as

the degrees of love, so are the centres, which the soul finds in

1. These are the many mansions of the Father's house.\*

Thus, a soul which has but one degree of love is already in

God, Who is its centre : for one degree of love is sufficient

for our abiding in Him in the state of grace. If we have two

degrees of love we shall then have found another centre, more \*\*\*\*\*

riorly in God ; and if we have three we shall have reached

another and more interior centre still. But if the soul shall

hav 1 to the highest degree of love, the love of God

will th<Ti wound it in its inmost depth or centre ; and the soul

will !, transformed and enlightened in the highest degree in

its substance, faculties, and powers, until it shall become most

like unto God. The soul in this state may be compared to The perfect

crystal, lurid and pure; the greater the light thrown upon it, v

the more luminous it becomes by the concentration thereof,

until at last it seems to be all light, and undistinguishable

I'm ni it; it being then so illuminated, and to the utmost

extent, that it seems to be one with the light itself.

The flame wounds the soul in its inmost drpth : that is, it

w.'ir hen it touches the very depths of its substance,

power and force. This expression implies that abundance of

and glory, whi< h is the greater and the more tender, the

S. J..1.M xiv. 2.

MM . ii. g

226 Till: LIVIXO FLAME OF LOVi:.

STANZA, more vehemently and substantially the soul is transformed

~ and centred in God. It greatly surpasses that which occurs

in the ordinary union of love, for it is in proportion to the

greater heat of the fire of love which now emits the living

flame. The soul which has the fruition only of the ordinary

union of love may be compared, in a certain sense, to the

( fire ' of God which is in Sion, that is in the Church Militant ;

while the soul which has the fruition of glory so sweet may

be compared to ' His furnace in Jerusalem,' \* which means

the vision of peace. The soul in the burning furnace is in a

more peaceful, glorious, and tender union, the more the flame

of the furnace transcends the fire of ordinary love. Thus the

AD blessings soul, feeling that the living flame ministers to it all good

contained

in supreme the Divine love brings all blessings with it cries out:

( living flame of love, that woundest tenderly.' The cry of

the soul is: kindling burning love, how tenderly dostthou

make me glorious by thy loving motions in my greatest power

and strength, giving me a Divine intelligence according to

the capacity of my understanding, and communicating love

according to the utmost freedom of my will ; that is, thou hast

elevated to the greatest height, by the Divine intelligence, the

powers of my understanding in the most intense fervour and

substantial union of my will. This ineffable effect then takes

place when this flame of fire rushes upwards in the soul.

The Divine wisdom absorbs the soul which is now puri-

fied and most clean profoundly and sublimely in itst-lt ';

for \* Wisdom reacheth everywhere by reason of her purity.' f

It is in this absorption of wisdom that the Holy Ghost

effects those glorious quiverings of His flame of which

I am speaking. And as the flame is so sweet, the soul says :

' As thou art no longer grievous.'

iv. 'As thou art no longer grievous.' Thou dost not

' Is. xxxi. 9. t Wiad. vii. 24.

DIVINE LOV1 KVOUS, NOW SWEET. 227

afflict, nor vex, nor weary me as before. This flame, when

the soul was in the state of spiritual purgation, that is, when

it was entering that of contemplation, was not so peaceful and

sweet as it is now in the state of union. For before the

Divine fire enters into the soul and unites itself to it in its

inmost depth by the perfect purgation and purity thereof, the woAof the

flame wounds it, destroys and consumes the imperfections of

its evil habits. This is the work of the Holy Ghost, who

thereby disposes the soul for its Divine union and transfer- f

mation in God by love. For the flame which afterwards unites

itself to the soul in the glory of love, is the very same which

before enveloped and purified it ; just as the fire which ulti-

mately penetrates the substance of the fuel, is the very same

which in the beginning darted its flames around it, playing

about it, and depriving it of its coldness until it prepared it

with its heat for its own entrance into it, and transformation

of it into itself.

The soul suffers much in this spiritual exercise, and endures

grievous afflictions of spirit which occasionally overflow into

-enses ; for then the flame is felt to be grievous. As I have

described it in the Treatise of the Obscure Night, and in that

of the Ascent of Mount Carmel, I shall therefore not pursue

the subject further. It is enough for us to know that God,

Who seeks to enter the soul by union and the transformation

of love, is He who previously enveloped the soul, purifying

it with tin- light and heat of His Divine Flame, which was

before grievous but is now sweet The meaning of the whole

is as follows : Thou art now not only not obscure as before,

the Divine light of ray intellect wherewith I behold Thee :

not only dost Thou abstain from causing me to faint in my

weakness, but Thou art become the strength of my will,

wherein I can love and enjoy Thee, being wholly changed

into Divine love. Thou art no longer grief and affliction, but

rather my glory, my delight, and my liberty, seeing that I

\*

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may apply to myself the words in the Canticle, \* Who is this

that cometh up from the desert flowing with delights leaning

upon her Beloved,' \* scattering love on this side and on that ?

Perfect Thy work, if it be Thy will.'

Perfect love v. 'Perfect Thy work, if it be Thy will;' that" is, do

for God

desire w^ Thou perfect the spiritual marriage in the Beatific Vision.

resignation. Th OU gh it is true that the soul is the more resigned the

more it is transformed, when it has attained to a state so

high as this is seeing that it knows nothing and seeks

nothing with a view to itself,f but only in and for the

Beloved, for Charity seeks nothing but the good and glory

of the Beloved still because it lives in Hope, and Hope

implies a want, it groans deeply, though sweetly and joy-

fully, because it has not fully attained to the perfect adop-

tion of the sons of God, in which, being perfected in glory,

all its desires will be satisfied. However intimate the soul's

union may be with God, it will never be satisfied here below

till His 'glory shall appear ;'J and this is especially the case

because it has already tasted, by anticipation, of its sweetness;

and that sweetness is such that if God had not had pity on its

natural frailty and covered it with His right hand, as He

did Moses, that he might not die when he saw the glory of

God for the natural powers of the soul receive comfort and

delight from that right hand, rather than hurt it would

have died at each vibration of the flame, seeing that the

inferior part thereof is incapable of enduring so great and

BO sharp a fire. This desire of the soul is therefore no longer

a painful one, for its condition is now such that all pain

is over, and its prayers are offered for the object it desires

with great sweetness, joy, and resignation. This is the

reason why it says, 'if it be Thy will,' for the will and

desire are now so united in God, each in its own way, that

\* Cant viii. 6. f 1 Cor. xiii. 6. J Pe. xvi. 16.

GOD'S WILL Tin-: .s<u/s QtoBY. 229

the soul regards it as its glory that the will of God should be LTNB

done in it. Such are now the glimpses of glory, and such "

the love which now shines forth, that it would argue but

little love on its part if it did not pray to be admitted to

this perfect consummation of love.

Moreover, the soul in the power of this sweet communica- Tb \*mi

inritedto

tion, sees that the Holy Ghost incites it, and invites it in

most wonderful ways, and by sweet affections, to this immea-

surable glory, which He there sets before the eyes of the

soul, saying, 'Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my

beautiful one, and come. For winter is now past, the rain

is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land.

. . . The fig-tree hath put forth her green figs, the vines

in flower yield their sweet smell. Arise, my love, my

beautiful one, and come; my dove in the clefts of the rock,

in the hollow places of the wall, show me thy face, let thy

voice sound in my ears, for thy voice is sweet, and thy face

comely.'\* The soul hears all this spoken interiorly to it,

I iy tiir Holy Ghost in this sweet and tender flame, and

therefore it is that it replies to Him, saying, 'Perfect Thy

work, it it he Thy will.' This is in effect the two petitions

\\liirh ..in Lord commands us to make, 'Thy kingdom come,

Tliy will be donej'f that is, give Thy kingdom according to

will. AIM I thus the soul continues, 'Break the web in

this sweet encounter.'

vi. 'Break the web in this sweet encounter;' that is, the

obstacle to this so grand an affair. It is an easy thing to

draw near unto God when all hindrances are set aside, and

when the web that divides us from Him is broken. There

are three webs to be broken before we can have the perfect

fruition of God: 1. The temporal web, which comprises all

. i.Mt, ,1 (Inn--. -J. Tin- natural \s.-L, uhi-h OOO^fffifH :ill

Cant n 10-14. 18. Malth. vi. 10.

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STANZA, mere natural actions and inclinations. 3. The sensitive web.

i.

TO enjoy which is merely the union of soul and body; that is, the

sensitive and animal life, of which S. Paul speaks, sayimr,

1. Temporal. ' For we know if our earthly house of this habitation be

2. Natural. J

3. senaitiYe. dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made

with hands, eternal in heaven.'\*

The first and second web must of necessity have been

broken in order to enter into the fruition of God in the

union of love, when we denied ourselves in worldly things

and renounced them, when our affections and desires were

mortified, and when all our operations became Divine ; these

webs were broken in the assaults of this flame when it was

First and still grievous. In the spiritual purgation the soul breaks

broken in the two webs I am speaking of, and becomes united with

spiritual

third alone, the web of the sensitive life, remains

"^ now to be broken. This is the reason why but one web is

mentioned here. For now one web alone remains, and this

the flame assails not painfully and grievously as it assailed

the others, but with great sweetness and delight. Thus tin'

death of such souls is most full of sweetness, beyond that of

their whole spiritual life, for they die of the sweet violence of

love, like the swan which sings more Meetly when death is niirl i .

Peaceful It was the thought of this that made the Psalmist say,

servants of < Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints, 1 f

God.

for then the rivers of the soul's love flow into the sea of love,

so wide and deep as to seem a sea in themselves ; the boirinn in-^

and the end unite together to accompany the just departing for

His kingdom. 'From the ends of the earth' aro Mi-

praises, the glory of the just one,' J and the soul feels itself

in the midst of these glorious encounters on the point of

departing in all abundance for the perfect fruition of tin-

kingdom, for it beholds itself pure and rich, and prepared,

\* 2 Cor. v. 1. t Ps. cxv. 15. | la. xxiv. !;.

ETKRMTV SHINES THROUGH Till! \VI1IJ <>F I.IFK. 231

so far as it is possible for it to be, consistently with faith and

the conditions of this life. God now permits such a soul to

behold its own beauty, and intrusts it with the gifts and the

graces He has endowed it with, for all this turns into love

and praise without the least stain of presumption or of

vanity, because no leaven of imperfection remains now to

corrupt it.

When the soul sees that nothing more is wanting than the

breaking of the frail web of its natural life, by which its

liberty is enthralled, it prays that it may be broken ; for

it longs ' to be dissolved and to be with Christ,' to burst the

bonds which bind the spirit and the flesh together, that both

may resume their proper state, for they are by nature dif-

ferent, the flesh to ' return into its earth, and the spirit return

to God who gave it, 1 \* for the mortal body, as S. John records,

jTofiteth nothing,' f but is rather an impediment to the

good of the spirit The soul, therefore, prays for the dissolu-

tion of the body, for it is sad that an existence so mean

should be an obstacle in the way of a life so noble.

This life is called a web for three reasons: 1. Because of Thiniife

. . . i

the connection between the Spirit and the Flesh. 2. Because ' t "J b \* \*\*

it separates the soul aftd God. 3. Because a web is not so "\*\*\*

I I. ut that light penetrates it ; so the connection between

soul and bod}, in this state of perfection, is so slight a web,

that tin- hivinity shines through it, now that the soul is so

spiritualised, subtilised, and refined. When the power of the

life to come begins to be frit in the soul, the weakness of this

Incomes evident Its present life seems to be but a slender

web, even a spider's web, \* our years shall be considered as a

spider/ J and even less than that, when the soul is thus exalted

\_,'h a state. The soul being thus exalted to the per-

ceptions of God, perceives things as God does, in Whose sight

t ^ Uxxix. 0.

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' a thousand years are as yesterday which is past,'\* and before

Whom 'all nations are as if they had no being at all.'f In

the same way all things appear to the soul as nothing, yea,

itself is nothing in its own eyes, and God alone is its all.

The oni It may be asked here why the soul prays for the breaking

breaking of of the web rather than for its cutting or its removal, since

the web,

FOOT reasons, the effect would be the same in either case. There are four

reasons which determine it : 1. The expression it employs is

the most proper, because it is more natural that a thing should

be broken in an encounter than that it should be cut or

taken away. 2. Because love is more familiar with force, \vitli

violent and impetuous contacts, and these result in breaking

rather than in cutting or taking away. 3. Because the soul's

love is so strong, it desires that the act of breaking the web may

be so rapid as to accomplish the work quickly ; and because the

value and energy of love are proportional to its rapidity and

spirituality. For the virtue of love is now more concentrated

and more vigorous, and the perfection of transforming love

enters the soul, as form into matter, in an instant. Until now

no act of perfect transformation had occurred, but only the

disposition towards it in desires and affections successively

repeated, which in very few men attain to the perfect act of

transformation. Hence a soul that is well disposed may there-

fore elicit many more, and more intense acts in a brief period

than another soul not so disposed in a long time. Such a

soul spends all its energies in the preparation of itself, and

even afterwards the fire does not always penetrate the iu 1

it has to burn. But when the soul is already prepared, love

enters in continuously, and the spark seizes at the first contact

on the fuel that is dry. And thus the enamoured soul prefers

the abrupt breaking of the web to its tedious cutting or de-

layed removal. 4. The fourth reason why the soul prays for

the breaking of the web of life is that it desires it may be

Ps. Ixxxix. 4. t Is. xl. 17.

STRONG LOVE MAKES A SHORT I.li 233

done quickly ; for when we cut or remove anything we do it LINK

deliberately, when the matter is ripe, and then time and '

thought become necessary ; but a violent rupture requires

nothing of the kind. The soul's desire is not to wait for the

natural termination of its mortal life, because the violence of

its love and the disposition it is in incline it with resignation

towards the violent rupture of its natural life in the super-

n.tt ural assaults of love. Moreover, it knows well that it is the JJ^^JJJ?

way of God to call such souls to Himself before the time, that

He fills them with good, and delivers them from evil, perfect-

ing them in a short space, and bestowing upon them, through

love, what they could have gained only by length of time.

\* He pleased God and was beloved, and living among sinners

he was translated. He was taken away lest wickedness

should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his sou).

Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long

time, for his soul pleased God, therefore He hastened to

bring him out of the midst of iniquity.' 4 The constant Death

practice of love is therefore a matter of the last importance, 10Te -

fr when the soul is perfect therein, its detention here below

cannot be long before it is admitted to see God face to

ho\*

Hut why is this interior assault of the Holy Ghost called Th\* interior

an encounter ? Though the soul is very desirous to see the ?

ml of its natural life, yet because the tim. is not yet come "

that cannot be, and so God, to make it perfect and to raise

it above the flesh more and more, assails it divinely and

gloriously, and these assaults are really encounters wh n in

1 penetrates the soul, deifies the very substance of it, and

lera it aa it were divine. The substance of God absorbs

tli soul, because He assails and penetrates it in n liv< ly

man i MI l.\ ll.ly Ghost, whose communications are

vehement when they are of fire as at present This encounter

iv. 10-14.

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Till- LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.

STANZA

I.

Paraphrase

of the first

is called sweet, because the soul has therein a lively

of God; not that many other touches and encounters of

God, of which the soul is now the object, cease to be sweet

and delicious, but on account of the supereminent sweetness

of this ; for God effects it with a view to the perfect dissolu-

tion of the soul and its final glory. Hence the soul relying

on His protection becomes bold, and says, ' Break the web in

this sweet encounter.'

The whole stanza may be paraphrased as follows : fire

of the Holy Ghost, penetrating so profoundly and so tenderly

the very substance of my soul, and burning it with Thy flames,

since Thou art now so gentle as to manifest Thy desire of

giving Thyself to me in everlasting life ; if formerly my

petitions did not reach Thine ears, when weary and worn

with love, overcome through the weakness of sense and spirit,

because of my infirmities, impurity, and little love, I prayed

to be dissolved for with desire hath my soul desired Thee

when my impatient love would not suffer me to submit to

the conditions of this life according to Thy will for it was

Thy will that I should live and when the previous impulses

of my love were insufficient in Thy sight, because there was

no substance in them ; now that I am grown strong in love,

that body and soul together do not only follow after Thee, but

that my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God \* with one

consent, so that I am praying for that which Thou wiliest I

should pray for, and what Thou wiliest not, that I pray not

for it seems even that I could not do it, neither does it

enter into my mind to do so and as my prayers are now

more efficacious and more reasonable in Thy sight^ for they

proceed from Thee, and Thou wiliest I should so pray,

and as I pray in the joy and sweetness of the Holy < >

and 'my judgment cometh forth from Thy countenance,' f

when Thou art pleased with my prayer and hearkenest to it

Ps. Ixxxiii. 2.

t Ps. x\i.

FATHER, SON, AND IloLY liUOST. IMJ

Break Thou the slender web of this life that I may be enabled LINE

VI.

to love Thee hereafter with that fulness and abundance which "

my soul desires, without end for evermore.

STANZA II.

O tweet burnt

OdeKciout wound!

O tender kand/ gentle touch !

Savouring of everlasting lift,

And faying the whole debt,

In destroying death Thou htut changed it into life.

EXPLANATION.

We learn here that it is the Three Persons of the Most Holy workof th

Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Who accomplish the J\*

iae work of union. The 'hand,' the 'touch,' and the

Uirn' are in substance one and the same; and the three

terms are employed because they express the effects which

are peculiar to each. The ' burn ' is the Holy Ghost ; the

' Ji.md ' is the Father ; and the ' touch ' is the Son. Here the

soul magnifies the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, ex-

tolling those three grand gifts and graces which They perfect

within it, in that They have changed death into life, trans-

forming it into Themselves.

The first of these gifts is the delicious wound, which is Thm

i ,-,'\*

ibuted to the Holy Ghost, and for this the soul calls Him j

the 'burn.' The second is the 'taste of everlasting life,'

l>uted to the Son, on account of which He is called the

'gentle touch.' The third is that gift ' which is the perfect

recompense of the soul, attributed to the Father, Who is

therefore call\* <1 the 'tender hand.' Though the Three

Persona of the Most Holy Trinity are referred to severally,

because of the peculiar operations of Each, the soul is address-

ing itself to but One Essence, saying, ' Thou hast changed it

into life,' for the Three Divine Persons work together, and

the whole is attril.ut. -<1 t,, Each, and to All.

236 THi: LIVJM, FLAMi; OF LOVK.

STANZA i. '0 sweet burn.' 'The Lord thy God,' saith Moses, is

Firgt g j ft \_ a consuming fire/ \* that is, a fire of love. And as His p<

' ls infinite, He consumes infinitely, burning with great

vehemence, and transforming into Himself all He touches.

But He burns all according to the measure of their prepara-

tion, some more, others less ; and also according to His own

good pleasure, as, and when, and how, He will. And as the

fire of love is infinite, so when (rod touches the soul some-

what sharply, the burning heat within it becomes so extreme

as to surpass in its intensity all the fires of the world. This

is the reason why this touch of God is said to be a ' burn : '

for the fire there is more intense, and more concentrated, and

the effect of it surpasses that of all other fires. When the

Divine fire shall have transformed the soul into itself, the

soul feels not only the burn, but also that itself has become

wholly and entirely burnt up in this vehement fire. how

wonderful the fire of God ! though so vehement and so con-

suming, though it can destroy a thousand worlds with more

ease than the material fire can destroy a single straw, it con-

sumes not the spirit wherein it burns, but rather, in proportion

to its strength and heat, delights and deifies it, burning

sweetly within according to the strength which God has given.

reramorem Thus, on the day of Pentecost the fire descended with great

-;;i\ it' r

vehemence upon the Apostles, who, according to S. Gregory,!

sweetly burned interiorly. The Church also says, when cele-

brating that event: 'The Divine fire came down,

but enlightening.'J For as the object of these communications

fa t o elevate the soul, the burning of the fire does not distress

it but cheers it, does not weary it but delights it, and renders

it glorious and rich. This is the reason why it is said t<>

be sweet.

Thus then the blessed soul, which by the mercy of God

\* Deut. iv. 24. t Horn. 30, in Evangel. J Brev. Rom. 2 di. IV in.

IIKAI.TH OMAfM ffHl i> Di:i:r 237

has been burnt, knoweth all things, tasteth all things, 'what-

soever it shall do shall prosper,' \* against it nothing shall

prevail, nothing shall touch it It is to such a soul that the

Apostle referred when he said: 'The spiritual man judgeth

all things, and he himself is judged of no man,' f for \* The

Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God,' J be-

cause it belongs to love to search into all that the Beloved has.

O great glory of souls who are worthy of this Supreme fire, Dignity ami

which having infinite power to consume and annihilate you,

consumes you not, but makes you infinitely perfect in glory !

Wonder not that God should elevate some souls to so high a

degree, for He alone is wonderful in His marvellous works.

As this burn then is so sweet as it is here said to be how

happy must that soul be which this fire has touched ! The

soul, anxious to express its joy, cannot do it, so it rests satis-

fied with words of endearment and esteem, saying: '0 delicious

wound.'

ii. '0 delicious wound,' which He Who causes relieves,

and heals while He inflicts it It bears some resemblance to

the caustic usage of natural fire, which when applied to a

wound increases it, and renders a wound, which iron or other

instruments occasioned, a wound of fire. The longer the

caustic is applied, the more grievous the wound, until the

whole matter be destroyed. Thus the Divine cautery of love

heals the wound which love has caused, and by each applica-

tion renders it greater. The healing which love brings is to

wound again what was wounded before, until the soul melts

away in the fire of love. So when the soul shall become

wholly one wound of love it will then be transformed in love,

wound. <1 uith love. For herein the soul most wounded is

the most healthy, and he who is all wound is all health.

And yet even if the whole soul be one wound, and conse-

t 1 Cor. ii. 15. t H>. 10-

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Till: LIVI\(; FLAME OF LOVE.

STANZA

II.

The flonl

inflamed in

another

bow.

quently sound, the Divine burning is not intermitted : it

continues its work, which is to wound the soul with love. Hut

then, too, its work is to soothe the healed wound, and thus

the soul cries out, '0 delicious wound,' and so much the

more delicious the more penetrating the fire of love. The

Holy Ghost Himself inflicted the wound that He might

soothe it, and as His will and desire to soothe it are great,

great will be the wound which He will inflict, in order

that the soul He has wounded may be greatly comforted.

blessed wound inflicted by Him Who cannot but heal it !

happy and most blessed wound ! For thou art inflicted only

for the joy and comfort of the soul. Great is the wound,

because He is great Who has wrought it ; and great is the

delight of it: for the fire of love is infinite. delicious

wound then, and the more delicious the more the cautery of

love penetrates the inmost substance of the soul, burning all

it can burn that it may supply all the delight it can give.

This burning and wound, in my opinion, are the highest

condition attainable in this life. There are many other

forms of this burning, but they do not reach so far, neither

are they like unto this : for this is the touch of the Divinity

without form or figure, either natural, formal, or imaginary.

But the soul is burned in another and a most excellent way,

which is this : When a soul is on fire with love though not

in the same degree with the soul of which I have been now

speaking, though it is expedient it should be so, that it may

be the subject of this it will feel as if a Seraph with ;i

burning brand of love had struck it, and penetrated it

already on fire as glowing coal, or rather as a flame, and

cauterised it all at once. And then in that act of cauterising

the flame rushes forth and surges vehemently, as in a glowing

furnace or forge the fire revives and the flame ascends when

the burning fuel is disturbed. At this time when the burn-

ing brand touches it, the soul feels that the wound it h.is

TIIF: SKUA!-. a <>F n 239

thus received is d-lici<>us beyond all imagination. For

besides being altogether moved and stirred, at the time of

thi- >tirring of the fire, by the vehement movement of the

Seraph, wherein the ardour and the melting of love is great,

it feels that its wound is perfect, and that the herbs which

serve to attemper the steel are efficacious ; it feels the very

depths of the spirit transpierced, and its delight to be exquisite

beyond the power of language to express. The soul feels, as

it were, a most minute grain of mustard seed, most pungent

and burning in the inmost heart in the spot of the wound,

where the substance and the power of the herb reside

diffuse itself most subtilely through all the spiritual veins of

the soul in proportion to the strength and power of the heat.

It feels its love to grow, strengthen, and refine itself to such

a degree, as to seem to itself to be seas of fire overflowing

with love.

The feelings of the soul, at this time, cannot be described Kingdom of

otherwise than by saying that it now understands why the oompwd u>

kingdom of Heaven is compared to a mustard seed, which \*\*\*\* \*\*j\*

by reason of its great natural heat grows into a lofty tree.

' The kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed,

which a man took and sowed in his field. \Vhu-h is the

least indeed of all seeds; but when it is grown up, it is

greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds

of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof.'\* The

soul beholds itself now as one immense sea of fire. Few

souls, however, attain to this state, but some have done so,

especially those whose spirit and power is to be transmitted

piritual ohil.ln n ; since God bestows on the Founder nigta\*

such gifts and graces, as shall be proportionate to the succes- ]

sion of the Order, as the first-fruits of \*he Spirit

To return to the operation of the Seraph, >\hk-h in truth

\* S. Mmtth. \

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THI-: IJYIM; FI.A.MK OF LOVE.

STANZA

n.

The

.V' ///,,/',/ ,.f

an expres-

sion of the

inward

wounds of

IOVL-.

Union of

pain and

delight.

The flesh

mart be

restrained,

because it

in.]..-.!,-, th

spirit.

is to wound. If the effect of the wound be permitted to flow

exteriorly into the bodily senses, an effect corresponding to

the interior wound itself will manifest itself without. Thus

it was with S. Francis, for when the Seraph wounded

his soul with love, the effects of that wound became out-

wardly visible. God confers no favours on the body which

He does not confer in the first place chiefly on the soul. In

that case, the greater the joy and violence of the love which

is the cause of the interior wound, the greater will be the

pain of the visible wound, and as the former grows so does

the latter. The reason is this : such souls as these being

already purified and strong in God, their spirit, strong and

sound, delights in the strong and sweet Spirit of God ; Who,

however, causes pain and suffering in their weak and corrup-

tible flesh. It is thus a most marvellous thing to feel pain

and sweetness together. Job felt it when he said, ' Keturn-

ing, Thou tormentest me wonderfully.'\* This is marvellous,

worthy of the multitude of the sweetness of God, which He

has hidden for them that fear Him;f the greater the sw

ness and delight, the greater the pain and suffering.

Infinite greatness, in all things showing Thyself Omni-

potent. Who, Lord, can cause sweetness in the midst

of bitterness, and pleasure in the midst of pain ? delicious

wound, the greater the delight the deeper the wound. But

when the wound is within the soul, and not communicated

to the body without, it is then much more intense and keen.

As the flesh is a bridle to the spirit, so, when the graces of

the latter overflow into the former, the flesh draws in an<l

restrains the swift steed of the spirit and checks its course ;

' for the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the

earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon

many things.' J He, therefore, who shall trust too much to

Job x. 10.

t Ps. xxx. 20.

\\i\*l.ix.l6.

Till-: LIVING BDODIZ, 241

the bodily senses will never become a very spiritual man. I

say this for the sake of those who think they can ascend to

the heights and power of the spirit, by the mere energy and

action of the senses, which are mean and vile. We cannot

become spiritual unless tlu- bodily senses be restrained. It

is a state of things wholly different from this, when the

spirit overflows into the 'senses, for there may be great

spirituality in this ; as in the case of S. Paul, whose deep

MR ::

sense of the sufferings of Christ overflowed into his body, so

that he said : I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my

body.' \* Thus, as the wound and the burn, so the hand that

inflicted it ; and as the touch, so He who touched. tender

hand, gentle touch.

iii. '0 tender hand, gentle touch.' hand, as generous second gift,

as Thou art powerful and rich, giving me gifts with power,

O gentle hand ! laid so gently upon me, and yet, if Thou

wert to press at all, the whole world must perish ; for only

at the sight of Thee the earth trembles,! the nations melt,

and the mountains are crushed in pieces. J gentle hand,

Thou wert hard and heavy when Thou didst touch Job,

to me, gentle, loving, and gracious ; as sweet and gentle

to me as Thou wert sharp and rough for him ; the tenderness

with whirh Tin. u touchest me surpasses the severity with

which Thou didst touch Job. Thou killest and Thou giveet

life, and there is no one who shall escape out of Thy hand.

Thou, Divine Life, never killest but to give life, as

Thou never woundest but to heal. Thou hast wounded me,

Divine hand ! that Thou mayest heal me. Thou hast slain

in me that which made me dead, and destitute of the life

1 ii" w live. This Thou hast wrought in the

hi., ml it y of Thy bountiful grace, through that touch, wbere-

\\iili Thou dost touch me, of the brightness of Thy glory

Oalat vi. 17. f P\*. ciii. 32. t HaUc, iii. 0. $ Job xix. 21.

VOL. ii. it

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THE LIVING FF.AMI-: OF LOVE.

STANZA

II.

and the figure of Thy substance,\* Thine only begotten

in Whom, being Thy Wisdom, Thou reachest ' from end to

end mightily .'f

Third (rfft, gentle, subtile touch, the Word, the Son of God, Wlm,

.e? the son. because of the pureness of Thy Divine nature, dost enetr

subtilely the very substance of my soul, and touching it gently

absorbest it wholly in Divine ways of sweetness not ' heard of

in the land of Chanaan,' nor ' seen in Teman.' J touch of

the Word, so gentle, so wonderfully gentle to me ; and yet Thou

wert s overthrowing the mountains, and breaking the rocks in

pieces' in Horeb, by the shadow of Thy power going before

Thee, when Thou didst announce Thy presence to

Prophet in 'the whistling of a gentle air.' O gentle air,

how is it that Thou touchest so gently when Thou art so

terrible and so strong? blessed soul, most blessed, which

Thou, who art so terrible and so strong, touchest so gently.

Proclaim it to the world, my soul no, proclaim it not, for

the world knoweth not the 'gentle air,' neither will it listen

to it, because it cannot comprehend matters so deep.

my God and my life, they shall know Thee || and behold

Thee when Thou touchest them, who, making themselves

strangers upon earth, shall purify themselves, because purity

corresponds with purity. Thou the more gently touchest,

the more Thou art hidden in the purified soul of those

who have made themselves strangers here, hidden from

the face of all creatures, and whom 'Thou shalt hide in the;

secret of Thy face from the disturbance of men.'f 0, again

and again, gentle touch, which by the power of thy subtility

undoest the soul, removest it far away from every other

touch whatever, and makest it Thine own; Thou which

leaveet behind Thee effects and impressions so pure, that the

Blessed aro

the pure in

heart, for

they shall

' Heb. i. 8. f Wisd. viii. 1. J Bar. in.

3 Kings xix. 11, 12. || S. John xiv. 17. 11 P. xxx. 21.

SUBSTANTIAL TOUCH <>I ,OD. \_'i5

touch of everything else seems vile and low, the very sight

offensive, and all relations therewith a deep affliction. The

more subtile any matter is, the more it spreads and fills, and

the more it diffuses itself the more subtile is it. gentle

touch, the more subtile the more infused. And now the

vessel of my soul, because Thou hast touched it, is pure and

clean and able to receive Thee. gentle touch ! as in Thee

rj is nothing material, so the more profoundly dost Thou

touch me, changing what in me is human into Divine,

according as Thy Divine essence, wherewith Thou touchest

me, is wholly unaffected by modes and manner, free from the

husks of form and figure. Finally then, gentle touch, O

most gentle, for Thou touchest me with Thy most simple and

pure essence, which being infinite is infinitely gentle ; there\*

fore it is that this touch is so subtile, so loving, so surpassing,

and so delicious.

iv. 'Savouring of everlasting life.' What the soul tastes Buaftb

now in this touch of God, is, in truth, though not perfectly,

a certain foretaste of everlasting life. It is not incredible

that it should be so when we believe, as we do believe, that

touch is substantial, and that the substance of God

touches the substance of the soul. Many Saints have expe-

rienced it in this life. The sweetness of delight which tin's

ii occasions baffles all description. Neither will I speak

, lest men should suppose that it is nothing beyond what

my words imply, for there are no terms by which we can

designate or explain the deep tilings of God transacted in

perfect souls. The language that befits these things is this :

Let him who has been favoured with them judge of them by

himself, feel them and enjoy them, and be silent about them.

the soul sees that they are in some measure like the

white counter of which it is written, 'To him that over-

cometh I will give ... a white counter, and in the count\* r

a new name written, which no man knoweth but he that

B 2

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THE LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.

STANZA

II.

Foretaste of

everlasting

life.

ZVWpaidby

IMvine love,

receiveth it'\* Thus it may be truly said, \* savouring of

everlasting life.' For though the fruition of it is not perfect

in this life as it will be in glory ; nevertheless, the touch,

being of God, savoureth of everlasting life, and the soul

tastes in a marvellous manner, and by participation, of all the

things of God fortitude, wisdom, love, beauty, grace, and

goodness being communicated unto it.

Now as God is all this, the soul tastes of all in one single

touch of God in a certain eminent way. And by reason of

this great good which is bestowed upon the soul, some of

the unction of the Spirit overflows at times into the body

itself, penetrating into the very bones, as it is written, ' All

my bones shall say: Lord, who is like unto TheeP'f But as

all I can say on the subject must be defective, it is enough

to repeat, \* savouring of everlasting life.'

v. ' And paying the whole debt.' But what debt is it to

which the soul here refers, and which it declares to be paid

or satisfied ? It is this : those souls which attain to this

high estate, to the kingdom of the spiritual betrothal, have

in general passed through many tribulations and trials, because

that \* through many tribulations we must enter into the

kingdom of God.' J And these tribulations are now passed.

What they have to suffer who are to attain unto union

with God, are divers afflictions and temptations of sense,

trials, tribulations, temptations, darkness, and distress of

mind, so that both the flesh and the spirit may be puriti< <1

together, as I said in my Treatise of the Ascent of Mount

Carmel, and of the Obscure Night. The reason of this is

that the joy and knowledge of God cannot be established in

the soul, if the flesh and spirit are not perfectly purified and

refined, and as trials and penances purify and refine the

senses, as tribulations, temptations, darkness, and distress

\* Apoc. ii. IT t Ps. xxx iv. 10.

Acts A i

vnnri: ACQUIRED BY SUFFI-:IMN<;. 24^

n-fme and prepare the spirit, so they must undergo them who

would be transformed in God as the souls in Purgatory who pnrKmtory

through that trial attain to the Beatific vision some more 55;. orhfll

intensely than others, some for a longer, others for a shorter

time, according to those degrees of union to which God

intends to raise them, and according to their need of puri-

fication.

I i s by these trials to which God subjects the spirit and

the flesh that the soul acquires virtues and fortitude and

perfection, in bitterness, as the Apostle writes, 'Power is

made perfect in infirmity;\*\* for virtue is made perfect in

weakness, and refined in the contest of the passions. Iron

cannot be fashioned according to the pattern of the artificer

but through the instrumentality of fire and the hammer,

and during the process its previous condition is injured.

-i is the way of God's teaching, as the Prophet says,

>m above He hath sent fire into my bones and hath

chastised me.'f He speaks of the hammer also when he

saith, \* Thou hast chastised me, and I was instructed.'}: So,

too, the Wise Man asks, ' He that hath not been tried, what

manner of things doth he know ? '

'- comes the question why is it that so few ever attain FW attain to

to this state ? The reason is that, in this marvellous work \*\*?

which God Himself begins, so many are weak, shrinking

from trouble, and unwilling to endure the least discomfort or

mortification, or to labour with constant patience. Hence

it is that God, not finding them diligent in cultivating the

graces He has given them when He began to try them, pro-

ceeds no further with their purification, neither does He lift

them up out of the dust of the earth, because it required

greater courage and resolution fur this than they possessed.

Thus it may be said to those who desire to advance, but who

SCor. xii.O. tLam.i. 13. J Jerem. xxxi. 18. f EccluB.zzziv. 11.

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THE LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.

STAN"/ \

II.

Illustration

from the

prophet

Exhortation

to bear suf-

ferings with

name\*,

will not submit to these lesser afflictions nor consent to !>

exposed to them, in the words of the Prophet, ' If thou hast

been wearied with running with footmen, how canst thou

contend with horses ? and if thou hast been secure in a land

of peace, what wilt thou do in the swelling of the Jordan ?'\*

That is, if the ordinary trials of human life to which all men

living are liable are too heavy for thee, and a burden which

thou canst not carry, how art thou to ' contend with horses?'

that is, how canst thou venture out of the common trials of

life upon others of greater violence and swiftness ? If thou

hast been unwilling to make war against the peace and

pleasures of the earth, thine own sensuality, but rather

seekest comfort and tranquillity on it, what wilt thou do in

the swelling of the Jordan? that is, how wilt thou stand

against the rushing waters of tribulations and spiritual trials

to which the interior life is subject ?

souls that seek your own ease and comfort, if you knew

how necessary for this high estate is suffering, and how pro-

fitable suffering and mortification are with reference to these

great blessings, you would never seek for^ comfort anywhere,

but you would rather take up the cross with the vinegar and

the gall, and would count it an inestimable favour, knowing

that by thus dying to the world and to your own selves, you

are about to live to God in spiritual joy; you would suffer

your exterior afflictions so as to merit at the hands of God,

that He should look upon you, and cleanse and purify you

more and more in these spiritual tribulations. They whom

He thus blesses must have served Him well and long, must

have been patient and persevering, and their life must have

been pleasing in His sight. The Angel said unto Tobias,

\* Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that

temptation should prove thee.'f Tobias was acceptable to

Jerem. xil 6.

t Tob. rii. 13.

