THE SCALE OF PERFECTION, BOOK I

The Scale of Perfection, Book I
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Chapter One

That the innere havynge schulde be like to the uttere.

Goostli suster in Jhesu Crist, y praye thee that in the callynge whiche oure Lord hath
callyd thee to His servyse, thu holde thee paied and stond stedefastli thereinne, travailynge
bisili with alle thyne myghtes of thy soule bi grace of Jhesu Crist to fullefille in
sothfastnesse of gode lyvynge the staat whiche that thou hast take thee too in likenesse
and in semynge. And as thu hast forsaken the world, as it were a deed man turnyd to
oure Lord bodili in sight of men, right so that thy hert myght be as it were deed to alle
ertheli loves and dredis, turnyd hooli to oure Lord Jhesu Crist. For wite thu weel, a
bodili turnynge to God without the herte folwynge is but a figure or a likenes of vertues
and no soothfastnesse. Wherfore a wrecchid man or a woman is he or sche that leveth
al the inward kepinge of hymself and schapith hym withoute oonli a fourme and likenes
of hoolynesse, as in habite and in speche and in bodili werkes, biholdynge othere mennys
deedys and demyng here defaughtes, wenynge hymsilf to be aught whanne he is right
nought, and so bigileth hymself. Do thou not so, but turne thyne herte with thy body
principali to God, and schape thee withinne to His likenesse bi mekenesse and charité
and othere goostli vertues, and thanne art thou truli turned to Hym.

I sey not that thou so lightli on the first day may be turnyd to Hym in thi soule bi
fulheid of vertues as thu may with thi bodi be speryd in an hous, but that thu schuldest
knowe that the cause of thy bodili enclosyne is that thu myght the betere come to
goosteli enclosyne; and as thi bodi is enclosid fro bodili conversacioun of men, right
so that thy hert myght be enclosid from fleisschli loves and dredis of alle ertheli thynges.

And that thu myght the betere come thereto, I schalle telle thee in this litel wrytinge, as
me thynketh. Thou schalt undirstonde that ther ben in Holi Chirche two maner of lyves,
as Seynt Gregor seith, in the whiche Cristene men schul be saaf. That on is callid actif
lif, that other contemplatif lif. Withoutin the ton of thise two may no man be saaf.

Chapter Two
Of actif lif and of the werkes of it.

Actif lif lieth in love and charité schewyd outward in good bodili werkes, in fulfillynge
of Goddis comaundementes and of the sevene deedys of mercy, bodeli and goostli, to a
mannys even Cristene. This lif longeth to alle worldeli men whiche han richesse and
plenté of worldli goodes, and also to alle othere whiche eithir han staat, office, or cure
over other men and han goodis for to spende, leryd or lewyd, temporal or spiritual; and
generali alle worldli men. They are bounden to fulfille up here myght and here connynge,
as reson and discrecion asketh. Yif he mykil have, mykil doo; yif he litil have, litil doo;
yif he nought have, that thanne he have a good wille. These aren werkes of actif lif,
eyther bodoli or goostli.

Also a partie of actif lif lieth in grete bodili deedes whiche a man dooth to hymself, as
greet fastynge, mykil wakyngne, and other scharp penaunce-doynge for to chastise the
fleissch with discrecioun for trespaces that been bifore doon, and bi sich penaunce for
to refreyne lustes and likynges of it, and make it buxum and redi to the wil of the Spirit.
Thise werkes, though thei ben actif, not for thi they helpen mykel and ordaynen a man
in the bigynnynge to come to contemplatif lif, yif thei ben usid bi discrecion.

Chapter Three

Of contemplatif lif and the werkes of hit.

Contemplatif lif is in perfight love and charité feelid inwardli bi goostli vertues and bi
soothfaste knowynge and sight of God in goosteli thynges. This lif longeth speciali to
hem whiche forsaken for the love of God al worldli richesse and worshipes and outeward
besynesse and oonly gyven hem body and soule, up her myght and here kunnyngge, to
the service of God bi goosteli occupacioun. Now sithen it is so that thy staat asketh to
be contemplatif, for that is the ende and the entent of thyn enclosynge, that thu myght
more freli and entierli gyve thee to gosteli occupacioun - thanne bihoveth thee for to be
right bisy nyght and day with travaile of bodi and of spirit, for to come to that lif as neer
as thu may bi swich meenys as thu hopist were best unto thee.

Nevertheless bifore that I telle thee of the meenys, I schal telle firste a litil more of this
lif contemplatif that thu myght sumwhat see what it is and sette it as a mark in the sight
of thi soule wheerto thu schalt drawe in al thyn occupacion.

Chapter Four

Of the first partye of contemplacioun.

Contemplatif lyf hath three parties. The first is in knowynge of God and goosteli thynges
geten by resoun, bi techynge of man and bi studie of Hooly Writ, withouten goostli
affleccion and inward savour feelid bi the special gift of the Hooli Goost. This party han
speciali summe lettred men and grete clerkes whiche bi lange studé and travaile in
Hooli Writ comen to this knowynge, more or lesse, after the sutelté of kyndeli wit and
contynuance of studie after the general gift that God gyveth to everi man that hath use
Chapter Ten

How the schewynges to the bodili wittis and the feelyng of hem may be bothe good and yvel.

By this that I have seid myght thu sumwhat undirstonde that visiones or revelaciouns of ony maner spirite, bodili apperpyng or in ymagynyng, slepand or wakand, or ellis ony othere feelinge in the bodili wittes maad as it were goosteli; either in sownynge of the eere, or saverynge in the mouth, or smellynge in the nose, or ellis ony felable heete as it were fier glowand and warmand the breest, or ony othere partie of the bodi, or onythinge that mai be feelyd bi bodili wit, though it be never so comfortable and lykande, aren not verili contemplacion; ne thei aren but symple and secundarie though thei be good, in regard of goostli vertues and in goosteli knowynge and loovyng of God.

For in vertues and in knowynge of God with love is noo disceit. But al swich maner of feelinge thei mowe by gode, wrought bi a good angil, and they may be deceyvable, feyned bi a wikkid angil when he transfigurith him into an angel of light. Wherfore sithen thei moun be bothe good and yvel, it semeth that thei aren not of the beste; for wyte thou weel that the devyl may, whanne he hath leve, feyne in bodili felinge the liknes of the same thinges whiche a good angil may worche. For as the good angil cometh with light, so can the deovel, and so of othere wittes. Whoso hadde fedel bothe, he schulde kunne telle whiche were gode and whiche were yvele, but he that nevere feelid neither, or elles but that oon, may lightli be disseyved.

Thei aren like in maner of feelynge oughtward, but thei aren ful diverse withinne; and therfore thei aren not to desire greetli, ne for to resseyve lightli, but yif a soule myght bi spirite of discrecioun knowe the gode from the yvele, that he were not bigiled. Seynt Joon seith thus: *Nolite credere omni spiritui, sed probate si ex deo sit/i* (1 John 4:1). Seynt Joon biddeth us, we schulde not leve everi spirit, but we schullen assaien frist whether he be of God or no. Therfore bi oon assaie, I schal telle thee as me thenketh.

Chapter Eleven

Hou thu schal knowe whanne the schewinges to thi bodili wittes and the feelyng of hem aren good or yvele.

If it be soo that thou see ony maner of light or brightnes with thi bodili iye or in ymagynyng, othir than every man mai see; or yif thou here ony meri or wondirful sowninge with thi bodili eere; or in thi mouth ony swete sodayne savour, othir than of kynde; or ony heete in thi breest as it were fier; or ony maner of deelighte in ony partie of thi bodi; or yif a spirite bodili appere to thee as hit were an angel for to conforte thee and teche thee; or ony swich feelynge which thu woost wel it cometh not of thiself ne of noo bodili creature - be thanne waar in that tyme or soone aftir and wisili bihoold the stirynge of thyne herte. Yif thou be stired bicause of that likinge that thu feelist, for to drawe oute thyne herte from biholdinge of oure Lord Jhesu Crist and fro goostli occupacions, as from preiers, and thankinge of thisilf and of thi defautis, fro the inwa desire of vertues and of goostli knowynge and the feelinge of God, for to sette the sight of thin herte and thyn affeccioun, thi delite and thi reest principali therinne, wenynge that bodili feelinge schulde be a partie of heveneli joie and of angilis blisse, and for thi thee thynketh that thu schuldest never pray ne thinke not elles, but al hooli tende thereto, for to kepe it and delite thee therinne: this feelinge is suspect and of the enemye. And therfore, yif it be never so likinge and wondirful, refuse it and assente not therto, for this is the sleighte of the enemye. Whanne he seeth that a soule gyveth him entierli to goostli occupacioun, he is wondirful wrooth, for he hateth nothinge more thanne for to see a soule in bodi of synne feele verili the savour of gostli knowynge and the love of God, the whiche he withouten bodi of synne loste wilfulli. And therefore yif he may not lette him bi opyn bodili synnes, he wolde dere hym and bigile him bi swich a vanité of
bodili savoures or swettenesse in the wittis, for to bringe a soule into goostli pride and into a fals sikernesse of himself, wenande therbi that he hadde a feelinge of heveneli joye, and that he were half in paradise for delite that he feeleth al aboute hym, whanne he is neer atte helle gates, and so bi pride and presumpcion he myght falle into erroiris or into fantasies or into othere bodili or goostli myschevys.

Neverthelees, yif it so be that this maner of feelynge lette not thyn herte fro goostli occupacion, but it maketh thee the more devoute and the more fervent for to pray, it maketh thee the more wise for to thenke goostli thoughtes; and though it be so that it stonyeth thee in the first biginnynge, neverthelees aftirward it turneth and quykeneth thyn herte to more desire of vertues and encreese thi love more bothe to God and to thyn evene Cristen; also it maketh thee more meke in thyn owyn sight. Bi thise tokenes may thu knowe thanne that it is of God, maad bi the presence and the touchinge of the good angil, and that is of the goodnesse of God in confort of symple devoute soulis for to encreese ther trust and there desire to God, for to seke therbi the knowynge and the love of God more perfightli for swich a confort, or ellis, yif thei be perfight, that thei fele suyche a delite: it semeth than that it is an ernest, and as it were a schadewe of glorifyynge of the bodi which it schal have in the blisse. But I not whether ther be ony siche man lyvande in erthe. This pryvylegie hadde Marie Mawdeleyn, as hit seemeth to my sight, in tyme whanne sche was visited, whanne sche was aloone in the cave thritti wyntir and iche day was born up with angelis into the eyr, and was feed bothe bodi and soule bi the presence of hem. Thus we reden in the legend of hire.

