

**CHAPTER SEVEN**  
**ABOUT THE MYSTICAL TRANSPORT OF THE MIND, IN WHICH**  
**REST IS GIVEN TO THE INTELLECT AFTER OUR AFFECTION**  
**PASSES OVER TOTALLY INTO GOD THROUGH ECSTASY**

1. At last, we have exhausted these six considerations, which are like the *six steps* leading to the *true throne* of Solomon: these steps lead one to peace, where the true person of peace rests in the quiet of the mind as in an interior Jerusalem. They are also like the *six wings of the Cherub*, by which the mind of the truly contemplative person, filled with the light of heavenly wisdom, is able to ascend upwards. They are also like the *first six days* of Creation, during which the mind is trained, in order to arrive, finally, at the Sabbath of rest. Further, our mind has contemplated God *outside itself* through and in the vestiges; *within itself* through and in the image; and *above itself*: through the likeness of the divine light, which shines on us from above, and in the divine light itself, as far as our pilgrim state and the level of training of our mind permit that. Finally, only at Step Six, our mind has come to reflect, using as its object the first and highest Principle and the mediator *between God and humanity*, Jesus Christ, on those things that have no whatsoever parallel in the created world, and that completely surpass the penetrating power of the human intellect. It remains, then, for the mind, while it meditates on these things, to pass over and transcend not only this sensible world but even itself. And in this passage, Christ is the *way and the door*. Christ is the *ladder* and the *vehicle*, like the *Mercy Seat placed above the ark of God* and *the mystery that has been hidden from all eternity*.

2. Anyone who turns fully to face this Mercy Seat with faith, hope, and love, devotion, admiration, joy, appreciation, praise and rejoicing, beholding Christ hanging on the Cross, celebrates the *Pasch*, that is, the Passover, with Christ. This allows this person, using the rod of the Cross, to pass over the Red Sea, moving from Egypt into the desert where he could taste the *hidden manna*. This also allows this person to rest

with Christ in the tomb, as one dead on the outside, yet experiencing, as far as this pilgrim state allows, what was said on the cross to the thief who was hanging there with Christ: *This day you will be with me in Paradise.*

3. All this was shown also to blessed Francis when, in a rapture of contemplation on the top of the mountain<sup>71</sup> where I reflected on the things I have written here, a six-winged Seraph fastened to a cross appeared to him, as I myself and many others have heard from the companion who was with him at that very place. Here he was carried out of himself in contemplation and passed over into God. And he has been set forth as the example of perfect *contemplation*, just as he had earlier been known as the example of *action*, like another Jacob transformed into Israel. His example enables God to invite all truly spiritual persons to this sort of passing over and ecstatic experience, more by example than by words.

4. Now if this passing over is to be perfect, all intellectual activities must be given up; all of our affection, intensified to its highest point, must be directed to God and transformed into God. However, this experience is mystical and most hidden, which *no one knows except one who receives it*. And no one receives it except one who desires it. And no one desires it but one who is set on fire internally by the fire of the Holy Spirit, whom Christ has sent into the world. Therefore the Apostle says that this mystical wisdom is revealed through the Holy Spirit.

5. Now since our nature can achieve nothing in this area, and even personal effort cannot achieve much, little importance should be given to investigation and much to unctio; little to speech but exceedingly much to interior joy; little to words or writing and all to the gift of God, namely the Holy Spirit; little or no importance should be given to the creature but all to the creative essence, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit—

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<sup>71</sup> I.e., mount Alverna.

so that we could cry out to the Triune God with pseudo-Dionysius: “O Trinity, essence beyond essence and God beyond all deities, and most excellent Protector of the theological wisdom of Christians, guide us to that totally unknown but exceedingly radiant and most high summit of mystical discourse. There, the new, absolute, and changeless mysteries of theology are concealed in the dazzling darkness of a silence that teaches secretly: the darkness that shines exceedingly brightly in a total obscurity that is nevertheless exceedingly manifest; the darkness, in which all things shine forth and which fills to excess invisible intellects with the splendor of invisible goods that are above all good.”<sup>72</sup> This was said to God. But to the friend, to whom this was written, we can say with Dionysius: “In this matter of mystical visions, my friend, being strengthened for your journey, leave behind the world of the senses and of intellectual activities, all sensible and all invisible things, and everything that exists or does not exist, and, in your ignorance, allow yourself, in as far as that is possible, to be restored to unity with that One who is above all essence and knowledge. Thus, in an ecstasy of a pure mind that is beyond you and other things, and beyond their scale, leaving all things behind and freed from all things, you shall rise up to the radiance of the divine darkness that is beyond all essence.”

6. If, however, you ask how all these things come about, ask grace, not learning; desire, not intellect; the groaning of prayer and not diligent reading; the Bridegroom, not the academic teacher; God, not a human being; darkness, not clarity; not light, but the fire that inflames one totally and carries one into God through spiritual fervor and with the most burning affections. Now this ‘fire’ is God, and God’s *furnace is in Jerusalem*. And it is Christ who starts the fire with the white flame of his most intense passion. Only that person who says *My soul chooses hanging, and my bones death* can truly grasp this passion. Only one who loves this death can see God, for it is absolutely true that *no one can see me and live*.

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<sup>72</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, *Mystical Theology*, Bk. 1, ch. 1.

Let us die, then, and enter into this darkness. Let us silence all our cares, desires, and images in the imagination. Let us pass over with the crucified Christ *from this world to the Father*, so that when the Father has been shown to us, we may say with Philip: *It is enough for us*. Let us hear with Paul: *My grace is sufficient for you*; and let us exult with David, saying: *My flesh and my heart waste away; you are the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever. Blessed be the Lord forever, and let all the people say: let it be, let it be. Amen.*