THI: < KOSS, TIII-: WAY TO GOD.

(inl, therefore He tried him: He gave him the grace of LINB

tribulation, the source of greater graces still, and it is written

of him that ' the rest of his life was in joy.'\*

The same truth is exemplified in the life of Job. God

acknowledged him as His faithful servant in the presence of

the angels good and evil, and immediately sent him heavy

trials, that He might afterwards raise him higher, as He did

both in temporal and in spiritual things. t

This is the way God deals with those whom it is His will Tribulation

to exalt. He suffers them to be tempted, afflicted, tormented, -

bcU.

and chastened, inwardly and outwardly to the utmost limit of

their capacity, that He may deify them, unite them to Him-

self in His wisdom, which is the highest state, purifying them

in that wisdom, as it is written, \* The words of the Lord are

pure words, silver tried by the fire, purged from the earth,

refined seven times.\* J The wisdom of the Lord is silver tried

by the fire, purged from the earth of our flesh, refined seven

times, that is perfectly refined.

It is not necessary I should stop here to speak of each of

these degrees of purgation, and how they tend to bring the

soul to the Divine Wisdom, which in this life is as silver,

t hough it becomes exceedingly grand, yet it is not com-

parable to that of pure gold, which is reserved for everlasting

glory.

it is most necessary that we should endure these

tribulations and trials, inward and outward, spiritual and

corporal, great and small, with great resolution and patience,

accepting all as from the hand of God for our healing and our

good, not shrinking from them, because they are for the health

of our soul. M f the spirit of him that hath power,\* saith the

\Vi.sr Man, ' n.Mvutl upon th-r, lr;ivc n't thy place, 1.. vau>r

care ' that is healing' will make the greatest sins to cease.'

Tob. xiv.4. t Job 18-20; xlii 12. J 1'\*. xi. 7. f Eoeiat. x. 4.

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Till- LlVLNii FLAMi: OF LOVE.

STANZA

II.

TY'.v <\> -4-rvc'

to be made

Borrow

turned into

joy.

Illnstration

from the

life of

Mardochai.

'Leave not thy place,' that is the place of thy trial, which is

thy troubles ; for the healing which they bring will break th'

thread of thy sins and imperfections, evil habite, so that

they shall proceed no further. Thus, interior trials and

tribulations destroy and purge away the imperfect and evil

habits of the soul. We are, therefore, to count it a great

favour when our Lord sends us interior and exterior trials,

remembering that they are few in number who deserve to be

made perfect through sufferings, so as to attain to so high a

state as this.

I now return to the explanation of the words before me.

The soul now remembers that its past afflictions are suf-

ficiently recompensed, for as was its darkness so is its light,\*

and that having once been ' a partaker of the sufferings,' it is

now 4 of the consolation,' f that its interior and exterior trials

have been recompensed by the Divine mercies, none of them

being without its corresponding reward. It therefore acknow-

ledges itself perfectly satisfied, and says, ' paying the whole

debt,' with David in the like circumstances : \* How great

troubles hast Thou shown me, many and grievous, and turning

Thou hast brought me to life, and hast brought me back

again from the depths of the earth. Thou hast multiplied

Thy magnificence, and turning to me Thou hast comforted

me.'J Thus the soul which once stood without at the gates

of the palace of God, like Mardochai weeping in the streets

of Susan because his life was threatened, clothed with sack-

cloth and refusing the garments which Esther sent him,

unrewarded for his faithful service in defending the king's

honour and life, finds, also, like Mardochai, all its trials

and service rewarded in one day. It is not only admitted

within the palace and stands before the king in its royal

robes, but it has also a diadem on its head, and in its hand a

Ps. cxxxviii. 12. t 2 Cor. i. 7. J Ps. Ixx. 20. Esth. iv. 1-0.

DEATH CHANGED INTO LI1 249

'? ro, sitting on the royal throne with the king's signet on its

finger, symbols of its power in the kingdom of the Spouse. '

For those souls who attain to this high estate obtain all their

desires; the whole debt due to them is amply paid; the

appetites, their enemies which sought their life, are dead,

while they are living to God. ' In destroying death Thou

hast changed it into life.'

vi. \* In destroying death Thou hast changed it into life.' TWO kin\* of

spiritual life:

Death is nothing else but the privation of life, for when life

cometh there is no trace of death in that which is spiritual.

There are two kinds of life, one beatific, consisting in the i. Beatific,

Vision of God, and this must be preceded by a natural and of God.

bodily death, as it is written, ' We know if our earthly house

of this habitation be dissolved, that we have a building of

God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven:'\*

the other is the perfect spiritual life, consisting in the s.

possession of God by the union of love. Men attain to this oodtjtoT\*.

through the mortification of their evil habits and desires.

Until this be done, the perfection of the spiritual life of

union with God is unattainable, ' For, if you live according

to the flesh, you shall die : but if by the spirit you mortify

the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.'f

By 'death' is meant here the old man, that is the employ- TbeoU,MMi

ment of our faculties, memory, intellect, and will, upon the

tilings of this world, and the wasting of our desires upon

created things. All this is our old life, the death of the new

life which is all spiritual. The soul cannot live this life

perfectly unless the old man be perfectly dead, for so the

Apostle teaches, when he bids us 'put off according to

former conversation, the old man . . . and put on the

new man, who, according to God, is created in justice and

holiness of truth.' J In this new life, when it shall have

< : x 1 . t Horn. viii. 13. | Ephc\*. iv. 22, 24.

J.30 THE LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.

STAXZA attained to perfect union with God, all the affections of tlu

ii.

The perfect s u ^ its powers, and its acts, in themselves imperfect and

o^, U bSn^e vile> become as it were Divine. And as everything that

lama. lives, to use the expression of philosophers, lives in its acts,

so the soul, having its acts in God by virtue of its union

with Him, lives the life of God, its death being changed into

life,

intellect. This is so, because the intellect, which, previous to its

union with God, understood but dimly by means of its

natural light, is now under the influence and direction of

another principle, and of a higher illumination of God. The

will, which previously loved but weakly, is now changed into

the life of Divine Love, for now it loves deeply with the

affections of Divine Love, moved by the Holy Ghost in whom

it now lives. The memory, which once saw nothing but

the forms and figures of created things, is now changed,

and keeps in 'mind the eternal years.'\* The desire, which

previously longed for created food, now tastes and relishes the

food that is Divine, influenced by another and more efficacious

principle, the sweetness of God. Finally, all the motions

and acts of the soul, proceeding from the principle of its

natural and imperfect life, are now changed in this union

with God into motions Divine. For the soul, as the true

child of God, is moved by the Spirit of God, as it is written,

' Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons

Theioni of God.' t The substance of the soul, though it is not tin-

made di rinc,

noun sub- substance of God, because inconvertible into Him, yet being

united to Him and absorbed in Him, is by participation God.

This is accomplished in the perfect state of the spiritual lite,

but not so perfectly as in the other ; hence is it well said :

\* In destroying death Thou hast changed it into life.'

The soul, therefore, has reason for saying with S. Paul,

Pi. Ixxvi. 6. t Rom. viii. 14.

80X0 OP 1 251

'I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.'\* What in the

soul is dead and cold, becomes changed into the life of God,

fulfilling the words of the Apostle, \* Death is swallowed up in

victory,'! and those of the Prophet, ' death, I will be thy

death.' J

The soul being thus swallowed up of life, detached from

all secular and temporal things, and delivered from all its

iral deordination, is led into the chamber of the King,

where it rejoices in the Beloved, \* remembering His breasts

more than wine,' and saying, \* I am black but beautiful, ye

daughters of Jenisalem,' for my natural blackness is changed

into the beauty of the Heavenly King. then, the burning gJ

of the fire! infinitely burning above all other fires, O how

infinitely beyond all other fires dost thou burn me, and the

more thou burnest the sweeter thou art to me. \* delicious

wound/ more delicious to me than all the delights of the

world. ' tender hand,' infinitely more tender than all

tenderness, and the greater the pressure of it the more

tender it is to me. '0 gentle touch,' the gentleness of

which surpasses infinitely all the gentleness and all the

loveliness of created things, sweeter and more delicious than

honey and the honeycomb, because thou savourest of ever-

lasting life; the more profoundly thou dost touch me, the

more I taste it Thou art infinitely more precious than

gold and precious stones, for thou payest debts which nothing

else can pay, because thou changest admirably death into

In this state of life, so perfect, the soul is as it were

keeping a perpetual feast with the praises of God in its

with a new song of joy and love, full of the

knowledge of its high dignity. It sometimes exulteth,

repeating the words of Job, 'My glory shall always be

OaUt ii. 20. t 1 Cor. XT. 54. : O. nU. 14, Cant L 8, 4

J.VJ

TIM: LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.

STANZA

II.

Joys of the

stafof

Perfection.

renewed/ and 'as a palm tree' I 'shall multiply my days.'\*

That is, God will not suffer my glory to grow old as before,

and He will multiply iny days, that is my merits, unto heaven,

as a palm tree multiplies its branches. What David saith

in the twenty-ninth Psalm, the soul sings interiorly to God,

especially the conclusion thereof, 'Thou hast turned for me

my mourning into joy : Thou hast cut my sackcloth and hast

compassed me with gladness, to the end that my glory may

sing to Thee, and I may not regret' for this state is inac-

cessible to pain c Lord my God, I will give praise to Thee

for ever.'

Here the soul is so conscious of God's solicitude to

comfort it, feeling that He is Himself encouraging it with

words so precious, so tender, so endearing ; that He is con-

ferring graces upon it, one upon another, so that it seems as

if there were no other soul in the world for Him to comfort,

no other object of His care, but that everything was done for

this one soul alone. This truth is admitted by the brMr

in the Canticle when she says, ' My beloved to me, and I to

him.'f

STANZA IIL

Lamps of fire,

In whose splendours

The deep caverns of sense,

Obscure and dark,

With unwonted brightness

Give light and heat together to the Beloved.

EXPLANATION.

I stand greatly in need of the help of God to enter into

the deep meaning of this stanza: great attention also is

necessary on the part of the reader, for if he be without

experience of the matter he will find it full of obscurity,

while, on the other hand, it will be clear and full of joy to

him who has had that experience.

. Job xrix. 18, 20. f Cant. ii. 10.

MANY LAMPS; ONK FLA Mi:. 253

The bride-soul from her inmost heart gives thanks to the LTNB

Bridegroom for the great mercies which, in the state of union, "

she has received at His hands, for He has bestowed upon her

therein a manifold and most profound knowledge of Himself,

which enlightens the powers and senses of the soul, and fills

t h m with love. These powers, previous to the state of union,

were in darkness and obscurity, but are now illuminated by

the fires of love and respond thereto, offering that very

light and love to Him who has kindled and inspired them,

when He infused into the soul gifts so Divine. For he who Marks of

. |ni a tf\*f

truly loves is satisfied then when his whole self, all he is, all ood, who.

he can be, all he has, and all he can acquire, is spent in the

service of the object of his love; and the greater that service,

the greater is his pleasure in giving it. Such is the joy of

the soul now, because it can shine in the presence of the

Beloved in the splendours with which He has surrounded

it, and love Him with that which He has communicated

to it

i. \* Lamps of fire.' Premising in the first instance that

lamps have two properties, that of giving light, and of burn-

ing, we must keep in mind, if we are to understand this

stanza, that God in His one and simple essence is all the

powers and grandeurs of His attributes. He is omnipotent,

wise, good, merciful, just, strong, loving; He is all the

other at tributes of which we have no knowledge here below.

And He being all this, and in union with the soul, when He

is pleased to reveal Himself to it in a special way, the soul

beholds in Him all these powers and grandeurs in the one and

>lo Essence, perfectly and profoundly known according

to the conditions of Faith. And as each one attribute is the

very Essence of God, Who is the Father, the Son, and the

li-ly Ghost each attribute of Whom being God Himself

and as God is infinite light, and infinite Divine Fire, it follows

that He gives light and burns as true God in each one

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THE LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.

God light

and heat to

the aool in

many ways.

Moses on

Mount Sinai

Haw eome of

the temp\*

at Qod,

attributes. God therefore, according to tins knowled

Him in union, is to the soul as many lamps, because it has

the knowledge of each of them, and because they minister to

it the warmth of love, each in its own way, and yet all of one

substance, all one lamp. This lamp is all lamps, because it

gives light, and burns, in all ways.

When the soul reflects upon this, the one lamp is to it as

many lamps, for though but one, it can do all, and involves

all powers and comprehends every spirit. And thus it may

be said that the one lamp shines and burns many ways in

one: it shines and burns as omnipotent, as wise, as good,

ministering to the soul intelligence and love, and revealing

itself unto it, according to the measure of its strength for the

reception of all. The splendour of the lamp as omnipotent

gives to the soul the light and heat of the love of God as

omnipotent, and accordingly God is now the lamp of

Omnipotence to the soul, shining and burning according to

that attribute. The splendour of the lamp as Wisdom pro-

duces the warmth of the love of God as all-wise, and BO of

the other attributes; for the light which emanates from

each of the attributes of God and from all, produces in

the soul the fire of the love of God as such. Thus God

is to the soul in these communications and manifestations

of Himself they are, I think, the highest possible in this

life as innumerable lamps from which light and love

proceed.

These lamps were seen by Moses on Mount Sinai, where

God passed before Him, and where Moses threw himself

prostrate on the earth in all haste. He mentions some of

the grandeurs of God which he then beheld, and, loving Him

in them, speaks of them separately in the following words :

' O the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, patient

and of much compassion, and true, Who keepest mercy

unto thousands; Who takest away iniquity and wickedness

GOD (.IVIi.S 1IIM.-KLF TO THE SOUL. 255

and sin, and no man of himself is innocent before Thee.' \* It

appears that the principal attributes of God which Moses then

recognised and loved were those of omnipotence, dominion,

mercy, justice, and truth. This is a most profound knowledge,

and the deepest delight of love.

It follows from this that the joy and rapture of love commu-

nicated to the soul in the fire of the light of these lamps is ad-

mirable, and immeasurable ; as abundant as from many lamps,

each of which burns with love, the heat of one subserving

that of the other, as the light of one ministers to that of the

other ; all of them forming but one light and fire, and each of

them that one fire. The soul, too infinitely absorbed in these

delicate flames, is subtilely wounded by each one of them, and

by all of them more subtilely and more profoundly, in the love

of life ; the soul now sees clearly that this love is everlasting

life which is the union of all blessings, and recognises the

truth of those words, 'The lamps thereof are fire and flames. J f

If \* a great and darksome horror seized upon ' Abram as he

saw the ' lamp of fire passing J J before him, when he learned

with what rigorous justice God was about to visit the Amor-

rhites, shall not the lamps of the knowledge of God shining

now sweetly and lovingly produce greater light and joy of

love than that one lamp produced of horror and darkness,

when it passed before Abram ? my soul I how great, how BM

excellent, and how manifold, will be thy light and joy: \*\*\*\*'&

seeing that in all, and by all, thou shalt feel that He gives

thee His own joy and love, loving thee according to His

powers, attributes, and properties. For he who loves and does

good to another honours him and does him good according to

his own nature and qualities. Thus thy Spouse abiding in

thee, being omnipotent, gives Himself to thee, and loves thee

\N i 1 1 1 omnipotence ; being wise, with wisdom ; being goo\* 1 ,

' Kxod. xjxir. 0, 7. t Cant viii. 6. J Gene\*. XT. 12, 17.

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STANZA goodness; being holy, with holiness. And as He is

thou wilt feel also that He loves thee with liberality, without

self-interest, only to do thee good, showing joyfully His

countenance full of grace, and saying : I am thine and for

thee, and it is My pleasure to be what I am, to give Myself

to thee and to be thine.

Who shall then describe thy feeling, blessed soul,

soul beloved

by God. when thou shalt behold thyself thus beloved, and so highly

honoured ? ' Thy belly is like a heap of wheat set about with

lilies.' \* \* Thy belly,' that is, thy will, is like a heap of wheat

covered and set about with lilies ; for with the grains of wheat

which form the bread of life, and of which thou now art

tasting, the lilies of virtue, which gird thee about, fill thee

with delight. For the daughters of the king, that is the

virtues, will delight thee wondrously with the fragrance of

their aromatical herbs, which are the knowledge of Himself

which He gives thee. Thou wilt be so absorbed in this know-

ledge, and it will be so infused in thee, that thou too shalt be

\* a well of living waters which run with a strong stream from

Libanus,' f and Libanus is God. Thy joy will now be so

marvellously complete, because the words of the Psalmist

are accomplished in thee : ' The stream of the river maketh

the city of God joyful.' J

The lamps of wonder ! The soul is now overflowing with the Divine

the fire of

wa te rs > which run from it as from an abundant fountain unto

everlasting life. It is very true that this communication is

light and fire of the lamps of God, yet the fire is here so

sweet, that though an infinite fire, it is as the waters of lilt-

which satisfy the soul, and quench its thirst with that vehe-

mence for which the spirit longs. Thus, though they

lamps of fire, they are also the living waters of the spirit.

Those which descended on the Apostles, though lamps of fire,

Cant. vii. 2. t Cant. iv. 15. J Ps. xlv. 6. S. John iv. 14.

WATKF: Of WISDOM THE FIRE OF LOVE. 257

were also waters pure and limpid, according to the words of

Ezechiel who thus prophesied the descent of the Holy Ghost :

I ill pour upon you clean water, and put a new spirit

within you.' \* Thus though it be fire, it is water also, a figure of

which we have in the sacrificial fire which Jeremias concealed,!

which was water in the place of concealment, but fire when it

was brought forth and sprinkled upon the sacrifice.} So in like

manner the Spirit of God, while hidden in the veins of the

soul, is sweet water quenching its spiritual thirst ; but when

the soul offers the sacrifice of love the Spirit is then living

flames of fire, and these are the lamps of the acts of love of

which the bride spoke in the Canticle when she said, ' The

lamps thereof are fire and flames.' The soul speaks of them

t)i us because it has the fruition thereof not only as waters of

wisdom, but also as the fire of love in an act of love, saying,

' Lamps of fire.' All language now is ineffectual to express

the matter. If we consider that the soul is now transformed

in God, we shall in some measure understand how it is

true that it is also become a fountain of living waters

boiling and bubbling upwards in the fire of love which is

God.

ii. ( In whose splendours.' I have already said that these Thewni

splendours are the communications of the Divine lamps in j

which the soul in union shines forth with all its facul-

ties, memory, intellect, and will, enlightened and united

in this loving knowledge. But we are not to suppose that

the light of these splendours is like that of material fire,

when its flames shine upon and communicate heat to objects

external to it, but rather when it heats what is within it,

for the soul is now within these splendours, 'in whose

splendours.' That is to say, it is within them, not near them,

\vithin their splendours, in the flames of the lamps, itself

Esech. zzxvi. 25, 20. t 2 Mtc. ii 1 : U i J2. $ CV

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THE LIVIMJ FLAMi: OF LOVE.

transformed in flame. The soul therefore may be said t>

resemble the air which is burning within the flame

transformed in fire, for the flame is nothing else but air

inflamed. The flickerings of the flame are not those of air

only or of fire only, but of air and fire together ; and the fire

causes the air which is within to burn. It is thus that the

soul with its powers is illuminated in the splendours of God.

The movements of the flame, that is its vibrations and its

flickerings, are not the work of the soul only, transformed in

the fire of the Holy Ghost, nor of the Holy Ghost only, but

of the soul and of the Holy Ghost together Who moves the

soul as the fire moves the air that is burning.

Thus then these motions of God and of the soul together

are as it were the acts of God by which He renders the soul

glorious. For these vibrations and motions are the 'play-

ing \* and the joyous feasts of the Holy Ghost in the soul,\*

in which He seems to be on the point of admitting it into

everlasting life. And thus these movements and quiw

of the flame are as it were stimulants applied to the soul,

furthering its translation into His perfect glory now that it

is really entered into Him. So also is it with the fire : all

the motions and vibrations to and fro which it causes in the

air burning within it, are the efforts which the fire makes to

ascend to its proper sphere ; and all these quiverings are the

effects of its perseverance in its upward efforts, but they are

all fruitless because the air itself is within its own spline.

In the same way the motions of the Holy Ghost, though full

of fire and most effectual to absorb the soul in great gl-ry,

do not accomplish their work before the time is come when

it is to sally forth from the sphere of the air of this mortal

life and reach the centre of the spirit, the perfect life in

Christ. These visions of the glory of God, to which tin-

\* Stanza 1, line 2, p. 223.

Till: SHADOW OF GOD. '259

is now admitted, are more continuous than they used to be, LINE

more perfect and more durable ; but it is in the life to come - ''

th.it they will be most perfect, unchanging, and uninterrupted.

There too the soul will see clearly how that God, though here

appearing to move within it, yet in Himself moves not at

all, as the fire moves not in its centre. These splendours are

inestimable graces and favours which God bestows upon the

soul. They are called also overshado wings, and are, in my

opinion, the greatest and the highest graces which can be

bestowed in this life in the way of transformation.

Now overshadowing is the throwing of a shadow; and to

throw one's shadow over another signifies protection and

favour, for when the shadow of one touches us, it is a sign that iD \*-

he whose shadow it is stands by us to favour and protect us.

Thus it was said to the Virgin, \* The power of the Most High

shall overshadow thee,'\* for the Holy Ghost was about to

approach her so closely as to 'come upon ' her. The shadow

of every object partakes of the nature and proportions of it,

f.-r it the object be dense, the shadow will be dense and

dark ; if it be light and clear, so will be the shadow, as we

see in the case of wood or crystal ; the former being dense,

throws a dark shadow, and the latter being clear, throws a

shadow that is light. In spiritual things too, death is the

privation of all things, so the shadow of death will be dark- <\*\*\*

ness, which in a manner deprives us of all things. Thus, too,

speaks the Psalmist, saying, 'sitting in darkness and the

shadow of death,'f whether the spiritual darkness of spiritual

death, or the bodily darkness of bodily death.

The shadow of life is light ; if Divine, a Divine light, and if

the shadow be human, the light is natural. Thus the shadow

of beauty will be as another beauty according to the nature

and quality of that beauty of whi.-h it is the shadow. The

\* S. Lake i. 85. t P\* cri. 10.

t

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STANZA shadow of strength will be another strength, in measure and

proportion. The shadow of wisdom will be another wisdom.

Or rather, beauty, strength, and wisdom themselves will be in

the shadow, wherein is traced the form and property, the

shadow whereof is there. This then being the case, what

must be the shadow of the Holy Ghost, the shadow of all His

power, might, and attributes, when He is so near the soul ?

He touches the soul not with His shadow only, for He unites

Himself to it, feeling and tasting with it the form and pro-

perties of God in the shadow of God : that is, feeling and

tasting the property of Divine power in the shadow of

omnipotence ; feeling and tasting the Divine wisdom in the

shadow of the Divine wisdom ; and finally, tasting the glory of

God in the shadow of glory, which begets the knowledge and

the taste of the property and form of the glory of God. All

this takes place in clear and luminous shadows, because the

attributes and powers of God are lamps, which, being

resplendent and luminous in their own nature, throw forth

shadows resplendent and luminous, and a multitude in one

essence.

vision of the what a vision for the soul when it shall experience the

power of that which Ezechiel saw : ' the likeness of four

living creatures,' and the ' wheel with four faces,' the appear-

ance \* like that of burning coals of fire, and like the appearance

of lamps ;' \* when it shall behold that wheel, the wisdom of

God, full of eyes within and without, that is the marvellous

intelligence of wisdom ; when it shall hear the noise of their

wings as they pass, a noise ' like the noise of an army,' that is

of many things at once which the soul learns by one sole

sound of God's passing before it ; and finally, when it shall

hear the beating of the wings, which is like the \* noise of

many waters, as it were the voice of the Most High Gocl,'|

Ezech. i. 6, 13, 16. t Ib. i. 24.

DEEP CAVERNS OF SPIRITUAL 261

which signifies tin- rushing of the Divine waters, at the over-

flowing of which the Holy Ghost envelops the soul in tlames

of love. Here the soul rejoices in the glory of God, under

the protection of His shadow, for the Prophet adds : ' This

was the vision of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.' \*

how high is the condition of this happy soul ! how exalted I

O how it marvels at the visions it has within the limits of

the Faith ! Who can describe them ? how it is profoundly

immersetl in these waters of the Divine splendours where the

everlasting Father sends forth the irrigating streams with a

bounteous hand, for these streams penetrate soul and body.

wonder ! the lamps of the Divine attributes though one

in substance are still distinct, each burning as the other, one

being substantially the other. abyss of delights, and the

more abundant, the more thy riches are gathered together in

infinite simplicity and unity. There the one is so recognised

and felt as not to hinder the feeling and recognition of the

nther ; yea, rather everything in Thee is light which does not

impede anything ; and by reason of Thy pureness, Divine

dom, many things are known in Thee in one, for Thou

art the treasury of the everlasting Father, ' the brightness

i ual light, the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the

image of His goodness,' f 'iu Whose splendours,'

iii. 1. ' The deep caverns of sense.' The caverns are the TJM\*MI

powers of the soul, memory, intellect, and will, and their depth 3K ,

is commensurate with their capacity for great good, for nothing "

less than the infinite can fill them. What they sutler when

they are empty, shows in some measure the greatness of

their delight \\hen they are full of God ; for contraries are

kiM.un i riea. In the first place, it is to be remembered

that these caverns are not conscious of their extreme empti-

ness when they are impure, stained by affections for created

Mb, ii. 1.

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STANZA things. In this life every trifle that enters them is enough to

perplex them, and to render them insensible to their loss, and

unable to recognise the infinite good which is wanting, or

their own capacity for it\* It is assuredly a most wonderful

desire for the thing how, notwithstanding their capacity for infinite good,

a mere trifle perplexes them, so that they cannot become the

recipients of that for which they are intended, till they are

completely emptied. But when they are empty, the hunger,

the thirst, and the anxiety of the spiritual sense become in-

tolerable, for as the appetite of these caverns is large, so their

suffering is great, because the food which they need is great,

namely, God. This feeling of pain, so deep, usually occurs

towards the close of the illuminative life and the purgation

of the soul, previous to the state of perfect union during

which it is satisfied. For when the spiritual appetite is

empty, pure from every creature and from every affection

thereto, and when the natural temper is lost and the soul

attempered to the Divine, and the emptied appetite is well

disposed the Divine communication in the union with (id

being still withheld the pain of this emptiness and thirst

is greater than that of death, especially then when certain

glimpses of the Divine ray are visible, but not communicated.

Souls in this state suffer from impatient love, and they

cannot endure it long without either receiving that which

they desire, or dying.

Three 2. As to the first cavern, which is the intellect, its

emptiness is the thirst after God. So great is this tliir-t.

that the Psalmist compares it to that of the hart, for he

i. The intei- knew of none greater, saying, \* As the hart panteth after the

fountains of waters : so my soul panteth after Thee, God.' \*

This thirst is a thirst for the waters of the Divine Wisdom,

the object of the intellect. The second cavern is thu will,

Ps. xli. 1.

JIKAVK.V OR IIKLL.

t | thereof is a hunger so great after God,

tliat tin- s..ul faints away, 'My soul longeth and fainteth fur 2 Thewm

the courts of the Lord.'\* This hunger is for the perfection ;

"f love, tin- object of the soul's desires. The third cavern

is the memory, and the emptiness thereof is the soul's

melting away and languishing for the enjoyment of God: 3. Theme-

I!.' 'TV . 'A '

I will In; mindful and remember, and my soul shall Ian-

within me: these things I shall think over in my Fruiti(m

r, therefore will I hope.'f Great, then, is the capacity

of these caverns, because that which they are capable of

ng is great and infinite, that is, God. Thus their capacity\*\*

capacity is in a certain sense infinite, their hunger and thirst SJuj P to?

infinite also, and their languishing and their pain, in their J

way, in tin itr. So when the soul is suffering this pain, though

tli- pain be not so keen as in the other world, it seems

t<> be a vivid image of that pain, because the soul is in a

sure prepared to receive that which fills it, th- priva-

tion of which is its greatest pain. Nevertheless the suffering

ngs to another condition, for it abides in the depth of

will's love ; lut in this life love does not alleviate the pain,

OM tin- \_r renter it is the u n at. r the soul's impatience for

fruit i. .11 of God, for which it hopes continually with

intense d

my God, seeing r :in that he who truly JQalmanto

longs i dy, as S. Gregory saith,J entered into d8- \*

possession, how comes it that the soul is in pain? If that

re which the Angels have to look upon the Son of God

fr.'in pain and anxiety, because they have tl,

II .it u.'uld sec in then that the soul also having the

fruition of God in -u to its desire of Him and the

fruition ,f (i.d i luess of deli-lit mu>t in tl.

portion to its intei^ conscious ..f that

l. .-ji.

; ii :... 80 in i:\angel i u.

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STANZA fulness, seeing that it longs so earnestly after God, and so

in.

herein there ought not to be any anxiety or pain.

The soui may But it is not so, for there is a great difference between the

enjoy God in

the fruition fruition of God by grace only, and the fruition of Him in

of grace, and J \* J9

t!.''-.".f'h' r union also ; the former is one of mutual good will, the latter

frStion 3 one of special communion. This difference resembles that

which exists between espousals and marriage. The former

implies only an agreement and the mutual good will of the

parties, contracting together with the bridal presents, and

the ornaments graciously given by the bridegroom. But

marriage involves also personal union and mutual self-sur-

render. Though in the state of betrothal, the bridegroom is

sometimes seen by the bride, and gives her presents; yet

there is no personal union, which is the end of espousals.

So when the soul has attained to such purity in itself, and in

its powers, that the will is purged completely from all

strange desires and inclinations, in its higher and lower

nature, and when it wholly consents unto God, the will of

both being one in free and ready concord, it has then

attained to the fruition of God by grace in the state of

betrothal and conformity of will. In this state of spiritual

betrothal between the soul and the Word, the Bridegroom

confers great favours upon the soul, and visits it oftentimes

most lovingly to its great comfort and delight. But all this

admits of no comparison with that which belongs to the

state of the spiritual marriage.

Now, though it is true that this takes place in the soul

when it is perfectly purged of every created affection

because that must occur previous to the spiritual espousals

still other positive dispositions on the part of God, His

visits and gifts of greater excellence, are requisite for this

union, and for the spiritual marriage. It is by means of

these dispositions, gifts, and visits, that the soul grows more

and more in purity, beauty, and refinement, so as to become

DISPOSES FOK UM<>\. 265

meetly prepared for a union so high. All this requires time,

in some souls more, in others less. We have a type of this ~

Perfection

in the history of the virgins chosen for King Assuerus. These JSJ} 1 \*\*

were taken in all the provinces of the kingdom, and brought

from their fathers' houses ; but before they could be presented

to the king, they were kept in the palace a whole year : ' For

six months they were anointed with oil of myrrh,' and for the

other six with ' certain perfumes and sweet spices ' of a costlier

nature, after which they appeared in the presence of the king.\*

During the time of the espousals, and in expectation of unction of

the spiritual marriage in the unction of the Holy Ghost,

when the unction disposing the soul for union is most

penetrating, the anxieties of the caverns become most press-

ing and keen. For as the unction of the Holy Ghost is a

proximate disposition for union with God, the unction is

most near unto Him ; it fires the soul with the taste thereof,

and inspires it with a delicious longing after it. Thus this

desire is much more delicious and deep, because the desire for

God is a disposition for union with Him.

4. This would be a good opportunity to warn souls

whom God is guiding to this delicate unction to take care

what they are doing, and to whose hands they commit

thriii--l\vs, that thry may imt p. l,;i.-k\vanl>, wnv surh a

task not altogether beside my purpose. But such is the pain

and grief of heart which I feel at the sight of some souls

who go backwards, not only by withdrawing themselves from

the further anointing of the Holy Ghost, but by losing the

effects of what they have already received, that I cannot

refrain from speaking on the subject, and telling them what

they ought to do in order to escape from so great an evil.

I \\ill therefore leave my subject for a moment, hut I shall

]. turn to it soon again. And in truth the consideration of

I! !,. ;:. :'. U.

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STANZA this matter tends to elucidate the nature of these caverns,

and it is also necessary, not only for those souls who

prosper in their work, but also for all others who

searching after the Beloved.

oodaeeksthe In the first place, if a soul is seeking after God, the

San it seeks Beloved is seeking it much more; if it sends after Him its

Hi m,

loving desires, which are sweet as <a pillar of smoke of

aromatical spices, of myrrh and frankincense,'\* He on His

part sends forth the odour of His ointments, which draw the

soul and make it run after Him.f These ointments are His

Divine inspirations and touches, which, in that they proceed

Divine grace from Him, are always directed and ordered by the motives

ing to the of the perfection of the law of God and of the Faith, in

T A .\* r\*t C\*\*A \*"

which perfection the soul must ever draw nearer and nearer

unto God. The soul, therefore, ought to see that the desire

of God in all the graces which He bestows upon it by means

of the unction and odour of His ointments, is to dispose it for

another and higher unction, and more in union with His

nature, until it attains to that delicate and pure disposition,

which is meritorious of the Divine union, and of its transfor-

mation in all its powers.

The soul, therefore, considering that God is the chief

agent in this matter, that it is He who guides it and leads it

by the hand whither it knows not, namely, unto supernatural

things beyond the reach of intellect, memory, and will, inu-t

take especial care to put no difficulties in the way of its

guide, who is the Holy Ghost, on that road along which He

leads it by the law of God and the Faith. Such a difficulty

will be raised if the soul intrusts itself to a blind gui<l ;

and the blind guides of the soul which lead it astray are

Three blind three, namely, the spiritual director, the devil, and its own self.

K 11 '\*

As to the first of these blind guides, it is of the groatat

ait. iii.C. t Ib. i. 3.

T1IUEE BLIND (.TIDES OP THE SOUL. -Ji.i7

importance to the soul desirous of perfection and anxious

not to fall back, to consider well into whose hands it resigns

itself ; for as the master, so is the disciple ; as the father, so a

the child. You will scarcely find one who is in all respects

qualified to guide a soul in the higher parts of this road, or

even in the ordinary divisions of it, for a director must be

learned, prudent, and experienced. Though the foundations A spiritual

of good direction be learning and discretion, yet if experience J

of the higher ways be wanting, there are no means of guiding J;

a soul therein when God is showing the way, and inexpe-

rienced directors will therefore inflict great evils on their

penitents. Such directors, not understanding these ways of

the Spirit, will very frequently be the cause of souls losing

tin- unction of the delicate ointments, by means of which the

Holy Ghost is preparing the soul for Himself: for they will

guide them by other means of which they have read, but

which are adapted only for beginners. These directors

knowing how to guide beginners only and God grant they

may know that will not suffer their penitents to advance,

though it be the will of God, beyond the mere rudiments,

acts of reflection and imagination, whereby their profit is

extremely little.

5. In order to have a clear perception of th<> state of Direction for

beginners, we must keep in mind that it is one of meditation

and of acts of reflection. It is necessary to furnish the soul

in this state with matter for meditation, that it may make

reflections and those interior acts, and avail itself of the

sensible spiritual heat and fervour, for this is necessary in

"i<i. r to accustom the senses and desires to good things, so

that by satisfying them by the sweetness thereof they may

be detached from the world.

When this is in some degree effected, God begins at once

to introduce the soul into the state of contemplation, and

that \vry quickly, especial 1 case of Religious, because

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STANZA these, having renounced the world, quickly fashion their

senses and desires according to God; they have, therefore,

to pass at once from meditation to contemplation. This

requires passage, then, takes place when the discursive acts and medi-

sponding tation fail, when sensible sweetness and the first fervours

change in

dtorttau cease, when the soul cannot make reflections as before, nor

find any sensible comfort, but is fallen into aridity, because

the spiritual life is changed, and the spirit is not cognisable

by sense. And as all the natural operations of the soul,

which are within its control, depend on the senses only, it

follows that God is now working in a special manner in this

state, that it is He who infuses and teaches, that the soul is

the recipient on which He bestows spiritual blessings by

contemplation, the knowledge and the love of Himself to-

gether ; that is, He gives it the loving knowledge without

the instrumentality of its discursive acts, because it is no

longer able to form them as before.

6. At this time, then, the direction of the soul must be

wholly different from what it was at first. If formerly it was

supplied with matter for meditation and it did meditate,

now that matter must be withheld and meditation must

cease, because, as I have said, it cannot meditate, do

what it will, and distractions are the result. If before

it looked for fervour and sweetness and found them, let

it look for them no more nor desire them ; and if it at-

tempt to seek them, not only will it not find them, but it

will meet with aridity, because it turns away from the

peaceful and tranquil good secretly bestowed upon it, when

it attempts to fall back on the operations of sense. In this

way it loses the latter without gaining the former, because

the senses have ceased to be the channel of spiritual good.

Souls in this state are not to be forced to meditate, nor t<>

apply themselves to discursive reflections laboriously effect. -.1.

neither are they to strive after sweetness and fervour, for if

MEDITATION Y1KLDS TO CONTK.M PLATKXV. 269

they did so, they would be thereby placing obstacles in the

way of the principal agent, who is God Himself, for He is

now secretly and quietly infusing wisdom into the soul,

together with the loving knowledge of Himself, indepen-

<1. ntly nf these divers acts, without their being multiplied

or elicited, though He produces them sometimes specifically

in tin- .-"ill, and that for some space of time. And in that

case, the soul too must be lovingly intent upon God without

specifically eliciting other acts beyond those to which He

i lies it ; it must be as it were passive, making no efforts

of its own, purely, simply, and lovingly intent upon God,

as a man who opens his eyes with loving attention. For as Aood &]

God is now dealing with the soul in the way of bestowing by fjj^

simple and loving knowledge, so the soul also, on its part,

must deal with Him in the way of receiving by simple and

loving knowledge, so that knowledge may be joined to know-

ledge, and love to love ; because it is necessary here that the

recipient should be adapted to the gift, and not otherwise, and

that the gift may be accepted and preserved as it is given.