Of this maner of assayinge of wirkynge of spirites speketh Seynt Joon in his epistil thus, and techeth us: *Omnis spiritus qui solvit Jhesum, hic non est ex deo* (1 John 4:3). Eche a spirit that looseth Jhesu or ellis unknitteth Hym, he is not of God. Thise woordes may be undirstonde on many manerys; neverthelees upon oon maner I mai undirstonde to that purpos whiche y have seid.
tyme of thi praier, so that thou hast no grete mynde of noon ertheli thynge, or elles the
mynde dereth thee but litil. Yif thou praye thus, than can thou preyen wel; for praier is
not ellis but a stiynge desire of the herte to God bi a withdrawinge of thi mynde from
alle ertheli thoughtes. And so is praier likenyd to a fier whiche of the owen kynde
leeveth the lowenesse of the erthe and alwei stieth up into the eir. Right so desire in
praier, whanne it is touchid and lightned of the goostli fier whiche is God, it is ay
upstyannde to Hym kyndeli whom it com fro.

Chapter Twenty-six

Of the fier of love.

Alle men and women that speken of the fier of love knowe not wel what it is, for what
it is I can not telle thee, save this may I telle thee, it is neither bodili, ne it is bodili feelid.
A soule mai fele it in praier or in devocioun, whiche soule is in the bodi, but he felith it
not bi no bodili witt. For though it be so, that yif it wirke in a soule the bodi mai turne
into an heete as it were chafid for likynge travaile of the spirit, neverthelees the fier of
love is not bodili, for it is oonly in the goostli desire of the soule. This is no doute to no
man ne woman that felith and knoweth devocion, but summe aren so symple and
wenen bicause that it is callid fier that it schulde be hoot as bodili fier is. And forthi I seie
that I have seid. Now as to that othir, for to knowe what prayer were best for to use, y
schal seie as me thenkith. Thou schalt undirstonde that there are thre maner of praieres.

Chapter Twenty-seven

That certayn praier in speche ordeyned of God and of Holi Chirche is best to hem that
aren bounden and ordeyned therto, and to hem that gyven hem newli to devocion.

The first is praier of speche maad speciali of God, as is the Pater Noster, and maad also
more generali bi the ordenaunce of Holi Chirche, as mateyns and evesonge and houres;
and also maad bi devout men of othere special seiynges, as to oure Lord and oure Ladi,
and to His seyntis. As unto this matier of praier, whiche is callid vocal, me thenketh unto
thee that art religious, and bi custum of rule art bounden for to seie mateyns and houres,
I holde it moost spedful for to seie hem as devouteli as thou mai. For whanne thou seist
thi mateyns, thou seist also thi Pater Noster principali; and over more to stire thee to
more devocioun was it ordeyned for to seie psalmys and ympnys and siche othere
whiche are maad bi the Holi Goost, as the Pater Noster is. And therfore thou schalt not
seie hem gredili ne rekleesli, as thou were yvel paid that thou art bounden with hem, but
thou schalt gadre thyn affeccioun and thi thought for to seie hem more sadli and more
devouteli than ony othir special praier of devocioun, trowande for sothe, that sithen it is
the praiere of Holi Chirche there is no praier so profitable to thee whiche is vocale for to
use comounli as that is. And so schalt thou put awey al the hevynesse, and bi grace thou
schalt turne thi nede into good wille and thi boond into gret freedom, that it schal no
lettynge be to thee of goostli occupacion. And after thise, yif thou wolte, thou mai use
othere, as the Pater Noster or ony swiche othir. And in thise, in which thou felist most
and this is whanne a man or a woman felith grace of devocioun bi the gifte of God, and
in his devocioun speketh to Hym as yif he were bodili in presence, with sich wordis and
acordande most to his stirynge for the tyme as comen to his mynde after sondri rewardes
which he felith in his herte, either rehersynge his synnes and his wrecchidnesse or the
malice and the sleightes of the enyme, or ellis the godenesse and the merci of God. And
with that he crieth with desire of herte and with speche of his mouth to oure Lord for
socour and help, as a man that were in peril amongst his enemesys or as a man in
sikenesse, schewynge his sooris to God as to a leche, seiyng thus: Eripe me de inimicis
meis, deus meus (Psalms 58:2) Lord, delyvere me fro myn enemies, or ellis thus: Sana,
domine, animam meam, quia peccavi tibi (Psalms 40:5). A, Lord, heele my soule, for I
have synned agenys Thee, or sich othere that come to mynde. And also hym thenketh
so mykil godenesse, grace, and mercy in God, that hym liketh with grete affeccioun of
the herte for to love Hym and thanke Hym by siche wordes and psalmys as acorden to
the lovyngge and preisyngge of God, as Davyd seith: Confitemini domino, quoniam bo-
nus, quoniam in seculum misericordia eius (Psalms 135:1). Loveth and preiseth oure
Lord for He is good and merciful, and bi siche othere as he is sterid for to seie.

Chapter Thirty

That this maner of praier pleseth moche God, and maketh a man to have him as he were
dronken, and maketh his soule to be woundid with the suerd of love.

This maner of praier mykil pleseth God, for it is oonli in the affeccion of the herte, and
thefore it goth nevere awey unspeed withoutin sum grace. This praier longeth to the
secunde partie of contemplacioun, as I have bifoire seide. Whoso hath this gift of God
ferventli, hym bihoveth for the tyme flee presence and cumpanye of alle men and to be
alone that he be not lettid. Whoso hath it, holde it while he may, for it mai not longe laste
in the fervour. For yif grace come plenteoussli, it is travelous wondirfulli to the spirit,
though it be likande; and it is mykil wastande the bodili kynde, whoso mykil useth it, for
it maketh the bodi, yif grace come myghtili, for to stire and turne heer and theer as a
man that were mad or dronken and can have noo reste. And this is a poynct of the
passion of love, the whiche bi grete violence and maistrie breketh doun alle lustis and
likynges of alle ertheli thinges, and it woundeth the soule with the blisful suerd of love,
that the bodi faileth and falleth doun and mai not bere it. This touchynge is of so grete
myght that the moste vicious or fleschli man lyvand in erthe, yif he were wel touchid
ones myghtili with this scharp suerd, he schulde be right saad and sobre a grete while
after, and lothe alle likynges and the lustis of the fleisch, and of alle ertheli thinges
whiche he hadde bifoire most likynge inne.

Chapter Thirty-one

Hou fier of love wasteth alle fleischli lustes, as othir fier wasteth alle bodili thynges here.

Of this maner of felynge speketh the prophete Jeremye thus: Et factus est in corde meo
quasi ignis estuans, claususque in ossibus meis, et defeci, ferre non sustinens (Jeremiah
This is thus mykil to undirstonde: The love and the felynge of God was maad in thy herte not as fier, but as fier glowand; for as bodili fire brenneth and wasteth al bodili thyng where it cometh, right so gosteli fier, as is love of God, brenneth and wasteth fleischli loves and likynges in a manys soule, and this fier is stokyn so in my boonys, as the prophete seith of himsilf. That is for to seie, this love filleth ful the myghtes of the soule, as mynde, wille, and resoun, of grace and goostli swettenesse, as marwe filleth fulle the boon; and that is withinne, not withouten in the wittis. Neverthelees, it is so myghti withinne that it Smyteth oute into the bodi, and dooth al the bodi quake and tremble, for it is so feer from the bodili kynde and so uncouthe that he can no skile of it and mai not bere it, but faileth and falleth doun, as the prophete seide. Therfore oure Lord temprith it and withdraweth the fervour and suffreth the herte for to falle into sobirté of mor swettenesse. Whoso can preie thus ofte, he spedeth swithe in his travaile. He schal gete more of vertues in a litil tyme thanne sum man withoutyn this, or anothir as gode schal doo in a longe tyme, for al the bodili penaunce that he myght doo; and whoso hath this, it nedeth not to charge the bodili kynde with more penance than he bereth yif he have it ofte.

Chapter Thirty-two

Of the thridde maner of praier, oonli in herte withouten speche.

The thridde maner of praier is oonli in herte withoute speche, bi grete reste of the bodi and of soule. A clene herte him bihoveth for to have that schulde prai wel thus, for it is of sich men and women that bi longe travaile bodili and goostli, or ellis bi swich smert smytynes of love, as I bifore seide, comen into reste of spirit, so that here affeccioun is turnyd into goostli savoure, that thei moun neer contynueli praie in here herte, and love and praise God withoutyn grete lettynges of temptacions or of vanitees, as I bifore seide in the secunde partie of contemplacioun. Of this maner of preier seith Seynt Poul thus: Nam si orem lingua, spiritus meus orat, mens autem mea sine fructu est. Quid ergo? Orabo spiritu, orabo et mente, psallam spiritu, psallam et mente (1 Corinthians 14:15). This is thus mykil for to seie: Yif y praie with my tunge oonli, bi wille of spirit and bi travaiyl, the preier is meedful, but my soule is not fed, for it felith not the frughte of goostli swettenesse bi undirstondynge. What schal y thanne doo? seith Seynt Poul. And he anwereth and seith: I schal praie bi travaile and bi desire of the spirit, and I schal pray also more inward in my spirit withouten travaile, bi felinge of goosteli savour and the swettenesse of the love and the sight of God, bi the whiche sight and felynge of love my soule schal be fed. Thus, as y undirstonde, Seynt Poul cowde preie. Of this maner of preier speketh oure Lord in Holi Writ bi figure thus: Ignis in altari meo semper ardebit, et cotidie sacerdos surgens mane subiciet ligna, ut ignis non extinguat (Leviticus 6:12). This is for to seie thus mykil: The fier of love schal be ay light in the soule of a devoute man or woman, the whiche is the autier of oure Lord, and the prest schal every dai at morwe lei to stikkes and norissch the fier. That is to seie, this man schal bi hooli psalmes, clene thoughtes, fervent desires, norische the fier of love in his herte, that it goo not out noo tyme. This reste oure Lord geveth to summe of Hise servauntis, as it were for a reward of here traveyle and a shadwe of the love whiche thei shullen have in the blisse of hevene.
This maner of meditacioun with gracious compunction a man hath not alwei whan he wolde, but whanne oure Lord wole gyve it. Unto sum men and women He geveth it al here lyvetyne, bi sithes whan He visiteth hem; as summe devout men and women aren so tendre in here affineccion that whanne thei here men speke or ellis that thei thenken of this precious passioun, her hertis melten in devocion and thei are fed and confortid bi vertu of it agens al maner temptacions of the enyme, and that is a grete gift of God. To summe men He gyveth it first plenteuousli, and afterward He withdrawith it for dyverse causis, either yif a man wex proud of it in his own sight, or for sum othir synne bi the whiche he maketh himselff unable for to resseyve the grace; or ellis oure Lord withdrawith it and al othir devocion sumtyme from a man or a woman, for He wole suffre hem for to be assaied bi temptacions of His enyme, and so wole He dispose a man for to knowe and fele Him more goostli. For he seide so Himsilf to His disciples: *Expedit vobis ut ego vadam; si enim non abiero, paraclitus non veniet ad vos* (John 16:7). It is spedful to you that y goo fro yow bodili; for yif y goo not, the Holi Goost mai not come to yow. For as longe as He was with hem, thei lovyd Him mykil, but it was flesschli oonli in the manhed; for thei trowed not fulli that Jhesu man was God, and therfore it was spedful to hem that He schulde drawe the bodili forme from here sight that the Hooli Goost myght come to hem, and kenne hem for to love Him and knowe Hym as God more goostli, as He dide on the dai of Pentecost. Right so it is spedeful to summe that oure Lord withdrawe a litil the bodili and the fleschli likeness from the iye of her soule, that the herte myght be set and ficchid more bisili in gosteli desire and felynge of His Godhed.

