

## The Sixth Dwelling Places

### Chapter 5 (summary)

#### Interior Castle

Saint Teresa of Avila

Continues on the same subject and deals with a kind of rapture in which God raises up the soul through a flight of the spirit, an experience different from that just explained. Tells why courage is necessary.

Explains something about this delightful favor the Lord grants. The chapter is a very beneficial one.

There is another kind of **rapture**—I call it **flight of the spirit**—which, though largely the same as other raptures, is **interiorly experienced** very **differently**. Sometimes suddenly a movement of the soul is felt so swift that it seems the **spirit is carried off**, and at a **fearful speed** especially in the beginning ... Strong **courage** is necessary ... and even **faith** and **confidence** and a **full surrender** to our Lord so that He may do what he wants with the soul.

Do you think it is a small disturbance for a person to be very much in his senses and see his soul carried off... without knowing where he is going? ... At the beginning of this swift movement there is **not so much certitude** that the **rapture is from God**.

2. Is there some means to **resist** it? **None at all** ... God wishes that the soul ... understand that it no longer has any part to play ... It **abandons itself** into the hands of the One who is all powerful, for it sees that the safest thing to do is to make a virtue of necessity ...

3. It seems the trough of water we mentioned ... in the fourth dwelling place ... filled so easily and gently, with no movement. Here this great God ... lets loose the springs from which the water in this trough flows. With a powerful impulse, a **huge wave** rises up so forcefully that it lifts high this **little bark** that is our **soul**. A bark cannot prevent the furious waves from leaving it where they will.

The interior part of the soul ... is unable to make its senses or faculties do other than what they are commanded; the soul doesn't care what happens in the exterior senses.

4. ... I hold that if his Majesty were to reveal this power to those who go astray in the world ... they would not dare to offend Him ... For love of Him, Sisters, I beg you ... don't grow **careless** and do nothing but **receive**. Reflect that the one who owes a lot must pay a lot.

5. ... Great **courage** is necessary, for this favor is frightening... Without courage from the Lord, the soul would go about greatly distressed. It reflects on what His Majesty does for it ... and sees how little it **serves** in comparison ... and how the tiny bit it does is full of **faults, failures, and weaknesses**.

... It prefers striving to **forget its works**, keeping in mind its **sins**, and placing itself before the **mercy of God**. Since it doesn't have anything with which to pay, it begs for the pity and mercy God has always had toward sinners.

6. ... What seems to me very **beneficial** to help you understand how pleased our Lord is that we **know ourselves** and **strive to reflect** again and again on our **poverty** and **misery** and on how we possess nothing that we have not received. So, my Sisters, **courage** is necessary for this knowledge and for the many other graces given to the soul the Lord has brought to this stage. And when there is **humility**, courage, is even more necessary for this **knowledge of one's own misery**. May the Lord give us this humility because of who He is.

7. To return to this **quick rapture** of the spirit. It seems that the **spirit truly goes forth** from the body. It is clear that this person is not dead ... It seems to the person that he was entirely in another region ... where there is shown another **light** so **different** from **earth's light** ... It happens that within an **instant** so many things together are taught him ... This is not an intellectual but an **imaginative vision**, for the **eyes of the soul** see much better than do

we with bodily eyes here on earth and without words understanding of some things is given; I mean that if a person sees a saint, he knows that saint as well as if he had often spoken with him.

8. At other times, along with the things seen through the **eyes of the soul** by an **intellectual vision**, other things are represented, especially a multitude of angels with their Lord.

And without seeing anything with the **eyes of the body** or the **soul**, through an **admirable knowledge** ... many other things not meant to be spoken of are represented ... Whether all of this takes place in the body or not, I wouldn't know; at least I wouldn't swear that the soul is in the body or that the body is without the soul.

9. I have often thought that just as the sun while in the sky has such strong rays that, even though it doesn't move from there, the rays promptly reach the earth, so **the soul and the spirit, which are one, could be like the sun and its rays**. Thus, while the soul remains in its place, the superior part rises above it. In a word, I don't know what I'm saying. What is true, is that with the speed of a ball shot from a gun, when fire is applied, an **interior flight** is experienced ... which, though **noiseless**, is so clearly a **movement** that it cannot be the work of the imagination.

And while the spirit is far outside itself ... great things are shown to it. When it again senses that it is within itself, the **benefits** it feels are remarkable, and it has so little esteem for all earthly things ... From then on its **life on earth is very painful** ...

It seems the Lord, like those Israelites who brought back signs from the promised land, has desired to show it something about its future land so that it may suffer the trials of this laborious path, knowing where it must go to get its final rest. Even though something that passes so quickly will not seem very beneficial, the **blessings** left in the soul are so great that only the person

who has this experience will be able to understand its value.

10. ... It would be impossible for the devil or the imagination to represent things that leave so much **virtue, peace, calm**, and **improvement in the soul**.

**Three things**, especially, are left in the soul to a very sublime degree;

-knowledge of the grandeur of God;

-self-knowledge and humility upon seeing that something so low in comparison with the Creator of so many grandeurs dared to offend Him (and neither does the soul dare look up at Him);

-the third, little esteem of earthly things save for those that can be used for the service of so great a God.

11. These are the **jewels** the Spouse begins to give the **betrothed**, and their value is such that the soul will not want to lose them. For these **meetings** remain so **engraved** in the memory that I believe it is impossible to forget them ...

12. Well to get back to the **courage** that is necessary, doesn't it seem to you that this is so trivial a thing? It seems that because the soul loses its senses, and doesn't understand why it is separated from the body, it is necessary that He, who gives everything else, give the **courage**. You will say that this fear is well paid. So do I. May it please His Majesty to give us the **courage** so that we may **merit to serve Him**, amen.