It is evident therefore, that if the soul does not now

abandon its previous ways of meditation, it will receive

this gift of God in a scanty and imperfect manner, not in

that perfection with which it is bestowed ; for the gift being

so grand, and an infused gift, cannot be received in this

scanty and imperfect way. Consequently, if the soul will at

this time make efforts of its own, and encourage another

disposition than that of passive loving attention, most submis-

and calm, and if it does not abstain from its previous

rsive acts it will place a complete barrier against those

graces which God is about to communicate to it in this

loving knowledge, He gives His grace to beginners in the

exercise of purgation, as I have said, and afterwards with an

increase of the sweetness of love. But if the soul is to be

the recipient of this grace passively, in the natural way of

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-THE LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.

STANZA

III.

Sodspeata

to the soul

when silent

and

detached.

God, and not in the supernatural way of the soul, it follows

that, in order to be such a recipient, it must be per

detached, calm, peaceful, and serene; it must be like the

atmosphere, which the sun illumines and warms in propor-

tion to its calmness and purity. Thus the soul must be

attached to nothing, not even to the subject of its meditation,

not to sensible or spiritual sweetness, because God requires a

spirit so free, so annihilated, that every act of the soul, even

of thought, of liking or disliking, will impede and disturb it,

and break that profound silence of sense and spirit necessary

for hearing the deep and delicate voice of God, Who speaks

to the heart in solitude;\* it is in profound peace and

tranquillity that the soul is to listen to God, Who will speak

peace unto His people, f When this takes place, when the

soul feels that it is silent and listens, its loving attention

must be most pure, without a thought of self, in a manner

self-forgotten, so that it shall be wholly intent upon hearing,

for thus it is that the soul is free and ready for that which

our Lord requires at its hands.

7. This tranquillity and self-forgetfulness are ever

attended with a certain interior absorption ; and, therefore,

under no circumstances whatever, either of time or place,

is it lawful for the soul, now that it has entered on the state

of contemplation, tranquil and simple, to recur to its previous

meditations, or to cleave to spiritual sweetness, as I have

said, and at great length, in the tenth chapter of tlu- fir>t

book of the Obscure Night, and previously in the last

chapter of the second, and in the first of the third book of the

Ascent of Mount Carmel. The soul must detach itself from

all spiritual sweetness, rise above it in freedom of spirit;

this is what the Prophet Habacuc did, for he says of himself,

'I will stand upon my watch' over my senses that is, I

Os. ii. 14.

t Ps. bcxxiv. 9.

BRIGHT SUN IN < I.KAU MR. 271

will leave them below 'and fix my foot upon the tower'

of my faculties that is, they shall not advance a step even "

in thought 'and I will watch to see what will be said to

me,' \* that is, I will receive what God shall communicate to me

passively. I have already said that to contemplate is to

receive, and it is impossible to receive the highest wisdom,

that is contemplation, otherwise than in a silent spirit,

detached from all sweetness and particular knowledge. The

Prophet Isaias teaches the same truth when he says, ' Whom

shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to

understand the hearing? them that are weaned from the

milk/ that is from sweetness and personal likings, that are

drawn away from the breasts,' f from their reliance on

particular knowledge. Take away the mote and the film

from thine eye, and make it clean, thou who art spiritual,

and then the sun will shine for thee, and thou shalt see

clearly. Establish thy soul in the freedom of calm peace,

withdraw it from the yoke and slavery of the miserable

efforts of thine own strength, which is the captivity of Egypt

for all thou canst do is little more than to gather straw for

the bricks and guide it into the land of promise flowing

milk and honey.

spiritual director, remember it is for this liberty and Adruu>

holy rest that God calls the soul into the wilderness ; there

it journeys in festal robes, with ornaments of gold and

t he Egyptians are spoiled and their riches carried

away. Nor is this all : the enemies of the soul are drowned

in the sea of contemplation, where the Egyptian of sense

could find no support for his feet, leaving the child of God

free, that is the spirit, to transcend the narrow limits of

it own operations, of its low views, rude perceptions, and

wretched likings. God does all this for the soul that He

t I\* xxviii. 0. J Exod. xxxiiLi. $ Ib. xtt.35.

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TIIK LIVING FLAME OF LOVK.

STANZA

HOW the

ted \*

it\* feeling\*,

may give it the manna, which, though ( having in it all that

is delicious and the sweetness of every taste'\* objects of

desire for the soul according to thy direction and though

it is so deb'cious that it melts in the mouth, thy penitent

shall not taste of it, if he encourages any other desire what-

ever, for he shall not receive of this.

Strive, therefore, to root out of the soul all desire after

sweetness, all efforts after meditations ; do not disquiet it by

any solicitude about spiritual things, still less after earthly

things ; establish it in an estrangement from all around, and

in the utmost possible solitude. For the greater its progress

in this, and the more rapidly it attains to this calm tran-

quillity, the more abundant will be the infusion of the spirit

of Divine Wisdom, the loving, calm, lonely, peaceful, sweet

ravisher of the spirit The soul will feel itself at times

enraptured, gently and tenderly wounded, not knowing by

whom, how, or when, because the Spirit communicates Him-

self to it without effort on its own part. The least portion

of the action of God on the soul in this state of holy rest and

solitude is an inestimable good, transcending the very thought

of the soul and of its spiritual guide, and though it does

not appear so then, it will show itself in due time. What

the soul feels in this state is a certain estrangement and

alienation from all things around it, sometimes more, some-

times less, with a certain sweet aspiration of love and life of

the spirit, an inclination to solitude, and a sense of weariness

in the things of this world, for when we taste of the spirit,

the flesh becomes insipid. But the interior goods which

silent contemplation impresses on the soul without the

soul's consciousness of them, are of inestimable value, for

they are the most sweet and delicious unctions of the Holy

Ghost, whereby He secretly fills the soul with the riches of

Wiad. xvi. 20.

GOD'S WORK HINDERED BY MAN. 273

gifts and graces ; for being God, He doeth the work of

God as God.

8. These goods, then, these great riches, these sublime and

delicate unctions, this knowledge of the Holy Ghost which, \*\*,,

on account of their exquisite and subtile pureness, neither the

soul itself, nor he to whom the direction of it is entrusted,

can comprehend, but only He Who infuses them in order to

render it more pleasing to Himself are most easily, even by

the slightest application of sense or desire to any particular

knowledge or sweetness, disturbed and hindered. This is a

serious evil, and a matter of deep grief. how sad, and how

wonderful ! The evil done is not perceived, and the cause of it

is almost nothing, and yet it is more grievous, an object of

deeper sorrow, and inflicts a greater stain, than any other,

though seemingly more important in common souls which

have not attained to such a high estate of pureness. It is as

if a beautiful painting were roughly handled, besmeared with

coarse and vile colours ; for the injury done is greater, more

observable, and more deplorable, than it would be if a

multitude of common paintings were thus bedaubed.

Though this evil be so great that it cannot be exaggerated,

it is still so common that there is scarcely one spiritual

director who does not inflict it upon souls whom God has

begun to lead by this way to contemplation. For, whenever

God is anointing a soul with the unction of loving knowledge,

most delicate, serene, peaceful, lonely, strange to sense and

imagination; whenever He withholds all sweetness from it,

and suspends its power of meditation because He reserves it

! T this lonely unction, inclined to solitude and quiet aspiri-

tual director will appear, who, like a rough blacksmith, knows

only the use of his hammer, and who, because all bis know-

ledge is limited to the coarser work, will say to it : Come, get

rid of this, this is waste of time and idleness: arise and

meditate, resume thine interior acts, for it is necessary that

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STANZA thou shouldest make diligent efforts of thine own ; everything

else is delusion and folly. Such a director as this does not

understand the gradations of prayer, nor the ways of the

Spirit, neither does he consider that what he recommends

the soul is too late, since it has passed through that s

already, having attained to the state of sensitive abnegation ;

for when the goal is reached, and the journey ended, all

further travelling must be away from the goal.

Such a spiritual director, therefore, is one who understands

not that the soul has already attained to the life of the

Spirit, wherein there is no reflection, and where the senses

cease from their work ; where God is Himself the agent in a

special way, and is speaking in secret to the solitary soul.

Directors of this kind bedaub the soul with the coarse

ointments of particular knowledge and sensible sweetness, to

which they bring it back ; they rob it of its loneliness and

recollection, and consequently disfigure the exquisite work

which God was doing within it. The soul that is under

such guidance as this fails in one method and does not profit

by the other.

Reel guide of 9. Let spiritual directors of this kind remember, that

souls, the

uoijGhort. the Holy Ghost is the principal agent here, and the real

guide of souls ; that He never ceases to take care of them,

and never neglects any means by which they may profit and

draw near unto God as quickly as possible, and in the best

Directors are way. Let them remember that they are not the agents, but

only in.-tru-

menta,and mere instruments only to guide souls by the rule of Faith

mnBt guide J

i OI The y Buie an ^ ^ e ^ w ^ ^^> according to the spirit which God gives

2.' Tb? LW to eacn Their object therefore should be, not to guide souls

by a way of their own suitable to themselves, but to ascertain,

if they can, the way by which God Himself is guiding them.

If they cannot ascertain it, let them leave these souls alone

and not disquiet them. Let them adapt their instructions to

the direction of God, and endeavour to lead their penitents into

GOD WILL DO HIS OWN WORK. 275

greater solitude, liberty, and tranquillity, so that their spirit

may not be tied down to any particular course when God is

thus leading them on. The spiritual director must not be

anxious or afflicted because he is doing nothing in this case,

as he imagines, for provided the soul of his penitent be

detached from all particular knowledge, from every desire

and inclination of sense ; provided it abide in the self-denial of

poverty of spirit, emptied of darkness and sweetness, weaned

from the breast for this is all that the soul should look to,

and all that the spiritual director is to consider as within the

province of them both it is impossible according to the

course of the Divine Goodness and Mercy that God will

not perform His own work, yea, more impossible than that

the sun should not shine in a cloudless sky. As the sun

rising in the morning shines into thy house if thou dost but

open thy windows, so God, the unsleeping Keeper of Israel,\*

will shine in upon the emptied soul and fill it with good

things. God is here like the sun, above our souls and ready

to enter within them. Let spiritual directors, therefore, be

content to prepare souls according to the laws of evangelical

perfection, which consists in detachment, and in the empti-

ness of sense and spirit Let them not go beyond this with

the building, for that is the work of our Lord alone, from

Whom cometh 'every perfect gift.'t For, 'unless the Lord

build the house, they labour in vain that build it/J And as

He is the supernatural Builder, He will build up in every Oodtiw

. :in.,nling to His own good pleasure, the supernatural J

building. Do thou, who art the spiritual director, dispose

the natural faculties by annihilating them in their acts

that is thy work ; the work of God, as the Wiae Man 8ay, is

to direct man's steps towards supernatural goods by ways and

means utterly unknown to thee and thy penitent. Say not,

Pkcxx.4. t 8. James L 17. t Ps. cxxvt 1. $ Prov. xvi. 1, 0.

T\*

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Till-: LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.

STANZA therefore, that thy penitent is making no progress, or is doing

Further from nothing, for if he have no greater pleasure than he once had

Not to go

back, is to

by faith.

in particular knowledge, he is advancing towards that which

is above nature. Neither do thou complain that thy peni-

tent has no distinct perceptions, for if he had he would be

making no progress, because God is incomprehensible, sur-

passing all understanding. And so the further the penitent

advances, the further from himself must he go, walking by

faith, believing and not seeing ; he thus draws nearer unto

God by not understanding, than by understanding. Trouble

not thyself about this, for if the intellect goes not backwards

\*

occupying itself with distinct knowledge and other matters of

this world, it is going forwards ; for to go forwards is to go

more and more by faith. The intellect, having neither the

knowledge nor the power of comprehending God, advances

^ owar( ^ s ^ m ^7 no ^ understanding. Thus, then, what thou

judgest amiss in thy penitent is for his profit : namely, that

he does not perplex himself with distinct perceptions, but

walks onwards in perfect faith.

10. Or, you will say, perhaps, that the will, if the intellect

have no distinct perceptions, will be at the least idle, and

without love, because we can love nothing that we do not

know. That is very true as to the natural actions of the

soul, for the will does not love or desire anything of which

there is no distinct conception in the intellect. But during

supernatural the season of infused contemplation, it is not at all necessary

f r the sou l t nave distinct knowledge, or to form many

discursive acts, because God Himself is then communicating

to it loving knowledge, which is at the same time heat and

light indistinctly, and then according to the state of the

intellect is love also in the will. As the knowledge is

general and obscure the intellect being unable to conceive

distinctly what it understands so the will also loves gene-

rally and indistinctly. For as God is light and love in

LKJI1T, LOVE, LIFE.

this delicate communication, He informs equally the

intellect and the will, though at times His presence is felt

in one more than in the other. At one time the intellect

is more filled with knowledge than the will with love, and at

another, love is deeper than intelligence.

There is po reason, therefore, to be afraid of the will's The win

active In Con-

idleness in this state, for if it ceases to elicit acts directed by

particular knowledge, so far as they depend on itself, God

inebriates it with infused love through the knowledge which

contemplation ministers, as I have just said.

These acts of the will which are consequent upon infused

contemplation are so much the nobler, the more meritorious

and the sweeter, the nobler their source, God, Who infuses

this love and kindles it in the soul, for the will is now near

unto God, and detached from all other joys. Take care,

fore, to empty . the will and detach it from all its wbmt -

inclinations, for if it is not going backwards, searching after

sweetness and comfort, even though it have none in God

ictly felt, it is really advancing upwards above all such

things to God, seeing that it is without any particular

pleasure.

And though the penitent have no particular comfort in

God distinctly apprehended, though he does not make

ict acts of love, he does find more comfort in Kim

in that general secret and obscure infusion than if he were

under the influence of distinct acts of knowledge, because

the soul sees clearly then that nothing can furnish so much

comfort and delight as this calm and lonely infusion. He

loves God too more than all lovely things, because the soul

has thrown aside all other joys and pleasures, for they have

become insipid. There is no ground tor uneasiness her

if the will can find no rest in the joys and satisfactions of

particular acts, there is then real progress, because not

backwards, embracing what is sensible, is to go onwards t\*> t h<

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STANZA, unapproachable, who is God. Hence, then, if the will is to

HOW the will advance, it is to do so more by detachment from, than by

the precept attachment to, what is pleasurable and sweet. Herein is

of Love.

fulfilled the precept of love, namely, that we are to love

Him above all things. And if this love is to be perfect, we

must live in perfect detachment, and in a special emptiness

of all things.

The memory 11. Neither are we to be distressed when the memory is

more fitted

empt^d'o? en emptied of all forms and figures ; for as God is without form

or figure, the memory is safe when emptied of them, and

draws thereby the nearer to God. For the more the

memory relies on the imagination, the further it departs

from God, and the greater the risks it runs ; because God,

being above our thoughts, is not cognisable by the imagina-

MNt.-iko tion. These spiritual directors, not understanding the case

oUrectoreT\* 1 of souls who have already entered into the state of quiet and

solitary contemplation, and perhaps having never advanced

beyond the ordinary state of reflection and meditation

themselves, look upon penitents, such as I am speaking of,

as idle for 'the sensual man,' the man who still dwells

with the feelings of the sensitive part of the soul, ' perceiveth

not these things that are of the Spirit of God '\* disturb the

peace of that calm and tranquil contemplation given them by

God, and force them back to their former meditations. This

is followed by great loss, repugnance, dryness, and dis-

tractions on the part of such penitents, who desire to abide

in their quiet and peaceful self-recollection. These directors

will have them strive after sweetness and fervours, though in

truth they should have given them a wholly different advice.

Their penitents are unable to follow their direction, being

incapable of meditating as before ; because the time for that

is past, and because that is not the road by which they arc to

1 Cor. ii. 14.

THE SOUL'S PEACE DISTL'Kl)i:i. 279

travel now. They are, therefore, doubly disquieted, and UNI:

imagine themselves in the way of perdition. Their directors

encourage them in this supposition, dry up their spirit, rob

them of those precious unctions which God gave them in

solitude and calm and this is a great evil and furnish

tli. in with mere mud instead, for they lose the former, and

ir in vain with the latter.

Such directors as these do not really know what spiritu- HOW diwo-

ality is. They wrong God most grievously, and treat Him wrong God.

verently, putting forth their coarse hands to the work

which He is doing Himself. It has cost God not a little to

have brought souls thus far, and He greatly esteems this

solitude to which He has led them, this emptiness of their

faculties, for He has brought them thither that He may speak

to ti < ir heart,\* which is the object of His continual desire.

He now takes them by the hand, and reigns within them

in the abundance of peace. He has deprived the discursive

lu ir strength, wherewith they had 'laboured all

it' and had taken nothing, f He feeds them now in

spirit, not by the operation of sense, because the senses

together with their acts cannot contain the spirit

II"\v precious in His sight is this calm, or sleep, or oo<ikmth

annihilation of the senses, His words in the Canticle show : ui in Him.

1 adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and

harts of the fields, that you stir not up nor awake my

vt'd till she please.' J He shows clearly how much 1!

values this sleep and oblivion of the soul, by the mention of

those solitary and retired animals. But the spiritual direc-

of whom 1 am speaking will not suffer their penitents

;t in M u|M.n continual labour, so that God shall

. no oppi .ing His own work ; what He is doing

md disfigure compulsory activity of t

\*0i.ii. II. Luke v. 6. uitiii.6.

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THE LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.

STANZA

III.

God oom-

those who

hinder His

work.

Cantion to

spiritual

Their great

mnOMi-

bility.

How tho

affairs of

God are to be

handled.

A director

inexcusable,

when.

Liberty of

the penitent.

Change of

direction,

when

soul of their penitents ; and the little foxes that destroy the

vines are not driven away. God complains of these directors

by the mouth of the Prophet, saying, ' You have devoured

the vineyard.' \*

But it may be said that these directors err, perhaps, with

good intentions, because their knowledge is scanty. Be it so;

but they are not therefore justified in giving the rash counsels

they do, without previously ascertaining the way and spirit of

their penitent. And if they do not understand the case, it is

not for them to interfere in what they do not comprehend,

but rather to send their penitent to others who understand

him better than they. It is not a trivial matter, or a slight

fault to cause, by incompetent direction, the loss of inestimable

blessings, and to endanger a soul. Thus, he who rashly errs,

being under an obligation to give good advice for so is

everyone in the office he assumes shall not go unpunished

for the evil he has done. The affairs of God are to be handled

with great caution and watchful circumspection, and especially

this, which is so delicate, and so high, and where the gain is

infinite if the direction given be right, and the loss also

infinite if it be wrong.

12. But if you say that such a director may be excused

though for my part I do not see how you must at least

admit that he is inexcusable if he persist in keeping a peni-

tent in his power for certain empty reasons and considerations

known to himself. It is quite certain that a soul which is to

make progress in the spiritual life, and which God is ever

assisting, must change its method of prayer, and be in need

of a higher instruction, and of another spirit than those of

such a director. Not all directors have the knowledge which

every event on the spiritual road requires ; neither are they

all qualified to determine how a given soul is to be directed

Is. iii. 14.

ABS AKTIUM DIRECTIO AXIMAKUM. 281

under every circumstance of the spiritual life ; at least they LTNB

must not presume that they have, or that it is God's will that niurtrmUon

a particular soul should not advance further. As it is not SSupttS

everyone who can trim a block of wood, can also carve an

image out of it; nor can everyone form the outlines who can

carve ; nor can everyone who fashions the outlines paint

them, as neither can everyone who can paint perfect and com-

plete the image: for everyone of these can do only what

he understands himself; and if any one of them were to

attempt that which is not within the compass of his skill, he

would spoil the statue.

So is it in the spiritual life ; for if a director whose only Different

work it is to trim the rude block, that is, to make his penitent j

despise the world, and mortify his desires; or if, further, it J ;"; : , ,

be that of the carver, which is to guide the soul into holy f \*\*\* \*

meditations, and if his science extend no further, how can he

le his penitent to the highest perfection of the finished

portrait, to that delicate colouring which consists not in the

rough hewing of the wood, nor in the carving thereof, nor

even in the formation of the outlines, but is rather a work

which God Himself perfects in the soul with His own hand.

1 1 is therefore quite certain that such a director as this, whose

teaching is ever the same, cannot help driving back the

1 "-intent whom he subjects to it, or, at the least, hindering his

advancement. For what will be the state of the image, if

n< >thing be done to it but to rough-hew the wood and beat it

u it h a mallet? What is this, but the discipline of the facul-

ties? When shall the image be finished? When shall it be

ready for God to colour it?

Is it possible that any spiritual director can think himself whon

I u.-ilified for all this? that he looks upon himself as sufficiently JJ^jj

skilful, so as to render the teaching of any other needless for

his penitent? Granting even that he is qualified for the

whole direction of a particular soul, because, perhaps such a

Till; LIVING FLAME OP LOVE.

STANZA

III.

God lead\*

every soul by

Spiritual

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Woe

pronounced

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an faithful

shepherda.

Duties of

directorate

penitent\*,

\SLat--

soul has no vocation for a higher walk, it is almost impossible

that he can be also a sufficient guide for all whom he hinders

from passing out of his hands into the hands of others,

leads every soul by a separate path, and you will scarcely

meet with one spirit which agrees with another in one half

of the way by which it advances. Who can be like S. Paul,

who 'became all things to all men, that he might save

all?'\*

Thou art thus become a tyrant of souls, the robber of their

liberties, assuming to thyself all the freedom of the evangel-

ical doctrine, and taking every precaution lest any of thy

penitents should leave thee; yea, still further, and much

worse, should it come to thy knowledge that any of them had

gone elsewhere for direction, or to discuss a question which

it was not convenient to submit to thee ; or if God had led

them for the purpose of learning what thou teachest not

I say it with shame thou art jealous, like a husband of his

wife. This is not zeal for the honour of God, but the zeal

which cometh out of thine own pride and presumption. 1 Low

couldest thou be sure that thy penitent had no need of other

guidance than thine ? With such directors God is angry, and

he threatens to chastise them, saying: 'Woe to the shepherds

of Israel . . . you eat the milk and you clothed your

with the wool . . . but my flock you did not feed. . . .

I will require my flock at their hand.' f

These directors, therefore, ought to leave their penitents at

liberty, yea, they lie under an obligation to allow them to have

recourse to the advice of others, and always to receive tin 'in

again with a cheerful countenance ; for they know not by

what way God intends to lead them, especially when

present direction is not suited to them. That, indeed, is a

sign that God is leading their penitents by another road, and

1 Cor. U.

t Ezech. xxiiv. 2, 10.

COUNSELS. -J\*:i

they require another director; they should, therefore, LDTB

counsel the change, for a contrary course of proceeding springs

from a foolish pride and presumption.

13. Let me now pass on from this and speak of those Bra of

hindering ft

other means, fetal as the plague, which these directors, or ~^

others worse than they, make use of in the guidance of souls.

When God sends into a soul the unctions of holy desires, and

leads it to give up the world, draws it on to change its state

of life, and to serve Himself by despising the world it is a

great matter in His eyes that souls should have advanced to

this, for the things of the world are not according to the

heart of God these directors, with their human reasonings

and worldly motives, contrary to the doctrine of Christ, at

variance with mortification and contempt of all things, con-

sulting their own interest or pleasure, or fearing where no

fear is, interpose delays or suggest difficulties, or, what is

worse, take away all such good thoughts from the hearts of

their penitents. These directors have an evil spirit, indevout HOW^

and exceedingly worldly; unaccustomed to the ways of Chi

they do not enter in themselves by the strait gate, neither

will they suffer others to enter in. These are they whom our

Lord threatens in the Gospel, saying : ' Woe to you lawyers,

for you have taken away the key of knowledge: you yourselves

have not entered in, and those that were entering you have

hindered/ \*

These directors are in truth like barriers before the gate of

Heaven, forgetting that God has called them to the functions

they exercise that they may compel those to enter in whom He

has invited. He has given them this charge in the Gospel, 1 >ut

they, on the contrary, compel their penitents not to en'

la the narrow gate which leadeth unto life.f Such a director

as this is one of the blind guides leading souls astray from

a Luke xi. tt. t a Mattb. vii. 13, 14.

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THE LIVING FLAME OF U'Vl'.

STANZA.

III.

Ignorance

when

inexcusable.

Second blind

a, the

guide,-

devil.

He tries to

deceive

the soul by

knowledge

and

the way of the Holy Ghost. This happens in many ways';

some err knowingly ; others ignorantly ; but both the one and

the other shall be punished ; for by taking upon themselves

the office which they fill, they are bound to understand and

consider what they do.

14. The other blind guide that disturbs the soul in this

interior recollection is Satan, who, being blind himself, desires

to render the soul blind also. He labours, therefore, when the

soul has entered into those deep solitudes, wherein the de-

licate unctions of the Holy Ghost are infused he hates and

envies the soul for this, because he sees it fly beyond his

reach, adorned with the riches of God to throw over the

soul's detachment and estrangement from the world, certain

cataracts of knowledge, and the darkness of sensible sweetness,

sometimes good, the more to entice the soul, and to draw it

back to the way of sense. He would have it fix its eyes on

this, and make use of it with a view of drawing near to God,

relying upon this kind of knowledge, and sensible sweetness.

By this means Satan distracts the soul, and easily withdraws

it from that solitude and recollection wherein the Holy Ghost

worketh secretly His great marvels within. And then the

soul, naturally prone to sensible satisfactions and sweetness

especially if it aims at them is most easily induced to

rely upon such knowledge and sweetness, and so draws back

from the solitude wherein God was working. For as the soul,

as it seemed, was doing nothing then, this new way appears

preferable, because it is something, while solitude seemed to

be nothing. How sad it is that the soul, not understanding

its own state, should, for one mouthful, disqualify itself for

feeding upon God Himself; for He offers Himself to be its

food when He absorbs it in these spiritual and solitary

unctions of His mouth.

In this way, the evil spirit, for a mere nothing, inflicts

upon souls the very greatest injuries, causing the loss of great

SATAN AS A BLIND GUIDE. 285

>, and dragging them forth, like fish with a trifling bait,

out of the depths of the pure waters of the Spirit, where they

were engulfed and drowned in God, resting upon no created

support. He drags them to the bank, and supplies them with

objects whereon to rest, and makes them walk on the earth

painfully, that they may not float on 'the waters of Siloe,

that go with silence,'\* bathed in the unctions of God. It is

wonderful how much Satan makes of this: and as a slight

injury inflicted on the soul in this state is a great one, you

will scarcely meet with one which has gone this way that has

not suffered great injuries, and incurred grievous losses.

Satan stations himself with great cunning on the frontiers

i \* 1 '\*.'> 'i-r

1 1. tween sense and spirit ; there he deludes the soul, and feeds id betw

COM Bud

tin senses, interposing sensible things so as to detain it, and )lrit -

hinder it from escaping out of his hands.

The soul, too, is most easily taken by these devices, for it

knows as yet of nothing better ; neither does it dream that

this is a loss, yea rather, it looks on it as a great gain, and

accepts the suggestions of the evil one gladly, for it thinks

that God has come to visit it; consequently it omits to enter

into the inner chamber of the Bridegroom, and stands at the

door to see what is passing without in the sensitive part of

ft\*

The devil ' beholdeth every high thing 'f that relates to souls

that he may assail them. If, therefore, a soul becomes re-

collected, he labours to disturb it by horrors and fears, or by

bodily pains, or outward noise and tumults, that he may

ruin it; he strives to draw its attention to the tumult he

excites, and to fix it upon what is passing without, and to

\\ithdraw it from the interior spirit, but when he fails in

efforts he leaves it alone. So easily does Satan squander

grt s and bring about the ruin of these precious

' 1 t Job xll 25.

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Till- LIVI\<; FLAME OF LOVE.

STANZA

III.

Satan com-

pared to the

Behemoth

MM] thr

Leviathan.

Advice to

God is

leading to

Contem-

plation.

souls, though he thinks this of more consequence than tin-

fall of many others, that he looks upon it as a small matt IT

because of the ease with which he effects it and because of

the little trouble it costs him.

15. We may also understand in the same sense the

following words, spoken by God to Job: ' Behold he will

drink up a river and not wonder: and he trusteth that the

Jordan' the highest perfection 'may run into his mouth.

In his eyes as with a hook he shall take him, and bore

through his nostrils with stakes.' That is, he will turn

away the soul from true spirituality by means of the arrows

of distinct knowledge wherewith he pierces it, for the breath

which goeth out through the nostrils in one volume becomes

dispersed if the nostrils be pierced, and escapes through the

divers perforations.

Again it is said, \* The beams of the sun shall be under

him, and he shall strew gold under him like mire.' He

causes souls that have been enlightened to lose the marvel-

lous beams of Divine knowledge, takes away and disperses

abroad the precious gold of the Divine adorning by which

- souls had been made rich.

souls, now that God shows you mercies so great, lead in-

you into solitude and recollection, withdrawing you from the

labours of sense, do not you return thereto. If your own

exertions were once profitable, enabling you to deny the

world and your own selves when you were but beginners,

cease from them now when God of His mercy has begun to

work in you, for now they will only embarrass you. If you

will be careful to lay no stress on your own operations,

withdrawing them from all things, and involving them in

nothing which is your duty in your present state and

wait lovingly and sincerely upon God at the same time

doing no violence to yourselves except to detach yourselves

wholly, so as not to disturb your tranquillity and peace God

SELF A BLIND (illDE. 287

If will feed you with the heavenly food, since you

cease to hinder Him.

16. The third blind guide of the soul is the soul itself,

which, not understanding its own state, disturbs and injures

itself. For as the soul knows of no operations except those

of sense, when God leads it into solitude, where it cannot

exert its faculties and elicit the acts it elicited before, and as

it appears to itself then to be doing nothing, it strives to

elicit its previous acts more distinctly and more sensibly.

The consequence is distraction, aridity, and disgust, in that Howa\*mi

very soul which once delighted in the calm peace and i

Hpi ritual silence, wherein God Himself was in secret infusing

His sweetness. It sometimes happens that God persists in

keeping the soul in this quiet calm, and that the soul

persists in crying out with the imagination, and in walking

\\itli the intellect Such souls are like children in tlu-ir

mothers' arms, who, unable to walk, cry, and struggle with

their feet, demanding to be allowed to walk alone, but who

cannot walk themselves, and suffer not their mothers to

do so either. These souls make God resemble a painter

whose work is hindered because the subject he portrays is

not suffered to remain stationary.

The soul, then, should keep in mind that it is now making

greater progress than it could make by any efforts of its own,

though it be wholly unconscious of that progress. God

Himself is carrying it in His own arms, and thus it happens

that it is not aware that it is advancing. Though it thinks

that it is doing nothing, yet in truth more is done than if

itself were the agent; for God Himself is working. If this

work be invisible, that is nothing strange, for the work of

God in the soul is not cognisable by sense, because silmtly

wrought: 'The words of the wise are heard in silence. 1 \*

\* EoclM. ix. 17.

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THE LTVIXG FLAME OF LOVE.

STANZA

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Subject of

the Cavernt

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A-.l.-irv.

BO fruition.

Faculties of

the soul

call.-. I

Carernt,

why.

Let the soul abandon itself to the hands of God and confide

in Him. He that will do so shall walk securely, for there

is no danger then unless the soul should attempt any-

thing in its own strength, or by the exercise of its proper

faculties.

17. Let us now return to the deep caverns of the

faculties, in which I said the sufferings of the soul were

ordinarily very great when God is anointing it, and pre-

paring it for union with Himself by His subtile and delicate

unctions. These unctions of God are so subtile that, penetrat-

ing into the inmost depths of the soul, they so dispose it,

and so fill it with sweetness, that the sufferings and fainting

of the soul through its great desire in the immense void

of the caverns are immense. Now if the unction which

disposes the caverns for the union of the spiritual marriage

be so wonderful, what shall the accomplishment thereof be ?

Certain it is that as the hunger and thirst and suffering of

the caverns so will be the satisfaction, fulness, and delight

thereof. According to the perfection of these dispositions

will be the exquisite delight of the fruition of the sense of the

soul, which is that power and energy of its very substance

for perceiving and delighting in the objects of the faculties.

These faculties are with great propriety called caverns. For

as the soul is conscious that they admit the profound intel-

ligence and splendours of the lamps, it sees clearly also,

that they are deep in proportion to the depth of the intel-

ligence and love; that they have space and capacity com-

mensurate with the distinct sources of the intelligence, of

the sweetness and delight which it receives in them. All this

is received and established in the cavern of the sense of the

soul which is the capacity thereof for possession, perception,

and fruition. Thus, as the common sense of the fancy is

the place where all the objects of the outward senses are

treasured up, so is this common sense of the soul in a lik<

KYK- THAT SKI: no 289

way enlightened and made rich by a possession so grand and

so glorious.

iv. 'Obscure and dark.' The eye sees not in two ways,

either because it is in darkness or is blind. God is the light \*&

and the true object of the soul, and when He does not shine

upon it, it is then in darkness, though its vision may

be most perfect. When the soul is in sin, or when it

occupies the desires with other things than God, it is then

Mind. Though the light of God be not wanting to it then,

yet, being blind, it cannot see the light because of its

blindness, which is the practical ignorance in which it lives.

Before God enlightened the soul in its transformation it was

in darkness and ignorant of His great goodness, as was the

Wise Man before he was enlightened, for he says, 'He

enlightened my ignorances.'\*

Speaking spiritually, it is one thing to be blind and Condition, of

- \_ " '

another to be in darkness. Blindness proceeds from sin. Inn

darkness does not necessarily involve sin, and it happens in

two ways. There is natural darkness where the light of

natural things shines not, and there is supernatural darkness

where there is no knowledge of many supernatural things.

Here the soul says with regard to them both, that the intel-

lect without God abode in darkness. For until the Lord sa

' Let light be,'f darkness was upon the face of the deep of the

cavern of the soul's sense. The deeper the cavern when God

shines not upon it, the deeper is the darkness thereof. Thus

I impossible for it to lift up the eyes to the Divine ligl

yea the Divine light is not even thought of, because never

seen or known to exist ; there is therefore no desire for it In

that case it desires the darkness rather than light, and so goes

on from darkness to darkness, guided by the darkness, for

\* Eccliin. li. 20. IgnorantiM men\* illuminavit. See Obecuro >

Bk. ii. 0. 1-.

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STANZA, darkness can guide the soul only to darkness again. As c day to

day uttereth speech and night to night showeth knowledge,'\*

so the deep of darkness calleth another deep, and the deep of

light another ;f like calling upon like. Thus, then, the light

of grace which God had before given to the soul, and by

which He opened the eyes of it from the deep to behold the

Divine light, and made it pleasing to Himself, calls to another

deep of grace, namely, the Divine transformation of the soul

in God, wherein the eye of sense is enlightened and rendered

acceptable.

Eye of the The mind was also blind in that it took pleasure in other

suffused by than God. The blindness of the higher and rational sense

the affections

of the wiii. i s caus ed by the desire which, like a cloud or a cataract,

overlies and covers the eye of reason, so that it shall not see

what is before it. Thus, then, the grandeur and magnifi-

cence of the Divine beauty are rendered invisible, so far as the

pleasure of sense is followed. For if we cover the eye with

anything, however trifling it may be, that is enough to

obstruct the vision of objects before us, be they ever so

grand. Thus, then, a single desire entertained by the soul

suffices to impede the vision of all the Divine grandeurs

which are beyond its desires and longings. Who can

how impossible it is for the soul, subject to desires, to judge

HOW to of the things of God ? for he that would judge aright of these

mentof 3 thf things must cast away from himself all desires, because he

things of J

Go\* 1 - cannot judge aright while subject thereto; for in that case

he will come to consider the things of God not to be God's,

and those things which are not God's to be the thin^r

God.

While this cloud and cataract cover the eye of the judg-

ment, nothing is visible except the cloud itself, sometimes of

one colour, sometimes of another, according to circumstances,

\* Pa. xviii. 2. t Ib. xli. 8.

DESIRES EFFECT BEMi.

;inl men will take the cloud for God, because they see

nothing beside the cloud which overshadows the sense, and Purity of

God is not comprehended by sense. Thus, desire and

sensual satisfactions hinder the knowledge of high things, ^

as it is written, 'The bewitching of vanity obscureth good

tilings, and the wandering of concupiscence overturneth the

innocent mind.'\* Those persons, therefore, who are not so

spiritually advanced as to be perfectly purified from th<

res and inclinations, but are still somewhat sensual,

believe and account those things to be important which are

in truth of no account in spirituality, being intimately con-

nected with sense ; they make no account and despise -those

tilings which are highly spiritual, further removed from

sense, yea sometimes they look upon them as folly, as it

is written, 'The sensual man perceiveth not these things

that are of the Spirit of God: for it is foolishness to him

and he cannot understand.' f

The 'sensual man' is he who still lives according to the The

desires and inclinations of the natural man, and even though

< natural desires come occasionally into contact with

things of the spirit, yet, if man cleaves to spiritual

tilings with his natural desires, they are still natural desires

only. The spirituality of the object is little to the pur- ch\*r\*<

pose, if the desire of it proceed from itself, having its root

and strength in nature. What ! you will say, is it not a "H\* 4 \*\*\*-

i natural desire to desire God? No, not always; but

only then when the motive is supernatural, and when the

ugth of the desire proceeds from God; that is a very

rent tiling. When the desire comes from thyself, so far

as it relates to the manner thereof, it is nothing more than

natural. So, then, when thou leanest on thy spiritual tastes, i

exerting thine own natural desire, thou bringest a cataract

Wiad. i t ICVr. ii. II.

