

in me through their doctrine; that all of them may be one as you, Father, in me and I in you, that thus they be one in us. The glory which you have given me I have given them that they may be one as we are one, I in them and you in me; that they may be perfect in one; that the world may know that you have sent me and loved them as you have loved me [Jn. 17:20-23].¹ The Father loves them by communicating to them the same love he communicates to the Son, though not naturally as to the Son but, as we said, through unity and transformation of love. It should not be thought that the Son desires here to ask the Father that the saints be one with him essentially and naturally as the Son is with the Father, but that they may be so through the union of love, just as the Father and the Son are one in unity of love.

6. Accordingly, souls possess the same goods by participation that the Son possesses by nature. As a result they are truly gods by participation, equals and companions of God. Wherefore St. Peter said: *May grace and peace be accomplished and perfect in you in the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, as all things of his divine power that pertain to life and piety are given us through the knowledge of him who called us with his own glory and power, by whom he has given us very great and precious promises, that by these we may be made partakers of the divine nature* [2 Pt. 1:2-4]. These are words from St. Peter in which he clearly indicates that the soul will participate in God himself by performing in him, in company with him, the work of the Most Blessed Trinity because of the substantial union between the soul and God. Although this participation will be perfectly accomplished in the next life, still in this life when the soul has reached the state of perfection, as has the soul we are here discussing, she obtains a foretaste and noticeable trace of it in the way we are describing, although as we said it is indescribable.²

7. O souls, created for these grandeurs and called to them! What are you doing? How are you spending your time? Your aims are base and your possessions miseries! O wretched blindness of your eyes! You are blind to so brilliant a light and deaf to such loud voices because you fail to discern that insofar as you seek eminence and glory you remain miserable, base, ignorant, and unworthy of so many blessings! The next expression the soul uses to explain the "what" is:

the song of the sweet nightingale,

1. This important New Testament passage helps John express his experience of union that he found so difficult to put into words. Jerónimo de la Cruz, John's companion on many journeys, testifies that Fray John of the Cross used to recite quietly along the road and with great devotion the 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel.

2. Cf. 22. 6-7; F. 1. 28.

8. The result of the soul's breathing the air is that she hears the sweet voice of her Beloved calling to her. And she in this voice expresses to him her delightful jubilation and calls both voices the song of the nightingale. Just as the nightingale begins its song in the spring, once the wintery cold, rain, and changes have passed, and provides melody for the ear and refreshment for the spirit, so in this actual communication and transformation of love that the bride has now attained in this life, in which she is freed from and protected against all temporal disturbances and changes, and divested and purged of imperfections, penalties, and clouds in the senses and the spirit, she feels a new spring in spiritual freedom and breadth and gladness. She hears the sweet voice of her Bridegroom who is her sweet nightingale. Renewing and refreshing the substance of the soul with the sweetness and mellowness of his voice, he calls her as he would call one now disposed to make the journey to eternal life, and she hears this pleasant voice urge: *Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come; for now the winter has passed, the rains have gone far off, the flowers have appeared in our land, the time of pruning has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land* [Sg. 2:10-12].

9. The bride feels that this voice of the Bridegroom speaking within her is the end of evil and the beginning of good. In the refreshment, protection, and delightful sentiment afforded by this voice, she too, like the sweet nightingale, sings a new and jubilant song together with God, who moves her to do this. He gives his voice to her that so united with him she may give it together with him to God.

This is the Bridegroom's aim and desire, that the soul may intone to God with a spiritual voice of jubilation, as he requests in the Song of Songs: *Arise, make haste my love, and come, my dove; in the clefts of the rock; in the hollow of the wall show me your face, let your voice sound in my ears* [Sg. 2:13-14].

The ears of God signify his desires to have the soul sing to him with this voice of perfect jubilation. That this voice be perfect, the Bridegroom asks that she sing and let it resound in the caverns of the rock, that is, in the transformation into the mysteries of Christ. Since the soul rejoices in and praises God with God himself in this union (as we said in speaking of love),³ it is a praise highly perfect and pleasing to God, for a soul in this state of perfection performs very perfect works. This voice of jubilation, thus, is sweet both to God and to the soul. As a result the Bridegroom declared: *Your voice is sweet* [Sg. 2:14], that is, not only to you but to me as well, since through union with me you sing for me—and with me—like the sweet nightingale.

3. In 38. 3-4.