Chapter Thirty-seven

Of divers temptaciouns of the feend of helle.

Neverthelees it bihoveth a man for to suffre many temptacions first, and thise temptacions fallen ofte sithes to sum men and women after whanne comfort is withdrawen upon divers maneres bi the malice of the enyme, as thus. Whanne the devyl perceyveth devocioun mykil withdrawn, that the soule is left as it were nakid for a tyme, thanne he sendeth to summe men temptacions of leccherie or glotonye, so hoot and so brennynge that hem schal thenke thei felid nevere noon so grevous in al here lif bifore thei gave hem to synne most. In so mykil that thei schul thenke it impossible for to stonde longe and suffre, that thei ne schul nedynges falle but yif thei have helpe. And therfore han thei than mykil sorwe, bothe for lakkynge of comfort and devocioun that thei weren wonte to have, and mykil drede of fallyng from God bi siche open synnes. And al this worcheth the devel for to doo hem forthenke here good purpos and turne agen to synne as they were wont to doo; but whoso wole abide awhile and suffre a litil peyne, the hande of oure Lorde is ful neer and helpeth swithe soone. For He kepeth hem wel sikirli, and thei wot not how; as the prophete David seide in the persoone of oure Lord: *Cum ipso sum in tribulacione, eripiam eum et glorificabo eum* (Psalms 90:15). I am with him in tribulacion and in temptacion; I schal delivere him and y schal make him glorious in my blisse. Sum men he tempteth bi gosteli synnes maliciousli, as of mys-trowynge of the articles of the feith or of the sacrament of Goddis bodi, also dispeir or blasphemye in oure Lord or in ony of His seyntis, or lothyngne of here lif, or bittirnesse
and unskilfyl hewynesse, or to mykyl drede of hemself or of here bodi, yf thei putten
hem hooli to Goddis service. Sum men he tempteth also, and nameli solitarie men and
women, bi dredes and ugglynesse and quakynges and schakynges, either apperynge to
hem in bodili likeness or ellis in ymagynyng, slepyngne and wakyngne, and tarieth hem so
that thei mai unnethes have ony reste. And also on many othere wises he tempteth mo
than I can or mai seie.

Chapter Thirty-eight

Of sere remedies agennes temptaciounes of feend.

N Remedie unto siche maner of men and women that aren thus travaled, or ony othir
wise, mai be this: first that thei wolen putten al hire trust in oure Lord Jhesu Crist and
bringe thanne to mynde His passioun and His peynes that He suffride, and that thei
trowe thanne stidefastli that al this sorwe and traveile that thei suffren in siche
temptaciones, whiche to an unkunynge man semeth forsakyng of God, is no reprovyng
of God, ne non forsakyng, but assayynge for here betere, either for clensyng of here
synnes bifoire doon, or for grete encresyng of here mede, or for greet disposyng to
mykil grace, yif thei wolde abide and suffre a litil while and stonde faste with a nakid
trouth and stidefast mynde of Jhesu Crist, so that thei turne not wilfulli agene to
synne. Another remedye is that thei drede not ne sette not at herte siche malicious
stirynges of despeir or blasfemye, or of the sacrament or ony siche othere that were
uggly to here, for the felynge of thise temptaciones foulen the soule no more than yif thei
herde an hound berke or felid a flee bite. Thei tarie the soule, but thei apeire not the
soule, yif a man wolde despice hem and sette hem at nought. It is not good to stryve
with hem, for to putte hem ought bi maistrie; for the more that men stryven with siche
thoughtes the more thei cleve to hem. And therfore thei schullen as mykil as thei moun
drawe oute the thought from hem, as yif thei chargiden hem not, and sette it to summe
other good occupacion. And yit yif thei wolen ai hange upoun hem, thanne it is good to
hem that thei ben not angryi ne hevy for to fele hem, but that thei with a good trust in
God wolde bere hem as it were a bodili peyne and a scourge of oure Lord for clensyng
of here synnes, as longe as He wolde. And over this it is good to hem, to schewe hire
hertes to sum wise man in the bigynnynge bifore thei ben rooted in the herte, and that
thei leve here owen witte and folwe the counsel of him; and that thei schewe hem not
lightli to noon uncouth man, that is to seie, to noon unkunynge man and worldli, which
never hadde felid siche temptaciones, for thei myghte lightli bringe a symple soule into
despeir bi unkunyng of hemself. Of this maner of temptaciones, bi the whiche a man
semeth forsaken of God and is not, in comfort of hem that aren temptid oure Lord seith
thus bi His prophete: In modico dereliqui te et in memento indignacionis mee percussi
tet, et in miseracionibus meis multis congregabo te (Isaiah 54:7). In a litil y forsook thee,
that is for to seie, I suffrid thee for to be taried a litil, and in a poynyte of my wraththe y
smoot thee, that is to seie, al the penance and the peyne that thou suffrest heere is but
a poynyte of my wraththe in reward of peyne of helle or of purgatorie. And yit in my
manyfold mercies y schal gadre thee togedre, that is for to sai, whanne that thee theenketh
that thou art forsaken, thanne schal y of my greet merci gadre thee agen to me, for
thanne whanne that thou wanest that thou art but lost, thanne schal oure Lord helpe thee,
owen fre wil fuledden My conceils, and over that ye loveden Me oonli and entierli with alle the myghtis of youre soule, and brenneden in My love with goostli delite, as diden principali the aposteles and martires and alle othere soules that myghten bi grace come to the gifte of perfeccioun: yee schullen be maad dronken with the highest and freschest wyn in My celere, that is, the sovereign joie of love in the blisse of hevene.

Chapter Forty-five

That a man schulde be besi for to recovere agen his worthynesse, and reforme in him the ymage of the Trinite.

Neverethelees though this be sooth of the endeles merci of God unto thee and to me and al mankynde, we schullen not therfore in trust of this be the more rekles wilfulli in oure lyvynge, but more bisi unto plese Hym, nameli now, syn we aren restorid agen in hope bi this passioun of oure Lord to the dignite and to the blisse whiche we hadde lorn by Adammys synne. And though we myghten nevere geete it here fulli, yit we schulde desire that we myght recovere here lyvand a figure and a likenes of that dignite, that oure soule myght be reformed, as it were in a schadewe, bi grace to the ymage of the Trinite, whiche we hadde bi kynde and aftir schullen have fulli in blisse.

For that is the lif that is veri contemplatif, unto bigynne here in that felynge of love and goosteli knowynge of God bi openyng of the goostli iye, whiche schal nevere be loste ne bi taken awey, but the same schal be fulfilled othirwise in the blisse of hevene.

This bhight oure Lord to Marie Mawdeleyn, whiche was contemplatif, and He seide thus of here: *Maria optimam partem elegit, que non auferetur ab ea* (Luke 10:42), that Marie hadde chosen the beste partie, that is the love of God in contemplacion, for it schal nevere be taken away fro hire. I seie not that thou mai here lyvande recovere so hool ne so parfit clennesse, ne innocence, knowynge and lovynge, as thou haddest first, ne as thou schalt have; ne thou may not eschape alle the wrecchidnessis ne the peynes of synne, ne thou lyvande in dedli fleisch may distroie and quenche al hooli the veyn fals love of thisilf, ne flee alle venial synnes, that thei ne wole - but yif thei ben stopped bi grete fervour of chariti - alwey srynget oute of thyn herte, as watir renneth oute from a stynkinge welle. But I wolde yif thou myght not fulli quenche hit, that thou myghtest sumwhat sleke it and come to that clennesse as nygh as thou mai.

For oure Lord bhighte the children of Israel whanne He ledde hem into the lond of biheste, and in figure of hem to alle Cristene men thus: *Omne quod calcaverit pes tuus tum erit* (Deuteronomy 11:24). That is for to seie, as mykil as thou may trede upon with thi foot of verrey desire here, so mykil schalt thou have in the lond of biheste, that is in the blisse of hevene whanne thou comest thider.

Chapter Forty-six

Hou Jhesu schal be sought, desired, and founden.