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Till- LIVING FLAME OF LOVK.

STANZA

The purified

the light of

over thine eye, thou art wholly sensual, thou canst neither

perceive nor judge what is spiritual, for that transcends all

natural sense and desire.

If you still doubt, I have nothing further to add except to

bid you read over again what I have written, and if you will

do so perhaps your doubts will vanish. What I have said is

the substance of the truth, and I cannot now enlarge upon

it. This sense of the soul, hitherto obscure without the

Divine light and blinded by its desires, is now such that its

deep caverns, because of the Divine union, 'with unwonted

brightness give light and heat together to the Beloved.'

v. vi. \* With unwonted brightness give light and heat toge-

ther to the Beloved.' These caverns of the soul's faculties

being now among the marvellous splendours of the lamps whirl i

burn within them, being lighted and burning in God, remit

back to God in God, in addition to their self-surrender to

Him, those very splendours which they receive from ]lim in

loving glory; they also, turning to God in God, being them-

selves lamps burning in the brightness of the Divine lamps,

return to the Beloved that very light and warmth of love which

they received from Him. Now, indeed, they give back unto

Him, in the way they received them, those very splendours

which He communicates, as crystal reflects the rays of tin-

sun when shone upon. But this state of the soul efi

this in a nobler manner, because of the intervention of tin-

will.

4 With unwonted brightness ;' that is, strange and surpass-

ing all imagination and description. For the perfection of

beauty wherein the soul restores to God what it has received

from Him is now in conformity with that perfection where-

with the intellect made one with that of God received tin-

Divine Wisdom ; and the perfection wherewith the will

restores to God in God that very goodness He gave it

for it was given only to be restored is in conformity with

GOD <-ivi;.v TO ni.Msn.r. 293

that perfection wherein the will is united with the will of y ^

God. In the same way, proportional to the perfection of

its knowledge of God's greatness, united therewith, does the

soul shine and give forth the warmth of love. And according to

the perfection of the other Divine attributes communicated

to the soul, such as strength, beauty, justice, are those

tections wherewith the spiritual mind, now in enjoyment,

gives back to the Beloved in the Beloved the very light and

heat received from Him.

The soul now being one with God is itself God by Tbetna\*.

ieipation, and though not so perfectly as it will be in JS^ 1011 "

the world to come, is still, as I have said, God in a shadow.

, thru, the soul, by reason of its transformation,

being a shadow of God, effects through God in God what

He effects within it Himself by Himself, because the will

of both is one. And as God is giving Himself with a free

and gracious will, so the soul also with a will, the more free

and the more generous, the more it is united with God in The perfect

God, is, as it were, giving back to God in that loving \*>

complacency with which it regards the Divine Essence and

perfections God Himself. This is a mystic and affective gift

he soul to God, for then the soul seems in truth to have

God for its own possession, and that it possesses Him, as His

adopted child, by a right of ownership, by the free gift of

iself made unto it The soul gives to the Beloved, Who

is God Himself, what He had given to it Herein every

debt is paid, for the soul giveth as much voluntarily with

inestimable joy and delight, giving the Holy Spirit as its

own of its own free will, so that God may be loved as He

deserves to be.

in consists the inestimable joy of the soul, for it sees

that it offers to God what becomes Him in His Infinite

Being. Though it be true that the soul cannot give God

to God anew, because He is always in Himself, still it

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PT m rzA so > P er ^ ec ^7 an d wisely, giving all that He has given it in

requital of His love ; this is to give as it is given, and God

is repaid by this gift of the soul ; nothing less could repay

Him. He receives this gift of the soul as if it were its own,

with kindness and grace, in the sense I have explained ; and

in that gift He loves it anew, and gives Himself to it, and

the soul also loves Him anew. Thus, there is in fact a

mutual interchange of love between the soul and God in the

conformity of their union, and in the matrimonial surrender,

wherein the goods of both, that is the Divine Essence, are

possessed by both together in the voluntary giving up of

each to the other. God and the soul say, the one to the

other, what the Son of God said to His Father, 'All My

things are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in

them.'\* This will be verified in the fruition of the next life

without intermission, and is verified in the state of union

when the soul's communion with God energises in an act of

love.

illustration. The soul can offer such a gift, though far greater than

itself, just as he who rules over many kingdoms and nati

though greater than he is, can bestow them upon whom he

source of tho will. This is the source of the soul's great delight, that it

onl's delight,

sees itself able to give unto God more than itself is worth,

that it gives Himself to God with such liberality, as if God

were its own, in that Divine light and warmth of love which

He Himself has given it. This is effected in the life to

come through the light of glory and of love, and in this

life by faith most enlightened and by love most enkindled.

Thus it is that the deep caverns of sense, with unwonted

brightness give light and heat together to the Beloved. I say

together, because the communication of the Father and of

the Son and of the Holy Ghost in the soul is one ; they are

the light and the fire of love therein.

\* S. John xvii. 10.

nr.AUTY OP THE SOUL IX TIOD. 295

I miiBt here observe briefly on the perfection of beauty LINES

wherewith the soul makes this oblation unto God. In the

act of union, as the soul enjoys a certain image of fruition, SLSjT 11 '

caused by the union of the intellect and affection in God, it

makes this oblation of God to God, and of itself to Him, in

most wonderful ways; delighting itself therein and constrained

thereto. With respect to love, the soul stands before God in i. in love,

strange beauty, with respect to this shadow of fruition in the

same way, and also with respect to praise and gratitude. As to

the first, that is love, the soul has three grand perfections of

beauty. 1. It loves God by means of God. This is an admir- >J tlOTeg

able perfection, because the soul, set on fire by the Holy Ghost, gjjj" \*

and having the Holy Ghost dwelling within it, loves as the

Father loves the Son, as it is written, 'that the love wherewith

Thou hast loved Me, may be in them, and I in them.'\* 2. The g>\* ttoT

second perfection is to love God in God, for in this union the God-

soul is vehemently absorbed in the love of God, and God com-

municates Himself with great vehemence to the soul. 3. The gj] t j r<-

thinl perfection of beauty is that the soul now loves God for GO\*-

what He is ; for it loves Him not merely because He is boun-

1 , good, and generous to the soul, but much more, because

1 i is all this essentially in Himself.

There are also three perfections of beauty with respect to s. in the

shadow of fruition, marvellously great. 1. The soul fruition,

enjoys God here, united with God Himself, for as the soul <n it i.

unites its intellect with wisdom and goodness, and perceives God.

so clearly though not so clearly as iu the life to come it

delights greatly in ;ill these things, clearly understood, as I

said before. 2. The second principal perfection of beauty <> TO

hat the soul delight\* itself in God alone without the ad- \*

mixture of any created thing. 3. The third is that it enjoys <\*> with \*

Him alone for what He is, without the admixture of any - :

selfish feeling, or of any created object.

\* a John zviL 20.

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STANZA. There are also three principal perfections of beauty in the

3 in praise- praises of God which the soul offers to Him in union. 1. The

80U 1 offers it as an act of duty, because it recognises this as

the end of its creation ; as it is written, ' This people have

biLSJTgs I formed f r Myself, they shall show forth My praise.'\* 2. The

oelve(L second is, that it praises Him for blessings received, and

because of the pleasure which the praise of so great a Lord

(3) For inspires. 3. The third is, it praises Him for what He is in

what God

Himself, for if the praises of God were unaccompanied by

any pleasure at all, still the soul would praise Him for what

He is.

4.ingratd- Gratitude also involves three principal perfections. 1.

Thanksgiving for all natural and spiritual blessings, and for

<2> Forthe all benefits received. 2. The second is the great delight of

^^ 8 praising God, in the way of thanksgiving, for it is moved with

(3) For great vehemence to such an act. 3. The third is that the

God in

soul gives thanks unto God only for what He is, which is

much more efficacious and more delightful.

STANZA IV.

How gently and how lovingly

Thou liest awake in my bosom,

Where alone Thou secretly dwellest ;

And in Thy sweet breathing

Full of grace and glory,

How tenderly Thou fittest me with Thy love.

EXPLANATION.

Here the soul turns towards the Bridegroom in great love,

magnifying Him and giving Him thanks for two marvellous

acts which He sometimes effects within the soul through its

union with Himself. The soul too observes on the way He

produces them and on their effects upon itself.

The first effect is the. awakening of God in the soul, and

the way of that is gentleness and love. The second is the

Is. xliii. 21.

GOD AWAKKS IN Till: >OUL. 297

breathing of God in the soul, and the way of that is grace LINBS

and glory given in that breathing. The effect of this upon ~ :

the soul is to make it love Him sweetly and tenderly. The

stanza therefore may be paraphrased as follows : how gently prphnue

and how lovingly dost Thou lie awake in the depth and Sum\*. 00

centre of my soul, where Thou in secret and in silence alone,

as its sole Lord, abidest, not only as if in Thine own house or

in Thine own chamber, but also as within my own bosom, in

close and intimate union: how gently and how lovingly!

Sweet to me is Thy breathing in that awakening, for it is full

of grace and glory. with what tenderness dost Thou in-

spire me with love of Thee ! The figure is borrowed from

one awaking from sleep, and drawing his breath, for the soul

in this state feels it to be so.

i. ii. ' How gently and how lovingly Thou liest awake in my pint effect

bosom/ The awakenings of God in the soul are manifold, union.

' The awaken-

and so many that were I to describe them I should never end. {JJj2 dl11

This awakening, to which the soul refers here, the work of

the Son of God, is, in my opinion, of the highest kind, and

the source of the greatest good to the soul. This awakening

is a movement of the Word in the depth of the soul of such i\* tutors

Aji i rittiutp

grandeur, authority and glory, and of such profound sweetness

that all the balsams, all the aromatic herbs and flowers of the

world seem to be mingled and shaken together for the pro-

duction of that sweetness: that all the kingdoms and do-

minions of the world, all the powers and virtues of heavt n

seem to be moved; this is not the whole, all the virtues, sub-

stance, perfections and graces of all created things, shine forth

and make the same movement in unison together. For as

S. John saith, ' what was made in Him was life,\* \* and in

Him moves and lives; as the Apostle says, 'In Him we live

and move and are.' f

a John 13; see p. 46. t AcU xriL 3&

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STANZA The reason is this; when the grand Emperor wills to

reveal Himself to the soul, moving Himself in the way of

giving it light, and yet not moving at all He upon whose

shoulder is the government,\* that is, the three worlds of

Heaven, earth, and hell, and all that is in them, and who sus-

tains all by the word of His power, f then all seem to move

together. As when the earth moves, all natural things upon

it move with it; so is it when the Prince moves, for He

bears the court, not the court Him. This, however, is an

exceedingly imperfect illustration ; for here not only all seem

to move, but also to reveal the beauties, power, loveliness of

their being, the root of their duration and life in Him. There,

indeed, the soul understands how all creatures, higher and

lower, live, continue, and energise in Him, and enters also

into the meaning of these words, 'By Me kings reign, by Me

princes rule, and the mighty decree justice.' J

HOW Though it is true that the soul here sees that all these

creatures,

jithoujh things are distinct from God, in that they have a created exist-

from, are in ence ^ an( j understands them in Him in their force, origin, and

strength, it knows also that G-od in His own essence is, in an

infinitely pre-eminent way, all these things, so that it under-

stands them better in Him, their First Cause, than in them-

joyof selves. This is the great joy of this awakening, namely, to

creature in know creatures in God, and not God in His creatures: this is

the Creator.

to know effects in their causes, and not causes by their effects.

This movement in the soul is wonderful, for God is Himself

immovable. Without movement on the part of God, the soul

is renewed and moved by Him ; and the Divine life and Being

and the harmony of creation is revealed unto it with marvel-

How the lous newness, the cause assuming the designation of the

effects resulting from it If we regard the effect, we may

say with the Wise Man that God moves, s for Wisdom is more

\* IB. ii. 6. t Heb. i. 3. J Prov. viii. 15, 10.

Till- 90UL AWAKKS IN' GOD. 299

tilings,'\* not because it moves itself

lnit because it is the source and principle of all motion, and

6 remaining in herself the same, reneweth all things ; ' f this

lie meaning of the words, 'more active than all active

tilings.'

Thus then, strictly speaking, it is the soul itself that is The mi

1 and awakened, and the expression < awake' is correct.

God however being always, as the soul sees Him, the Mover,

the Ruler, and the Giver of life, power, graces, and gifts to

nil creatures, contains all in Himself, virtually, presentially,

and supremely. The soul beholds what God is in Himself,

and what He is in creatures. So may we see, when the palace

is thrown open, in one glance, both the magnificence of him

who inhabits it, and what he is doing. This, according to ood

unTo

my understanding of it, is this awakening and vision of the HI \*\*

soul ; it is as if God drew back some of the many veils and

coverings that are before it, so that it might see what He is;

then indeed but still obscurely, because all the veils are net

J> thev

drawn back, that of faith remaining the Divine face full of

grace bursts through and shines, which, as it moves all things

its power, appears together with the effect it produces, and

is the awakening of the soul.

ugh all that is good in man comes from God, and

though man of himself can do nothing that is good, it may be

said in truth, that our awakening is the awakening of God,

and ug the rising of God. ' Arise, why sleepest Th< >i i ,

LordP'J saith the Psalmist That is in effect to say, TI

>e us up and awake us, for we are fallen and asleep. Thus

cause the soul had fallen asleep and could never rouse

If again, and because it is God alone who can open its

S and effect its awakening, this awakening is most pro-

rred to God : < Thou liest awake in my bosom.'

Wiad. Tii. 24. t II). 27. 1 P.. xliii. S3.

300 THE LIVING FLAME OP LOVE.

STAXZA ii. ( Thou liest awake in my bosom.' Awake us, Lord,

enlighten us, that we may know and love those good things

which Thou hast set always before us, and that we may know

that Thou art moved to do us good, and hast had us in remem-

brance. It is utterly impossible to describe what the soul, in

this awakening, knows and feels of the goodness of God, in the

inmost depths of its being, that is its ' bosom.' For in the

soul resounds an infinite power, with the voice of a multitude

of excellences, of thousands of thousands of virtues, wherein

itself abiding and subsisting, becomes ' terrible as an army set

in array,' \* sweet and gracious in Him who comprehends in

Himself all the sweetness, and all the graces of His creation.

But here comes the question, how can the soul bear so

vehement a communication while in the flesh, when in

truth it has not strength for it without fainting away ? The

mere sight of Assuerus on his throne, in his royal robe, glitter-

ing with gold and precious stones, was so terrible in the eyes

of Esther, that she fainted through fear, so awful was his face.

'I saw thee, my Lord, as an angel of God, and my heart was

troubled, for fear of thy Majesty.' f Glory oppresses him who

beholds it, if he be not made glorious by it. How much more

then is the soul now liable to faint away, when it beholds not.

an angel but God Himself, the Lord of the angels, with His

face full of the beauty of all creatures, of terrible power and

glory, and the voice of the multitude of His excellences. It

is to this that Job referred when he said, 'We have heard

scarce a little drop of His word ; who shall be able to behold

the thunder of His greatness ?'J and again, 'I would not

that He should contend with me with much strength, lest He

should overwhelm me with the weight of His greatness.'

The soul, however, does not faint away and tremble at tins

awakening so powerful and glorious. There are two reasons

\* Cant vi. 9. t Esth. xv. 16. J Job xxvi. 14. Ib. xxiii. G.

ESTHER BEFORE ASSUERUS. 301

iiis : 1 . It is now in the state of perfection, and therefore LOTM

lower portion of it is purified and conformed to the spirit. K It u now

It is in consequence exempt from that pain and loss which "

spiritual communications involve, when the sense and spirit

are not purified and disposed for the reception of them. 2.

The second and the principal reason is that referred to in the

first line of this stanza, namely that God shows Himself

gentle and loving. For as He shows His greatness and glory

to the soul in order to comfort and exalt it, so does He favour

and strengthen it also, and sustain its natural powers while

manifesting His greatness gently and lovingly. This is easy

enough to Him, who with His right hand protected Moses,

BO that he might behold His glory.\*

Thus the soul feels God's love and gentleness to be commen-

surate with His power, authority, and greatness, for in Him

these are all one. Its delight is therefore vehement, and the

protection it receives strong in gentleness and love, so that

itself being made strong may be able without fainting away

to sustain this vehement joy. Esther, indeed, fainted away, mtwtnufcm

hat was because the king seemed unfavourable towards <\*\*\*.

her, t"i with 'burning eyes' he 'showed the wrath of his

heart,' f but the moment he looked graciously upon 1

touched her with Ins sceptre and kissed her, she recovered

herself, for he said to her, ' I am thy brother, fear not.' So is i t

\\ith the soul in the presence of the King of kings, for tin-

moment He shows himself as its Spouse and Brother, all

fear vanishes away. Because in showing unto it, in gentleness

and not in anger, the strength of His power and the love of 1 1

goodness, He communicates to it the strength and love of 1 i

i\*t, ' leaping from 1 1 is t in-one ' J to caress it, as the bride-

groom from his secret chamber, touching it with the sceptre of

I i Majesty, and as a I'l-.th.-r embracing it. There the royal

\* Exod. xjudii. 22. t Euth. XT. 10. t Ib - \* v ' l -

302 Till- LIVING FLAME OF LOVM.

STANZA robes and the fragrance thereof, which are the marvellous at t ri -

butesof God; there the splendour of gold,which is chnrii \ . and

the glittering of the precious stones of supernatural know-

ledge ; and there the face of the Word full of grace, strike t In-

queenly soul, so that, transformed in the virtues of the Kini;

of Heaven, it beholds itself a queen : with the Psalmist there-

fore may it be said of it, and with truth, ' The queen stood on

Thy right hand in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety.' \*

And as all this passes in the very depths of the soul, it is

added immediately, 'Where alone Thou secretly dwellest.'

ood dwells in iii. Where alone Thou secretly dwellest.' He is said to

all souls, but

in different dwell secretly in the soul's bosom, because, as I have saiil, t his

\\ ;ij\* -, \*f

sweet embracing takes place in the inmost substance and

powers of the soul. We must keep in mind that God dwells

in a secret and hidden way in all souls, in their very suit-

stance, for if He did not, they could not exist at all. This

dwelling of God is very different in different souls ; in some

He dwells alone, in others not; in some He dwells contented,

in others displeased ; in some as in His own house, giving His

orders, and ruling it ; in others, as a stranger in a house

not His own, where He is not permitted to command, or to do

anything at all. Where personal desires and self-will least

abound, there is He most alone, most contented, there He

dwells as in His own house, ruling and directing it, and the

more secretly He dwells, the more He is alone.

His pnenoe So then in that soul wherein no desire dwells, and out <>l

mate to the which all images and forms of created things have been cast,

son! most

purified. the Beloved dwells most secretly Himself, and the pun-r

the soul and the greater its estrangement from everything

but God, the more intimate His converse and the closer l\\>

embrace. He thus dwells in secret; for Satan himself niimnt

penetrate this secrecy, nor discover this converse, nur

\* Ps. xliv. 10.

TIIK PKRFECT SOUL A HOME FOR GOD. HI

any intellect ascertain how it is effected. But in this secrecy

If is not hidden from the soul in the state of perfection,

for such a soul is ever conscious of His presence. Only in

these awakenings He seems to awake who before was asleep

in the soul's bosom ; and though it felt and enjoyed His

presence, He seemed as one sleeping within.

how blessed is that soul ever conscious of God reposing

theaoul

and resting Himself within it. How necessary it is for such

a soul to flee from the matters of this world, to live in great

tranquillity, so that nothing whatever shall disturb the

Beloved ' at His repose.' \*

He is there as it were asleep in the embraces of the soul,

and the soul is, in general, conscious of His presence, and, in

general, has the fruition of it most deeply. If He were always

awake in the soul, the communications of knowledge and love

would be unceasing, and that would be a state of glory. If He

awakes but once, merely opening His eyes, and affects the

soul so profoundly, what would become of it if He were con-

tinually awake within it?

He dwells secretly in other souls, those which have not

attained to this state of union, not indeed displeased, though

they are not yet perfectly disposed for union : these souls in

general are not conscious of His presence, but only during

the time of these sweet awakenings, which however are not

<>t the same kind with those already described, neither indeed

hey to be compared with them. Hut the state of these

souls is not secret from the devil and the intellect, like that

>c others, because the senses always furnish some indica-

tions of it by the excitement into which they are thrown.

The senses are not perfectly annihilated before the union is

complete, and they manifest their power in some degree,

because they are not yet wholly spiritual. But in this

Cmnti. 11

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Till- LIVING FLAME OF LOVE.

STANZA

IV.

Second effect

of Divine

union,

The

breathing of

God in the

soul.

Ite nature

and effects.

awakening of the Bridegroom in the perfect soul, all is perfect

because He effects it all Himself in the way I have spoken

of. In this awakening, as of one aroused from sleep and

drawing breath, the soul feels the breathing of God, and

therefore it says : ' In Thy sweet breathing.'

iv. v. vi. 'And in Thy sweet breathing, full of grace and

glory, how tenderly Thou fillest me with Thy love.' I would

not speak of this breathing of God, neither do I wish to do so,

because I am certain that I cannot ; and indeed were I to speak

of it, it would seem then to be something less than what it is in

reality. This aspiration of God is an act of His in the soul,

whereby in the awakening of the deep knowledge of the

Divinity, He breathes into it the Holy Ghost according to the

measure of that knowledge which absorbs it most profoundly,

which inspires it most tenderly with love according to what

it saw. This breathing is full of grace and glory, and there-

fore the Holy Ghost fills the soul with goodness and glory,

whereby He inspires it with the love of Himself, transcend-

ing all glory and all understanding. This is the reason why

I quit the subject.

INSTRUCTIONS AND CAUTIONS.

II.

INSTRUCTIONS AND CAUTIONS

TO BE CONTINUALLY OBSERVED BT HIM WHO SEEKS TO BE

A TRUE RELIGIOUS AMD TO ARRIVE QUICKLY AT GREAT

PERFECTION.

IP any Religious desires to attain in a short time to holy HOW to

recollection, spiritual silence, detachment, and poverty of

spirit where the peaceful rest of the spirit is enjoyed, and

union with God attained ; if he desires to be delivered from

all the difficulties which created things put in his way, to be

defended against all the wiles and illusions of Satan, and to be

protected against himself, he must strictly practise the follow-

ing instructions.

It he will do this, with but ordinary attention, without other

efforts or other practices, at the same time carefully observing

what his rule prescribes, he will advance rapidly to great

perfection, acquire all virtues in succession, and attain unto

holy peace.

All the evils to which the soul is subject proceed from three

sources : the world, the devil, and the flesh. If we can hide

ourselves from these we shall have no combats to fight The

world is less difficult, and the devil more difficult, to under-

stand ; but the flesh is the most obstinate of all, and the last

to be overcome togt-tl - i \\ith the 'old man.\* If we do not

conqurr tii\*- three, we shall never conquer one; and if we

conquer one, we shall also COIKJU\* r the others in the

prop

Z -2

308 INSTRUCTIONS AND CAUTION-

Three In order to escape perfectly from the evils which the worl<I

gainst the inflicts, there are three cautions to be observed.

world.

FIRST CAUTION.

The first is, preserve an equal love and an equal for-

\*\*\* ' getfulness of all men whether relatives or not: withdraw your

affections from the former as well as from the latter, yea

even rather more from the former, on account of the ties

of blood, for fear lest the natural affections, which men always

feel for their kindred, should thereby revive again. You must

mortify this affection if you are to attain unto spiritual

perfection. Look upon your kindred as strangers, and you

will thereby the more completely discharge the obligations

which they impose upon you ; for by not withdrawing your

heart from God on their account, you will fulfil your du

towards them better by not giving to them those affections

which are due unto God.

He most Do not love one man more than another, for if you do you

worthy of / /

W ^^ fa ^ \* nto error ' He whom God loves most is the most

^ worthy of love, and you do not know who he is. But if you

labour to forget all men alike as holy recollection requin-s

you to do you will escape all error, whether great or small.

Do not think about them; have nothing to say ab"iit

them either good or bad. Avoid them as much as you

possibly can. If you do not observe this, as things go, you

never will become a good religious, you will never attain

to holy recollection, nor will you get rid of your imper;

tions. If you will indulge yourself here, Satan will in some

way or other delude you, or you will delude yourself under

the pretence of good or evil.

If you will observe this direction you will be safe; and in

no other way will you ever get rid of the imperfections and

escape the evils which result to your soul from intercon

with men.

IN REGARD TO THE WORLD.

SECOND CAUTION.

The second caution against the world relates to temporal

goods. If you desire in earnest to escape the evils which

worldly goods occasion, and restrain your excessive desires, tomi

you must hold all personal possession in abhorrence, and cast

from you every thought about it. You must not be solici-

tous about what you eat or drink or wear, or about any

created thing w)i,-ir<\r: you must not be 'solicitous for

to-morrow,' but occupy yourself with higher things with the

Kingdom of God, that is, fidelity unto Him than with all

these things which, as He says in the Gospel, ' shall be added

unto you/ \* He who takes care of the beasts of the field will

not forget you. If you do this you will attain unto silence,

and have peace in your senses.

THIRD CAUTION.

The third caution is most necessary, that you may avoid all

< v i I in relation to the other Religious of the Community. Many

persons from not heeding this have not only lost their peace

mi, l.ii? li.iv<> also fallen, and fall daily, into great dis-

\* and sin. Be especially careful never to let your mind

<lw< II upon, still less your tongue to speak of, what is passing

- Community, its past or its present state. Do not speak

v Religious in particular, do not discuss his condition or

his conversation, or anything that belongs to him, however

important, either under the cloak of zeal, or of remedying

seems amiss, except only to him who of right should be

spoken to, and then at the fitting time. Never be scandalised

or surprised at what you see or hear, and labour to preserve

En i..iiipl,t.\* oMivion of all. If you lived among the

Angels and gave heed to what wn\* going on, many things would

ri.33.

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INSTRUCTIONS AND CAUTIONS

Example of

Lot's wife.

No place BO

secure but

the devil

may enter.

seem to you not to be good, because you do not understand

them.

Take warning from the example of Lot's wife who, because

she was disturbed at the destruction of Sodom, looked back

to behold it. God punished her for this, and she \* was turned

into a pillar of salt.'\* This teaches you that it is the will of

God, even if you were living among devils, you should so

live as not to turn back in thought to consider what they are

doing, but forget them utterly. You are to keep your soul

in purity before God, and not to suffer the thought of this or

that to disturb you.

Be sure of this, there is no lack of stumbling blocks in

religious houses, because there is no lack of devils who are

always labouring to throw down the saints. God permits this

in order to try them and to prove them, and if you will not

take care of yourself by observing this caution, you will never

become a true Religious, do what you may, neither will

you attain to holy detachment and recollection, or escape the

evils I am speaking of. If you live otherwise, in spite of

your zeal and good intentions, Satan will lay hold of you in

one way or another, and indeed you are already sufficiently

in his power, when your soul is allowed such distractions as

this. Remember those words of the Apostle, ' If any man

think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, this

man's religion is vain.'f This is applicable to the interior,

quite as much as to the exterior, tongue to thoughts as well

as words.

Three cautions to be observed in order to be delivered

from the devil in Religion.

If you wish to escape from Satan in Religion, you must give

heed to three things, without which you cannot be in safety

\* Genes, xix. 26.

t S. Jam. i. L>;

IN RI:<;ARD TO ] ,IL

from his cunning. In the first place I would have you

take this general advice, which you should never forget,

namely, that it is the ordinary practice of Satan to deceive

those who are going on unto perfection by an appearance of

good : he does not tempt them by what seems to be evil. He

knows that they will scarcely regard that which they know to

be wrong. You must therefore continually distrust that

which seems to be good, and especially when obedience does

nt intervene. The remedy here is to take the advice of him

who has authority to give it. This then is the

FIRST CAUTION.

Never set about anything, however good and charitable it i. N

may seem, either to yourself or to any other, whether in the

Community or out of it, except under obedience, unless you are

bound to do it by the rule of your Order. If you do this you

\\ill acquire merit, and be in security ; you will be safe against

yourself and against evil ; you will also avoid evils of which

you are ignorant, and of which God will require an account

one day. If you do not observe this caution in little things

as well as in great, notwithstanding your apparent success,

Satan will most certainly deceive you little or much. Even if

your whole error consist in your not being guided in every-

thing by obedience, you are plainly wrong, because God

wills obedience rather than sacrifice,\* and the actions of a

Religious are not his own, but those of obedience, and if hr

withdraws them from the control of obedience, he will have

to give v account of them as lost.

SECOND CAUTION.

The second c.-mtimi is one very necessary, because the devil

interferes exceedingly in the m:.tt<T t, which it refers. The

\* 1 Kings xv. 22.

312 INSTRUCTIONS AND CAUTION-

2. Regard observance of it brings great gain and profit, and the neglect

Sh! or th! of it great loss and ruin. Never look upon your superior, be

place of God. foe wno ne may, otherwise than if you were looking upon

God, in Whose place he stands. Keep a careful watch over

yourself in this matter, and do not reflect upon the character,

ways, or conversation, or habits of your superior. If you do,

you, will injure yourself, and you will change your obedience

from divine into human, and you will be influenced by what

you see in your superior, and not by the Invisible God

whom you should obey in him. Your obedience will be in

vain, or the more barren the more you are troubled by the

untowardness, or the more you are pleased by the favour, of

your superior. I tell you that a great many Religious in the

way of perfection have been ruined by not looking upon their

superiors as they ought to have done ; their obedience was

almost worthless in the eyes of God, because it was influenced

by human considerations. Unless you force yourself there-

fore to be indifferent as to who your superior may be, so far

as your private feelings go, you will never be spiritual,

neither will you faithfully observe your vows.

THIRD CAUTION.

t. stndy The third caution directed against Satan is this : strive with

all your heart after humility in thought, word, and work,

wort taking more pleasure in others than in yourself, wishing to

see them in all things preferred to yourself, and this too with

all your power from a sincere heart. In this way you \vill

overcome evil with good, drive the devil away, and have joy

in your heart. Labour to do this with respect to those who

are less agreeable to you; for be assured, if you do not,

you will never have true charity nor make progress in it.

Be always more ready to receive instniction than to give it,

even to the least of your brethren.

i\ IM:<.AKI> T<> Tin: FLF.SH.

Three cautions to be observed by those who would conquer The

themselves, and master the cunning of the flesh.

FIRST CAUTION.

If you wish to be delivered from the uneasiness and imper- i.

fections which present themselves before you, in the habits

and conversation of the Religious, and profit by what may

occur, you must keep in mind that you entered the Com-

munity only to be mortified and tried, and that all the inmates

of it are there, as in truth is the case, for the express purpose

of trying you. Some mortify you by words, others by works,

and others by thoughts ; in all this you are to submit yourself,

unresisting as a statue to the polisher, the painter, and the

gilder of it. If you do not, you will never be able to live as

you ought with the Religious of your House ; you will not

have holy peace, nor will you deliver yourself from much evil.

SECOND CAUTION.

Never omit any practices, if they are such as befit you,

because they are disagreeable; neither observe them, on

account of the pleasure which results from them, unless they

be as necessary as those which are not agreeable. Otherwise

you will find it impossible to acquire firmness, and conquer

your weakness.

THIRD CAUTION.

In all your spiritual exercises never set your eyes upon the

sweetness of them so as to cling to it, but embrace rather

tii.it in them which is unpleasant and troublesome. If you

do not observe this rule, you will never destroy self love, nor

acquire tlu- love of God.

LETTERS.

LETTERS.

LETTER I.

TO MOTHER CATHERINE OF JESUS, A BAREFOOTED CARMELITE AND

COMPANION OF 8. TERESA OF JESUS.

lie informs her of his state since his imprisonment, and gives her

spiritual consolation.

JESUS

15.- in your soul, my daughter Catherine. Although I know

not where you are, I write you these few lines, trusting that

"in- Mother will forward them to you if you are not with her.

And even should you be absent from her, you may account

yourself happy in comparison with me, who am shut up in so

lonely and distant a prison-house. For since I was swallowed

by that whale, and cast forth upon this distant shore, I have

not been counted worthy to see her or the saints who dwell

near her. God has worked it all for good ; for in truth to be

abandoned by creatures serves as a file to free us from tin\*

fetters of earth, and to suffer darkness is the direct way to

the enjoyment of great light.

God grant that we may not walk in darkness. Oh ! how

many things would I fain say to you ! But I am constrained

to write in enigmas, fearing that you may not receive this

: and thnvt ik off without finishing it Recom-

mend me to God. I will say no more of these parts, for I am

weary.

Your servant in Christ,

I-'KIAK JOHN OF Tin.

HA\*ZA : the Oth of July, 1581.

318 LETTERS.

LETTER II.

TO THE RELIGIOUS OF VEAS.

Hcyives them tome spiritual advice, full of heavenly instruction, and worthy

of perpetual remembrance.

JESUS AND MART

Be in your souls, my daughters in Christ.

Your letter greatly consoled me, and may our Lord reward

you for it. It was not from want of will that I have refrained

from writing to you, for truly do I desire for you all possible

good ; but because it seemed to me that enough had been

already said to effect all that was needful, and that what is

wanting to you, if indeed anything be wanting, is not writing

or speaking whereof ordinarily there is more than enough

but silence and work. For whereas speaking distracts,

silence and action collect the thoughts, and strengthen the

spirit. As soon therefore as a person understands what has

been said to him for his good, he has no further need to hear

or to discuss ; but to set himself in earnest to practise what

he has learnt with silence and attention, in humility,

charity, and contempt of self ; not turning aside incessantly

to seek after novelties which serve only to satisfy the desire

in outward things failing however to satisfy it really and

to leave it weak and empty, devoid of interior virtue. The

result is unprofitable in every way ; for a man who, before he

has digested his last meal, takes another the natural heat

being wasted upon both cannot convert all this food into the

substance of his body, and sickness follows. It is most neces-

sary, my daughters, to know how to preserve our spirit beyond

the reach of the devil and of our own sensuality, or we shall

find ourselves unawares at a great loss, and strangers t<> tin-

\i rt ues of Christ, and appear in the end with our labour lost

and our wurk dune the wrong way. The lamps which we

WORK, :. AM m: MLI'N Hi

believed to be alight will be found extinguished in our

hands, because the breath whereby we thought to keep them

burning has served rather to blow them out To avert this

evil, and to preserve our spirit, as I have said, there is no

surer remedy than to suffer, to work, to be silent and to close

our senses, accustoming ourselves to solitude, and seeking to

forget and to be forgotten by creatures, and to be indifferent

to whatever may happen, even if the world were to come to

an end. Never fail, whatever may befall you, be it good or

evil, to keep your heart quiet and calm in the tranquillity of

love, that so it may be ready to suffer all things which may

come upon you. For so momentous a thing is perfection, and

so priceless the treasure of spiritual joy, that it is God's will

t his should be barely sufficient; for it is impossible to make pro-

gress but by the way of virtuous doing and silent suffering. I

have heard, my daughters, that the soul which is easily drawn

talk and converse with creatures, pays little heed to the

fylpresence of God ; for if it remembered Him, it would be soon

<'rawn forcibly inwards, loving silence and avoiding all ex-

onversation ; as God wills that the soul should delight

II 'in rather than in any creature\* however pleasing and

ofitable it may be. I commend myself to your charitable

ayera ; and do you rest assured that, scant as is my char

in so bound up in you that I never forget those to whom I

owe so much in our Lord. May He be with us all Amen.

FR. JOHN or THE CROSS.

m GRANADA : the 22nd of Nov. 1587.

320 LETTERS.

LETTER HI.

TO MOTHER ELEANORA BAPTIST, PRIORESS OF THE CONVEiNT

AT VEAS.

The Blessed Father consoles her under an affliction which she

was suffering.

JESUS

Be in your soul. Think not, my daughter in Christ, that

I have not sorrowed over your labours and sufferings, and

those of your companions ; though when I consider that as

God has called you to an apostolical life, that is to a life

of contempt, He is now leading you in that way, I cannot

but rejoice thereat. God wills, indeed, that Religious be so

wholly and absolutely Religious that they shall have done

with all things, and that all things shall have done with

them; inasmuch as He is pleased to be their riches, their

consolation, their glory, and their bliss. God has, moreover,

conferred a great grace upon your Reverence, for now, for-

getting all other things, you may enjoy Him to the utmost

of your desire, caring nothing, in your love of God, t'.-r

what may come upon you, since you are no longer your own,

but His. Let me know whether your departure is certain,

and whether the Mother Prioress is coming. I commend

myself especially to my daughters Magdalen and Anna and

the rest, not having leisure to write to each of them

separately.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From GBANADA : the 8th February, 1588.

REMEDY

1. 1 TIKI! IV.

TO MOTHER ANNE OF S. ALBERT, PRIORESS OF THE BAREFOOTED

CARMELITES OF CARAVACA.

