

A Satirical Critique

On the Words “Seek Yourself in Me”

1. If obedience had not forced me, I would certainly not have answered, nor would I have accepted the role of judge. None of my reasons is the one the Sisters give: namely, that my brother is among the contestants and that affection will surely distort justice. I love all the contestants since each has helped me bear my trials. With the condition my head is in after the many letters and business matters I have been attending to from last night till now. I ask God to give me the grace not to say anything that might merit my being denounced to the Inquisition. But obedience can do all and so I will do what Your Excellency commands, whether it turns out good or bad. I have desired to enjoy myself for a while reflecting on the contestant’s papers sent to me but I have not yet had a chance to do so.

On Francisco de Salcedo’s Reply

2. It seems that the motto, “*Seek yourself in Me*”: is said by the Spouse of our souls. An indication that Senor Francisco de Salcedo errs is that he stresses so much that God is in all things; the Spouse knows that He is in all things.

3. Senor Francisco says a lot about the intellect and union. It is known that in union the intellect does not work. If it does not work, how can it seek? That which he says quoting David, “*I will hear what God speaks within me*” pleases me much as the peace in the faculties is to be highly esteemed. But, I have no intention of saying any good about what the contestants have written. Thus, I say that the explanation is off the mark because the motto does not say “*let us hear, but let us seek.*”

4. Worst of all, he lets stand what he wrote, so I will have to denounce him to the Inquisition nearby. For after quoting St. Paul and the Holy Spirit throughout his paper, and in signing his paper, he refers to the things he wrote as stupidities. Let him correct this at once, if he doesn’t he will see what happens!

On Father Fray John of the Cross’s Reply

6. He presents good doctrine for anyone wanting to follow the exercises from the Society of Jesus but not for what we have in mind here. Seeking God would be very costly if we could only do so when dead to the world. The Magdalene was not dead when she found Him, nor was the Samaritan or Canaanite women.

He speaks much about union with God. But the soul experiencing union is not seeking God but would seem to have already found Him.

7. God deliver me from those so spiritual that they want to turn all into perfect contemplation, no matter what. However, we are grateful to him for having explained so well what we did not ask. Thus, it is good to speak always of God, for where we do not expect it, benefit will come to us.

Senor Lorenzo de Cepeda’s Reply

8. So, benefit has come to us in Senor Lorenzo de Cepeda’s reply. We are very grateful to him for his couplets and response. If he has spoken of more than he understands, we pardon him—because of the recreation, he has given us—for his little humility in getting into such sublime matters, as he says in his answer. Concerning his counsel (that was not asked of him), that they practice the prayer of quiet, as if they had the power to do so...

Please God that since he is near the honey something good will stick to him for his answer gave me great consolation- although he was right to be ashamed of it. It is impossible to judge which reply is better, for without my doing an injustice to any of them, each reply has its faults.

Recommendations to Don Alvaro

9. Your Excellency should order the contestants to make amends. I will make amends by not being like my brother in his lack of humility. All these gentlemen are so divine that they have lost by going beyond what was asked by the question. As I have said, one would not tell the soul that attains this favor of union with God to seek Him, for it is already possesses Him.

I kiss Your Excellency's hand many times
for the favor you granted me with your letter.
So as not to tire you further with these silly
things, I am not writing now.
Unworthy servant and subject of Your
Excellency,

Teresa of Jesus