Seke thanne that thou hast lost, that thou myght fynde it. Wel y woot, whoso myght oones have an inward sight a litil of that dignite and that goosteli fairenesse whiche a
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Chapter Forty-seven

1309 N soule hadde bi kynde of the firste makynge and schal have bi grace, he schulde lothe
1310 and dispice in his herte alle the blisse, the likynge, and the fairnesse of al this world as
1311 stynk of carioun; and he schulde neve have wil to doo othir dede nyght ne dai -
1312 savynghe the freelte and the bare ned of the bodili kynde - but desire, morn, prai, and
1313 seke hou he myght come agen therto. Nevertheless, in as moche as thou hast not yit
1314 fulli seen what it is, for thi goostli yye is not yit openyd, I schal telle oon word for alle
1315 whiche thou schalt seke, desire, and fynde, for in that word is al that thou hast loste.
1316 This word is Jhesu. I mene not oonli this word Jhesu peynted upon the wal, or writen
1317 bi letres on the book, or fourmured bi lippes in soun of the mouthe, or feyned in the herte
1318 bi traveil of mynde; for on this maner wise may a man oute of charité fynde Hym. But
1319 N I mene Jhesu Crist, that blissid persoone, God and man, son of Marie, that glorious
1320 virgyne, that is al goodnesse, endeless wisdom, love, and sweitennesse, thi joie, thi
1321 worscipe, and thyn ai lastynghe blisse, thi God, thi Lord, and thy savacioun.
1322 N Thanne yif it be so that thou felist grete desire in thyn herte to love and to plese Jhesu,
1323 N either bi the mynde of this name Jhesu, or bi mynde or seynge of ony othir word, or
1324 praier, or in ony dede that thou doost, whiche desire is so mykil that hit putteth ought as
1325 it were bi strengthe alle othir thoughtes and desires of the world and of the fleisch,
1326 that thei moun not reste in thyn herte, thanne sekest thou wel Jhesu. And whanne thou
1327 felist this desire to God, to Jhesu Crist (al is oon) hoolpen and comfortid bi gostli myght
1328 N thorough light of Goddis grace so mykil that it is turnyd into love and into affeccioun,
1329 N gostelè savour, and sweetenesse, into light and knowynge, into soothfastnesse - so
1330 N mykil that for the tyyme the poynyt of thi thought is sette upoun noon ertheli thynge, ne
1331 felith no stirynghe of veynglorie, ne non othir yvel affeccioun (for thei moun not appere
1332 N that tyyme), but oonli is enclosid, rested, softed, anoynted, and comfortid thorugh gra-
1333 cious presence of ooure Lord Jhesu Crist, thanne hast thou founden sumwhat of Jhesu.
1334 Not yit Hym fulli as he is, but a schadewe of Hym; for the betere that thou fyndest
1335 Hym, the more schalt thou desire Hym. Thanne bi what maner of praier or meditacioun
1336 or occupacion that thou mai have grettest desire to Hym, and have most felynge of
1337 Hym, bi that occupacion thou sekest Hym best and best fyndest Hym. Therfore yif it
1338 come to thy mynde as it were askand what hast thou lost and what sekest thou, lift up
1339 N the mynde and the desire of thyn herte to thi Lord Jhesu Crist, that blissid maidenys
1340 N sone, though thou be byldynd and not mai see of His Godhede, and seie Hym hast thu lost,
1341 N and Hym wolde thou have, and nothynge but Hym, noon othir joie, blisse in hevene ne
1342 N in erthe, but Hym, to be with Hym wharso He is, and to see Hym and love Hym. And
1343 N though it be so that thou fele a litil His goostli presence in devocion or in knowynge, or
1344 in ony othir gifte what it be, reste not therinne as though thou haddest fulli founden
1345 N Jhesu and wolt no more seken aftir Hym, but ai be desirande aftir Jhesu more and more
1346 for to fynde Hym betere, as thou hadde right nought. For wite thou wel, what that thou
1347 felist of Hym, be it nevere so mykil, yhe, though thou were raveschid into the thridde
1348 N hevene with Poule, yit haste thou not fulli founden Jhesu as He is in His joie. Knowe
1349 thou or fele thou never so mykil of Hym here in thi lyf, He is yit above it. And therfore
1350 N yif thou wolt fulli fynde Hym as He is in the blisse, cese nevere while thou lyvest of
1351 N praier and of goostli desyrynge.
oonli nede, whiche mai not be eschewid but yif thou wolt doo wars and slee the nede,
as many foolis doo, whiche schulden slee the theef and spare the trewe man, that is to
seie thei schulde slee the unskilful lust and the wilful likynge, and spare and kepe the
bodili kynde. But agen alle othere synnes thou schalt arise for to distroie; not oonli the
gret deedli and the grete venyal synnes, but also agens the ground of hem in as moche
as thou mai.

See bi this skyle, thou mai not lyve withoute mete and drinke; but thou mai lyve
withoute leccherie yif thou wole, and neveer be but the betere. And therfore thou schalt
not oonli flee the dede in the silf, which is deedli synne, and also the wilful likynge of
it in thyn herte withoutin dede, which is venial, and sumtyme it is deedli; but also thou
schalt arise agen the ground of it, for to distroie the risynge and the felynge and the
fleischli stirynges.

Chapter Seventy-three

The ground of leccherie schulde be distroied with goostli travaile and not with bodili.

But this travaile agen the ground of leccherie nameli schal be goostli, as bi prayers and
goostli vertues, and not bodili bi no bodili penaunce. For wite thou wel, though thou
wake and faste and scourge thisilf and doo al that thou can, thou schal neveer have the
clennesse and that chastité withoute the gifte and the grace of mekenesse. Thou schulde
mowe rathere slee thisilf thanne thou schuldest slee fleischli stirynges and likynges of
lustis of leccherie, other in thi herte or in thi fleisch, bi ony bodili penaunce. But bi the
grace of Jhesu in a meke soule, the ground mai be stoppid and distroied, and the springe
mai be dried and that is veri chastité in bodi and soule.

And the same manere mai be seid of pride, coveitise, and siche othere; for thou
myghtest lyve though thou were neither proud ne covetous, and therfore thou schalt
distroie alle the felynges of hem as moche as thou myght. But in glotonye thou schal
arise and smyte awey alle unskilful stirynges, and save the ground hool. And therfore he
that riseth agen the feelynge of fleischli likynge in mete and drinke more fulli and more
scharpli thanne agen the feelynge and the stiryng of pride, for thei seme faire and are
not lightli reprevyd, or of envie, ire, coveitise, or leccherie, I seie that he is half blynd.
For he seeth not yit goostli the unclennesse of pride and envie, how foul it is in Goddis
sight. I hope yif a man myght see with his goostli iye hou foule pride and coveitise aren
in the sight of God, and hou contrarie to Him, he schulde more lothe the stiryng of
pride and the veyn delite of it; and also he schulde more agrise and arise agen an yvel wil
of envie or ire to his even Cristene, thanne agens many stirynges and likynges, oithir of
glotonye or leccherie. Nevertheless, alle men wenen not so, for comonli men aren more
arwgh for to fele a stiryng of fleischli synne, and have for it more hevynesse, thanne
for grete likynges in veynglorie or othere goostli synnes. But thei aren not wise, for yif
thei wole undirstonde Holi Writ and doctours sawes thereof, schulde thei fynde as I
saie, whiche y ne mai ne wole not reherce now.

Chapter Seventy-four
N for to have thy wittes and use hem in nede, it is no synne; but yif thou goo for to assaie
hem bi veyn delite in creaturis, thanne it is synne. For yif thou chese that delite as a fynal
reste of thi soule and as a ful likyne, that thou kepit noon nother blisse have but sich
othir wordli vanyté, thanne it is deedli synne. For thou chesist it as thi God, and so schal
thou be putte fro the sopere. For the wise man forbeed us that we schulde not assaie
oure wittes so, whanne he seide thus: *Non eatis post concupiscentias vestras*
(Ecclesiasticus 18:30). Thou schalt not goo aftir thi lustes, ne wilfulli assaie thyn likynges.
A man or a woman that is encombred with deedli synnes schal not ascape deedli synne
in this, though he see it not; but I hope that it toucheth not thee. Neverethelees, yif thou
bi freelté delite thee in thi wittes and in sich vanyté, but with that, thou kepit thee in
charit in othir sides, and thou chesist not that delite for a ful reste of thi soule, but thou
settest ai God bofire al thyng in thi desire, this synne is venyal, aftir the circumstaunces
more or lasse. Ne thou schalt not for thise venyal synnes be putte fro the sopere in the
blisse of hevene, but thou schal wante the tastynge and the assaiynge of that delicat
sooper lyvynge in erthe, but yif thou be bisie with alle thi myghtes for to agetonde
sich venyal synnes. For though it be soo that venial synnes breketh not charité, soothli
thei lette the fervour and the goostli felynge of charité.

Chapter Eighty-three

Hou an ankir schal have hir to hem that comen to hir.

But now seist thou that thou mai not kepe thee from heerynge of vanytees, for divers
worldli men and othere that comen ofte tyme for to speke with thee, and telle thee
sumtyme talis of vanité. As unto this y seie thus, that comenynge with thyn evene
*Cristene is not moche agens thi charité, but helpith thee sumtyme yif thou worche visili. For
thou mai assaie therbi the mesure of thi charité to thyn evene Cristene, whethir hit be
moche or litil. Thou art bounden, as eche man or woman is, to love thyn evene Cristene
principali in thyn herte, and also in deede for to schewe hym tokenes of charité as
resoun asketh, up thi myght and up thi knowing.

Now syn it is so that thou owest not to goo oute of thyn hous for to seche occasioun
how thou myght profite thyn evene Cristene bi deedis of merci, for thou art inclose,
neverethelees thou art bounden for to love hem alle in thyn herte, and to hem that
comen to thee for to schewe hem tokenes of love sothfastli. And therfore whoso wole
spake with thee, what that he be, in what degree that he be, and thou knowe not what
he is, ne whi that he cometh, be soone redi with a good wille for to wite what his wille
is. Be not daungerous, ne suffre him stonde longe for to abide thee, but loke hou redi
and hou glaad thou wolde be yif an angel of hevene wolde come and speke with thee.
Soo redi and so buxum be thou in wille for to speke with thyn even Cristene whanne he
cometh to thee. For thou wost not what he is, ne what he wolde, ne what nede he hath
to thee, ne thou of hym, til thou have assaied hym.