// makes known to her by a prophetical inspiration the state of her soul,

tmd delivers her from temples.

JESUS

]! in your soul. How long, my daughter, will you ni-rl t

be carried in the arms of others ? I desire now to see in you

a great detachment of spirit, and such a freedom from any

dependance upon creatures, that all the powers of hell may

be unable to disturb you. What useless tears have you been

shedding in these last days ! How much precious time, think

you, have these scruples caused you to throw away ? If you

would communicate your troubles to me, go straight to that

spotless mirror of the Eternal Father His only Be^r

Son ; for there do I daily behold your soul, and without doubt

you will come away consoled, and have no more need to beg

at the door of beggars.

Your servant in Christ,

.IMIIN oi THE CROSS.

1 :.'- VDA.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME RELIGIOUS.

JESUS

your soul, dearest daughter in Christ. Though you

say nothing to me I have something to say to you ; and that

is, to bid you close the entrance of your soul to those vain

fears \vhi.-h make the spirit cowardly. Leave to our Lord

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LETTERS.

that which He has given and daily gives, and think n<>t t<>

measure God by the narrowness of your own capacity, for

not thus must we deal with Him. Prepare yourself to

receive a great grace from our Lord.

Your servant in Christ,

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From GRANADA.

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME RELIGIOUS.

The Uofy Father informs her of the fottndation of the monastery at Cordova,

and of the removal of the community of Nuns in Seville.

JESUS

Be in your soul. I wrote to you in haste when I left Granada

for the foundation at Cordova. I have since received your

letter there, and those of the gentlemen who went to Madrid,

thinking that they should find me at the congregation. \'<\*\\

must know, however, that this meeting has never taken pi: KM ,

for I have been waiting to finish these visitations and founda-

tions which our Lord has hastened forward in such wise that

there has been no time to spare. The Friars have been received

at Cordova with the greatest joy and solemnity on the part of

the whole city. No Order has been better received tin TO.

All the Clergy and Confraternities of Cordova assembled

together on the occasion, and there was a solemn proc

of the Most Holy Sacrament from the Cathedral Church

all the houses being hung with tapestry with great < u-

course of people, as on the Feast of Corpus Christi.

f l'h is took place on the Sunday after Ascension Day, and

the Bishop preached, praising us much in his sermon. The

house is in the best part of the city, and belongs to the.

Cathedral. I am now busied at Seville with the removal of

CAKMELITE FOUNDATIO ;j ;

MI Xuns, who have bought one of the principal houses at a

cost of about 14,000 ducate, being worth more than 20,000.

They are now established there. His Eminence the Cardinal

is to place the Blessed Sacrament in their chapel with great

solemnity on the Feast of S. Barnabas. Before ray depar-

ture I intend to establish another house of Friars here, so

that there will be two of our Order in Seville. Before the

Feast of S. John I shall set forth for Ecija, where, with the

I >i vine blessing, we shall found another; thence to Malaga;

and then to the congregation. I wish I had authority to

make this foundation, as I had for the others. I do not

expect much difficulty ; but I hope in God that so it will be,

and at the congregation I will do what I can ; and you may

say so to these gentlemen to whom I am writing.

Be pleased to send me the b'ttle book containing the Stanzas

of ttie Spouse, which I think Sinter - - of the Mother of

God will by this time have copied for me. Remember to

present my humble respecte to Senor Gonzalo Muiioz, to

whom I do not write for fear of being troublesome to him,

:h.| l>ecause your Reverence will make known to him that

1 1 I have her vou.

Dearest Daughter in Christ,

Your Servant,

FB. JOHN OF TUB CROSS.

From SITILLB : June, 1588.

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LETTER VII.

TO F. AMBROSE MARIANO OF S. BENEDICT, PRIOR OF MADRID.

Containing wholesome instructions for the training of Novices.

JESUS

Be with your Reverence. Our need of Religious is very great,

as your Reverence knows, for the multitude of foundations

which we are making. It is therefore necessary that your

Reverence should have patience and allow Father Michael to

leave this place, and wait at Pastrana for the Father Provin-

cial ; the Foundation of the Convent of Molina being nearly

completed. It has seemed good to the Fathers also to assign

to your Reverence a Sub-Prior, and they have made choice

of Father Angelo for that office, believing that he will agree

perfectly with the Prior, which is a point of the utmost im-

portance in every religious house. Your Reverence will give

to each of these Fathers his letters, and will not fail to take

care that no Priest meddle or converse with the Novices, it

being well known to your Reverence that nothing is more

injurious to them than to pass through many hands, or to

be managed by any but their own master. Since, however,

you have so many under your care, it is reasonable that your

work should be lightened by the assistance of Father Angelo.

You can therefore give him the necessary authority, as the

authority of Sub-Prior is also conferred upon him to give

him greater weight in the house.

It seemed that Father Michael was no longer much needed

here, and that he might do greater service to the Order else-

where. Of Father Gratian I have nothing new to coiimm-

icate. Father Antony is now here.

FB. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From SEGOVIA : Nov. 9, 1688.

RETIREMENT, SHU -DKMAL, DETACH M KM . 325

LETTER VIIL

TO A YOUNG LADY, AT MADRID, WHO DESIRED TO BECOME

A BAREFOOTED CARMELITE, AND WHO WAS AFTERWARDS

PROFESSED IN A CONVENT AT ARENAS, IN NEW CASTILE,

AFTERWARDS TRANSFERRED TO GUADALAXARA.

JESUS

Be in your soul. Your messenger came at a time when I was

unable to reply before he left the place, and now, on his re-

turn, he is waiting for my letter. May God ever grant you,

my daughter, His holy grace, that always and in all things

you may be wholly occupied with His holy love ; for to this are

you bound, inasmuch as for this end He created and redeemed

you. As to the three questions which you have proposed to

me, I could say much more than time and the brevity which

beseems a letter will allow. I will, however, suggest three

points, the consideration of which you will find very profit-

able.

With regard to the sins which God so greatly abhors, that He

was constrained to die because of them, it is expedient, in order

ly to root them out, and never to commit any, to have

as little intercourse with people as possible, avoiding their

society, and conversing with them only when strictly obliged

to do so. For all such conversation, beyond what necessity or

the reason absolutely requires, has never profited any man,

however holy he may have been. To this watch tulm-ss a<M

an exact and loving observance of the law of God.

With regard to the Passion of Our Lord, endeavour to

chastise your body with <li~.-ivti.ni, to bate and to mortify

yourself, and never in anything to follow your own will and

your own im-1 hint ion, seeing that these were the causes of

His death and passion. Whatever you may do, do it all under

the advice of your director. Aa to tin- third point, the con-

11 of heavenly glory, to meditate upon and love it

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aright, we must hold all the riches of the world and all its

pleasures to be mere dross, and vanity, and weariness, as, in

truth, they are ; and make no account of anything, however

great and precious it may be, but only to become pleasing to

God ; because the best things here below, when compared with

the eternal good for which God created us, are vile and bitter ;

and yet, brief as is their bitterness and deformity, it shall abide

for ever in the soul which has chosen them for its portion.

I have not forgotten your matter ; but at present, much

as I desire it, I can do nothing for its furtherance. Recom-

mend it earnestly to our Lord, and take our Lady and S.

Joseph as your advocates with Him.

Kemember me especially to your mother, to whom, as

well as to yourself, this letter is addressed ; and do you both

pray for me, and in your charity ask your friends to do the

same. May God give you His Spirit.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From SEGOVIA : February, 1589.

LETTER IX.

TO A SPIRITUAL SON IN RELIGION, TEACHING HIM HOW TO

OCCUPY HIS WILL WITH GOD BY WITHDRAWING IT FROM

PLEASURE AND JOY IN CREATED THINGS.

The peace of JESUS CHRIST, my son, be ever in your soul.

I have received the letter of your Reverence, wherein you

tell me of the great desire you have, given you by Our Lord,

to occupy your will with Him alone, loving Him above all

things, and wherein you also ask me for directions how to

obtain your end. I rejoice that God has given you such

holy desires, and I shall rejoice the more at their fulfilment.

Remember then that all pleasure, joy, and affections come

upon the soul through the will and the desire of those tilings

THING GOOD BUT GOD. 327

which seem good, befitting, and pleasurable. Now, because

these things seem to be pleasing and precious, the affections

of the will are attracted by them, and the will hopes for them,

delighting in them when it possesses them, and dreads the

loss of them. The soul, therefore, by reason of these affec-

tions and joys, is disturbed and disquieted.

In order then to annihilate and mortify these emotions of

pleasure in all things that are not God, your Reverence will

observe, that everything in which the will can have a distinct

joy is sweet and delectable, because pleasant in its eyes ; but

no delectable thing in which it can have joy and delight can

be God, for as God is not cognisable by the apprehensions of

the other faculties, neither can He be by the pleasure and

desires of the will. In this life, as the soul cannot taste of

God essentially, so all the sweetness and delight of which it is

< .if;tl.l', and, however great it may be, cannot be God, for

r tin- will takes pleasure in and desires asadistinrt

thing, it desires so far as it knows it to be that which it longs

for. For as the will has never tasted of God as He is, nor

ever known Him under any apprehension of the desire, and

cannot therefore comprehend what He is, so its taste can

never know what He is ; its very being, desire, and taste can

never know how to desire God, because II. k tl>ove and be-

yond all its powers.

It is, therefore, plain that no distinct object among those

in which the will rejoices, can be God ; and for that reason,

to be united with Him.it must empty itself, cast away

every ly affection of the desire, every satisfaction it

may distinctly have, high and low, temporal and spiritual, so

that, purified and cleansed from all unruly satisfactions, joys

and desires, it may be wholly occupied, with all its affections,

in loving God. F.r it the will could in any way compre-

hend God and be unit.-.l with Him, it cannot be through any

capacity of the desire, but only by love; and as all delight.

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sweetness, and joy, of which the will is sensible, is not love,

it follows that none of these pleasing impressions can be t In-

adequate means of uniting the will to God: those means an-

really an act of the will.

Now, as an act of the will is perfectly distinct from the feel-

ing which attends it, it is by that act that union with God is

wrought that act ends in Him, and is love; and not by the

impressions and apprehensions of the desire which are in the

soul as ends themselves, and not as means of union. Truu,

these impressions may serve as motives of love, if the will

uses them for the purpose of advancing, and not otherwi>-.

These sweet impressions of themselves do not lead the soul

to God, but rather cause it to rest upon them : but an act of

the will to love God causes the soul to put its whole affection,

joy, delight, contentment, and love in Him only, casting

everything else aside, and loving Him above all things.

For this reason, then, if any one is moved to love God by

that sweetness he feels, he casts that sweetness away from

him, and fixes his love upon God, Whom he does not f < 1 -.

but if he allowed himself to rest in that sweetness and delight

which he feels, dwelling upon them with satisfaction, that

would be to love the creature, and that which is of it, and t>

make the motive an end. The issue then would be that t!>.

act of the will would be vitiated, for as God is incomprehen-

sible and inaccessible, the will, in order to direct its act of

love unto God, must not direct it to that which is tangible

and capable of being reached by the desire, but must direct

it to that which it cannot comprehend nor reach thereby. In

this way the will loves that which is certain and true, to the

satisfaction of faith, in emptiness and darkness as to its own

feelings, above all that it can understand by the operations of

the intellect, believing and loving in a higher way than that

of the understanding.

He then is very unwise, who, when sweetness and spiritual

delight fail him, thinks for that reason that God also has

LOVE GOD FOR GODS SAKE. 320

failed him ; and when he has that sweetness and delight,

's and is glad, thinking for that reason that God is

with him. More unwise still is he who goes about seeking

for sweetness in God, rejoices in it, and dwells upon it ; for, in

so doing, he is not seeking after God with the will grounded

in the emptiness of faith and charity, but only in spiritual

sweetness and delight, which is a created thing, following

herein his own will and fond pleasure. Such an one does not

love God purely above all things ; that is, the whole strength

of the will is not directed to God only ; for by clinging to

and resting on the creature by desire, the will cannot ascend

upwards beyond it to God Who is inaccessible. It is impos-

sil.lr for the will to attain to the sweetness and delight of the

I >i\ iue union, to feel the sweet and loving embraces of God,

otherwise than in detachment, in refusing to the desire every

pleasure in the things of Heaven and earth, for that is the

meaning of those words of the Psalmist : \* Open thy mouth

an. 1 I will fill it.'\* Now, in this place 'the mouth' of

the will is desire: that mouth opens, when not filled or

himlrrrl with the morsels of its own satisfactions: for when

i the desire is intent upon anything, it is then shut, because out

i of God everything is shut up.

Tip- sniil thru that is to advance straightway unto <

ami i.i IM- united with Him, must keep the mouth of the \\ill

' -p. 11, luit only for God Himself, in <1 t;u ltm nt from every

morsel of the desire, in order that God may fill it with His

own love and sweetness: it must hunger and thirst after

God alone, seeking its satisfaction in nothing else, seeing that

in thi> lit.- it cannot taste Him as He is. That which maybe

tasted here, if there be a desire for it, hinders the taste of God.

s is what the prophet Isaiah teaches when he Rays:

4 All you that thirst come to the waters/ f II. invites all who

thirst for God only to come to the fulness of the Divine waters

\* I'-alm Ixxx. 11. fliMuah i

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of the union with Him : namely, those who have ' no money '

of the desire. It is most expedient then, for your Reverence,

if you wish to have great peace in your soul, and to reach

perfection, to give up your whole will to God, that it may be

united to Him, and utterly detached from the mean and vile

occupations of earth. May His Majesty make you as spiritual

and as holy as I desire you may be.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

SEOOYIA, April 14, 1589.

LETTER X.

TO MOTHER LEONORA OF 8. GABRIEL, A BAREFOOTED CARMELITE

NUN.

The Holy Father having Kent her from the Convent of Seville to

found that of Cordova, gives her some gjriritital instruction concern-

ing interior solitude and the good government of her Community.

JESUS

Be in your soul, my daughter in Christ. Your letter was

very welcome to me, and I thank God that He has been

pleased to make use of you in this foundation, which His

Majesty has done for your greater profit ; for the more He is

minded to give us, the more does he enlarge our desires,

even leaving us empty that there may be the more space for

Him to fill with blessings. You shall be well repaid for

those which, for the love of your Sisters, you now leave be-

hind you in Seville; for the immense benefits of God can

only be received and contained by empty and solitary hearts ;

and, therefore, because He has a special love for 011, "ur

Lord will have you to be alone for the desire He has to be

your only companion. Your Reverence must therefore apply

your mind to Him alone, and in Him alone content yours. -It',

that in Him you may find all consolation. And true it is that

GOD OUR ONLY HOME. 3H

even were the soul in If\* av< n, if the will were not bent to

love it, the soul would be still unsatisfied. So is it with

God though He be ever with us if our heart be attached to

other things and not fixed on Him alone. I well believe

that those in Seville will be very lonely without your Reveren

I '.lit, perhaps, you have already done all the good there which

you were intended to do, and God wills that you should now

work here, for this will be one of our principal foundations.

To this end, I pray your Reverence to afford all the assistance

you can to the Mother Prioress, with great love and union of

heart in all things; though I know that I have no need to

enforce this upon one of such experience in religion, and so

well instructed in all that is needful for such foundations.

For this reason, we chose your Reverence for this work from

among many less well fitted for it. Be pleased to remember

me particularly to Sister Mary of the Visitation, and to Sister

Joanna of S. Gabriel, to whom I return thanks for her letter.

May God give your Reverence\* His Holy Spirit.

KR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From SEGOVIA, the 8th of July, 1589.

TO MOTHER MARY OF JESUS, PRIORESS OF THE BAREFOOTED

CARMELITES OF CORDOVA.

Containing vteftd leMomfor Religion\* engaged in the foundation of a

new Convent, of which they are to form thefirtt done\*.

JESUS

Be in your soul. You are bound to correspond to the grace

of on n jir>|..rtiin t<> the welcome which you have

received, the tidings of which have rejoiced my heart. It

l.y His appoint in- you entered so poor a dwelling,

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under the heat of such a burning sun. He would have you

to give edification to the people, and to show them that it is

your vocation to follow Christ in destitution of all things ;

so shall those who come to you hereafter learn in what spirit

they must come. I send you all necessary faculties. Be

very careful whom you receive at first, because such will be

those who follow ; and strive to preserve the spirit of poverty

and contempt of all earthly things, being content with God

alone : otherwise be assured that you will fall into a thousand

temporal and spiritual necessities ; and that you will never,

and can never, experience greater necessities than those to

which you voluntarily subject your heart : for the poor in

spirit is content and joyful in the want of all things; having

made very nothingness his all, and having found therein

fulness and freedom in all things. blessed nothingness,

and blessed hiddenness of heart, which is of such surpassing

virtue, which renders all things subject to the soul, suffering

nothing to bring it into subjection, and leaving every thought

free to burn more and more intensely with love ! Salute all the

sisters in our Lord. Tell them that since our Lord has chosen

them for the first stones of this building, they must consider

well what they ought to be, for upon them, as on a strong

foundation, those who follow after them are to be built.

Let them profit by that fervour which God is wont to infuse

into the first founders of a work, to make a wholly new

beginning of the way of perfection ; walking therein in ;ill

humility and entire detachment from all things, both within

and without, no longer at a child's pace, but with a strong

will conformed to their vocation of mortification and pen-

ance. Let them see that Christ costs them something, and

let them not be like those who are ever seeking their own

ease, and looking for consolation either in God or out of

Him. But let them seek to suffer either in Him or out of

Him, 1'v m ;ms of silence, hope, and loving memory. ]\I;ik<-

(..MX GOD BY POSSi: 5TOTHIHO, 333

all this known to Gabriela and the Sisters at Malaga. To

the others I have already written. God grant you His holy

grace. Amen. Y\*. JOHN OF THE CKOSS.

From SEGOYIA : the 28th of July, 1589.

LETTER XII.

TO MOTHER MAGDALEN OF THE HOLT GHOST, A RELIGIOUS OF

THE SAME CONVENT OF CORDOVA.

He treat\* of the spirit which should mark a new foundation.

JESUS

Be in your soul, my daughter in Christ. I rejoice to see the

good resolution expressed in your letter. I bless God, who

provides for all things ! Much need will you have of a

1 purpose in the beginning of this foundation, to bear

poverty, straitness, heat, and labours of all kinds, in such

a manner that none may perceive whether or not all these

things are grievous to you. Consider that for such beginnings

God will not have delicate and feeble souls, far less such as

are lovers of themselves ; and to this end does His Majesty

at such times give a special grace, that they, with moderate

diligence, may advance in ail virtues. It is assuredly a

great grace, and a sign of tin- Divine favour, that, passing by

Ml UTS, He has led you hither. And though it has cost you

much to forsake what you have left behind, you must not

count it much ; for you must in any case have shortly left it

all. In order to have God in all things, we must have

n< tiling at all ; t"r how can the heart, given to one, be given

at all to an.. t her?

I say this also to Sister Joanna, and let her recommend

me to (i 1. M. II- 1" in your heart. Ann n.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From SEOOVU : the 28th of July, 1580.

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LETTER XIII.

TO THE LADY JOANNA DE PEDRAgA, A PENITENT OF TIIK

HOLY FATHER AT GRANADA.

JESUS

Be in your soul. I give Him thanks that He has given me

the grace not to forget the poor, and not to take my ease, as

you suggest. It would be a great pain to me did I believe

that you seriously think what you say. It would be an evil

return on my part for so much kindness, especially when I

have not deserved it. All that is wanting now is that I

should forget you ; but consider how that is to be forgotten

which is ever present to the soul. But as you are now

walking in the darkness and emptiness of spiritual poverty,

you imagine that all things and all men are failing you ;

nor is this wonderful, since you imagine that God Himself

fails you. And yet in truth there is nothing wanting to

you, nor have you need of aid or counsel from any, all

these doubts and fears being without foundation. He who

desires nothing but God does not walk in darkness, however

blind and poor he may seem to himself to be ; and he wh<>

indulges in no presumptuous thoughts, nor seeks his own

satisfaction either in God or in creatures, nor to do his own

will in anything, is in no danger of falling, nor in any need

of counsel. You are in the right path, my daughter ; once

for all, be resigned, and live in peace. What ! are you to

undertake to guide yourself? You would do it well, no

doubt. You have never been in a better state than now, for

you have never been so humble, so submissive; you have

never made so little account of yourself, nor of all the things

in the world put together; you have never seen yourself to

be so bad, nor God to be so good ; you have never served

Him so purely and disinterestedly as now. You are not

running after the imperfections of your own will, seeking

self, as perhaps you once did. What do you mean ? What

Till: SAFE ROAD TO HEAVi :\:\:>

manner of life and conversation do you propose to yourself

in this world ? In what do you imagine the service of God

to consist, except in abstaining from evil, keeping His com-

mandments, and using our whole power and strength in

doing His will ? When we do this, what need have we of

imaginations, other lights, other consolations gathered

here and there, in which ordinarily lurk many snares and

dangers to the soul, which is deceived and led astray by its

appetites and perceptions : its very faculties cause it to err.

It is therefore a singular grace from God when He so darkens

and impoverishes the soul as to leave in it nothing which can

lead it astray. And that it may not go astray, it has nothing

to do but to walk in the beaten path of the laws of God and

of the Church, living solely by faith, obscure and true, in

assured hope and perfect charity, looking for all its blessings

i\vn; living here as pilgrims, beggars, exiles, orphans,

desolate wanderers, possessing nothing, and looking for every-

thing above. Rejoice, then, and put your trust in God, who

has given you these tokens that you can do, nay, that you

t to do, much for Him. If not, you must not be sur-

prised if He should be angry when He finds you so dull,

seeing that He has placed you in so safe a path, and led you

to so secure a haven. Desire nothing u-yond, tranquillise

your soul, which is in a good and safe conliti..n, and go to

communion as usual. Go to confession when you have some

clear matter for the sacrament, but beyond this be not too

eager to speak of your interior. When you have anything

ft to mention, write to me, and that promptly and

frequently, which you can always do through Dona Anna,

if not through the nuns.

I have been somewhat unwell, but am now much better.

Fr. John Evangelist, however, is still suffering. Recommend

liini to God, and me also, my daughter in our Lord.

JOHN or THE Cras.

From SKOOVIA: Oct. 1-th, 1580.

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LETTER XIV.

TO MOTHER MARY OF JESUS, PRIORESS OF CORDOVA.

Containing much profitable advice to those whose office w to govern and

provide for a Community.

JESUS

Be in your soul. My daughter in Christ, the cause of my

not having written to you for so long a time has been rather

the remote position of Segovia than any want of will. For

my good will has ever been, and I trust in God shall ever be,

the same towards you. I feel for you in all your trials. But

I would not have you take too much thought concerning the

temporal provision for your house, lest God should cease to

take thought for it ; and so you should fall into many tem-

poral and spiritual necessities ; for it is our over anxious

solicitude which brings us to want. Cast all your care, my

daughter, upon God, and He will nourish you : for He who

has given and will give the greater, will not fail to give the

Take care that the desire to be in want and poor never

fails you, for that instant your spirit will fail you, and your

virtues will become weak. For if in time past you have

desired poverty, now that you are Superior you should

desire it still more, and love it; for the house must be

ruled, and furnished with virtues and heavenly desires,

rather than by carefulness and arrangements lor the things

of this world; inasmuch as our Lord hath bidden us

to take no thought for our food, or for our raiment, or for

to-morrow. What you have to do is to train your own soul

and the souls of your nuns in all perfection in Religion, in

union with God, and rejoicing in Him alone; and I will

assure you of the rest It seems to me very difficult to

imagine that the other houses will come to your help, when

you are settled in so good a position, and have such e.\e< 1-

ALL FOR THE U; 337

lent nuns. Nevertheless, if I have an opportunity, I will

not fail to do what I can for you.

I wish much consolation to the Mother Sub-Prioress,

and I trust in our Lord that He will give it, and strengthen

her to bear her pilgrimage and exile cheerfully for love of

Him.

Many salutations in our Sovereign Good, to my daughters

Magdalen of S. Gabriel, Mary of S. Paul, Mary of the Visi-

tation, and Mary of S. Francis. May He be ever with your

spirit, my daughter. Amen.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From MADRID : the 20th of June, 1690.

LETTER XV

TO MOTHER ANNE OF JESUS, A BAREFOOTED CARMELITE OF THE

CONVENT OF SEGOVIA.

He coiuole\* for on hit not having been chosen Superior.

JESUS

Be in your soul. Your letter was most grateful to me, and

has added to the obligations I already owe you. That things

have not fallen out as you desired, should be a consolation to

you, and a motive of much thanksgiving to God ; because

sty has thus disposed them to the greater benefit <t

us all. It remains only that we submit our will in this, that

:iay see it in its true li^ht. For when things befall

it we do not like, they seem to us evil and o>ntr.-ir\,

'y never BO good and pr.-tif.-ible to our souls. But in

this case there is plainly n<> evil either t<> me or to any other.

n, indeed, it is most favourable ; for being free from the

care of souls, I may, by God's help, it I like, enjoy peace

and solitude, and the blessed fruit of forgetfulness of self

and of all created things.

\M|.. II.

UETTEB8,

And others, also, will receive benefit by my being set

aside; for so will they be delivered from falling into the

defects which by reason of my miseries they would have

committed. What I beg of you, then, my daughter, is to

pray to God that He will continue to me this grace ; for I

fear that they will send me to Segovia, and that I shall not

be left at liberty. But I shall do my utmost to escape from

this burthen also. However this may be, Mother Anne of

Jesus will not get out of my hands as she expects, and so

will have no occasion to die of grief at losing the opportu-

nity, as she thinks, of becoming a great saint. But whether

going or staying, wherever or however I may be, I will never

forget her nor blot her out of the book of my remembrance,

because I really desire her eternal good. Now, therefore,

until God gives it in Heaven, let her exercise herself con-

tinually in the virtues of patience and mortification, endea-

vouring to become likened in some measure, through suffer-

ing, to our great God, who was humbled and crucified for us,

because our life here is good for no other end but to imitate

Him. May His Majesty preserve you and make you

increase daily in His love, as His holy and well-beloved

child. Amen.

FK. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From MADRID: the 6th of July, 1591.

LETTER XVI.

TO MOTHER MARY OF THE INCARNATION, PRIORESS OF THE

SAME CONTENT.

On the same subject as the preceding.

JESUS

Be in your soul. Trouble not yourself, my daughter, about

what concerns me, since it troubles me not. The

MAX I'lIOPOSES; GOD DISPOSES. 339

thine: which grieves me much is to see the blame laid upon

those to whom it does not belong ; for the Author of these

things is not man, but God, Who knows what is best for

us, and orders all things for our greater good. Think of

this only, that all is ordained by God. And do you love

where there is no love, and you shall have love. May His

Majesty preserve you, and make you grow in His love.

Amen.

FR. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

From MADRID : the 6th of July, 1691.

LETTER XVII.

TO DONA ANNA DE PENALOSA.

lie informs her of his recent illness, and congratulates her on the ordination

of a Priest.

JESUS

Be in your soul, my daughter. I have received here in

IVfiurla tin- letter brought me by your servant, and I prize

exceedingly the kindness thus shown to me. I am going

to-morrow to Ubeda, for the cure of a feverish attack,

\\hirh, having hung about me for more than a week past,

has obliged me to have recourse to medical treatment. It

is my desire, however, to return here immediately, as I find

great good in this holy solitude. As to the advice you give

me not to go with F. Antony, be assured that in this, as in

all other matters of the kind, I will be careful. I rejoice

ly to hear that Don Luis is now a priest of God ;

may he be so for many a year, and may His Divine Majesty

i'ul til all the desires of his soul. Oh, what a blessed state

has he now entered for casting away all solicitude, and

speedily enriching his soul ! Congratulate him from

\* a

340 LETTEBa

me. I dare not venture to ask him sometimes to remeinln-r

me in his Mass, though I, as in duty bound, shall always

remember him; for never shall I, how forgetful soever 1 1 B,

fail to recollect him, closely bound as he is with the

whom I ever bear in my memory. I salute my dau

Dona Inez very heartily in our Lord ; and I beg both

brother and sister to pray God for me, that He will be

pleased to prepare me to go speedily to Him.

Now I remember nothing further that I have to write

to you, and besides, the fever will not suffer me to add

any more. But for this, gladly would I write at much

greater length.

FK. JOHN OF THE Ci

From PENTTELA : Sept. 21, 1591.

TEST OF -liAYKIi llf.MIL 341

THE FOLLOWING IS T1IK ol'IMoN AND ADVICE WHICH THB

-.SED FATHER GAVE TOUCHING THE SPIRIT AND

METHOD OF PRATER OF ONE OF THE NUNS OF HIS

ORDER.

IN the affective prayer of this soul, there are, as it seems

to me, five defects, so that I cannot consider her spirit to be

good. The first is, that she has a great fondness for her

own way : and a true spirit consists in great detachment

all desire. The second is, that she is too confident,

and has too little fear of delusions; in such a case the Spirit

of God is never present to keep a soul from sin.\* The third

is, that she is inclined to persuade people into the belief that

she is in a good and high state : this is not the fruit of a

true spirit: for that, on the contrary, would wish to be

lightly esteemed, and despised, and does despise itself.

The fourth and the chief is, tluit tin\* fruits of humility are

not visible in the state of this soul ; when these gifts as

she says here are real, they are ordinarily never commu-

.1 t tin- soul without first undoing and annihilating

it in an interior abasement of humility. Now, if they had

wrought this effect in her, she could not fail to say some-

thing, or rather a good deal, about it ; because the first sub-

jects that would suggest themselves to her to speak about,

and make mu-h of. an- th- fruits of humility; and these in

us are so effectual, that it is impossible to con-

ceal them. Though they are not equally observable in all aj-

usions of God, yet these, which she calls Union, are never

1 without th in. Because a soul is humbled l><t.>r< it is

t is good for me that Thou hast humbled

me.' J The fifth i-. Mi.it the style and language she uses do

t Prov. xviii. 12.

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not seem to me those of the spirit she refers to; t'<>r thnt

spirit teaches a style which is more simple, and free t'nm

affectation, and which avoids all exaggeration: and such is

not the one before me. All this that she says : God spoke to

me : I spoke to (rod : seems nonsense.

What I would say is this : she should not be required nor

permitted to write anything on these matters : and her

confessor should not seem to hear of them willingly, except

to disparage and set aside what she has to say. Let her

superiors try her in the practice of virtue only, particularly

in that of contempt of self, humility, and obedience ; and

then at the sound of this blow will come forth that gentle-

ness of soul in which graces so great have been wrought.

These tests must be sharp, for every evil spirit will suffer

a good deal for his own credit.

SPIRITUAL MAXIMS.

NOTE.

These maxims in the earlier editions of the Saint's

works did not exceed a hundred in number. But in the

later editions a new arrangement has been adopted : tin-

maxims have been classified, and others have been added to

them, taken from the Treatises and the Letters, with a

view, apparently, of increasing the number to 365. In this

the editors have failed, for two of the maxims have been

repeated, and in this translation they are only 363.

SPIKITUAL MAXIMS.

PROLOGUE.

O MY GOD, sweetness and joy of my heart, behold my soul

for love of Thee will occupy itself with these maxims of love

and light For though the words thereof are mine, I have

not the meaning and the power, and these are more pleasing

to Thee than the language and the knowledge thereo

Nevertheless, Lord, it may be that some may be drawn

by them to serve and love Thee, and profit where I fail :

that will be a consolation to me, if through me Thou shalt

tiii'l in others what Thou canst not find in me. my

Lord, Thou lovest discretion, and light, and love, more

than all the other operations of the soul; so then let these

maxims f urn Mi discretion to the wayfarer, enlighten him l>y

the way, and supply him with motives of love for his jour-

ney. Away, then, with the rhetoric of this world, sounding

words and the dry eloquence of human wisd<

ive, never pleasing unto Thee, l^et us speak to the

heart words flowing with sweetness and love, and such as Thou

deiightest in. Thou wilt be pleased herein, my God, and

it may be that Th.m wilt also remove the hindrance and the

stones of stumbling from before many souls who fall through

ignorance, and who for want of light wander out of the right

way, though tlnv think they are walking in it, and folio

the footsteps of Thy most sweet Son Jesus Christ our I

and imitating lli> lit.-, estate, and virtues according to the rule

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of detachment and of spiritual poverty. But, Father <>[

mercy, do Thou give us this grace, for without Thee, Lord,

we shall do nothing.

I.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

1. There is no progress but in the imitation of Christ,

who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and the Gate by which

he who will be saved must enter. Every spirit, therefore,

that will walk in sweetness at its ease, shunning the imitation

of Christ, is, in my opinion, nothing worth.

2. Your first care must be to be anxiously and lovingly

earnest in your endeavours to imitate Christ in all your

actions ; doing everyone of them to the uttermost of your

power, as our Lord Himself would have done them.

3. Every satisfaction offered to the senses which is no

God's honour and glory you must renounce and reject I'm

the love of Jesus Christ, Who, while upon earth, had, and

sought for, no other pleasure than doing the will of His

Father; this, He said, was His meat and drink.

4. In none of your actions whatever should you take any

man, however holy he may be, for your example, be

Satan is sure to put his imperfections forward so as to attract

your attention. Rather imitate Jesus Christ, Who is supremely

perfect and supremely holy. So doing you will never lali

into error.

5. Inwardly and outwardly live always crucified with

Christ, and you will attain unto peace and contentment of

.spirit, and in your e yon shall possess your soul.

6. Let Christ crucified alone be enough for you; with Him

suffer, with Him take your rest, never rest nor suffer without

Hirrr; striving with all your might to rid yourself of all

selfish affections and inclinations in the annihilation of

IIAITIXKSS AND Jil.HUY Of THii IIOSS. 347

7. He who makes any account whatever of himself, neither

denies himself nor follows Christ.

8. Love till Dilations more than all good things, and do not

imagine that you are doing anything when you endure them ;

so shall you please Him who did not hesitate to die for you,

9. If you wish t<> attain to the possession of Christ, never

seek Him without the Cross.

10. He who seeks not the Cross of Christ, seeks not the

glory of Christ.

11. Desire to make yourself in suffering somewhat like

\_^reat God, humiliated and crucified; for life, if not an

i.n <f Him, is worth nothing.

1 -2. What does he know who does not know how to suffer

for Christ ? The greater and the heavier the sufferings when

suffering is in question the better is his lot who suffers.

13. All men desire to enter into the treasures and consola-

tions of God ; but few desire to enter into tribulations and

sorrows for the Son of God.

1 1. Jeans Christ is but little known of those who

themselves His fi for we see them seeking in Him

tlii-ir own oomfbd . Borrows.

II.

THK T IDEOLOGICAL VlMl

!.". Because it is the function of the tln-..l,. u nr:il virtues to

withdraw the soul from nil that is less than God, it is t

also to unite it with Him.

Without walking truly in tl. . of these three

mp.Kxihi,. t.. : ;it tain to the perfect love of God.

KMIII.

17. The way of sound and safe, and along

souls must journey on from virtue to

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eyes against every object of sense and of clear and particular

perception.

18. When the inspirations are from God they are always

in the order of the motives of His Law, and of the Faith, in

the perfection of which the soul should ever draw nearer and

nearer on the way to God.

19. The soul that travels in the light and verities of the

Faith is secured against error, for error proceeds ordinarily

from our own proper desires, tastes, reflections, and under-

standing, wherein there is generally too much or too little ;

and hence the inclination to that which is not seemly.

20. By Faith the soul travels protected against the devil,

its strongest and craftiest foe ; and S. Peter knew of no

stronger defence against him when he said : Eesist him,

strong in faith.

21. The soul that would draw near unto God and unite

itself with Him, must do so by not comprehending rather

than by comprehending, in utter forgetfulness of created

things ; because it must exchange the mutable and compre-

hensible for the immutable and the incomprehensible, Who

is God.

22. Outward light enables us to see that we may not fall ;

it is otherwise in the things of God, for there it is better not

to see, and the soul, not seeing, is in greater security.

23. It being certain that in this life we know God better

by what He is not than by what He is, it is necessary, it' \sv

are to draw near unto Him, that the soul must deny, to the

uttermost, all that may be denied of its apprehensions, both

natural and supernatural.

24. All apprehension and knowledge of supernatural tl

cannot help us to love God so much as the least act of living

Faith and Hope made in detachment from all things.

25. As in natural generation no new form results witlmut

the corruption of the one previously existing for this obstructs

Till: Ti or FAITH. ;'4"

the former by reason of the contrariety between them so,

while the soul is under the dominion of the sensual and

animal spirit, the pure and heavenly spirit can never enter

within it.

26. Let no created thing have a place in your heart if you

would have the face of God pure and clear in your soul ;

yea, rather empty your spirit of all created things, and you

will walk in the Divine light; for God resembles no created

thing.

27. The soul is most recollected in Faith; for then the

Holy Ghost gives it light : the more pure and refined the

soul in a perfect living Faith, the greater the infusion of

Charity, and the greater the communication of supernatural

gifts and light

28. One of the greatest gifts of God to the soul in this life

not permanent but transient is that deep sense and

rstanding of God by which it feels and understands

ly, that it can neither understand nor feel Him at all.

29. The soul that leans upon any understanding, sense, or

feeling of its own all this being very little and very unlike

to God in order to travel on the right road, is most easily

led astray or impeded, because it is not perfectly blind in

Faith, which is its true guide.

