

## The Sixth Dwelling Places

### Chapter 2 (summary)

#### Interior Castle

Saint Teresa of Avila

Deals with some of the ways in which our Lord awakens the soul. It seems there is nothing in these awakenings to fear even though the experience is sublime and the favors are great.

... These are the trials that make the **soul fly still higher**. Well, let us begin to discuss the manner in which the Spouse deals with the soul and how before He belongs to it completely He makes it desire Him vehemently by certain delicate means the soul itself does not understand ... These are **impulses** so **delicate** and **refined**, for they proceed from very **deep within the interior part of the soul** ...

2. They are far **different** from all we can acquire of ourselves here below ... For often when a soul is distracted and forgetful of God, His Majesty will awaken it. His **action** is as **quick** as a falling comet. And as clearly as it hears a thunderclap ... the soul understands that it was **called by God** ... It feels that it is **wounded** in the most **exquisite way** ... It knows clearly that the **wound** is something **precious**, and it would never want to be **cured**. It **complains** to its Spouse with **words of love** ... It knows He is present ... The **pain** is **great**, although **delightful** and **sweet**. And even if the soul does not want this wound, the wound cannot be avoided. But the soul, in fact, would never want to be **deprived** of this pain. The wound satisfies it much more than the **delightful** and **painless absorption** of the **prayer of quiet**.

3. I am struggling, Sisters, to explain this **action of love** ... It seems a **contradiction** that the Beloved would give the soul clear **understanding** that He is with it and yet make it think that He is **calling** it by a **sign** so **certain** that no room is left for **doubt** and a **whisper** so penetrating that the soul

cannot help but hear it . For it seems that when the Spouse, who is in the seventh dwelling place communicates in this manner (for no words are spoken) all the **people** in the other dwelling places keep **still**; neither the **senses**, nor the **imagination**, nor the **faculties** stir.

O my powerful God, how sublime are your **secrets**, and how **different** spiritual things are from all that is visible and understandable below. There is nothing ... to explain this small favor when compared to the very great ones you work in souls.

4. This **action of love** is so powerful that the soul **dissolves** with **desire** ... it thinks God is with it ...so what pains it? ... I don't know... It seems this pain reaches to the soul's very **depths** and that when He who wounds it draws out the **arrow**, it seems...that God is drawing these very depths after Him ...

It is as though, from this **fire** enkindled in the **brazier** that is my God, a **spark** leapt forth and so struck the soul that the **flaming fire** was felt by it. And since the spark was not enough to **set the soul on fire**, and the fire is so **delightful**, the soul is left with that **pain**; but the spark merely by touching the soul produces that **effect**. This delightful pain, and it is not pain, is **not continuous** ... To sum up, it is never permanent. For this reason it does not set the soul on fire; but just as the fire is about to start, the spark goes out and the soul is left with the desire to **suffer again** that loving pain the spark causes.

5. ... The experience is something that leaves a **clear understanding** of how this activity comes from the place where the **Lord** who is unchanging **dwells** ... Here all the **senses** and **faculties remain free** of any absorption ... and are unable to increase or take away that delightful pain.

Anyone to whom the Lord may have granted this **favor**... should **thank Him** very much. Such a person doesn't have to fear deception. Let his great **fear** be that he might prove **ungrateful** for so generous a

favor, and let him **strive** to **better** his entire **life**, and to **serve**, and he will see the **results** ... May He be blessed forever, amen.

6. Why is there **greater security** in this favor than in other things? These are the reasons: **First**, the devil never gives delightful pain like this ... He does not have the power to join **pain** to the **spiritual quiet** and **delight of the soul** ... **Second**, this **delightful tempest** comes from a region where he is not lord. **Third**, the **favor** brings wonderful **benefits** to the soul such as the **determination** to **suffer** for God, the **desire** to have many **trials**, and the **determination** to **withdraw** from **earthly satisfactions** and **conversations**...

7. It is clear that this **favor** is **not** a **dream**. The soul is **not able to counterfeit** this experience. It ... can in no way be **imagined**. ... It is felt as clearly as a loud voice is heard ... and proceeds from the **interior part of the soul** ...

8. The Lord has other ways of **awakening the soul**: unexpectedly while praying vocally ... a **delightful enkindling** will come upon it as though a fragrance were suddenly to become so powerful as to **spread** through all the senses. The experience is only communicated for the sake of making one **feel** the Spouse's **presence**. The soul is moved with a **delightful desire** to enjoy him ... and so is prepared to make **intense acts of love and praise of our Lord**. ... There is nothing in it that causes pain, nor are the desires to enjoy God painful ... One should try to receive this favor with **gratitude**. amen