And though thou be in preiere or in devocioun, that thee thenketh looth for to breeke
of, for thee thenketh thou schuldest not leve God for mannys speche, me thenketh it is
not so in this caas; for yif thou be wise, thou schal not leve God, but thou schal fynde
Hym and have Hym and see Him in thyn evene Cristene as wel as in praiere. Yif thou
coude wel love thyn evene Cristene, but schulde not hyndre thee for to speke with hem
discretli. Discrecioun schalt thou have upoun this manere as me thenketh. Whoso cometh
to thee, aske hym mekeli what he wole; and yif he come to telle his disese and to be
comfortid of thi speche, heere him glaadli, and suffre him to seie what he wole for ese
of his own herte. And whanne he hath doon, conforte hym goodli and charitabli, and
sone breke of. And thanne aftir, yif he wole falle into idel tales or vanytees, or of othere
mennys deedis, ansuere hym not but litil, ne feeede not his speche; and he schal soone be
irke and sone take his leve.

N 2394 Yif it be anothir man that cometh to knowe thee, as a man of Holi Chirche, heere hym
loweli with reverence for his ordre, and yif his speche conforte thee, aske of hym,
and make thee not for to teche hym. For it falleth not to thee for to teche a preest, but
in nede. Yif his speche conforte thee not, answere but litil, and he wole soone goo his
wai. Yif it be anothir man that cometh for to gyve his almasse or ellis for to heere thee
spoke, or for to be knowen of thee, speke mekeli and goodli to him withal. Repreve no
man of his defaultis; it falleth not to thee, but yif he be the more hoomli with thee, that
thou wite wel that he wole not take it agreef. And schorteli for to seie, as moche as thou
conceyvest that schulde profite thyn evene Cristene goostli, mai thou seie yif thou can
and he wil take it. And of alle thynges kepe silence as moche as thou mai, and thou schal
have litil prees in schort tyme that schal lette thee. Thus thenketh me; doo betere yif
thou mai.

Chapter Eighty-four

Bi this that y have seide mai thou see a litil the myrkenesse of this ymage; nought for y
have discreyed it to thee for fulli as it is, can y not. Neverthelees bi this litil mai thou see
the more yif thou loke weel. But now seist thou: "Wherbi knowest thou that I bere siche
an ymage aboute with me as thou spekest of?" As unto this I answere: y mai take upoun
me a word of the prophete, and is this: Inveni idolum michi (Hosea 12:8) This is thus
mykil to seie, I have founden a fals ymage, that men calle a mawmet, in mysilf, wel
foule disfigured and forschapen with wrecchidnesse of alle thise synnes whiche I have
spoken of, bi the whiche I am cast doun into many wrecchidnessis more thanne y can
or mai seie; that me thenketh yvel fore and repente and crie merci. Bi this wrecchidnesse
that y feele in mysilf, moche more than I have seide, mai I the betere telle thee of thyn
image. For alle comen we of Adam and of Eve, cloothid with clothis of a beestis hide,
as Hooli Writt seith of oure Lord thus: Fecit dominus Ade et uxori eius tunicas pelliceas
(Genesis 3:21). Oure Lord maade to Adam and to his wif clothis of a beestis hide, in
tokene that for synne he was forschapen like to a beest; with whiche beestli clothis we
alle aren born, and umbilapped and disfigured from oure kyndeli schaap.

Chapter Eighty-five

Whiche aren the lymes of the ymage of synne.

Thanne is this an uggli ymage for to loke upon. The heed is pride, for pride is principal
schap of the ymage of Crist. And thanne schalt thou be schapin agen to the ymage of
Jhesu bi mekenesse and charité; and thanne schalt thou be ful schapen to the image of
God, heere lyvyng bi a schadewe in contemplacion, and in the blis of hevene be ful
sothfastnesse.

Of this schapynge to the ful liknesse of Crist speketh Seynt Poul thus: \textit{Filioli, quos}
\textit{iterum parturio, donec Christus formetur in vobis} (Galatians 4:19). Mi dere children,
whiche y bere as a woman berith a child, unto Crist be agen schapen in you. Thou hast
conceived Crist bi truthe, and He hath liyf in thee in as moche as thou hast a good wille
for to serve Hym and please Hym, but He is not yit ful schapen in thee, ne thou in Him
bi fulheed of charité. And therfore Seynt Poul baar me and thee and othere also with
traveile, as a woman bereth a child, unto the tyme that Crist hath His ful schap in us and
we in Hym.

Whoso weneth for to come to the workyng and to the ful use of contemplacioun and
not bi this way, that is for to sai not bi fulheed of vertues, he cometh not in bi the dore,
and therfore as a theef he schal be caste out. I seie not but that a man bi gifte of God mai
have bi tymes a taastynge and a glymerynge of lif contemplatif, sum man in the
bigynnynge, but the saad feelynge of hit schal he not have. For Criste is the doore and
porter, and withoute His leve and His lyveray mai there no man come in, as He seith
\textit{Hymself: Nemo venit ad patrem nisi per me} (John 14:6). No man cometh to the Fadir but
bi Me. That is for to seiue, no man mai come to the contemplacion of the Godheed but he
be first reformed bi fulhed of melenesse and charitee to the liknesse of Jhesu in His
manhede.

Chapter Ninety-two

Hereinne is told the cause whi this writynge is maad, and hou sche schal have hire in the
redynge that it was maad unto.

Lo, I have tolde thee a litil, as me thenketh, first of contemplacioun, what it is, and
sithen of the weies that bi grace leden therto. Not for I have it in felynge and in worchynge
as I have it in seiynge; nevertheless I wolde bi thise wordes, siche as thei aren, first stire
myn owen necgligence for to doon betere than I have doon, and also my purpos is for
to stire thee or ony othir man or woman that hath take the staat of contemplatif liyf for
to teivele more bisili and more mekeli in that maner of lif bi siche simple wordes as God
hath gyven me grace for to seie. And therfore yif ony word be thereinne that stireth or
conforteth thyne herte more to the love of God, thanke God, for it is His gift and not of
the word. And yif it conforteth thee nought, or ellis thou takest it not redeli, studie not
to longe theraboute, but lei hit biseide thee til anothir tyme, and gyve thee to praier or to
othir occupacion. Take it as it wole come, and not al at onys.

Also thise wordes that I write, take hem not to streiteli, but there as thee thenketh bi
good avysement that I speke to schorteli, oithir for lackynge of Ynglisch or wantynge
of resoun, I prey thee mende it there nede is oonli. Also thise wordis that y write to thee
longen not alle to oon man whiche hath actif lif, but to thee or to anothir whiche hath the
staat of liyf comtemplativ.

The grace of oure Lord Jhesu Crist be with thee. Amen
Chapter One

This chapitle scheweth that a man is seid the image of God aftir the soule and not aftir the bodi.

For as moche as thou coveitest greteli and askest it pur charité for to heere more of an image the whiche y have bIPHER tyMES in partie discried to thee, therfore I wole gladli with drede falle to thi desire; and helpynge the grace of oure Lord Jhesu Crist, in whom I fulliche truste, y schal opene to thee a litil more of this image. And in the bigynnynge, yif thou wole witen pleylnli what I mene bi this image, I telle thee forsothe that y undirstonde not ellis but thyn owen soule; for thi soule and my soule and everi resonable soule is an image, and that a worthi image, for it is the ymage of God, as the apostel seith:

\[\text{Vir est ymago dei} \]  
(1 Corinthians 11:7). That is, man is the image of God and maad to the image and to the liknesse of Him, not in bodili schap withoutin, but in the myghtes of it withinne, as Holi Writ seith: 

\[\text{Formavit deus hominem ad similitudinem suam} \]  
(Genesis 1:27). That is, oure Lord God schoop in soule man to the ymage and the liknesse of Him. This is the ymage that I have spoke of and schal speken of. This ymage, maad to the liknesse of God in the first schapynge was wondirli faire and bright, fulle of brennynge love and goostli light. But thorugh synne of the first man Adam it was disfigured and forschapen into anothir liknesse, as y have bipher seid. For it fil from that gostli light and that heveneli foode into that peynful myrkenesse and beestli lust of this wrecchid liyf, exilid and flemed out fro the heritage of hevene that it schuld han had yif it hadde stonden, into the wrecchidnesse of this erthe, and afthyward into the prisoun of helle, ther to have ben withouten eende. Fro the whiche prisoun to that heveneli heritage it myght nevere have comen agen, but yif it hadde be reformed to the first schap and to the first liknesse. But that reformynge myght not ben had by noon ertheli man, for everiche man was in the sam meschief, and noon myght suffice to helpe hymself, and so mykul lasse ony othir man. Therfore it nedide bi doon by Hym that is more thanne a man, and that is oonli God; and that was skilful, that He schulde reforme and restoren man to blisse yif he schulde be saaff, which of His eendeles goodnesse schoop him thereto. Hou thanne hit myght be reformed, and hou it is reformed to the firste likenesse bi Him that first formed it, bi the grace of God schal I telle thee, for that is the entente
slepen. Do thou so. For though it lette oon tyme, it schal fortherene thee anothir tyme.

Chapter Twenty-four

Hou a soule whan it is hid thorugh grace fro the vyle noise and besynesse of the world is a gode nyght and a lighti merkenesse, for thane may it freli praien and thenken on Jhesu.

Yyf thou wilte witen thane what this desire is, sotheli it is Jhesu. For He maketh this desire in thee and He geveth thee it. He it is that desireth in thee and He it is that is desired. He is al and He dooth al, yif thou myght seen Hym. Thou doost nought, but suffrist Hym werken in thi soule and assentest to Hym with grete gladenesse of herte that He voucheth saaf for to doo so in thee. Thou art not ellis but a resonable instrument whereinne that He werketh. And therfore whanne thou feelist thi thought bi touchynge of His grace bi taken up with this desire to Jhesu with a myghti devoute wille for to plesen Him and loven Him, thynke thanne that thou haste Jhesu; for He it is that desireth. Biholde Him wel, He goth biforn thee, not in bodili liknesse, but unseabli bi privei hid presence of His goostli myght; therfore see Hym gostly yif thou myght, or ellis trowe Him and folwe Him whidirso He goth; for Hee schal leede thee in the righte weie to Jerusalem, that is, the sight of pees in contemplacioun.

Thus praiede the prophete to the Fadir of hevene, seyynge thus: 

\[ \text{Emitte lucem tuam et veritatem tuam ipsa me deduxerunt, et adduxerunt in montem sanctum tuum, et in tabernacula tua} \]

(Psalms 42:3). That is: Fader of hevene, sende oute Thi light and Thi soothfastenesse, that is, Thi sone Jhesu; and He schal lede me bi desire in me into Thi hooli hille and into Thi tabernaculis, that is, to the feelynge of perfighte love and heighte in contemplacioun.