30. There is one thing in our day that ought to make us

1 : persons who have hardly begun to make their medi-

tatioi y seem to hear anything during their recollec-

tion, pronounce it to have come from God; so they tell 11%

God has spoken or I have had an answer from God. In

truth all this is nothing: these persons have been speaking to

uselves, out of a longing for such communications.

. He who should now enquire of God by vision or reve-

i would otV. n.l Him, because he does not fix his eyes upon

<>ne. To such an one the answer of God is: T

n. \ Moved Son, iu \Vhmn I am well pleased, hear Him, and

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do not seek for new instructions, for in Him I have spoken

and revealed all that can be asked or desired, and I have

given Him to be your Brother, Master, Companion, Ransom,

and Reward.

32. We must be guided in all things by the teaching of

Christ and His Church, and thereby seek the remedy for our

spiritual ignorances and infirmities : it is thus that we shall

obtain abundant relief ; and all that goes beyond this is not

only curiosity but great rashness.

33. You are not to believe that which reaches you in a

supernatural way, but only that which reaches you through

the teaching of Christ and His ministers.

34. The soul that seeks after revelations sins venially at

least; so does the director who encourages or allows that

seeking, be the end sought never so good : there is no neces-

sity for this, seeing that we have our natural reason and the

Evangelical Law to guide us in all things.

35. The soul that desires revelations undermines the perfect

guidance of the Faith, and opens a door for Satan to deceive

it by false revelations ; for he knows well how to disguise

them so as to make them appear good.

36. The wisdom of the Saints consists in knowing how to

direct the will courageously to God, in the perfect fulfilment

of His law and His holy counsels.

in.

HOPE.

37. That which moves and overcomes God is earnest Hope ;

in order to attain to the union of love, the soul must journey

in hope of God alone ; for without it nothing will be obtained.

38. A living Hope in God gives the soul such courage ;m<l

elevation in the things of everlasting life, that it looks on

nor on.

tlii< world so indeed it is as dry, weak, valueless, and dead,

in comparison with that it hopes for hereafter.

39. The soul in Hope strips itself of all the trappings of

thi< world, set heart upon nothing, hoping for nothing

in it <>r t\*f it, clad in the vesture of hope of everlasting life.

40. Through a living Hope in God the heart is so raised up

above the world and delivered from all its snares, that it can

ier be touched nor even be seen by it.

41. In all your trials have recourse to God in all confidence,

and you will be comforted, enlightened, and instructed.

42. The soul that retains the slightest desire for earthly

things, is more unseemly and impure in the way of God

than if it were labouring under the heaviest and most

impure temptations, provided the natural will did not consent

t> them; such a soul may, with greater confidence, draw

near to God in obedience to the Divine will ; for our Lord

hath said: Come unto me all you who labour and are

heavily burdened, and I will refresh you.

43. Have an interior desire that God may give you all He

knows to be needful tr you, to His greater honour and glory.

Have a O'litinual trust in God, esteeming in yourself

and in ymir luvthren that \\hk-h He most esteems ; namely,

spiritual good.

45. The more God gives, the more He makes us desire ;

until He leaves us empty that He may fill us with I!

bleningt,

46. So pleased is God with the soul hoping in Him, and

looking to nothing else, that it may be truly said the more

that soul hopes for, the more it obtains.

FKAR OF GOD.

. ou have sweetness and delight, draw near to God

in fear and in truth, and you will never be deceived nor

entangled in van :

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48. Do not rejoice in temporal prosperity, because you do

not certainly know that your eternal life is secure.

49. Though a man prosper in all his undertakings, and

though every wish of his heart may be gratified, he ought in

such a case to fear rather than rejoice; for this multiplies the

occasions of forgetting God, and the risks of offending Him.

50. Do not presume upon vain joy ; knowing how many and

how grievous are the sins you have committed, and not know-

ing whether you are pleasing unto God. But always fear

and always hope in God.

51. How can you venture to live without fear, seeing that

you must appear before God to give account of your lightest

words and thoughts ?

52. Lo ! many are called and few are chosen ; and if you

are not careful, your final ruin is more certain than your

salvation ; for the way that leadeth to eternal life is strait.

53. As in the hour of death you will certainly be sorry that

you have not employed all your time in the service of God,

why is it that you do not now so employ your time, as you

will wish you had done when you shall come to die ?

IV.

CHARITY.

54. The strength of the soul lies in its faculties, passions,

and desires; if these be directed towards God by the will,

and withdrawn from all that is not God, the soul then keeps

its strength for Him and loves Him with all its might, as our

Lord commands us.

55. Charity is like a fine robe of many colours, which lends

grace, beauty, and freshness, not only to the white garment

of Faith and the green vesture of Hope, but also to all the

virtues; for without Charity no virtue is pleasing in the

sight of God.

i' AM) VALUE OP CIIAUITV. '.>:,;l

56. The worth of love does not consist in high feelings,

but in detachment: in patience under trials for the sake of

God Whom we love.

57. God has a greater esteem for the lowest degree of

purity of conscience, than for the greatest service you can

render Him if that be wanting.

58. To seek God for Himself is to be without every conso-

1 it ion for His sake: an inclination to the choice of all that

is most unpleasing, whether in the things of God or in the

things of the world ; this is to love God.

59. Do not imagine that God is pleased with many good

works, so much as with the doing of them with a good will,

without self-seeking or human respect.

60. Herein a man may know whether he really loves God :

Is he satisfied with anything less than God ?

61. As the hair which is frequently dressed is the cleaner,

.-vl is the more easily dressed upon all occasions, so is it with

the soul which frequently examines its thoughts, words, and

works, doing all things for the love of God.

62. As tin hair is to be dressed from the t<>p <t the head if

it is to be thoroughly cleansed, so our good works must hn\\*-

U^iiininjj in the height of the love of God, if they are

> thoroughly pure and clean.

63. To restrain the tongue and the thoughts, and to set

the affections regularly upon God, quickly sets the soul on

fire in a Divine way.

HI. Study always to please God; pray that His will

may be accomplished in you; love Him much, fr it is

: in.-.

65. All our goodness is a loan ; God b the owner ; God

th, and His work is God.

66. We gain nun. 1,\ the goods of God in one hour, than

in our whole life by our own.

'.:. Out Kurd has always manifested the treasures of M

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wisdom and His Spirit to men : but' now that wickedness

manifests itself the more, He manifests them still more.

68. In one sense the purification of a soul from the con-

tradictions of desire is a greater work of God than its creation

out of nothing ; that nothing offered no resistance to His

Majesty : not so the desires of the creature.

69. That which God intends is to make us God by parti-

cipation, He being God by nature ; as the fire changes every-

thing into fire.

70. At the close of life you will be examined as to your

love : learn then to love God as He wishes to be loved, and

give up all that is your own.

71. The soul that seeks God wholly, must give itself

wholly to Him.

72. New and imperfect lovers are like new wine, easily

spoiled until the sum of imperfections has been cleared

away, and the heat with gross satisfaction of the senses has

died out.

73. The passions rule over the soul and assail it in propor-

tion to the weakness of the will in God, and to its dependence

on creatures; for then it rejoices so easily in things which

do not deserve to be rejoiced in ; hopes for that which is of

no profit, and grieves over that in which perhaps it ought to

rejoice, and fears where there is nothing to be afraid of.

74. They provoke the Divine Majesty to anger exceed-

ingly, who, seeking for spiritual food, are not content with

God only, but intermingle therewith carnal and earthly

satisfactions.

75. He who loves any other thing with God makes light of

Him, because He puts into the balance with Him that which

is at an infinite distance from Him.

76. As a sick man is too weak for work, so the soul that is

weak in the love of God is also too weak for the practice of

perfect virtue.

(HARITY, THK PKB1 OF TIIK WILL. 355

77. To seek self in God is to seek for comfort and re-

freshment from God; now this is contrary to the pure

love of God.

78. To regard the gifts of God more than God Himself, is

a great evil.

79. Many there are who seek their own pleasure and

comfort in God, and on whom He bestows His gifts and

graces ; but they who seek to please Him and to give Him

something at their own cost setting their own pleasure aside

are very few.

80. Few spiritual persons even among those who think

themselves most advanced attain to a perfect resolution in

well-doing, for they never entirely lose themselves on some

point or other connected with the world or self, despising

appearances and the opinions of men, so as to make their

good works perfect and in detachment from all things for the

sake of Christ.

81. Self-will and self-satisfaction in the works they do so

prevail among men, whether ordinary or more advanced

Christians, that scarcely one is to be found who works simply

for God without looking for some consolation or comfort or

other advantage in his work.

82. Some souls call God their Spouse and their Beloved ;

but He is not really beloved by them, because their heart is

not whole with Him.

83. What good will it do you if you give God one thing

when He asks something else ? Consider what God wills, and

do it, for so will you satisfy your heart better than by .

that to which you are inclined yourself.

To find all satisfaction in God you must be satisfied

with Him only, for in heaven itself, if you did not bend your

will to His will, you would never be satisfied; so is it hnv,

ir heart is set upon anything other than (

85. As aromatic spices exposed to the air gradually lose

A A 1

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their fragrance and the strength of their perfume, so tin-

soul, not recollected in the love of God alone, loses the h- .it

and vigour of virtue.

86. He who seeks nothing but Grod walks not in darkness,

however blind and poor he may be in his own estimation.

87. For a man to be in pain for God is a sign that he has

given himself up to Him, and that he loves Him.

88. He who in the midst of dryness and abandonment is

painfully anxious about Grod, and afraid that he does not

serve Him, offers Him a sacrifice that pleaseth Him well.

89. When Grod is really loved, He hears most readily the

cry of the soul that loves Him.

90. The soul defends itself against its fleshly enemy by

chanty; for where there is a real love of Grod neither the

love of self nor the love of creatures can enter in.

91. The loving soul is meek, gentle, humble, and patient;

the soul that is hard in self-love hardens itself still umit>.

If Thou, O good Jesus, in Thy love dost not make the soul

gentle, it will persist in its natural hardness.

92. The soul that loves is neither wearied nor wearies.

93. Behold the infinite wisdom and the hidden mysteries ;

the peace, the love, the silence of the Divine Bosom: tin-

deep science God teaches there ; what we call anagogic acts

ejaculatory prayer how they set the heart on fire !

94. The perfect love of God cannot subsist without the

knowledge of God and of self.

95. Perfect love naturally seeks nothing, and claims

nothing, for itself, but all for the beloved ; if this be the

case with earthly love, how much more with the love of God?

96. The ancient friends of God scarcely ever fail Him,

because they are raised above all occasions of failure.

97. True love accepts prosperity and adversity with an

equal spirit, that of joy and delight

98. The soul that labours to divest itself of all that is n-.t

PERFECTION OF L"Vj;.

God for God's sake is immediately enlightened by, ami '

formed in, God, in such a way that the soul seems to be God

Himself, uud to possess the things of ( <

99. Satan fears a soul united with God, as he fears God

Himself.

100. The soul, in the union of love, resists even the first

impulses.

lul. Purity of heart is nothing less than the love and

grace of God. Hence our Lord says : Blessed are the pure

in heart; that is, those who love ; for blessedness is given to

nothing less than love.

102. He who truly loves God does not blush before men

for what he does for God ; neither does he conceal his good

works out of shame, though the whole world may condemn

them.

103. He who truly loves God thinks it a great gain to lose

all he has, and his own life, for God.

1 < > 1 . It' the soul had but one glimpse of the boa u t

not only would it desire to .lie that it might see Him for

I. ut it would joyfully undergo a thousand most bitt.-r

deaths to see Him again, if only f..r a moment\*

1 <>.">. lie who acts out of tin- pure love of God, not only

does not perform his actions to be seen of men, but does not

do them even that God may know of them. Sin-h an one, if

!: thought it possible that his good works might escape the

<od, would still perform them with the sain-

and in the same pureness of love.

106. It is a great matter to be nnuh exercised in !

inor- -he soul, mad and consummated 1 1

.t l>e long <1 . - -ith.-r in this life or the n

the vision of God.

K7. A | ire and perfect work, WTOUL u a pure

t, makes a j> n-d-m for its Lord.

108. To the pure in heart hi^h thin<^ and low are profit;

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and minister to their greater purity ; while to the impure,

by reason of their impurity, both the one and the other are

occasions of greater evil.

109. The pure in heart find in all things the knowledge of

God, sweet, chaste, pure, spiritual, joyous, and loving.

PEACE.

110. By keeping guard over the senses, which are the

gates of the soul, we keep also and increase its tranquillity

and purity.

111. Man would never lose peace if he forgot and cast aside

his thoughts and notions, and withdrew from the sight, hear ing,

and discussion of passing events, so far as he well may.

112. If we forget all created things, there is then nothing

to disturb our peace ; nothing to excite our desires. These are

they that disturb it ; for, as the proverb says, What the eye

hath not seen, the heart does not desire.

113. The restless and perturbed soul, not built up in

mortification of the passions and desires, is, as such, incapa-

citated for spiritual good, for that enters only into the soul

which is under control and ordered in peace.

114. God reigns only in the peaceful and unselfish soul.

115. Be tranquil; put away superfluous thoughts, and

make light of whatever may happen ; so shall your service be

pleasing unto God, and you shall rejoice in Him.

1 1 6. Keep your heart in peace ; let nothing in this world

disturb it : all things have an end.

117. Be not made sad by the adverse events of this life,

for you know not the good they bring with them, ordained

in the justice of God, for the everlasting joy of the elect.

118. In all circumstances, however hard they may be, we

should rejoice, rather than be cast down, that we may not lose

the greatest good, the peace and tranquillity of our soul.

119. If the whole world and all that is in it were thrown

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into confusion, disquietude on that account would be vanity,

because that disquietude would do more harm than good.

120. To endure all things with an equable and peaceful

mind, not only brings with it many blessings to the soul,

I nit it also enables us, in the midst of our difficulties, to have

a clear judgment about them, and to minister the fitting

remedy for them.

121. It is not the will of God that the soul should be

troubled by anything, or that it should be afflicted ; for if

men are afflicted because of the adversities of this world, that

is the effect of their being weak in virtue ; for the soul of the

perfect rejoices even in that which gives pain to the soul of

the imperfect.

122. The heavens are stedfast, not subject to generation ;

and souls which are of a heavenly nature are stedfast, not

subject to the generation of desires, nor of anything of that

kind : they are in some measure like unto God, Who is not

moved for ever.

LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

123. Wisdom enters by love, silence, and mortification. It

is a great wisdom to know when to be silent, when to suffer,

and never to regard the sayings, doings, or lives of others.

124. See that you do not intermeddle in the affairs of

other people, nor discuss them in your own thought.-

I>s you will not be able to fulfil your own task.

r\_'.". Do not entertain a suspicious thought of a bro;

fur that takes away purity of heart.

126. Never listen to accounts of the frailties of others;

ami if anyone should complain to you of another, humbly

ask him not to speak about him at all.

127. Do not .shrink from trouble: though it may seem

to you more than you can bear. Let all men find you com-

paasiona

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128. No one merits love except for the virtue that he h:i> ;

and when love is so ordered, it is according to God and in

great freedom.

129. When the love and affection we give to the creature

is purely spiritual and founded on God, the love of God

grows with it ; and the more we remember the earthly love,

the more we also remember God and desire Him : the one

grows apace with the other.

130. When the love of the creature springs from sensual

vice, or from a purely natural inclination, in proportion to its

growth is the diminution of the love of God and forgetfulness

of Him ; remorse of conscience comes from the recollection

of the creature.

131. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that

which is born of the spirit is spirit, saith our Saviour in His

Gospel. So the love which grows out of sensuality ends in

sensuality; that which is of the spirit ends in the Spirit of

God, and makes it grow. This is the difference between

these two loves, that men may distinguish between them.

v.

DISORDERLY APPETITES.

132. He who loves any creature out of the order of charity

becomes vile as that creature itself, and in one sense even

viler ; for love not only levels but subjects also the lover to

the object of his love.

133. The passions and desires, when under control and

restrained, are the sources of all virtues, and, when they have

broken loose, of all the vices and imperfections of the soul

also.

1 34. Every desire hurts the soul in five ways, beside rob-

bing it of the Spirit of God: 1. It fatigues it 2. Torments

it. 3. Obscures it 4. Denies it. 5. Weakens it.

Tin: SOUL T ::D r,v i 361

. All rivate.l tilings are but the crumbs which fall from

Me of God; and t-r tint n^on, they who go about

\_,' on the creature are rightly called dogs; they are,

:>.re, always hungry like dogs, and justly so, because

crumbs excite, rather than appease, hunger.

L The desires are like re- fied children

begging of their mother, now one thing, now another, never

contented; like one ill of a burning fever, never at rest,

and whose thirst increases while the fever lasts.

1 :;7. As a man dragging a cart up hill, so is that soul on

ite way to God, which does not throw aside the cares of

life, and which does not deny itself.

138. As he is tormented who falls into the hands of his

ies, so is the soul afflicted and tormented which is

carried away by its desires.

139. As a man is tormented and afflicted who lies down

naked ami<l thorns and briers, so is the soul tormented and

afflicted which lies down in the midst of its desires:

'rture, and tear it painfully.

140. As vapours obscure the air and hide the light of the

o the soul, captive to its desires, is intellectually in

iess, so that neither the sun of natural reason nor that

of the supernatural wisdom of God can inform or enlighten it.

111. He who feeds his desires is like a moth, or a fish

1 l>v the li-ht whi< h the fishermen throw over the

water. may not see the ruin \\hieh the tisht rmen have

ir.-<l f..r it.

1 i'J. Who can tell how impossible it is for the soul.

to desires, to judge of the things of God? for while there is

n film over the eye of its judgment, it sees nothing lut that

til i n, now of one colour, now of another ; and so it comes to

regard the things of God as not the things of God, and those

things of God as the things of God.

1 1.".. A I. ml that has ji.Ti-l.nl upon a twig covered \vith

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birdlime labours in a twofold way in extricating itself and in

cleaning itself; so a soul, that has given way to desires ; it has

to extricate itself in the first place, and then, when it has

done so, it has to clean itself of that which has clung to it.

144. As soot defiles the most beautiful and perfect face, so

the unruly desires of the soul defile and pollute that soul

which entertains them, and yet that soul in itself is the most

beautiful and perfect image of God.

145. He that toucheth pitch, saith the Holy Ghost, shall

be defiled with it A soul touches pitch when it satisfies the

desires of the will in any created thing.

146. If my object were to describe the foul and corrupt

condition to which the desires reduce the soul, I should not

be able to find anything so full of cobwebs and worms, not

even corruption itself, wherewith to compare it

147. The desires are like the suckers which grow on a tree,

they sap its strength and destroy ita fertility,

148. There are no corrupt humours which so enfeeble a

man's gait, and make him to loathe his food, as the desire of

the creature enfeebles the soul, indisposing it for the practice

of virtue.

149. Many souls have no inclination for virtue, because

their desires are impure, and not for God.

150. As the young vipers, growing in the womb, feed on

their mother and kill her, preserving their own lives at t In-

cest of hers, so the unmortified desires prey on the soul and

kill the life of God in it; they at last are the only things

that live in it, because the soul has not killed them first

151. As it is necessary to till the eartli that it may 1

forth fruit for otherwise it will produce nothing but weeds,

so also is it necessary to mortify our desires, in order to

have purity of soul.

152. As wood is never transformed into fire if but one

degree of heat necessary for that end be wanting, so the soul

IMTKIUMKN'TS TO PERFKCT UNI' 363

that has but one imp\* -rfcctinn can never be perfectly trans-

formed in God.

153. Whether it be a strong wire rope, or a slender and

delicate thread, that holds the bird, it matters not if it really

us it, for, until the cord be broken, the bird cannot fly ;

so the soul, held in the bonds of human affections, however

slight they may be, cannot, while they last, fly upwards to

God.

154. The desires and attachments of the soul have the

property attributed to the remora, which, though it be but a

little fish, yet it arrests the progress of the ship to which it

clings.

155. that spiritual men knew how they are losing the

blessings and fulness of the Spirit, merely because they will

not raise up their desires above trifles ! and how they might

have the sweetness of all things in the pure food of the Spirit

of which the manna was a figure if they would only

abstain from tasting other food I

156. The children of Israel did not find in the manna all

the sweetness and strength they might have found in it ; not

Wan-\*- tin- manna di.l n.t contain them, but Ix-oauso th-y

longed for other meat

157. Of one spark cometh a great fire, and one imperfec-

tion is enough to beget another. We shall never see a soul

negligent in resisting but one single desire, which has not

many other desires, springing out of that weakness and im-

perfection from which the first proceeds.

158. Voluntary and perfectly deliberate desires, however

slight they may be, if only habitual, are those which chiefly

impede our progress to perfection.

159. Any imperfection to which the soul is attached is a

greater injury t<> than a daily fall into many <

and even greater imperfections, provided they do not result

from the habitual indulgence of an evil inclinat

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160. God is justly angry with those souls whom He, in the

power of His arm, has delivered from the world, and from

the occasions of grievous sins, but who are yet weak and

negligent in mortifying certain imperfections ; for this He

permits them to fall in their desires from bad to worse.

VI.

PRUDENCE.

161. Give heed to reason, that you may perform that

which it dictates to you in the way of God : and it will serve

you more than all good works heedlessly done, and all the

spiritual sweetness you aim at.

162. Blessed is he who, setting his own tastes and inclina-

tions aside, looks at things according to reason and justice, in

order to accomplish them.

163. He who acts according to reason is as one who

strong and substantial food ; but he who in his works

the satisfaction of his own will, is as one who eats poor and

unripe fruit.

164. No creature may transgress the limits which God lias

set for it in the order of its nature : and as He has appointed

for man's governance certain natural and rational laws, the

transgression thereof, by seeking for information in a super-

natural way, is neither holy nor becoming : moreover, God

is displeased ; and if at any time He vouchsafes an answer,

it is out of condescension to the soul's weakness.

165. Man knows not how to order his joy and grief reason-

ably and prudently, because he knows not the difference

between good and evil.

1 66. We know not how to distinguish between our right

hand and our left : for at every step we take evil for good

and good for evil, and if this be as it were natural to us,

what must it be if desire be added to our natural blind;

MI.NTISTI HI M I'-Vl'LO MINTS AIJ Al 365

HIT. The desire, as desin , is blind, becausr in itself it

ds not reason, which is that which ever guides and

soul urL'lit iu its operations: so the soul, when-

ever it is guided by its desires, is blind.

THE ANGELS.

168. The angels are our shepherds, because they carry not

mily >ur message to God, but also those of God to our souls,

iu'm with sweet inspirations and Divine communi-

us: as good shepherds they protect us, and defend us

the wolves, which are the evil spirits.

169. Through the secret inspirations which the angels

convey to the soul, they effect a deeper knowledge of God,

and make it love Him the more, till they leave it wounded

with love.

170. The Divine wisdom which in heaven illumine-

angels, and cleanses them of th--ir i^p -ranees, is the same

which illumines men upon earth, and cleanses them of tlu ir

errors and imperfections; it flows from God through the

first orders of the hierarchies down to the lowest, an<l t

171. Tin- li<;ht of God, which illumines the angels, en-

lightening and setting them on tire \\ ith love, as pure spirits

disposed for that inflowing, illumines men ordinarily in

obscurity, pain, and distress, because of men's impurity and

ness: so is the sun to a weak < \< ; th< light it gives is

ml.

17'j. When man has become spiritualised and refined in

vine love which purifies him, he then receives

th.- union and intl..\vin# of the loving illuminat i..n \\ith the

toCM \\ith uhirh an angel receives them. Th.ro are

who in thi< lit'. e a more perfect illumii:

i the angels.

s great graces to a soul the

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hands of an angel, He ordinarily allows the devil to know it,

that he may assail that soul with all his might, according to

the measure of justice, in order that the victory may be the

more prized, and the soul, faithful in temptation, may be the

more rewarded.

174. Eemember that your guardian angel does not always

move the will to act, though he always enlightens the reason ;

therefore do not promise yourself sensible sweetness always

in your works, because reason and understanding are

sufficient.

175. When the desires of man are occupied with anything

that is not God they embarrass the soul and shut the door

against the light by which the angel moves to virtue.

176. Consider what utter vanity it is to rejoice in anything

but in the service of God, how dangerous and how fatal ; how

ruinous it proved to the angels who rejoiced and had compla-

cency in their own beauty and their natural endowments ! for

this they fell foul into the abyss.

A SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR.

177. A soul without a director is like a kindled coal, which,

if left by itself, cools instead of burning.

178. He who insists on being left to himself, without a

director to guide him, is like an unowned tree by the way-

side ; however fruitful it may be, the travellers pick its fruit,

and none of it ripens.

179. The tree that is cultivated and kept carefully by its

owner produces fruit in due season, and the owner is not

disappointed.

180. He who falls alone remains alone in his fall; he

makes little account of his soul, because he trusts in himself

alone.

181. He who is burdened when he falls, rises with difficulty

under his burden.

CAUTION'S TO DIRECTORS AM) I'KMTKXTS. 367

182. He who falls, being blind, cannot rise, being blind

and alone ; and if he should rise by himself, he will walk in a

direction that is not good for him.

183. If you are not afraid to fall by yourself, how can you

venture to raise yourself alone? Kemember that two are

better than one.

184. Our Lord did not say in His Gospel, where one is by

himself there am I, but where there are at the least two : this

is to show us that no one should believe of himself, or confirm

himself in the things which he thinks are those of God,

without the counsel and direction of the Church and her

ministers.

185. Woe to him that is alone, saith the Holy Ghost ; and

therefore the soul has need of a director, for both will resist

the devil more easily, being both together to learn and practise

the truth.

186. It is the will of God that the government of one

man should be in the hands of another, and that we should

not give perfect credit to those matters which He communi-

cates supernatural ly Himself, until they shall have passed

through the human channel of another man's mouth.

187. When God makes a particular revelation to a soul, he

also inclines that soul to make it known to the minister of

His Church, who stands in His place.

188. It is not every one who is fitted for the direction of

souls ; it being a matter of the last importance to give right

or wrong advice in so serious a matter as that.

189. Let the soul that would advance, and not go ba< k.

take care into whose hands it commits itself; for, as is the

roaster, so is the scholar, and as is the father so is the child.

190. The inclinations and tastes of the director are easily

impressed upon the penitent

191. The chief solicitude of spiritual directors should be

to mortify every deMre- of th. t: to make them

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deny themselves in all they desire, so as to deliver them

from so great misery.

192. However high the doctrine, adorned the eloquence,

sublime the style, the fruits of the sermon will be, in general,

no better than the spirit of the preacher.

193. A good style and action, high doctrines and correct

expression, have a greater effect when accompanied by true

spirituality ; but without that the will is scarcely or but little

inflamed, though the senses may be charmed and the under-

standing delighted.

194. God is angry with those who teach His law and keep\*

it not ; and who preach spirituality to others without being

spiritual themselves.

1 95. For the highest parts, and even for the ordinary parts,

of the way of perfection, you will scarcely find one capable

guide throughout, such as men have need of: such an one

must be wise, discreet, and experienced.

196. For though the foundations of direction be knowledge

and discretion, yet if directors be without experience, they

will never be able to guide the soul in the way in which God

is leading it ; they will make it go backwards, ordering it

after low methods which they pick up in books.

197. He who shall presumptuously err in the direction of

souls, being under obligation to give good counsel as every-

one is in the office he undertakes shall not escape punish-

ment according to the evil he has done; for the work of

God and such is the direction of souls demands great

CM ut ion and counsel.

198. Who can be like St. Paul, who was all things to all,

that he might save all ? knowing all the ways by which God

leads souls, which are so different one from another, that you

can scarcely find one which in half its ways agrees with the

ways of another.

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RELIGION AND PRAYKK.

199. The greatest honour we can render unto God, is to

serve Him in evangelical perfection : and whatever is beside

is of no value or advantage to man.

200. One thought of man is of more value than the whole

world ; God alone is, for that reason, the worthy object of it,

and to Him alone is it due ; every thought of man, therefore,

which is not given to God, is a robbery.

201. In all nature there are correspondences; insensible

things correspond with those that are insensible ; sense with

things sensible; and man's thoughts with the Spirit of God.

NECESSITY OF PRATJ

202. Never let your heart waste its affections, not even f.r

a moment.

203. The soul cannot overcome the devil without prayer,

nor penetrate his devices without humility and mortification;

for the weapons of God are prayer and the Cross of Christ.

204. In all our necessities, trials, and afflictions, there is no

nor safer remedy than prayer, and hope that God will

provide for us in His own way.

FRUITS OF PRATER.

205. Let God be the spouse and friend of your soul,

remain always in His presence, and so you shall avoid sin,

learn to love Him, and all things will prosper with you.

206. Ent.-r int your innermost heart, and labour in th

presence of God, the spouse of your soul, Who is ever present

207. Strive to be continually in the presence of God, and

reserve the purity wlm-h He teaches.

208. By prayer aridity in expelled, devotion increased, and

th< int. rior practice of virtue estnHi-i e soul.

.11. it ii

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209. By shutting the eyes to the defects of others, keep-

ing silence, and conversing continually with God, great

imperfections are rooted out of the soul, which thereby be-

comes the mistress of great virtues.

210. When prayer is made in the pure and simple under-

standing of God, it seems to the soul to have lasted but a

moment, though in fact it occupied much time : this is that

prayer of a moment, of which it is said that it pierces tin-

clouds.

THE QUALITY OF PRAYER.

211. The powers and senses of the soul should not be

employed altogether upon anything unless it be a matter

which cannot be neglected ; for the rest, they should be

unoccupied for God.

212. Wait lovingly upon God, without any desire to feel

or understand anything particular in Him.

213. Strive to attain to that state in which nothing is of

importance to you, and you of importance to none, so that

being utterly forgotten you may be with God in secret.

214. He who will not allow his desires to carry him away

will wing his flight like a bird whose wings are strong.

215. Do not nourish your soul upn anything <!> l.ut on

God : repel the remembrance of things, let peace and recol-

lection fill your heart.

216. If you would attain to holy recollection, it must !

by rejecting, and not by admitting.

217. Seek by reading and you will find by meditating :

cry in prayer and the door will be opened in contemplation.

218. True devotion and spirituality consist in persevei

in prayer, with patience and humility, distrusting yoi

that you may please God only.

219. They call upon God in truth who pray for tint which

is most true : that which belongs to their eternal salvation.

Dl :IHN<; I'UAYKK. 371

220. There is no better way to obtain the desires of our

heart than to pray with all our might for that which is most

pleasing unto God; for then IK- will grant us not only our

salvation but also that which He sees most expedient for us,

though we may never ask for it, and though it may have

never entered into our hearts to do so.

221. Let every soul understand that, although God may

not succour it in its necessities when it cries, He will not

however fail it when the time comes ; provided it does not

lose heart and cease from prayer.

MOTIVES Full I'KAYER.

222. When the will, the moment it feels any joy in sen-

sible tilings, rises upwards in that joy to God, and when

sensible things move it to pray, it ought not then to r

yea rath IT it should make use of, them for so holy an exer-

cise; because sensible things, under these conditions, sub-

serve the end for which God created them : namely, '

occasions of making Him Utter loved and known.

223. He whose senses are subject to the Spirit, purged

from all sensible objects, even in his first movements, el it its

delights in the sweet knowledge an<l contemplation of God.

JIM. As it is a, truth <>t" >oimd philosophy that the life of

creature is in harmony with its constitution, so is it

elear he\,,nd all oontfadiot2oOj Ehd h.- irho\* lite i- ipiritoa]

nial lite being mortified mutf l>e wholly tending

t. \\anl- < i-tl.

. Th.- will of a devout person rests ehi.-tly ..n the

images for his use, and

are such as are m-- Mvine, than t.. human,

taste: lie ways of tin- other

\\.-rld, and !!

. Tin- chief tiling to be regarded in images is

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and faith ; if these be absent, the image will not be sufficient.

What a perfect living image our Lord was upon earth, ami

yet those who had no faith, though they were constantly about

Him, and saw His wonderful works, were not the better for

His presence.

PLACE FOR PRAYER.

227. Keep yourself apart for one thing only, which brings

everything with it solitude, accompanied by prayer and

spiritual reading : and there abide, forgetting all things, if

there be no obligation upon you to remember them. You

will please God more by keeping watch over, and perfecting

yourself, than if you gained everything : for what doth it

profit a man if he gain the whole world, if he loses his

own soul ?

228. Pure spirituality gives no heed to matters which do

not concern it, nor to human respect ; but alone and apart

from all created forms, communicates interiorly in sweet

tranquillity with God; for the knowledge of Him lies in the

Divine silence.

229. For the purposes of prayer that place is to be chosen

in which sense and spirit may be least hindered from rising

up to God.

230. The place of prayer must not be pleasant and de-

lectable to the senses some people seek such a place lest

the issue should be recreation of the senses, and not recollec-

tion of spirit.

231. He who goes on a pilgrimage will do well to do RO

when others do not, though it be at an unusual season.

When pilgrims are many, J would advise staying at home,

for in general men return more dissipated than they \\viv

before they went. And they who become pilgrims for recrea-

tion, rather than devotion, are many in number.

I>i:. [DING PRAYEB. 373

IMIT.IMV :i:i;.

. ![ who it the course of bis spiritual exer-

cises and prayer, is like a man who allows a bird to escape

from his hand ; he can hardly catch it again.

1 being, as He is, inaccessible, do not repose on

the consideration of objects perceptible by sense, and com-

prehended by the understanding. This is to be satisfied

with wh.-it is less than God; so doing you will destroy that

energy of the soul which is necessary for drawing near unto

234. Never consent to admit into your soul that which is

not substantially spiritual ; for if you do so you will losr the

sweetness of devotion and recollect inn.

235. He who relies much on the senses will never be very

they deceive themselves who think they can, in

the sheer strength of our grovelling senses, attain to the

power of lit.

The imperfect destroy true devotion, because they

seek sensible sweetness in prayer.

it touches the honey cannot fly; so the

soul that clings to spiritual sweetness ruins its own freedom

and hiir mplation.

238. He who will not dispose himself to pray in <

!y there wh<" \vn taste is gratiti-<l. \\ill

in his prayer; because, as they -ay, he can

only in his own parMi.

'. He who does not feel librrty of spirit amid the t!

; ^hould serve as motives to

prayer, ami \\i,o,- will rests and feeds upon them, mi-M to

abstain from the use o t 1 1 1 m t hey are a hindrance

>n thr r,.:i.l '

' A eetnen and

I, t" inia-i: 1 us also; and to

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imagine, that because we have such sweetness, that we have

God also.

241. Very often many spiritual persons employ their senses

upon sensible things, under the pretext of giving themselves

to prayer, and raising their hearts to God ; now this that

they do should be called recreation rather than prayer;

pleasing themselves rather than God.

242. Meditation tends to contemplation, as means to an

end. So when the end is attained, the means are laid aside ;

men rest at the end of their journey; thus, when the state of

contemplation has been attained, meditation must cease.

243. As it is necessary, at the proper time, to give up the

work of reflection and meditation in order to draw near unto

God, lest it should prove an impediment, so also is it neces-

sary not to give it up before the time lest we should go

back.

244. There are three signs of contemplation and interior

recollection of the soul : 1. When the soul takes no pleasure

in transitory things. 2. When it seeks solitude and silence,

striving after that which is the more perfect. 3. When medi-

tation, which was once a help, proves a hindrance. These

three signs must be found together.

245. In the beginning of the state of contemplation the

loving knowledge of God is, as it were, imperceptible : in the

first place, because it is most subtile and delicate, and, as it

were, unfelt ; in the second place, because the soul has been

accustomed to the practice of meditation, which is more

cognisable by the senses.

246. The more the soul is disposed for tranquillity, the

more will the loving knowledge of contemplation grow ; the

soul will feel it and relish it more than all other things

whatever ; because it brings with it peace and rest, sweetness

and delight, without trouble.

247. They who have passed on to the state of contempla-

:>1T.\TI"X AXD CO.NTK.Mri.ATi' 375

tion, must not for that reason suppose that they are never to

their mentations anymore; for in the beginning the

habit of it is not so established that they can have it whenever

they will; neither are they so far removed from medit

as to be unable to meditate as they were accustomed to do.

248. Except in the act of contemplation, in all exercises

and good works, the soul must make use of good meditations

on, and recollection of, what is good in such a way as to

increase devotion and profit, particularly dwelling on the

life, passion, and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, in order that

its works, exercises, and life may be conformed to His.

249. The conditions of the 'solitary sparrow' are five:

1 ! ascends as high as it can. 2. It admits none to be its

companion, even of its own kind. 3. It faces the wind.

4. It has no definite colour. 5. It sings sweetly. The con-

templative soul must do the same ; it must rise high above

transitory things, making no more account of them than if

they never existed ; it must be so enamoured of solitude and

silence as to suffer no creature to be in its company; it

must face the wind of the Holy Ghost, corresponding to His

inspii ;..in u r, it may become more worthy of

His company; it must have no definite colour, bent upon

iiMthini: hut "ii d..in\_r the will of God; it must sing sweetly

in contemplation and in the love of God.

250. Th.uiirh occasionally, in the height of contemplation

and pine intuition of the Divinity, the soul may not remem-

ber the most sacred humanity of Christ, because God elevates

.irit to the most .supernatural knowledge, yet 8tudi.m>l\

icet it is in nowise seemly, seeing that by the contem-

plation thereof, and loving meditation thereon, the

.ds to the highest state of union : f..r < 'hrist our Lord i\*

the Truth, the (Jate, the Way, and the (iuide to all good.

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VII.

OBEDIENCE.

251. The way of life demands little trouble and care, it

demands denial of the will rather than much knowledge ; he

who inclines to pleasure and sweetness will be the less able

to travel on it.

252. He who does not walk in the way of his own pleasure,

nor in that of the pleasures which come from God, nor in

that of those which come from creatures, and never does his

own will, he shall never stumble.

253. Though you may undertake great things, yet, if you

will not learn to deny your own will and to be obedient,

casting away all anxiety about yourself and your own affairs,

you will make no progress in the way of perfection.

254. Let others teach you, let others order you, let others

rule over you, and you will become perfect.

255. God is more pleased with that soul which, in aridity

and trouble of spirit, is subject and obedient, than with that

which, without obedience, performs all its duties with great

sweetness of spirit.

256. God would rather have from you the lowest degree

of obedience and subjection, than all those services you

would render Him.

257. Subjection and obedience is the penance of reason

and discretion ; and is therefore a more pleasing sacrifice in

the eyes of God than all other bodily penances.

258. Bodily penance, without obedience, is a most imper-

fect thing ; beginners practise it out of a desire for it, and for

the pleasure they find in it ; and therefore because they herein

do their own will, they grow in vice, rather than in virtue.

259. Inasmuch as a double bitterness results from fulfilling

one's own will, do not fulfil it ; although it may be bitter-

ness to remain quit t.

r\

. Tin -devil, -A it h ease over those who are alone,

and who in t of God order themselves according td

their <>wn will.

\ in.

FORTITUDE AND PATIENCE.

\_'<; 1 when burdened to be joined to the strong,

than unburdened to the weak. When you are loaded with

afflictions you are joined to God, Who is your strength,

and He is the strength of the afflicted. When you are un-

burdened you are joined to yourself, who are weakness itself,

for virtue and fortitude grow in the soul, and are strength-

<. in tril. illations.

262. Your flesh is weak, and no worldly thing can

strengthen or comfort your spirit ; that which is born of the

world is worldly, and that which is born of the flesh is flesh:

a good spirit is born only of the Spirit of God, and is com-

municated neither through the world nor the 11

. The most delicate flower is the first to wither, and to

lose its fragrance : therefore take care you do not walk in

th way of spiritual sweetness, for you will never be linn.

Choose rather a strong spirit, attached to nothing, and you

will find sweetness and abundance of peace. Savoury, sweet,

and la-ti: -ath. ird only in a dry and cold soil.

. Though the road he plain and ph-asmt for men of

good will, he who trav.ls on it will travel little, and that

with diHicnlt v, it he be not possessed of great courage, phy-

. d resolute perseverance.

26.'>. i hidden pastures, which are those

'f th -he blessed are they who hungered and thirsted

after th.-y who are fill

26fi. Vnilv he has overcome nil things in whom

pleasures <>t th.-m excite no joy, and the hitt, rness of them

QO -idn< .

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267. By fortitude the soul labours, prarti>-s virtu .

overcomes vice.

268. Let your heart be strong against everything that may

attract you to that which is not Grod, and be at home in the

sufferings of Christ.

269. Rejoice in God always, for He is your salvation, and

consider how good it is to suffer whatever may come from

Him who is the true good.

270. If you incline to aridities and suffering for the love

of Grod, He will esteem that in you of more value than all

the spiritual visions, meditations, and consolations you may

ever have.

271. Never, for good or for evil, suffer your heart t<> In-

otherwise than calm in the affections of love ; that you may

endure whatever may befal you.

272. We are not to measure our trials by ourselves, luit

ourselves by our trials.

273. If souls but knew the advantage of suffering and

mortification for the attainment of great blessings, they

would never seek for consolation anywhere.

274. If a soul has more patience under suffering, a greater

endurance in the absence of sweetness, that is a sign of greater

progress in virtue.

275. The way of suffering is more secure and more profit-

able than that of joy and action. In suffering, the strength

of Grod is given to the soul, while in joy and action it 1

do with its own weakness and imperfections: in sunWin.

virtues are acquired and practised ; the soul is puriiir.l, an-1

is rendered more prudent and cautious.

276. The soul that is not tried and proved in teinj.tati <ns

and afflictions can never attain unto wisdom, ; : ittm

in the book Ecclesiasticus : 'What doth he know that liatli

not been tried ? ' \*

Eccles. xx xi

Till: IMT.KK'K I

. The most perfect suffering brings with it the most

IE,

MODESTY,

278. The soul, by refraining from joy in the objects of

sense, recovers itself from the distractions into which it has

fallen through the excessive indulgence of the senses, and

recollects itself in God : spirituality and the virtues it has

:io|iiired are also preserved and increased.

279. As the man who seeks pleasure in the things of sense,

and rejoices in them, ought not, and deserves not, to be called

by any other name than sensual, animal, and earthly, so he

whose joy is beyond and above these things, merits the name

of spiritual, heavenly, and divine.

280. If you will deny yourself one joy in the things of

sense, our Lord will repay you a hundred-fold in this life

.spiritually and temporally; and for one joy indulged in the

things of sense, you shall have ;i hundred sorrows and afflictions.

281. All the functions and powers of his senses, who no

i lives after the flesh, are directed to Divine contem-

plation.

282. Though the goods of sense may deserve to be some-

what rejoiced in when they help a man t. raise his thoughts

to God, yet this is so uncertain that in general they do a

man more harm than good.

in shall have so habituated his senses to

the purgation lYnin sensible joy, that all thing's raise him up

to God, he must refrain from all joy in them, in order that

he may wean his soul frnm the life of sense.

284. The Fath.-r utt--r.-d MM \V..nl; tli.it V II

: i II Him for ever in everlasting silence, and

the soul to hear It HUM !> >i

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285. That which we most require for our spiritual growth

is the silence of the desire and of the tongue before God,

Who is so high: the language He most listens Ao is that <>f

silent love.

286. Speak little ; and do not meddle in matters when

you are not desired to do so.

287. Complain of no one : ask for nothing, but if it should

be necessary to ask, do so in few words.

288. Abstain from contradiction : on no account let your

words be other than pure.

289. Let your language be offensive to none; let it lu-

about matters such as will cause you no trouble if everybody

knew of them.

290. Preserve your spirit in peace, lovingly attentive to

God : and when you must speak, do so calmly and peaceably.

291. Be silent about what God may say to you, remem-

bering the words of Scripture : \* My secret to me.' \*

292. Never forget that of every word uttered without the

direction of obedience, God will require a strict account.

293. Intercourse with people beyond what is strictly ne-

cessary, and required by reason, has never been good for any

man, however holy he may have been.

294. It is impossible to make progress otherwise than by

doing and suffering everything in silence.

295. For growth in virtue, the important thing is to be

silent, and to work : conversation distracts, silence and work

bring recollection.

296. The moment a person understands what is told him

for his good, there is no necessity for him to ask for further

direction, nor to speak about it, but to act upon it sincerely

in silence carefully, in humility, charity, and contempt of sdf.

297. I have understood that the soul which is ready for

Is. xxiv. 1C.

IIKART. 381

talking and the commerce of the world is but little attentive

to God : for if it were otherwise, it would withdraw itself at

once into silence within, and avoid all conversation whatever.

298. It is the will of God that the soul should delight in

Him, rather than in any created thing, however useful or

necessary it may be to it.

x.

HUMILITY.

299. The first thing the soul must have in order to attain

to the knowledge of God is the knowledge of itself.

300. God is more pleased with certain actions, however

few they may be, done in silence and in secret, and without

any desire that men might see them, than with a thousand

grand actions undertaken with the intention of their becom-

ing known to men.

. The secrecy of conscience is broken when a man

reveals to others the blessings he has received: the reward

actions is the praise of men.

30L>. i in Spirit of God Who dwells in humble souls

inclines them to keep His treasures in secret, and to make

visihle their imperfections.

303. Perfection consists not in those virtues which everyone

recognises in himself, hut in those which God approves of.

And as His approval is hidden from the eyes of men, no one

'has any reason to pr.sume, but rather much whereof to be

id.

304. God, when He gives His love to a soul, regards not

its greatness in itself, hut rather the greatness of ite contempt

of self, in .mility.

\\ i.at \ . i most seek, and most anxiously desire, you

will never iiml if you seek it of \ . n>t even in the

most profound contemplation; hut only in deep humility and

:^-> SPIKriTAL MAXIMS.

306. If you will glory in yourself, cast away everything

not your own : what remains will be nothing, and it is no-

thing you should glory in.

307. Do not despise others because, as it seems to you,

they do not possess the virtues you thought they had: they

may be pleasing to God for other reasons which you cannot

discover.

308. Never excuse yourself: listen calmly to the repri-

mand and consider it to come from God.

309. Look upon it as a special mercy of God, that people

ever speak kindly to you : you do not deserve it.

310. Make neither much nor little of him who may be

against you, and strive always to please God. Pray that

His will may be done, and love Him much, for that is your

duty.

311. Love to be unknown to yourself and others: never

regard the good nor the evil of others.

312. Never forget the life to come. Consider how in; my

in heaven are great, and in great glory, who in their own

eyes were of no account, humble and poor.

313. In order to mortify really the desire of honour out

of which so many other desires proceed, you will do those

things which will bring you into contempt, and you will wish

others to do the same : you will speak disparagingly of your-

self and you will contrive that others may do so too : you

will think humbly and contemptuously of yourself, and you

will wish others to do so also.

314. Humility and submission to your spiritual director,

disclosing to him all that passes in your intercourse with

God, will bring light, rest, contentment, and security.

315. Virtue consists not in apprehensions of, and feelings

about God, however sublime they may be, nor in any personal

experiences of this kind, but, on the contrary, in that which

is not matter of feeling at all, in great humility, contempt of

Nl M ET OM.MA VAMTAS. Ml

nd ..fall that belongs to us profoundly rooted in the

sonl.

31(>. All visions, revelations, and impressions of heaven,

however much the spiritual man may esteem them, are not

cju.il in worth to the least act of humility: for this brings

the fruits of charity, which never esteems nor thinks

well of self, but only of others.

.'J17. The communications which come really from God,

have this property, that they humble and exalt the soul at

the same time, for in the way of the Spirit to descend is to

ascend, and to ascend is to descend.

318. When God communicates His gifts and graces to the

><>ul. He excites in it a repugnance to accept honours and

diMim-tinns, but in the way of humility and self-abasement,

He gives it ease and readiness.

319. God hates to see men ready to accept dignities, even

it is His will that they should accept them, but it is

not His will that they should do so eagerly and promptly.

320. When the devil speaks, he makes men ready and

eager to accept dignities, but he makes them reject humilia-

tions and self-abasement.

VANIH.

321. He who loves supcri..iiti, s and dignities, or tin- in-

dulgence of his desires, stands before God, not as a son who

is free, but as one of mean condit i<>u. t he slave of his passions.

322. The soul that is not humble, the devil most easily

'l-li ides, and makes it believe a thousand lies.

>. There are many Christians in our day who have

rt iii-s, and who do great things, but nil of no use to

them in the matter of everlasting lit'.-, m- i. ly because they

do not k [> in view the honour and glory of God alone, l>ut

rather the empty satisfaction of their own will.

iu our good works is always attended by

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a great esteem of them : out of this comes boasting, and .di. i

faults such as we see in the Pharisee in the gosprl.

325. Such is the misery of the children of mm, tl,

far as I can see, the greater part of their good works d

public are either sinful or worthless, or imperfect ami d -

fective in the sight of God, because men will not detach

themselves from self-interest and from human respect.

326. souls created for, and called unto, a dignity so

great! what are you doing, what is it that detains you?

() miserable blindness of the children of Adam, whu in ;i

light so great are blind, and to such an invitation drat !

While they seek after greatness and honour they are them-

selves miserable and base, and of such blessings unworthy.

XI.

VOLUNTARY POVERTY.

327. If rejoicing in riches can be made in any way en-

durable, it is when men spend and use them in the service of

God ; there is no other way of making them profitable : the

same principle applies to all other temporal goods, titles,

rank, and office.

328. The spiritual man must be very careful of tin- be-

ginnings of joy in temporal things, lest from little it should

become great, increasing from one degree to another; out of

slight beginnings great evils result One spark is enough

to set a mountain on fire.

329. However small an attachment may be, be not too

confident that you can cut it off at any time, but cut

at once: for if you have not the courage to destroy it \vlini

it is but beginning, how can you presume upon success

it has taken root and grown ?

'. He who turns aside from what is little, will not stum-

ble over what is large. Little matters cause great evils.

TIIOIINS OB Illi: WHKh. 335

because the fences and walls of the heart are broken down

when they enter in ; for the proverb says : he who has begun

his work has accomplished the half of it.

331. Joy darkens the judgment as a cloud, for there can

be no rejoicing in created things without the attachment of

the will. The negation and purgation of this joy leaves the

judgment clear as the sky when the mist has been scattered.

332. He who is detached is not molested when he prays,

nor at any other time, and so without wasting his time he

gains with ease great spiritual treasures.

ATARICE.

333. Although temporal goods are not, in themselves,

necessarily, occasions of sin, yet ordinarily, by reason of our

frailty, the heart of man seta its affections upon them, and

t ills away from God, which is sin : for this reason the wise

man saith : the rich shall not be free from sin.

334. The things of this world neither occupy nor injure

the soul ; it is not they that enter into it, but rather the will,

and the desire of them, which dwell within it.

335. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the gospel, calls rich. -

thorns, giving us to understand that he who seta his will

upon them shall be wounded by sin.

336. It is vanity to desire to have children, as some do,

who weary the world with their fretting for them: they

know not if their children will be good, and servants of

God : neither do they know whether the pleasure they expect

from them may not be turned into disquietude, pain, and

trouM. .

ie covetous man runs to and fro within the limits

<>f the chain by which his heart is bound, and with all his

efforts can scarcely set himself free, even for a moment,

fi-niii the bondage of his thoughts, nmnin- in.-,.>s:mtly hith.-r

and thither within the length of the chain that hinds him.

n GO

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POVERTY OF SPIRIT.

338. Consider how very necessary it is for you to n-t your

face against yourself, and walk in the way of penance, if you

would attain to perfection.

339. If any one tempts you with lax opinions, and should

even confirm them by miracles, trust him not : but rely rat h r

upon penance and perfect detachment from creatures.

340. God in the old law commanded that the altar of

sacrifice should be empty within. This is to teach us that

the soul, which is to become an altar worthy of His Majoty.

should be emptied of all things.

341. One desire only does God allow, and suffer in his

presence within the soul the desire of keeping the law per-

fectly, and carrying the cross of Christ. It is not said, in the

sacred writings, that God commanded anything to be laid up

in the ark with the manna except the book of the law and the

rod of Moses, a type of the cross of Christ .

342. That soul which has no other aim than the perfect

observance of the law of our Lord, and the carrying of tin-

cross of Christ, will be a true ark containing the true manna,

which is God.

343. If you wish devotion to be born in your heart, the

love of God to grow, together with the desire for divine things

cleanse your soul from every desire and self-seeking, BO that

nothing of the kind remain with you. For as a sick man,

freed from the evil humours which troubled him, i\ < -Is in-

stantly returning health and a taste for his food, so shall

you recover your health in God if you rid yourself of your

spiritual disorders : and if this be not done, whatever you

may do, you will make no progress.

344. Live in this world as if God and your soul only were

in it; so shall your heart be never made captive by any

earthly thing.

BLESSED ARK Till; r><>i; IX SI'IRIT. :N:

\*>. Do not weary yourself to no purpose: do not seek

spiritual joy and sweetness, unless it be by denying yourself

in that which you aim at.

!'< interiorly detached from all things, and do not set

your affection upon any temporal thing, and your soul will

gather in a harvest of blessings beyond its comprehension.

347. The goods of God, which are beyond all measure, can

be contained only in an empty and solitary heart.

348. So far as it lies in your power, refuse nothing asked

of you, though you may have need of it yourself.

He will never attain to perfection who will not lal M .in-

to be satisfied with this: that all his natural and spiritual

desires should be satisfied in the absence of everything which

is not God. This is most necessary for an abiding peace and

tranquillity of spi

350. Let your soul be always ordered by a desire not for

that which is easy, but for that which is most difficult ; not

for that which is most pleasant, but for that which is most

unpleasant ; not for that which is elevated and precious, Lut

f<r that which is vile and despised; not for great things,

1'iit f.r little things; not to seek for anything, but to seek

for nothing; not for that which is best, but \\hi -h is

worst ; desiring to enter, for the love of Jesus, upon detach-

ment, emptiness, and poverty in everything of this world.

351. If you will cleanse your soul of strange possessions

and desires, you will understand all things spiritually; and

if you will restrain yourself from setting your heart upon

them, you will rejoice truly in them, and understand them

certainly.

-'. All people will be your servants, and all things will

minister to you, if only you will forget them and yours\*

353. You will never have to do with necessities greater

than those to which you made your heart yirM it\*elt

the poor in spirit are most happy and joyous in a state of

o c t

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privation ; and he who has set his heart upon nothing, finds

fulness everywhere.

354. The poor in spirit give generously all they have, and

their pleasure consists in being thus deprived of everything

for God's sake, and out of love to their neighbour, ordering

all things by the laws of virtue.

355. Poverty of spirit looks to the substance of devotion,

and makes use only of what is sufficient for it : weary of the

multiplicity and curiosity of visible means.

356. A soul withdrawn from exterior things, detached from

its own will, even in divine things, will not be raised by pros-

perity nor subdued by adversity.

357. The poor that are naked shall be clothed : and the

soul that will strip itself of all its desires, likings, and dis-

likings, God will clothe with His own purity, His own joy,

and His own will.

358. The love of God in a pure and simple soul, detached

from every desire, is frequently in act.

359. Restrain your desires, and you will find that which

your heart longs for: how can you tell that your desire is

according to the will of God?

360. If you desire to have your soul in peace and comfort,

and to serve God in truth, do not rest satisfied with what

you have done in the way of self-denial, for it may be that

on the new road you have entered, you may find yourself as

much hindered, or even more than you were, but give up

everything that you have.

361. If you fail in the practice of self-denial, which is tin-

sum and root of virtue : every other way is but beating the air,

and you will make no progress, notwithstanding great medi-

tations and communications.

362. Not only do temporal goods, the delights and tin\*

tastes of sense, hinder and thwart the way of (rod, hut

spiritual delights and consolations also, if sought for, >r

to eagerly, disturb the way of virtue.

Til;. OF n:KFi:< T L<>

363. Such is the nature of our vain concupiscence tli

s to evcrx thin^: like the dry-rot, which wastes away

what is sound, it has it\* way both in what is good and what

ad.

MI.

1'KAYKK OK THE ENAMOURED SOUL.

Lord God, my Love, if Thou art still mindful of my

and will not grant my petitions, Thy will be done, for that

v chief desire. Show Thou Thy goodness ami mercy,

and Thou shalt be known by them. If it be that Thou art

waiting for me to do good works, that in them Thou mayest

grant my petition, do Thou give them and work them in me :

Bend also the penalties which Thou wilt accept, and do Thou

inflict them. But if Thou art not waiting for my good

works; what art Thou waiting for, <> Mr .Merciful Lord?

why tarriest Thou? For if at la>t it mu>t be grace ami

inercy, and I pray for it in Thy Son, do Thou accept my

i less offering, according to Thy will, and give me this

good also according to Thy will. O Lord, Omnipotent, my

spirit ha> tainted within me because it has forgotten t

Thee. I knew Thee not, O my Lord, when I went

vanity.

Who can free himself from base and mean ways, if Thou,

o m\ (iod, wilt not lift him up to Thee in pure love? 1

hastenest joyfully and lovingly, Lord, to raise up him who

has offended Thee, but I make no haste to honour and raise

him up who has offended me. How shall a man raise him-

self up to Thee, for he is born and bred in misery, if Thou

wilt n<>t lift him up with the hand that made him ? < > Lord,

omnipotent, it\* the shadow of the power of Thy justice in

ly sovereigns who govern and rule the nations can do

BO much, what must be Thy omnipotent justice, dealing \\ith

the .sin:

O Lord m\ (iod. Th'ui estranged I'l.-m Inn.

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does not estrange himself from Thee. How is it that mm

say thou art absent? Lord my God, who is there that

seeks Thee in pure and true love, who does not find Thee to

be the joy of his will ? It is Thou who art the first to show

Thyself, going forth to meet those who desire to meet Thee.

Thou wilt not take away from me, my God, what Thou

hast once said to me in Thy Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ,

in Whom Thou dost tell me all I desire. I will therefore

rejoice, Thou wilt not tarry if I wait for Thee. Wait in hope

then, my soul, for from henceforth thou mayest love God

in thy heart.

The heavens are mine, the earth is mine, and the nations

are mine : mine are the just, and the sinners are mine : mine

are the Angels, the Mother of God, and all things are mine :

God Himself is mine and for me, because Christ is mine, and

all for me. What dost thou then ask for, what dost thou

seek for, my soul? All is thine, all is for thee, do not t:ikr

less, nor rest with the crumbs which fall from the table of

thy Father. Go forth and exult in thy glory, hide thyself

in it, and rejoice, and thou shalt obtain all the desires of thy

heart.

O sweetest love of God, too little known; he who has

found thee is at rest : let everything be changed, my God,

that we may rest in Thee. Everywhere with Thee, my

God, everywhere all things with Thee as I wish. my Love,

all for Thee, nothing forme: nothing for Thee, everything

for me. All sweetness and delight for Thee, none for me :

nil liitterness and trouble for me, none for Thee. my God,

how sweet to me Thy presence, who art the Supreme Good.

I will draw near to Thee in silence, and will uncover Tliv

feet\*, that it may please Thee to unite me to Thyself, making

my soul Thy bride : I will rejoice in nothing till I am in

thine arms. O Lord, I beseech Thee, leave me not ti a

moment, because 1 know not the value of my soul.

\* Kuth hi. 7, 0.

I'OKMS.

POEMS.

TIII-; OBSCURE Miiirr <>i' Tin; sm i,.

In an obscure night,

With anxious love inflamed,

O, happy lot !

Forth unobserved I went,

My house being now at rest.

In darkness and security,

By the secret ladder, disguised,

O, happy lot!

In darkness and conceal n

My hoiiHe being now at rest.

Ml

In that happy night,

In secret, seen of none,

Seeing nought myself,

Without other light or giud.

Save that which in my heart was burning,

IV

That light guided me

More surely than the noonday sun

11 u. t v, :ng forme,

1 klU W v

And where none but 11 .. , tared.

394 THE OBSCURE NIGHT OF THE SOUL.

O, guiding night;

O, night more lovely than the dawn ;

O, night tliat hast united

The Lover with His beloved,

And changed her into her Love.

VI

On my flowery bosom,

Kept whole for Him alone,

He reposed and slept ;

I kept Him, and the waving

Of the cedars fanned Him.

VI

Then His hair floated in the breeze

That blew from the turret ;

He struck me on the neck

With His gentle hand,

And all sensation left me.

VIII

I continued in oblivion lost,

My head was resting on my Love;

I fainted away, abandoned,

And, amid the lilies forgotten,

Threw all my cares away.

\ H'HM'ITAL CANTICLE BETWEEN THE SOUL

AND CHRIST.

I

THE BRIDE.

WHERE hast Thou hidden Thyself.'

Why hast Thou forsaken me in my groaning, O my

Beloved ?

Thou didt fly like the hart, away,

When Thou hadst wounded me.

I ran after Thee, crying ; but Thou wert gone.

shepherds, you who go

Through the slu-cpoots up the hill,

If you shall see Him

Whom I love,

Till Him I languish, agonize, and dir.

in

In search of my Love

1 will traverse mountains and strands ;

I will gather no flowers,

! 1 fear no wild beasts ;

And I will overpass the mighty ami tin- lh>i

IV

Ye groves and thickets

Planted by the hand of the Beloved ;

"i . nl;mt mvacb

I

396 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE

v

ANSWER OF THE CREATURES.

A thousand graces diffusing

He passed through the groves in haste,

And beholding them only

As He passed,

He clothed them with His beauty.

VI

THE BRIDE.

O who can heal me ?

Give me perfectly Thyself,

Send me no more

A messenger

Who cannot tell me what I seek.

VII

All they who serve

Relate a thousand graces of Thee ;

And all wound me more and more,

And they leave me dying,

While they babble I know not what.

VIII

But how thou perseverest, O life !

Not living where thou livest;

The arrows bring dc-atli

Which thou receivest

From thy conceptions of the Beloved.

IX

Why, after wounding

This heart, hast Thou not healed it ?

And why, after stealing it,

Hast Thou thus abandoned it,

And not carried away what Thou hast stolen ?

IJI:T\VI:I:\ THE SOUL AND < IIIUST. 397

Quench Thou my troubles,

For none else can do so ;

Ami Irt mine eyes behold Tlirc

Who art their light,

And it is for Thee alone I would use tin -in.

XI

Reveal Thy presence,

And let the vision of Thy beauty kill me.

Behold, the disease

Of love is incurable

t in Thy presence and in the liirht of Thy

countenance.

XII

Fount of cry

C) that on Thy silvered surfa<

Tln>ii wcmldrst mirror forth at omv

Those eyes desiral

WhU'h I have in my heart delineated !

XIII

Turn them away, O my Belovi ! !

1 fly a

THE IIRIDEGKOOX.

li turn, My Dove I

Tin- \vi.uml-.l hart

Looma on the hill

In the air of thy flight ami i

XIV

Till

mountain\*,

i

The roaring torrent\*,

.

A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE

xv

The tranquil night

At the approaches of the dawn,

The silent music,

The murmuring solitude,

The supper which revives, and enkindles love.

XVI

Catch us the foxes,

For our vineyard hath flourished ;

While of roses

We make a nosegay,

And let no one appear on the hill.

XVII

Cease, O thou killing north wind !

Come, O south wind, thou that awakenest love !

Blow through my garden,

And let its odours flow,

And my Beloved shall feed among the flower-.

XVIII

O nymphs of Judea !

While amid the flowers and the rose-trees

The amber sends forth its perfume,

Tarry in the suburbs,

And touch not my threshold.

XIX

Hide Thyself, O my Beloved !

Let Thy face shine on the mountains.

Do not tell it,

But regard the companions

Of her who traverses strange islands.

xx

'I III: BRIDEGROOM.

Light- winged birds,

Lions, fawns, hounding deer,

Mountains, valleys, strands,

Waters, winds, fires,

And the terrors that keep watch l.v ni.L'ht ;

BETWKKN TIIK .Sul'L AND < I1UIST.

By the soft lyres

the siren strains, I adjure you,

Let your fury cease,

And touch not the wall,

That the Bride may sleep in peace.

XXII

The Bride has entered

The pleasant and desirable garden.

And there reposes to her heart's content ;

Her neck reclining

On the sweet arms of her Beloved.

XXIII

Beneath the apple-tree

I espoused thee :

Tin-re I jrave thee My hand,

And thou wert then; redeemed

Where thy mother was corrupted.

XXIV

THE nUIDE.

Our bed is of flowers

By the dens of lions encompassed,

II imp: with purple,

Made in peace,

And crowned with a thouwu of gold.

\ \ v

In Thy footsteps

The young ones run Thy way ;

At the touch <>f th.

And l>y the spiced wine,

The Divine balsam flows.

In tin- inmost collar

Of my Beloved have I drunk ; and \vl il fi.rih

Over all the plain

I knew nothing,

Aii.1 1...-I the flock I follow,,! bit

400 A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE

XXVII

There He gave me His breasts,

There He taught me the science full of sweet i

And there I gave to Him

Myself without reserve ;

There I promised to be His Bride.

XXVIII

My soul is occupied,

And all my substance in His service ;

Now I guard no flock,

Nor have I any other employment :

My sole occupation is love.

XXIX

If, then, on the common

I am no longer seen or found,

Say that I am lost ;

That, being enamoured,

I lost myself; and yet I gained.

xxx

Of emeralds, and of flowers

In the early morning culled,

We will make the garlands,

Flowering in Thy love,

And bound together with one hair of my head.

XXXI

By that one hair

Thou hast observed fluttering on my nock,

And hast regarded on my n

Thou wert captivated ;

And wounded by one of my eyes.

XXXII

When Thou didst regard me,

Thine eyes imprinted Thy grace in me :

For this didst Thou love me again,

And thereby min eyes did merit

!'! what in Thee tin \

SOUL AND rilUIST. 401

XXXIII

Despise me not,

For if I was swarthy once

Thou canst regard me now ;

Since Thou hast regarded me,

Grace and beauty hast Thou given me.

XXXIV

THE BRIDEGROOM.

THE little white dove

Has returned to the ark with the bough ;

And now the turtle-dove

desired mate

On the green banks has found.

XXXV

In solitude she lived,

And in solitude built her nest ;

And in solitude, alone

I lath the Beloved guided her,

In solitude also wounded with her love.

KVI

TRP. nr.i

Let us rejoice, O my Beloved 1

Let us go forth to see ourselves in Thy beauty,

To the mountain and the hill,

Where the pure water flows ;

Let us enter into the heart of the thicket.

XXXVll

We shall go at once

To the lofty caverns of the rocks

Which are all secret,

v we shall enter in

tarte of the new MT JN m.vi.i

VOL. II. D D

40-2 A SPIRITUAL CANTK'LK.

\ \ xvin

There Thou wilt show me

What my soul desired ;

And there Thou wilt give at once,

O Thou, my life !

What Thou gavest me the other day,

XXXIX

The breathing of the air,

The song of the sweet nightingale,

The grove and its beauty

In the serene night,

With the fire that consumes, but without pain.

XL

None saw it ;

Neither did Aminadab appear.

The siege was intermitted,

And the cavalry dismounted

At the vision of the waters.

Tin- I.IVI.M; i I.AMK MF LOVE

I

O LIVING Flame of I.

That woundest tenderly

My soul in its inmost depth !

As Thou art no longer grievous,

Perfect Thy work, if it be Thy will,

Break the web in tin\* sweet encounter.

n

O sweet burn !

O delicious wound !

O tender hand 1 O gentle touch !

Savouring of everlasting lit.-,

And paying the whole debt,

In destroying death Thou host changed it into life.

in

<>!.. ;

In who.-- ura

The deep caverns of wnne,

Obscure and dark,

With unwonted brightness

I light and heat together to the Belov.

IV

v gently and how lovingly

Thou liestawnk. in my |.<.

; o alone Thou seer. : , -at ;

A n. 1 in Thy sweet breathing

Full of grace and glory,

How tenderly Thou fillest me with Thy love.

401

A SOUL LONGING FOR TIFE VISION OF GOD.

I LIVE, and yet not I,

In a manner hoping

That I am dying because I am not dead.

i

I am not now living in myself,

And without God I cannot live ;

For without Him, I ain also without myself.

This life of mine, what is it ?

A thousand deaths to me ;

For in my very life I hope

That I am dying because I am not dead.

ii

This life that I am living

Is but a lifeless life.

And so, a death continuing

Until I come to live with Thee.

God, hear thou my cry !

This life of mine I will it not ;

1 die because I am not dead.

in

When I am away from Thee,

What is my life to me?

The agony of death.

None greater have I seen.

O, wretched that I am !

For thus I persevere ;

I die because I am not dead.

IV

The fish that from the water leapeth

Is there not unrelieved ;

The death that it endures

A SOUL LONGING FOR Till: VISION

Does end in death at last.

What death can ever equal

My misery i \ii\- .'

For I, the mon I liv , the more I am not cl a-1

\Vht-n I iee Tln-r in the Sacrament

And begin to be relieved,

The absence cH'ruition

Creates a deeper pang ;

In all things greater suffering,

And I am sick at heart

And die, because I am not dead.

VI

And if, O Lord, I have a joy

In hopes of seeing Thee ;

My sorrow is increased,

Because I still may lose Th< , .

Living in dread so great

And hoping as I h<

I die, because I am not dead.

VII

Drlivur me from this death,

O God, and give in<- 111.-,

Nor let these fetters hold me ;

They are so strong :

Behold, I die to see Thee\*

And in a manner hoping

That I am dying, because I am not dead.

vni

My death I will bewail then,

And lament inv lit\*-

By reason of my H

Still here prolonged.

my God, when shall I be there

Where I may truly my,

1 livf at last because I am not dead?

406

irsTASY OF CONTEMPLATION.

I ENTERED, but I knew not where,

And there I stood nought knowing,

All science transcending.

I knew not where I entered,

For, when I stood within,

Not knowing where I was,

I heard great things.

What I heard I will not tell :

I was there as one who knew not,

All science transcending.

11

Of peace and devotion

I had perfect knowledge,

In solitude profound ;

The right way was clear,

But so secret was it,

That I stood babbling,

All science transcending.

in

I stood enraptured

In ecstasy, beside myself,

And in my every sense

No sense remained.

,.irit was endowed

With iindiTHtanding, under. standing nought,

All M-iuicc transcending.

ECSTASY OP CO.NTKM I'L ATION. 407

IV

That cloud of darkness

Illumining the night,

The higher it ascended

The leas I understood.

Whoever understands it,

Knows therefore ever leas,

All science transcending.

He who cornea here truly

Annihilates him

And all his previous knowledge

Seems ever lew and lea\*;

Mjience grows, :m<l h<

Abides as one nought knowing,

All Hcience transcending.

VI

Thia knowing of nought knowing

la ao potent in its might

That the prudent in tlu-ir reasoning

\i-\t-r ,-an .I.-!', a! it :

For their wisdom never reaches

To the understanding that understandcth nothing.

All science transcending.

Ml

Tin\* sovereign \M !. m

xoellenoe ao high

no (acuity nor nciencc

Can ever unto it attain.

He win i nlm 11 overcome himself

' knowledge\* which know notli:

vill always have it, all science tranaoen

408 r.iSTASY OF CONTEMPLATION.

VIII

If you would learn wherein

This sovereign wisdom doth consist :

In a sense profound

Of the essence of God :

It is an act of His compassion,

To abide, nought understanding,

All science transcending.

Till: SAM I. SUBJECT.

IN the wake of a loving cast,

And not of hope abandoned,

I mounted higher and hi^rln-r.

So that I came in sight of rh>

That I miirht o>mr in sight

Of that ca

I was forced to fly so high

As to be lost to sight ;

Yet in that act supreme

I grew weaker in my flight,

But my love was still so strong

That I rai-

III

I ascended higher

My sight grew faint and dim.

An<l the greatest ai

In obscurity wan made ;

is my love was viol

Blindly forth I l.-aj.t.

higher ai.

ami' in sight of the prey

way most strange

-:uid flight\* in

I from li

.

410 ECSTASY OF CONTEMPLATION.

For this cast alone I hcju d,

And my hope was not in vain,

For I mounted higher and higher,

So that I came in sight of the prey.

But the nearer I drew

To this cast sublime,

The more lowly, base, and vile,

And humiliated I grew.

I said, none can reach it ;

I abased myself still more and more;

So that I mounted higher and higher,

So that I came in sight of the prey.

411

THE SUPREME GOOD.

WITHOUT support, and with support,

Without light and in darkness living,

I see myself wasting away.

My soul lives in detachment

From every thing created,

And raised above itself

Into a life delicious,

Of God alone supported.

And therefore I will say,

Th.-it u hilt 1 most esteem

I.- that my soul is now

Without support, and with

u

And though I .-tin m darkness,

In this my mortal life

My misery is not so great :

: I have not !

I have th lit'r (I'-

ii the love of that :

In obscurity the greatest

The soul is submit

Without light and in darkness living.

in

Love has wrou

Since I ha it,

That be it ill or well with in.

1 havi- tin- -:nnr j>l-u-i.

It h;n traii-l'-nui-d i\i\ --ul ;

And so in it\* sweet il.rn.-.

h in m>-

I see my\* '

A in 1 wasting away.

41-2

THE SAME SUBJECT.

FOR all the beauty of the world

Never will I lose myself,

But only for that I know not,

Which may happily be found.

Sweetness of good that is finite.

The utmost it can do

Is to pall upon the appetite

And vitiate the taste.

For all the sweetness in the world

Never will I lose myself,

But only for that I know not,

Which may happily be found.

ii

The generous heart

Will never rest

Where it can be at ease,

But only where it meets with difficulties ;

Nought can ever satisfy it ;

And its faith ascends so high

As to taste of that I know not,

Which may happily be found.

in

He that ia on fire with 1

Divinely touched of God

Receives a taste so new

That all his own are gone.

Like one who of a fever ill

I Disdains the food before him,

And longs for that 1 know not.

Which may happily be found.

GOD THi: SUPREME GOOD. 413

IV

Be not at this astonished,

That the taste should thus be chui

For the cause of this affection

From all others differs.

And so the whole creation

Beholds itself estranged,

And tastes that I know not,

Which may happily be found.

For when once the will

Has been touched of God,

It never can be satisfied

Except in God alone.

But because His beauty

Is such that faith alone can see it,

It tastes it in I know not what,

Which may happily be found.

VI

And now of Him enamoured,

Tell me if you are in pain ;

For as He has no sweetness

In all created things,

But without form and figure,

Without support or rest,

Tasting there I know not what,

Which may happily be foun<l.

Do not think the inner heart,

Which is of priceless worth,

OH or in glad

In that which here sweetness gives;

But rather above all beauty raised

That is, en has ever been,

Taste\* tli : \v not what,

\* i may happily be found.

414 GOD THE SUPREME GOOD,

VIII

He who seeks a greater gain

Will rather turn his thoughts

To that he has not acquired

Than to that he has already.