Of this desire speketh the prophete thus: 

\[ \text{Memoriale tuum domine in desiderio anime mee. Anima mea desideravit te in nocte, sed et spiritus meus in precordiis meis} \]

(Isaiah 26:8-9). That is: Lord Jhesu, the mynde of Thee is printed in desire of my soule, for my soule hath desired Thee in the nyght and my spirite hath coveited Thee in al my thenkynge.

And whi the prophete seith that he desired God al in the nyght, and what he meneth therbi, schal I telle thee. Thou woste weel that the nyght is a tymeful space atwixe to daies; for whanne oo dai is ended, anothir cometh not as tite, but first cometh nyght and departeth the daies, sumtyme longe and sumtyme schort, and thanne aftir that cometh anothir dai. The prophete menede not oonli of this maner nyght, but he menede of the goostli nyght. Thou schal undirstande that there ben two daies or two lightes; the first is fals light, the secunde is a trewe light. The fals light is the love of this worlde, that a man hath of himsilf of corrupcion of his fleisch; the trewe light is the perfight love of Jhesu feelid thorugh grace in a mannys soule. The love of the world is a fals light, for it passeth awei and lesteth not, and so it performeth not that it highte. This light byhighte the feend to Adam, whanne he stired hym to synne, and seide thus: 

\[ \text{Aperientur oculi vestri et eritis sicut dii} \]

(Genesis 3:5). That is: Youre iyen schullen ben opened and ye schullen ben as goddis. And he seide soth there; for whanne Adam hadde synned, anoon his innere iye was spered and goostli light withdrawn, and the utterere yyen were opened, and he felte and sigh a newe light of fleschli knowynge and wordli love that he sigh not biforn. And so sigh he a newe dai, but this was an ille dai; for this dai was it that Job wariede whanne he seide thus: 

\[ \text{Pereat dies in qua natus sum} \]
That is: Perische mote the dai in whiche I was born. He wariede not the dai rennynge in

the yeere that God maade, but he wariede this dai that man maade, that is, the

concupiscence and the love of the world in the whiche he was born, though he feelte it

not thanne. This dai and this light he askide of God that it schulde perischen and no

lengere lasten.

But the love of Jhesu is a trewe dai and a blissed light, for God is bothe love and light,

and He is ai lastynge, thus Seynt Johan seith: Qui diligit deum manet in lumine (1 John

2:10). That is: He that loveth God duelleth al in light. Than what man that perceyveth

and seethe the world of this fals and failande, and forthi he wole forsake it and seke

the love of God; he mai not as tite feele the love of Hym, but him bihoveth a while abiden

in the nyght, for he mai not sodeynli come from that oon light to that othir, that is, fro

the love of the world to the perfite love of God. This nyght is not ellis but a foreberyng

and a withdrawynge of the affeccioun and the thought of the soule from ertheli thynges,

bi gret desire and yernynge for to seen and felen and loven Jhesu and gosteli thinges.

This is the nyght; for right as the nyghte is myrke and an hidynge of alle bodili creatures

and a restynge of alle bodili deedses, right so a man that setteth him fulli for to thenken

on Jhesu, and desiren oonli the love of Him, is besi for to hiden his thought from veyn

biholdynge and his affeccion from fleischli likynge of alle fleschli creatures, so that his

thought be maad free, not ficched, ne his affeccion bounden, ne trobeled in nothinge

lowere ne worse thanne hymsilf. And yif he mai doo soo, thanne is it nyght with him,

for thanne is he in myrkenesse.

But this is a good nyght and a lighti merkenesse, for it is a stoppynge ought of fals

love of the world, and it is a neighynge to the trewe dai. And sotheli the merkere that the

nyght is, the nerrere is the trewe light of the love of Jhesu; for the more that a soule mai

thorugh longynge to God be hid fro noise and deene of fleschli affecciones, werldli

desires, and unclene thoughtes, the nerrere is it for to feelen the light of the love of Hym,

for it is eveene at it. Thus semede that the prophete menede whanne he seide thus: Cum

in tenebris sedeo, dominus mea lux est (Micah 7:8). Whanne I sitte in myrkenesse oure

Lorde is my light; that is, whanne my soule is hid from alle stirynges of synne as it were

in sleep, thanne is oure Lord Jhesu my light, for thanne neigeth He of his grace for to

schewe me of His light. Neverthelesse this nyght is sumtyme peynful and sumtyme it is

esi and confortable. It is peynful firste whanne a man is mykil foule and is nought

thorugh grace usid for to ben often in this myrkenesse, but wolde fayne have it, and

therfore he setteth his thought and his desire to Godward as mykil as he may, that he

wolde not feelen ne thenken but oonli on Hym.

And bicause that he may not lightli have it, therfore it is peynful. For the custom and

the hoomlynesse that he hath had bfore with synne of the world, and fleschli affecciones

and ertheli thynges, and his fleschli deedes, presen so upon him and ai smyten in bi

maistrie and drawen doun alle the soule to hem, that he mai not wel ben hid from hem

as soone as he wolde ben. And therfore is this merkenesse peyneful to hym, and nameli

whanne grace toucheth him nought abondauntli. Neverthelesse, yif it be so with thee, be

not to hevy ne strive not to mykil, as yif thou woldest thorugh maistrie putten hem

ought of thi thought; for thou may not doon soo. But abide grace, suffre esili, and breek

not thisilf to mochil and sili yif thou maist drawe thi desire and thi goostli biholdynge to

Jhesu, as yif thou woldest not charge hem.

For wite thou wel, whanne thou woldest desire Jhesu and oonli thenken on Him, and

thou mai not freli for presynge in of swilk wordli thoughtes, sothli thou art outeward of
N the fals dai, and thou art entred into this myrkenesse. But thi merkenesse is not restefulle, bicause of disuse and unconnynge and unclennesse of thiself. And therfore use it often, and it schal bi processe thorugh feelynge of grace be more esi and more restful to thee. N And that is whanne thi soule thorugh feling of grace is maad so free and so myghti and so gadreth the soule into this merkenesse, that it leysteth to thenken on right nought, and that it mai withoute leTTYNGe of ony bodili thyngge thenke on right nought: than is it in a good myrkenesse. 

This nought I mene thus: that a soule mai thorugh grace be gadreth into itsilf and stonde stille in itsilf freli and hooli, and not be dryven agens his wil ne drawen doun bi N maistrie for to thenken or liken or loven with chesinge of affeccioun ony synne, or veyni or ertheli thyngge. Than thenketh the soule nought, for thanne thenketh it on no ertheli thyngge clevandeli. This is a riche nought. This nought and this nyght is a grete eese for a soule that desireth the love of Jhesu. It is in eese as for thought of ertheli thyngge, but not as for Jhesu; for though the soule thenke not of ony ertheli thyngge, neverethelees it is ful bisi for to thenken on Him.

What thinge thanne maketh this merkenesse? Sothli not ellis but a gracious desire for to have the love of Jhesu. For that desire and that longynge that it hath that tyme to the love of Jhesu, for to seen Hym and han Hym, dryveth oute of the herte alle wordli vanyties and fleschli affeccions, and gadreth the soule into itsilf and occupieth it oonli for to thenken how it myght come to the love of Him, and so bryngeth into this riche nought. And sothli it is not al myrke ne nought whanne it thenketh thus; for though it bee myrke fro fals light, it is not al merke fro the trewe light. For Jhesu that is bothe love and light is in this merkenesse, whethir it be peynful or resteful. He is in the soule as travailande in desire and longynge to light; but he is not yit as restande in love, ne as schewende his light. And therfore it is called nyght and merkenesse, in as mykil as the soule is hid fro the fals light of this woorld and hath not yit fulli felynge of trewe light, but is in abidynge of the blissid love of God that it desireth.

Thanne yif thou wolt wite whanne thou arte in this syker merkenesse and whanne not, thou myght assaie thus, and seke no ferthere but thus. Whanne thou feelist thyn entente and thi wille fulli sette for to desiren thus God and thenke oonli on Hym, thou maight as it were first examyne thisilf in thi thought, whethir thou coveite for to have onythynge of this liyf for love of itsilf, or for to have the use of ony of thi bodili wittes in ony creature. And thanne yif thyne iye bigynne and ansuere thus, I wolde see right nought; and aftir that thyn eere, I wolde heere right nought; and thi mouthe, I wolde savoure right nought, I wold speke right nought of ertheli thyngge; and thi nose, I wolde smellre right nought; and thi bodi, y wolde feelre right nought; and aftir, yif thyn herte seith, I wolde thenke right nought that is of ertheli thyngge, ne of bodili deede, ne I wolde have affeccioun fastned fleschli in no creature, but oonli to God and to Godward, yif that y coude. And whanne thei ansuere alle thus to thee, and that is doon ful redili yif grace touche thee, thanne art thou entred sumwhat into merkenesse.

For though thou feele and perceyve glyntynges and proferinge of veyn thoughtes and presynge in of fleschli affeccions, neverthelees thou art in this profitable myrkenesse, bi so that thou thought be not ficchid on hem. For siche veyn ymaginacions that fallen in the herte unaviseli troblen this merkenesse and pyne the soule sumwhat, bicause that it wolde ben hid from hem and mai not. But thei doon not awai the profite of this myrkenesse, for the soule schal bi that weie come to reestful myrkenesse. And thanne is this siche veyn restful, whanne the soule is hid for the tyme fro the pyneful feelynge of alle siche veyn thoughtes, and oonli is rested in desire and longynge to Jhesu with a goosteli
bigholdynge of Hym, as it schal be seid aftir. But it lasteth but a while hool; nevertheless
though it be but a schort tyme, it is ful profitable.

Chapter Twenty-five

Hou that desire of Jhesu sothfastli feelid in this lightli myrkenesse sleeth alle stirynges of
synne, and ableth the soule for to perceyve goostli lightnynges for the goostli Jerusa-
lem, that is Jhesu.

Thanne sithen this merkenesse and this nyght is so good and so restful, though it be
schorte, that stondeth oonli in desire and longyng to the love of Jhesu with a blynde
thyngynge of Him - hou good thanne and hou blissid is it for to feelen His love and for
to be illumyned of His blissid unseable light for to seen soothfastenesse, the whiche light
a soule resseyveth thanne the nyght passeth and the dai springeth. This I hope was the
nyght that the prophete menede whanne he seide: "My soule hath desired thee in the
nyght" (Isaiah 26:9), as I bifoire seide. It is mykil betere for to ben hid in the myrke
nyght fro bigholdynge of the world, though it were peyneful, than for to ben ouste in the
fals likynge of this world that semeth so schynande and so comfortable to hem that are
blynded in knowynge of gosteli light. For whanne thou art in this merkenesse thou art
mykil neer Jerusalem than whanne thou art in myddis of that fals light.

Therfore applie thyn herte fulli to the stirynge of grace, and use thee for to wonen in
this myrkenesse, and bi often assaiynge to be hoomli thereinne, and it schal soone be
maad resteful to thee and the trewe light of goosteli knowynge schal spryngen to thee;
not al at oonys, but pryveli bi litil and litil, as the prophete seith:

Habitantibus in regione
umbre mortis, lux orta est eis
(Isaiah 9:2). To hem that wonen in the contré of the
schadwe of deeth, light was sprongen. That is, light of grace was sprongen and schal
spryng to hem that can wonen in the schadwe of deeth, that is, in this merkenesse that
is like to deeth. For as deeth sleeth a lyvynge bodi and al fleschli feelynges of it, right so
desire to love Jhesu felt in this myrkenesse sleeth alle synnes, alle fleschli affeccions
and unclene thoughtes for the tyme, and thanne neigheste thou faste to Jerusalem.
Thou art not yit at it, but bi smale sodeyn lightnynges that gliteren oute thorugh smale
cranés fro the cité schalt thou mowen see it from feer, or thou come therto. For wite
thou wel, though thi soule be in this resteful myrkenesse withoute troblynge of wordli
vanyté, it is not yit there it schulde be; it is not yit clothid al in light, ne turned al into the
fier of love; but it feeleth wel that there is sumwhat aboven itsilf that it knoweth not ne
hath not yit, but it wolde have it, and brennandli yerneth it. And that is not ellis but the
sight of Jerusalem withoutforth, the whiche Jerusalem is like to a cité that the prophete
Ezechiel sawgh in his visions.

He seith that he sawgh a cité sette upon an hil heldande to the thought, that to his sight
was no more whanne it was meten on lengthe and in brede than a rodde that was sixe
cubites and a palme on lengthe; but as soone as he was brought into that cité and lokide
aboughte him, thanne thoughte him that it was wondir moche, for he seigh many halles
and chambris bothe open and privy. He sai bothe gates and porchis, uttirwarde and
innerward, and mychil more biggynge than y seie now, on lengthe and on brede many
hundrid cubitis. Thanne was this wondir to hym, hou this cité withinne was so longe
and so large, that was so litil to his sight whanne he was withoute. This cité bitokeneth

http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/hltxt2.htm
the perfect love of God, set in the life of contemplation which unto the eye of a soul that is without the feeling of it, and travelleth in desire toward it, semeth somewhat, but it semeth but a little thing, no more than a reed, that is, six cubits and a palm in length. Bi six cubits is understood perfection of man's work, by this palm a little touching of contemplation. He seeth well there is such a thing, that passeth the dissert of wyrkyng of a man a litil, as the palm passeth over the six cubites, but he seeth not within what that is. Nevertheles, yf he may come within the city of contemplation, thanne seeth he moche more than he sawe fyreste.

Chapter Twenty-six

Hou a soule mai knowe fals illuminacions feyned bi the feend fro the trewe light of knowing that cometh oute of Jhesu; and bi what tokens.

But now beware of the myddai feend, that feyneth light as it come oute of Jerusalem and it is not soo. For the feend seeth that oure Lord Jhesu scheweth to Hise loveris light of sothfastenesse; therfore in disceyvynge of hem that aren unwise he scheweth a light that is not trewe undir colour of trewe light, and so disceyveth hem. Neverthelees, hou a soule mai knowe the light of sothfastnes, whanne it schyneth fro God, and whanne it is feyned of the enemy, schal I seie thee as me thenketh bi ensaumple of the firmament. Sumtyme in the firmament scheweth a light from the sunne and semeth the sunne and is not, and sumtyme scheweth the trewe sunne treuli. A knowynge of that oon from that othir is this. The feynede sunne schewith him not but atwixe tweyne blake reyny cloudes: than, bicause that the sunne is ney, there schyneth oute a lite from the cloudes as it were the sunne, and is noon. But the trewe sonne scheweth hym whanne the firmament is cleer or mykil clered from blake cloudes. Now to oure purpos. Sum men, as it semeth, forsaken the love of this world and wolden come to the love of God and to the light of undirstondynge of Him, but thei wole not come thorugh this myrkenesse that I have spoken of bifore. Thei wolen not knowe hemsilf truli ne mekeli, what thei han ben, ne what thei arent yit thorugh synne, ne hou nought thei arent in hire owen kynde anemptis God. Thei aren not bisi for to entre into hemsilf, alle othere thinges left, and fleen alle wikked stirynges of synne that risen in here hertis, of pride, of envie, ire, and othere synnes, thorugh lastende desire to Jhesu, in prayynge and in thenkynge, in silence and in wepynge, and in othere bodili exercise and goosteli exercise as devoute and holi men han doon. But as tite as thei han forsaken the world as it were outeward in liknesse, or ellis soone aftir, thei wenen that thei arent holi and able for to have the goosteli undirstondynge of the Gospeel and of Holi Writ. And nameli yif thei mowen fulfille litteralli the commandementis of God and kepe hem from bodili synnes, thanne thei wenen that thei loven God perfiteli; and therfore thei wolen as tite prechen and techen alle othere men, as though thei hadden receyved grace of undirstondynge and perfeccioun of charité thorugh special grace and gifte of the Holi Gooste. And also thei arent mykil the more stired therto, for as myche as thei feelen sumtyme moche knowinge, as it were sodeynli gyven to hem withoute grete studie bifore-goynge, and also mykil fervour of love, as it semeth, for to preche truth and rightwisenesse to here evene Cristene.

Therfore thei holden it as a grace of God, that visiteth hem with His blessed light before othere soulis. Neverthelees yif thei wolen loken wel aboute hem, thei schullen wel
Chapter Thirty-one

Hou this maner of spekyng reformynge of a soule in feelynge and in what wise it is reformed is founden in Seynt Poulis wordis.

Now I have seide to thee a litil of reformynge in feith, and also I have touched thee a litil of the forthgoynge from that reformynge to the highere reformynge that is in feelynge. Not in that entente as I wolde bi thise wordes setten Goddis werkinge undir a lawe of my spekyng, as for to seyn, thus wirketh God in a soule and noon othirwise. Nay, I meene not soo: but y seie aftir my symple feelynge that oure Lord Jhesu werkith thus in summe creatures as I hope. And I hope wel that He werketh otherewise also, that passith my witte and my feelynge. Nevertheeles, wheer he werke thus or othirwise, bi sundry menys, in lengere tyme or in schorter tyme, with mykil traveile or litil traveile, yif al come to oon eende, that is to perfite love of Hym, than is it gode inowgh. For yif He wole geven a soule on o day the ful grace of contemplacion and withouten ony travaile, as He weel mai, as good it is to that soule as yif he had ben examyned, pyned and mortified, and purified twenti wyntir tyme. And therfore upon this manere wise take thou my seiyng, as I have seid; and namely as I thenke for to seyn. For now bi the grace of oure Lord Jhesu schal y speke a litil as me thenketh more openli of reformynge in feelynge - what it is and how it is maad, and whiche aren goostli feelynges that a soule receyveth.

Nevertheless first, that thou take not this maner of spekyng of reformynge of a soule in feelynge as feynynge or fantasie, therfore I schal grounden it in Seynt Poules wordis, where he seith thus: *Nolite conformari huic seculo, sed reformamini in novitate sensus vestri* (Romans 12:2). That is: Ye that aren thorugh grace reformed in feith, conforme yow not henneforward to maneres of the world, in pride, in covetise, and in othere synnes; but be ye reformed in newehede of youre feelynge. Loo, heere thou maist see that Seynt Poul speketh of reformynge in feelynge; and what that newe feelynge is he expounneth in anothir place thus: *Ut impleamini in agnicione voluntatis eius, in omni intellectu et sapiencia spirituali* (Colossians 1:9). That is: We praien God that ye mowen ben fulfilled in knowynge of Goddis wille, in al undirstondyng and in al maner goostli wisdom; that is, in reformynge in feelynge. For thou schalt undirstonde that the soule hath two manere of feelynges: on withoute of the fyve bodili wittes, anothir withinne of the goostli wittes, the whiche aren propirli the myghtis of the soule, mynde, reson, and wille. Whanne thorugh grace thise myghtesaren fulfilled in al undirstondinge of the wille of God and in goostli wisdom, than hath the soule newe gracious feelynges. That this is sooth, he schewith in anothir place thus: *Renovamini spiritu mentis vestre, et induite novum hominem, qui secundum deum creatus est in iusticia, sanctitate, et in veritate* (Ephesians 4:23-24). Be yee now renued in the spirit of youre soule; that is, ye schullen ben reformed not in bodili feelynge ne in imaginacion, but in the overe partie of youre reson. And clothe yow in a newe man, that is schapen aftir God in rightwisenesse, holinesse, and soothfastnesse. That is, your reson, that is propirli the ymage of God thorugh grace of the Holi Goost, schal be clothid in a newe light of soothfastenesse, holynesse, and rightwisenesse and thanne is it reformed in feelynge. For whanne the soule hath perfight knowynge of God, than is it reformed.
Thus seith Seynt Poul: *Exspoliantes veterem hominem cum actibus suis; induite novum, qui renovatur in agnicione dei, secundum ymaginem eius qui creavit eum* (Colossians 3:9-10). Spoile yousilf of the oolde man with alle his deedis; that is, casteth fro yow the love of the world with alle wordli maneris. And clothe you in a newe man; that is, ye schullen be renewed in the knowynge of God aftir the liknesse of Hym that made yow. Bi thise wordes maist thou undirstonden that Seynt Poul wold have mennys soulis reformed in partie knowynge of God, for that is the newe feelynge that he speketh of generali. And therfore upon his word I schal seyn more pleynli of this reformynge, as God geveth me grace. For ther is two maner of knowynge of God. On is had principali in imaginacion, and litil in undirstondynge. This knowynge is in chosen soulis bigynnynge and profitynge in grace, that knowen God and loven Hym al manli not goostli, with manli affeccions and with bodili liknesse, as I have before seid. This knowynge is good, and it is likned to mylk bi the whiche thei aren tendirli norischid as children, til thei ben able for to come to the fadris boord and taken of his hande hool breed. And that othir knowynge is principaly felt in undirstondynge, whanne it is comforted and illumyned bi the Hooli Goost, and litil in imaginacion. For the undirstondynge is ladi, and yimaginacion is a maiden, servande to the undirstondynge whanne nede is. This knowynge is oolde breed, mete for perfite soulis, and it is reformynge in feelynge.