And therefore for a greater venture

I shall always be inclined,

Neglecting all for that I know not,

Which may happily be found.

IX

For all that in the way of sense

I may obtain on earth,

And all I may understand,

However high it may be

For all grace and beauty

Never will I lose myself;

But only for that I know not,

Which may happily be found.

41.'.

OF THE SOUL REJOICING IN THE KNOW-

LEDGE OF GOD BY FAITH.

I KNOW the fountain well which flows and runs,

Though of the night.

i

That everlasting fountain is a secret well,

And I know well its home,

Though of the night.

ii

Its source I know not, because it has none ;

But I know that therein all things have their source,

Though of tin- night.

in

I know that nothing can be in beauty like it,

Ami that of it heaven and earth do drink,

Though of the night.

I know well it is of depths onftthomble,

And that none may ever sound it,

Though of the nipht.

Its brightness never is obscured,

A; i.l I know that from it all light proceeds,

Though of th. in

VI

1 know it\* streams are so abundant.

It water\* lu-ll and heaven and earth,

Though of the night.

416 KNOWLEDGE OF GOD BY FAITH.

VII

The torrent that from this fountain rises

I know well, is so grand and so strong,

Though of the night.

VIII

The torrent that from Both proceeds,

I know that Neither of them It precedes,

Though of the night.

IX

This everlasting fountain lies concealed

In the living Bread to give us life,

Though of the night.

It calls on every creature to be filled

With its waters, but in the darkness,

Though of the night.

XI

This living fount which I desire

I see it in this Bread of life,

Though of the night.

41

SONG OF CHRIST AM' 11 IK SOUL

THERE is a shepherd alone in his grief,

Deprived of all pleasure and joy,

His thoughts on his shepherdess intent,

And his heart is by love most cruelly torn.

He weeps, not because wounded with love,

Nor because of the pain of his gr

Though his heart has been pierced so 1

But because h<- thinks he is forgot.

in

His beautiful shepherdess, BO does ho think,

Has forgotten him : that thought alum\*

Overwhelms him with grief in a land not his own,

And his heart i most cruelly tern.

shepherd exclaims, ah wretch that I

For I am abanl- in .1 and left;

My presence is shunned by my love,

And my heart for her love is most cm

At last he was raised on a it

Win-re he open. .1 hi- l'<autiful nrms,

And hanging thereby breathed his last,

Hi\* heart hy love moat rrm-llv torn.

II. , i

41-

TIIK MOST HOLY TRINITY.

(In principle erat vcrlmiii. )

IN the beginning was the Word,

The Word was God,

In Whom He possessed

Bliss everlasting.

That very Word was God,

And the Beginning as well ;

He was in the Beginning,

And yet had none.

in

He was the Beginning Itself,

And therefore had none ;

The Word is the Son,

From the beginning born.

IV

He haa begotten for ever,

And is for ever begetting ;

He has given Him of His substance for

And has it for ever Himself.

And thus the glory of the Son

Is that He hath in the Father,

And all His glory flic Father

Hath in the Son.

TIIF. K00T II<M TRINITY. 4io

M

As the lover with his love,

Each in the Other living,

So this Love which Both unites

Is One in Both.

VII

In dignity and might

Coequal with Them Both,

Three Persons, one Love,

The Three are One.

VIII

And in the Three one Love,

One Lover makes of All ;

The Lover is the Love

In Whom Each doth live.

i\

The Being which the Three possess

Each by Himself possesses,

And of the Three Each One exults

In that Ho hath this Reing.

This Being is Each One,

And makes Them One alone

In a way ineffable,

Beyond all thoughts or word.

XI

And BO that Lore which makes Them One

Is Infinite Itself:

-no Love make One the Three,

And is their Being as well.

hat Love the more it makes Them One

The moro It in Thrir Love.

420

THE COMMUNICATION OF THE THREE PERSONS.

IN the Love from Both proceeding

It hath limits none.

The Sire uttered words of gladness

To His only Son.

Words they were of joy profoundest,

Understood of none,

But of Him exulting in them

Whose they were the Son.

in

Of these words of gladness, only

This was heard by me

Nought, my Son, can give Me plea -mo

When I have not Thee.

IV

But if aught should give Me pleasure.

That I seek in Thee,

He who gives to Thee most pleasun-

Gives it most to Me.

He who Thee in nought resembleth

Cannot be like Me.

Life of Life, My whole rejoicing

one in Thee.

Till: COMMUNICATION Qi ; UK T1IKKK I'KIi.- 421

VI

Thou art My Eternal Wisdom,

Thou, Light of My light ;

In Thee, Figure of My substance,

la My whole delight.

VII

Thee, My Son, he who loveth

Shall have love ol

And the love wherewith I love him

IB My love of Thee.

So great, then, is My love of Thee, that he

Who loveth Thee shall be also loved by M

THE CREATION.

O MY SON, I long to give Thee

In My love a loving bride,

Who shall by Thy goodness merit

With Us ever to abide :

Who shall, at the heavenly banquet,

Eating of My bread with Me,

Learn to know the wondrous treasure,

What I have, My Son, in Thee;

in

And that in Thy grace and beauty,

As a glory round her shed,

She with Me may joy together.

He gave the Sire thanks, and said :

IV

On the bride which Thou wilt give Me

I My brightness will bestow,

So that she My Father's goodness

In its light may love and know ;

Learning also how My Being

From His Being doth outflow.

With My arms I will embrace her,

And Thy love shall be her light,

So for ever shall Thy goodness

Be exalted with delight.

i in: SA.MI; SIT..IBCT.

FOR the merit\* of Thy love, then.

4 Be it done/ the Father said ;

In the word the Father uttered

All created things were made.

In the everlasting wisdom

Rose the palace of the bride,

Which two substance\* created

In a twofold form divide.

in

With varicti.^ unnumbered

Was the lower part arrayed,

While the higher glowed in beauty,

With tin- wondrous ir-ms displayed.

IV

That the bride might know the Bridegroom

Wh<> )UT h.'.-umly nuptials graced,

Angelic hosts in order

In tli.- higher part were placed.

Man waa placed his nature lower

In the lower part on earth,

K. MI:: ta>htm>d of a Mibotanoe

Which \va> uf

THE CREATION.

VI

And although both place and nature

God in this way did divide,

Yet the two are, both together,

But one body of the bride.

VII

And the two, although divided,

Are one bride in His one 1

Who, in gladness, as the Bridegroom

Is possessed of those above.

VIII

Those below in hope are living

Of the faith that He has given,

For He one day will exalt them

He hath said so unto heaven.

IX

For of those of base condition

He will take away the shame,

And exalt them, so that nothing

Shall remain to them of blame.

x

He in all things with their likeness

Will Himself one day invest ;

He will come and dwell among them,

As His own elected rest.

XI

God Himself will be Incarnate,

God will have a human birth ;

Eating, He will come, and drinking,

And converse with men on earth

XII

He will dwell Himself among them

And continually stay,

Till the final consummation

Whfn tlic ;i^cs melt away.

Tin

Mil

shall both rejoice together

In an endless life of bliss,

For to Him belongs the Headship

Of die bride, and she is His.

XIV

He shall bring the just together

Nought shall them from her divide

F.-r they are the living members

Of the body of the bride.

xv

II.- \si:i t, n.l.-rly unbrace her,

!!< will give her <>f His 1<

And, united with Him, take her,

To His Father's home above.

XVI

Into joy shall she then or

God no greater joy can give ;

When absorbed in Him for .

the lif, of God shall live.

XVI I

So the Father, Son, and Spirit,

Three in One and One in Three,

Kuch living in the Oil.-

Tin- most blessed

496

THE DESIRES OF THE HOLY FATHERS.

WHEN the ancient Saints were waiting,

Hope came down to their relief,

And made lighter by its presence

The sore pressure of their grief.

But still, hope deferred, together

With the longing which they had

To behold the promised Bridegroom,

Made them sick at heart, and sad.

HI

Pouring forth their supplications

In their misery they lay,

Sighing, weeping, and lamenting,

With strong crying night and day,

IV

That He would the times determine,

And among them come and stay :

\* O that I,' so one entreated,

' Might rejoice to see His day !'

1 Hasten, then, Thy work, and finish ;

Send Him, Lord, Whom Thou wilt send,'

Wa- the cry of one. Another's,

\* O that He the heavens would rend ! '

Tin: ii:<n;i-> or TIIK nm.y r.uii>

4 That I might behold His coming,

And my wail be turned to mirth ;

Let the clouds rain down the JUKI One,

So long desired on the earth ; '

VII

1 Let the earth which brought forth briers

Now break forth, and in their room

Let it bear the sacred flower

Which shall ever on it bloom.'

VIII

Others also : O how blessed

Shall that generation be !

Which shall merit in time coming

God's Most Holy Face to see ; '

IX

' Men shall throng around, and touch, Him,

They shall in His sight remain ;

In the Sacraments rejoicing

He Himself shall then ordain.'

THE SAME SUBJECT.

THESE and other supplications,

As the centuries rolled by,

Men poured forth : with greater fervour

As the promised time drew nigh.

Aged Simeon in the furnace

Of his longing, burning lay,

Praying God that He would grant him

Of His grace to see that day.

in

And the Ever-blessed Spirit

Condescended to his cry ;

And consoled him with the promise

That the old man should not die

IV

Till he saw the Ever-living

God, descended from above,

Took Him in his arms and held Him.

And embraced Him in His love.

THE INCARNATION.

IN the fulness of the ages

Now had come the holy tide,

For the payment of the ransom

Of the long-expectant bride,

Groaning in the house of bondage

Underneath the legal yoke

Of the precepts given by Mooes.

When these words the Father spoke

in

I, my Son, have in Thy likeness

And Thy image made Thy l>rid-.

And in that resemblance worthy

To be ever at Thy side ;

IV

But in one respect unlike Thee,

For hrr nature is not Tin

She is flesh her nature human

Thy nature is Divi:

Perfect love demands a likeness

In the lovers it unites,

For tl- most complete reseml

Mort aboumli th in ! light\*.

Tin: INCAI;\.\TIM\.

VI

Now the love and exultation

Of the bride would greatly grow

If she saw Thee in her likeness,

In the flesh, on earth below.

VII

Then the Son the Father answered,

Lo ! My will is ever Thine,

And My glory which I cherish

Is that Thine is also Mine.

VIII

I am ready at Thy bidding,

For Thy will is my delight,

To make known at once Thy goodness

And Thy wisdom and Thy might.

IX

I will manifest Thy justice,

And proclaim throughout the earth

Thy supremacy and beauty

And the sweetness of Thy worth.

I will go and seek My bride, then,

And upon Myself will take

All the poverty and sorrows

She now suffers for My sake.

XI

And that I true life may give her,

I will give for her My own,

So shall I present her, rescued

From the pit, before Thy throne.

I. -I I

THE SAME SUBJECT.

GOD then summoned the Archangel

Holy Gabriel him He sent

To the Blessed Virgin Mary

To obtain the Maid's consent.

consented : in that instant

The mysterious work was done,

And the Trinity a body

Wrought and fashioned for the Son.

in

In this wondrous operation,

Though the Sacred Three concurn <],

II. \Vh> in the womb of Mary

Wa Incarnate, is the Word.

IV

He Who had a Father only

I l.i.l ;i Mother also then :

Hut it was in other fashion

Than the manner is of men.

In the womb of Holy Mary

II 1 1 is fleah did then receive:

So the Son of God Mott Highest

We the Son of Man believe.

43.'

THE NATIVITY.

Now at last the destined ages

Their appointed course had run,

When rejoicing from His chamber

Issued forth the Bridegroom Son.

ii

He embraced His bride, and held her

Lovingly upon His breast,

And the gracious Mother laid Him

In the manger down to rest.

in

There He lay, the dumb beasts by Him,

They were fitly stabled there,

While the shepherds and the angels

Filled with melody the air.

IV

So the feast of their espousals

With solemnity was kept ;

But Almighty God, an Infant,

In the manger moaned and wept.

v

So the bride at her betrothal

Did the bridal gifts arrange ;

But the Mother looked in wonder

At the marvellous exchange.

Man gave forth a song of gladness,

God Himself a plaintive moan ;

Both possessing that which n

H;ul boon hitliorto their own.

SUPER FLUMINA BABYLONIS.

(Ps. cxuvi.)

i

BT the waters of the river

Close by Babylon it swept

On the banks my tears were flowing-

There I sat me down and wept.

I remembered thee, O Sion,

With thy love my heart was sore ;

Sweet to me was thy memorial,

So I wept still more and more,

in

Of my festal robes divested,

Those of woe around me flung

While my silent harp suspended

From the willow branches hung.

IV

" I left it; fondly trusting,

For my hopes in thee still lay.

Love my heart had deeply wounded.

And had carried it away.

So, I said, my wound is grievous

O let love me wholly slay.

Into iu fire\* then I threw me,

That 1 miffht U- 1-urncd away.

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VI

Now the silly moth I blame not,

That in the fire seeks its death ;

For I, while in myself but dying,

Draw in thee alone my breath.

VII

I for thee to death submitted,

And for thee to life returned ;

For in thy most sweet memorial

Life and death were both inurned.

VIII

In their merriment exulting,

Heedless of the captive's wrongs,

Strangers bade me rise and sing them

Sion's old familiar songs.

IX

Sing us of the songs of Sion ;

We would hear them strange dem.-md

How can I, lamenting Sion,

Sing them in a foreign land ?

x

In the chants once so familiar

How can I uplift my voice ?

May they never be remembered

If in exile I rejoice !

XI

Let my tongue, from speed i refraining,

To my palate silent cleave ;

If I, in the land of exile,

Where I dwell alone and grieve,

XII

Even amidst the verdant bowers

Of the Babylonic land

Should forget thee. Let my right hand

Cease its cunning to command

a FI.rMUVA BABYLON |J

XIII

If I make not thee, O Sion,

The beginning of my mirth ;

Or if I rejoice in keeping

Any festival of earth.

XIV

Thou, of Babylon the daughter,

Shalt lie prostrate in the dust,

Lost and wretched ; but for ever

Blest is He in Whom I trust.

xv

In the day of retribution

He will thee at last afflict;

II' will lay on thee the burden

Thou didst once on me inflict.

XVI

He will me, thy weeping captive,

With thy little children take,

to Christ the Kock will bring them

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81, L 434. My soul hath fainted for Thy .-alvation.

131, ii. 1 12. I opened my mouth and panted.

140, n. 221. Thy word is a vehement fire.

ocx. 4, n. 275. He shall neither slumber nor sleep that keepeth Israel

cxxii. 2, i. 443. As the eyes of the handmaid.

cxxvL 1, ii. 275. Unless the Lord build the house,

cxxxvii. 6, i. 82. The Lord is high and looketh on the low.

czzxviu. 11, i. 60, 227; n. 209. Night shall be my light in my pleasures.

12, 1.390; n. 67, 248. The darkness and the light are alik t<>

Thee.

cxlii. 7, L 434. My spirit hath fjunted away,

oxliv. 16, ii. 38. Thou openeet Thy hand.

18, L 314. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him.

oxlvn. 17, i. 127, 374. He sendeth His crystals like morsels.

PROVERB&

ii. 4, u. 54. If thou shalt seek her as money.

\ V i t h all watchfulness keep thy heart.

17. O ye men, to yon I call.

15, n. 298. liy me kings reign.

18,1. 17. With me are riches and glory.

31, n. 100, 127, 223. My delights were to be with the children of

ix. 10, i. 181. The knowledge of the holy is prudence,

i. 141. To the just their desire shall be given.

XT. 15, ii. 116. A secure mind is like a continual feast.

1. :i. -J7.V I r i the part of man to prepare the soul.

J, n. 275. The Lord must direct his steps.

Before destruction the heart of a man is ex

Look not upon the wine when it is yellow,

xxiv. 16, i. 40. A just man shall fall seven times and shall rie again

shall be overwhelmed by glory.

19, i IM The hearts of men are laid open to the prudent

xxx. I am the most foolish of men.

15, L 38. The horse leech hath two daughters that say, Bring,

Nt

1 5, 257. Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain.

BOCUBIA0TB8

15. All i\* vanity and vexation

246. Unghtr I counted TT >r

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ii. 2,

10,

26,

iii. 12,

iv. 10,

v. 1,

258. Why art thou vainly deceived.

32. Whatsoever my eyes desired I refused them not.

245. Riches a fruitless solicitude of the mind.

220. There is no better thing than to rejoice.

162. Woe to him that is alone.

145. God is in heaven, and thou upon earth ; therefore let thy

words be few.

9, i. 245. He that loveth riches shall reap no fruit from them.

12, i. 245, 252. Riches kept to the hurt of the owner,

vii. 1, i. 187. What needeth a man to seek things that are above him.

3, i. 247. It is better to go to the house of mourning than the house

of feasting.

4, i. 247. Anger is better than laughter.

5, i. 246. The heart of the wise is where there is mourning,

viii. 4, i. 199. The Word of God is full of power,

ix. 1, n. 14. Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or

hatred.

17, n. 287. The words of the wise are heard in silence,

x. 1, i. 279. Dying flies spoil the sweetness of the ointment.

4, n. 247. Care will make the greatest sins to ceaso.

xii. 7, n. 231. And the spirit return to God who gave it.

CANTICLE OF CANTICLES.

\*

i. 1, i. 439, 451. Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth.

3, n. 133, 162, 266. Draw me, we will run after Thee.

4, i. 440; n. 177, 251. I am black but beautiful.

6, n. 15. Shew me where Thou feedest,

10, n. 63. We will make thee chains of gold.

11, u. 303. While the king is at his rep

11, n. 99. My spikenard sent forth the odour thereof.

15, n. 127. Our bed is of flowers,

ii. 1, n. 126, 166. I am the flower of the field.

,. 3, n. 181. I sat down under His shadow.

4, i. 94 ; n. 140. He brought me into the cellar of wine.

5, n. 165. Stay me with flo\\

6, n. 138. His left hand is under my head.

9, n. 21. My beloved is like a roe.

10, n. 206, 229. Arise, make hate, my love.

11, n. 122. Winter is now pat.

.. 13, ii. 193, 206. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come.

14, n. 79, 207. Let thy voice sound in my ears.

.. 15, n. 93. Catch us the little foxes.

,. 16, n. 252. My Beloved to me, and I to Him.

iii. 1, i. 434, 439, 454 ; n. 30. In my bed by night I sought Him.

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CANTICLE OF

, \.r V I',.-.-

.ii. J L 414; & SI I will Mek Him whom my soul loveth.

4, i. 434. 453 ; n. 30. When I had paved by them I found Him.

439. I held Him and will not let Him go.

6, i. 203 ; ii. 1 17, 155, 279. I ndjtire you, O daughters of Jerusalem,

that you stir not up.

6, ii. 211. Who is she that goeth up by the desert,

ii. 288. As a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices.

7, i. 44S; u. 131. Behnl.l threescore valiant one\*.

9, IL 130. King Solomon hath made him\*-lf a litt.-r.

1 0, L 444. The seat of gold, the going up of purple.

, 11, n. 118, 183. Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and \*.

.Solomon,

ir. 1, IT. 178. 179. Behold thou art fitir, O my lore, thy eyes are dore's

eye\*.

4, n. 131. Thy neck is as the tower of David.

I will go to the mountain of myrrh.

''. i. 413 ; n. 42, 189. Thou bant wounded my heart.

.. U. i 21A ; ii. 117. My spouse is a garden enclosed.

1 '. n. 268. A well of living waters.

., 18, n. 99. Blow through my garden.

v. 1. n. 121. I am come into my garden.

-'. r .11 " I sleep and my heart watcheth.

f. n. 134. My Beloved put His hand through the keylml.-.

' . it. 140. 222. My soul molted when He v

::. 61. I nought Him and found Him :

n. 21. They "truck me and wounded me.

.. ft. t. 414, 433 ; n. 42. T. 11 Him that I languish with lore.

194. His belly is of ivory set with sapphires.

180. I to my Beloved, and my Beloved to roe.

\* 3. n. ITS. Behold Thou art fair, my Beloved.

n. 18.V Terrible as an army set in array.

.. 4. i. 192, 361 ; n. 82. Turn away thy eyes from me.

Who is she that cometh forth aa the morning.

. it. 3M). Terrible as aa army set in array.

., 10, L 449. I went down into the garden of nuts,

1. i. 110, 427; n. 143. I knew not

n. 93. My soul troubled me fur th. rhariota of AminadaK

1 . it. K,.-,. How iN-aiitiful are thy steps in hue.

2. IL 266. Thy belly is like a heap of wheat -t with lilies.

Phe new and the old I hav. I hee,

1. i. 417. 1.1 ; n. 122, 128. Who shall give Thee to me for

2. n. 140, 196. I will give Thee a cup of spiced wine.

'>. tt.211. 228. Leaning upon her Beloved.

.. A. i: i \_ i I'nder the apple tree I railed thee up.

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viii. 6, i. 231, 234, 436 ; n. 65. Put Me as a seal upon thy heart.

n. 255, 257. The lamps thereof are fire and flames.

n. 66. Love is strong as death.

8, n. 107. Our sister is little.

WISDOM.

i. 6, L 219, 264. The Holy Ghost will withdraw Himself from

thoughts that are without understanding.

7, n. 88. The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world.

iii 6, i. 387. As gold in the furnace He hath proved them,

iv. 10, n. 233. He pleased God, and was beloved.

12, L 249 ; n. 291. The bewitching of vanity obscureth good things.

vi. 13, n. 30. Wisdom is glorious and never fadeth away,

vii. 11, i. 403. All good things came to me with her.

21, i. 180, 210. Wisdom, which is the worker of all thinp\*, taught

me.

22, L 274. Which nothing hindereth, beneficent.

23, i. 250. They all love bribes.

24, L 396 ; n. 226, 299. Wisdom reacheth everywhere by her purity

26, IL 261. The brightness of eternal light

27, n. 299. She reneweth all things,

viii. 1, n. 242. She reacheth from end to end mightily.

i. 122 ; n. 1. Wisdom ordereth all things sweetly.

ix. 15, L 374. n. 104, 210, 240. The corruptible body is a load upon tli<

soul,

ad. 17. i. 152. By what things a man sinneth, by the same also is h,

tormented.

xvi. 20, i. 19, 397 ; n. 272. Having in it the sweetness of every taste.

21, 1.350,397. Serving every man's will.

25, x. 327. Even then it was transformed into all things,

xviii. 14, i. 453. While all things were in quiet silence.

ECCLESIA8TICUS.

T. 6, n. 174. Be not without fear about sin forgiven.

ix. 14, n. 137. Forsake not an old friend.

15, n. 136. A new friend is as new wino.

xi. 10, L 244. If thou be rich, thou shalt not be free from sin.

34, i. 42. Of one spark cometh a great fire.

xiiL 1, i. 33. He that toucheth pitch shall bo defiled with it.

xix. 1, i. 42. He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and

little.

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ECCLESIASTICUS <xmtinu<d.

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xxiii. 6, I. 38. Take from me the greediness of tho belly.

xxxiv. 9, i. 371. What doth he know that hath not been tried.

1 1, M. 2 t 5. He that hath not been tried, what doth he know.

XZXT. 21, i. 109. The prayer of him that hombleth himself shall pierce the

clouds,

xli. 1, n. 60. O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee.

3, n. 59. O death, thy sentence is welcome,

li. 29, i. 403. My entrails were troubled in seeking her.

26, i. 410. n. 289. He hath enlightened my ignorances.

1SAIAS.

ii. 2. it. 188. In the last days the mountain of the house of the. Lord

shall b prepared.

3, u. 188. Let as go up to the mountain of the Lord.

iii. 12, i. 269. They that call thee blessed deceive the\*.

14, n. 280. You have devoured the vineyard.

v. 20, i. 223. Darkness for light, and light for darkneas.

i. 424. The light is darkened with the mist thereof.

-'. i. 73. Upon it stood the seraphim.

4, i. 115. The Lord showed His glory in the seraphim.

vii. 9, i. 59. If you will not believe you shall not understand.

viii. 6, it. 285. The waters of Siloe that go with silence,

ix. 6, u. 298. The government is upon His shoul.l.r.

., 20, i. 26. He shall turn to the right hnnd and shall be hungry.

xi. 3, u. 139. He shall be filled with the spirit of the fmr of th<> Inl.

xix. 14, I. 153, 870. The Lord hath mingled in the midst them\* the

spirit of giddiness,

xxiv. 16, n. 230. From the ends of the earth we have heard praises.

. n. 83. My seen\* to myself,

xxvl 9, 1.408. My soul hath deaired Thee in the night.

., 1 7, i. 400. 80 are we become in Thy presence.

17 1 1 i.lo Thyself a little for a mom

9, i. 136, 362 ; n. 271. Whom shall He teach knowledge?

., 19,1.362. Vexation Alone shall make yon understand.

xx ix. 8, i. 25. Faint with thirst and his soul is empty.

xxx. 1, 2, i. 156. Woe to you ... who walk to go down into Egypt.

9, u. 226. His furnace in Jerusalem,

xl. 17, u. 232. All nations are as if they had no l>eing at all.

18, i. 83. To whom then have you likened God?

., 31, i. 438. They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength.

xliii. 3.M.178. I have given Egypt for thy atonement

4, n. 176. Since thou became honourable in My y\*.

,. 21.ii.S96. This people hare I formed for Mys^f.

xlv. 3.H. la I will give thee hidden treasure

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adv. 15, ii. 14. Verily Thou art a hidden God.

xlviii. 18, i. 216. Thy peace had been as a river.

Iv. 1, i. 28. All you that thirst come to the waters.

Ivii. 20, L 26. The wicked are like the raging sea which cannot rest.

Iviii. 10, i. 362; IL 186. Then My light shall rise up in darkness.

lix. 10, i. 33. We have stumbled at noon as if in darkness.

Ixiv. 4, i. 63, 83, 229, 265, 398 ; n. 199. Eye hath not seen, O Cod.

besides Thee.

Ixv. 24, n. 54. Before they call I will hear.

Irvi. 12, ii. 78. I will bring upon her a river of peace.

n. 147. They shall caress you.

JEREMIAS.

i. 6, i. 428. Ah, Lord God !

11, 1.115. A rod watching,

ii. 2, I. 437. I have remembered thee.

13, i. 23. My people have done two evils.

i. 251. They have forsaken me.

14, ii. 101. Is Israel a bondman?

24, i. 26. He snuffed up the wind of his love.

25, i. 26. Keep thy foot from being bare.

iv. 10, i. 137. You shall have peace, and behold the sword reachctli

even unto the soul.

23, i. 14. I beheld the earth and lo, it was void and nothing,

viii. 15, i. 137. We looked for peace, and no good came,

xii. 5, ii. 246. If thou hast been wearied with running with footmen.

xr. 7, i. 146. I am become a laughing-stock all the day.

xxiii. 21, i. 286. I did not send prophets, yet they ran.

28, L 201. What hath the chaff to do with the wheat

29, ii. 221. Are not My words as a fire.

32, i. 286. They cause My people to err by their lying.

xxxi. 18, i. 371. n. 245. Thou hast chastised me.

xlv. 2, L 18\*. God revealed to Jeremias the weakness of Baruoh.

adix. 16, i. 281. Thy arrogancy hath deceived thee.

LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAS.

i. 13, i. 409 ; n. 245. From above He hath sent fire into my bones.

hi. 1, L 389. I am the man that see my poverty.

8, i. 393. He shutteth out my prayer.

9, i. 393. He hath shut up my ways with square stones.

17, L 400, 401. My soul is repelled off from peace.

19, n. 27. Remember my poverty.

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LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAS^ctmtfnwrf.

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iii. 20, i. 220 ; n. 263. I will be mindful and remember.

29, i. 393, 444. He shall put his mouth in the dust

44, t.393. Thou hast set a cloud before Thee.

47, L 146. Prophecy is become to us a fear,

iv. 1, i. 261. How is the gold become dim.

7, i. 34. Her Nazarites were whiter than snow.

8, L 34. Their face is now made blacker than coals.

BARUCH.

iii. 11, n. 101. Thou art grown old in a strange country.

., 22, n. 242. It hath not been heard of in the land of Chanaan.

23, i. 84. The way of Wisdom they have not known.

31, L 430. There is none that is able to know her ways.

EZECHIEL.

i. 6, n. 260. The likeness of four living creatures.

8, i. 242. They had faces and wings on the four sides.

24, n. 79, 260. The voice of the Most High God.

1, H. 261. The vision of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

viil 10, i. 35. Ail the idols of the house of Israel were painted on the

walls.

14, L 35. Behold women sat there mourning for Adonis.

16, L 36. Five and twenty men having their backs to the temple of

the Lord,

xir. 7, L 154. If he come to the prophet to enquire of me.

1 54. And when the prophet shall err

x vi. 5. n. 1 -21. Thou wast cast out upon the face of the earth.

n. 174. I will not remember all his iniquities,

xxir. 10, L 387. Heap together the bones.

ll,i. 387. Set it empty on burning coals,

zzzir. 2, u. 282. Woe to the shepherds of Israel

xxxvi. 25, 11. 257. I will pour upon you clean water.

DAX1EL.

ix. 22, i. 196. I am now come forth to teach thee.

27, 1.261. There shall be in the temple the abomination of desolation.

9. Daniel, stand upright

,, 16, n. 84. At the sight of the\* my joint\* are loosed.

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ii. 14, i. 215; n. 181, 270, 279. I will lead her into the wilderness.

20, i. 377, 442 ; n. 62. I will espouse thee to me in faith,

xiii. 9, i. 420. Perdition is thine own.

14, n. 251. O death, I will be thj death.

JONAS.

ii. 4, i. 386. Thou hast cast me forth unto the deep,

iii. 4, i. 143. Yet forty days and Ninive shall be destroyed,

iv. 2, i. 146. Therefore I went before to flee unto Tharsis.

11, L 32. They know not how. to distinguish between their right

hand and their left.

MICHEAS.

vii. 3, i. 280. The evil of their hands they call good.

NAHUM.

i. 9, n. 174. There shall not rise a double affliction.

HABACUC.

ii. 1, i. 234. 363. ii. 271. I will stand upon my watch,

iii. 6, 11. 241. The mountains are crushed in pieces.

SOPHONIAS.

i. 12, n. 13. I will search Jerusalem with lamps.

ZACHARIAS.

ii. 8, n. 54. He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of my eye.

II. MACHABEES.

i. 22, n. 267. Jeremias commanded them to take the fire,

ii. 1, n. 257. There was a great fire kindled.

S. MATTHEW.

iv. 8, i. 172. The devil showed our Lord all the kingdoms of the world.

v. 3, i. 282. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

.. 8, L 440. Blessed are the clean in heart.

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T. 26, IL 13. Thou shall not go oat from thence till thou repay the last

farthing.

vL 2, L 277, 278. Amen I say to you, they have received th ir

reward.

3, L 278, 447. Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand

doth.

6, i. 316. When thou Shalt pray, enter into thy chamber.

IL 17. Pray to thy Father in secret.

,, 7, L 315. When ye pray, speak not much.

10, n. 229. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.

,, 24, L 207 ; H. 158. No man can serve two masters.

33, i. 314. Seek first the kingdom of Ood and His justice,

vii. 3, i. 329. Why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

6, L 24. Give not that which is holy to dogs

13, EL 283. Enter ye in at the narrow gate.

14, L 74, 325, 345, 359. How narrow is the gat, .

n. 12. Strait is the way that leadeth to life,

22, i. 164, 284. Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name.

23, L 164. I never knew you.

viii. 20, i. 78. The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head,

x. 33, n. 158. He that shall deny Me before men.

36, L 417. A man's enemies shall be they of his own household.

xi. 28, L 29. Come to Me all you that labour and are burdened.

30, L 77. My yoke is sweet, and My burden light,

xii. 30, i. 42. He that gathcreth not with Me scattereth.

xiii. 12, n. 177. He that hath, to him shall be given.

: 244. Thorns . . . the deceitfulneas of riches.

31, IL 239. The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed.

41, u. 17, 149. The treasure hidden in a field.

68, L 299. He wrought not many miracles there, because of their

unb-

xv. 8, I. 303, 304. This people honoureth Me with th.-ir lip\*.

,. II. i. 30, 129. If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit

26, i. 24. It is not good to take the bread of childnn.

xri. 24,i. 263. If any man will come after Me, let him deny himselfl

J.i, i. 344 ; XL 169. He that shall lose his life for My sake shall

find it.

26, L 245. What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world.

5, i. 167. This is My In-loved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

xviii. 20, i. 161. Where there are two or three gathered together in My

name,

xix, 23, L 244. A rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of

Heaven.

29, 1.256,271. A hundredfold reward even in this lifr.

9, L 303. The multitude\* cried Hosanna to the Son of David.

13, i. 304. Gut him into the exterior darkueef.

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S. MATTHEW continued.

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xxiii. 5, L 277. All their works they do to be seen of men.

15, i. 246. You go round about the sea and the land to make one

proselyte.

24, i. 329. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a

camel.

xxiv. 19, i. 38. Woe unto them that are with child.

xxv. 8, 1.331. Give us of your oiL

21, L 94. Because thou hast been faithful over a few things.

28, n. 177. Take ye away the talent from him.

xxvi. 39, i. 316. Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.

xxvii. 46, I. 79. My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me.

xxviii. 10, i. 289. Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee.

S. MAEK.

viii. 34, i. 75. If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself.

35, i. 77. Whosoever will save his life shall lose it.

ix. 38, I. 318. Do not forbid him.

xiii. 11, L 288. Take no thought beforehand what you shall speak.

S. LUKE.

i. 13, n. 26. Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard.

35, it. 259. The power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.

52, n. 78. He hath exalted the humble,

ii. 25, n. 139. A just man full bf fear,

iv. 24, i. 299. No prophet is accepted in his own country,

vii. 37, i. 413. Behold a woman that was in the city, a sinner,

viii. 12, i. 282. They by the wayside are they that hear,

ix. 54, i. 286. Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from

heaven,

x. 20, i. 285, 290. Rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto

you.

42, n. 154. One thing is necessary,

xi. 1, i. 315. Teach us to pray.

5, L 72. Friend, lend me three loaves.

9, n. 29. Seek and you shall find.

26, L 95. He taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than

himself.

52, n. 283. Woe to you lawyers,

xii. 20, i. 245, 256. Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of

thee.

35, i. 38. Let your loins be girt.

37, n. 147. He will gird himself and make them sit down to

meat.

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a

Ca. Vr. YoLPBfe

xiv. 11, L 431. Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled.

33, L 19, 72, 222. Every one of you that doth not renounce alL

XT. 6, n. 118. When he hath found it, lay it on his shoulders re-

joicing.

9, n. 118. Rejoice with me.

x-.i. 8, i. 251. The children of this world are wiser in their generation\*

than the children of light

,, 10, L 253. He that is faithful in that which is least.

19, i. 268. The rich man feasted sumptuously every day.

xvii. 21, L 307 ; n. 16. The kingdom of God is within you.

xviii. 1, L 316. We ought always to pray and not to faint

11, L 225, 277, 329. God, I give Thee thanks that I am not a\* the

rest of men.

xix. 41, L 303. Christ wept over Jerusalem,

MM. 8, n. 98. Go and prepare for us the pasch.

26, i. 16. He that is greater among you, let him become as the

younger.

xxiv. 6, L 289. He is not here, but m risen.

Jl, i. 139. We hoped that it was He who should have redeemed

Israel.

25, L 139. O foolish, and slow of heart

26, L 289. Ought not Christ to hare suffered these things.

8. JOHN.

i. 3, n 297. Without Him was made nothing.

4,ii. 76. In Him was life.

.'>, i. 14, 412. The light shineth in darkness and the darkncM di.i

not comprehend it.

.. 12, L 67; n. 204. He gave them power to be made the sons of

God.

,,13,i. 67. Born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh ... bat of

God.

,, 16, n. 172, 176. Grace lor grace,

18, i. 8\*2, 229. No man hath seen God at any time.

u. 14. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the

Father.

3, n. 28. They have no wine.

iii. 5, i. 68. Unices a man be born again of water and of the Holy

Ghost.

6, I. 272, 338. That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

1 1. n. 62, 114, 266. A fountain of water springing up into life ever-

lasting.

23, i. 306. The true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in

truth.

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8. JOHN continued.

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iv. 24, i. 307. God mnst be adored in spirit and in truth.

28, ii. 222. The woman left her waterpot.

34, i. 48. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent mo.

48, i. 289. Unless you see signs and wonders you believe not.

vi. 64, ii. 231. The flesh profiteth nothing.

ii. 221. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit an-1

life.

67, ii. 221. Many of His disciples went back.

69, ii. 222. Thou hast the words of eternal life,

vii. 38, ii. 219. Rivers of living water.

39, ii. 63. The spirit which they should receive who believed in

Him.

ix. 39, i. 65. FOP judgment I am come into this world.

x. 9, i. 78. I am the door.

xi 3, ii. 28. Behold he whom Thou lovest is sick.

50, I. 139. It is expedient for you that one man should die for the

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xii 16, 1.144. When Jesus was glorified then they remembered that these

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29, ii. 79. An angel spoke to Him.

32, ii. 38. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth.

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10, n. 187, 294. All My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine.

20, ir. 204. Not for them only do I pray.

24, n. 204. That they may see My glory.

26, n. 295. That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in

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xx 2, i. 289. They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre.

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14, i. 434. When she had thus said she turned herself back.

15, i. 289, 414 ; ii. 51. If thou hast carried Him away, tell me where

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