Chapter Thirty-two

Hou grace openeth the innere iye of a soule into goostli biholdynge of Jhesu, and hou there is thre maner of knowynge of Jhesu bi example of thre men stondynge in the sunne, on blynd, anothir hath his iyen sperid, and the thridde forth lokynge. A soule that is callid fro the love of the world, and aftir that it is righted and assaied, mortefied and purifried, as I have before seid, oure Lord Jhesu of His merciful goodnesse reformeth it in feelynge whanne He vucheth saaf. He openeth the innere iye of the soule whanne He lightneth the reson thorugh touchynge and schynynge of His blyssid light, for to seen Hym and knowe Him; not al fulli at oones, but litil and litil bi dyverse tymes, as the soule mai suffre Hym. He seeth Hym not what He is, for that mai no creature doon in hevene ne in erthe; ne he seth Him not as He is, for that sight is oonli in the blisse of hevene. But he seth Him that He is: an unchaungeable beynge, a sovereyn myght, sovereyn soothfastnesse, and sovereyne goodnesse, a blissid lyf, and an eendelees blisse. This seeth the soule, and moche more that cometh withal; not blyndli and savourli, as dooth a clerk that seeth Him be clergie oonli thorugh myght of his naked resoun, but that othir seeth Hym in undirstondynge that is comforted and lightned by the gifte of the Hooli Goost with a wondirful reverence and a privei brennande love, with goostli savour and heveneli delite, more cleerli and more fulli than mai be writen or seid. This sight, though it be schortli and litil, is so worthi and so myghti that it draweth and ravescheth al the affeccion of the soule therto from biholdynge and the mynde of al ertheli thynge, for to reste therinne everemore yif that it myghte. And of this manner sight and knowynge the soule groundeth al his inward wirkynge in alle the affeccions. For thanne it dredeth God in man as soothfastnesse, wondreth Him as myght, loveth Him as goodnesse. This sight and this knowynge of Jhesu, with the blissid love that cometh oute of it, mai be called the reformynge of a soule in feith and in feelynge that
I spoke of. It is in feith, for it is myrk yit as in reward of that ful knowynge that schal ben in hevene. For than schullen we seen Hym not oonli that He is, but even as He is; as Seynt Joon seith: *Tunc videbimus eum sicuti est* (1 John 3:2). That is: Thanne schulle we seen Him as He is. Nevertheless, it is in feelynge also, as in reward of that blynde knowynge that a soule hath stondyng eonli in feith. For this soule knoweth sumwhat of the kynde of Jhesu God thorugh this gracious sight, but othir knoweth it not, but oonli troweth it, this is sooth.

Nevertheless, that thou mowe the betere conceyve that I meene, I schal schewe thee thre manere reformynge of a soule bi ensample of three men stondyng in light of the sunne. Of the whiche three, oon is blynd, and anothir mai seen but he hath hiseyen spered, the thridde loketh forth ful sight.

The blynde man hath no maner knowynge that he is in the sunne, but he troweth it yif a trewe man telle hym; and he bitokeneth a soule that is oonli reformed in feith, that troweth in God as Holi Chirche techeth, and woot not what. This sufficeth as for savacion. The tothir seeth a light of the sunne, but he seeth it not cleerli what it is, ne as it is, for the liddes of his iyen letteth him that he mai not, but he seeth thorugh the liddes of his iyen a glymerynge of a greet light. And he bitokeneth a soule that is reformed in feith and in feelynge, and so is contemplatif. For he seeth sumwhat of the Godhede of Jhesu thorugh grace; not cleerli ne fulli, for the iyen liddes, that is his bodili kynde, is yit a wal atwixe his kynde and the kynde of Jhesu, and letteth him fro the cleer sight of Hym. But he seeth thorugh this wal, aftir that grace toucheth him more or lasse, that Jhesu is God and that Jhesu is sovereign goodnesse, and sovereign beynge, and a blissid liyf, and al othir goodnesse cometh of Him. This sight is so myghti that though no man lyvand wolde trowe in Jhesu, ne love Him, he wolde trowe nevere the lesse ne love Him the lasse; for he seeth it so soothfastli thorugh grace that he mai not untrowe it.

The thridde man, that hath ful sight of the sunne, he troweth it not for he seeth it fulli; bitokeneth a ful blissid soule that withouten ony wal of bodi or synne seeth openli the face of Jhesu in the blisse of hevene. There is no feith, and therfore he is fulli reformed in feelynge.

There is no staat above the secunde reformynge that a soule mai come to heere in this liyf; for this is the staat of perfeccion, in the weie to heveneward. Nevertheles alle the souls that are in this staat are not alle ilike ferforth. For summe have it litil, and schortli and seldom; and summe lengere, clerere and oftennere; and summe han it clerest and lengest, aftir the habundyng of grace; and yit alle thise han the gifte of contemplacioun. For the soule hath not perfighte sight of Jhesu al at onys, but first a litil, and aftir that it profiteth and cometh to more feelynge, and as longe as it is in this lyf it mai wexen more in the knowynge and in this love of Jhesu. And sothli I woot not what were more leef to siche a soule that hath a litil felt of it, than uttirli alle othire thynges left and sette hem at nought, and oonli tende therto for to have clerere sight and clennere love of Jhesu, in whom is al the blissid Trynyté.

This manere of knowynge of Jhesu, as I undirstonde, is the openynge of hevene to the iye of a clene soule, of the whiche holi men spaken of in here writynge. Not as summe wen, that the openynge of hevene is yif a soule myght seen bi imaginacion thorugh the skyes above the firmament, hououre Lord Jhesu sitteth in His majesté in a
bodili light as mykil as an hundred sunnes. Nai, it is not soo: ne though he see nevere so
highe on that manere, sothli he seeth not the goostly hevene. The hierie stiyeth above
the sonne bi sich imagynacion for to see Jhesu God, the lowere he falleth bynethe the
sunne. Nevertheeles this maner sight is suffrable to symple soulis, that kunne no betere
seke Hym that is unseable.

Chapter Thirty-three

Hou Jhesu is hevene to the soule; and hou a soule schal seke Jhesu above itself and
withinne itsilf; and whi Jhesu is callid fier and light.

What is hevene to a resonable soule? Sothli, not ellis but Jhesu God. For yif that be
hevene oonli that is above a thynge, than is God oonli hevene to mannys soule. For He
is oonli above the kynde of a soule. Thanne yif a soule mai thorugh grace have knowynge
of that blissid kynde of Jhesu, sothli he seeth hevene, for he seeth God.

Therfore ther are many men that erren in undirstondynge of summe wordes that aren
seid of God, for thei undirstonden hem not goostli. Hooli Writte seith that a soule that
wole fynde God schal liften upward the innere iye and seke God above itsilf. Thanne
summe that wolde doon aftir this seiynge undirstonden this word "aboven hemsilf," as
for higher settynge in stide and for worthihere of place, as oon element or oon planete is
above anoither in settynge and in worthinesse of bodili place; but it is not so goostli. For
a soule is above a bodili thynge not bi settynge of stide, but bi sutilté and worthinesse of
kynde. Right so, in the selve wise, God is above alle bodili and goostli creaturis, not bi
settynge of stide, but thorugh sutilté and worthinesse of His unchaungeable blissid
kynde. And therfore he that wole wisili seke God and fynden Him, he schal not renne
oute with his thought as yif he wolde clymbe above the sunne and persen the firma-
ment, and imagyne the majesté as it were a light of an hundred sonnes. But he schal
rathere drawe doun the sunne and al the firmament, and forgeten it and casten it binethen
hym ther as he is, and settyn al this and al bodili thinge also at nought, and thenken
thanne yif he can goostli, bothe of himsilf and of God also. And yif he doo thus, thanne
seeth the soule aboven himsilf and thanne seeth it hevene.

Upon this self manere schal this word "withinne" be undirstonden. It is comonli seid
that a soule schal see oure Lord withynne al thynge and withinne itsilf. Sooth it is that
oure Lord is withinne alle creatures, not on that manere as a kirnel is hid withinne the
schale of a note, or as a litil bodili thinge is hid and holden withinne anoither mykil. But He
is withinne alle creatures as hooldynge and kepyng hem in here beyng, thorugh sultilté
and thorugh myght of His blissid kynde and clennesse unseable. For right as a thynge
that is most precious and moste clene is leid innerest, right so bi that liknesse it is seid
the kynde of God (that is most precious and most clene and most goostli, feerthest
from bodilihede) is hid withinne alle thynges. And therfore he that wole seke God
withinne, he schal forgete first al bodili thynge (for al that is withouten) and his own
bodi; and he schal forgeten the thenkyng of his own soule and thenken on that unmaad
kynde that is Jhesu, that made him, quykeneth him, and holdeth him, and gyveth hym
resoun and mynde and love; the whiche is withinne hym thorugh His privei myght and
sovereine sotilté. Upon this manere schal the soule doo whanne grace touchith hym,
ellis it wole but litil availe to seken Jhesu and fynde Him withinne itsilf and withinne alle
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Chapter Thirty-seven

Hou love, thoru a gracious biholding of Jhesu, sleth alle stirynge of pride and maketh
the soule perfite meke; for it maketh the soule for to lese savour and delite in al ertheli
worship.

Nevertheles, hou love sleeth synnes and reformeth vertues in a soule more speciali
schal y seyn; and firste of pride, and of mekenesse that is contrarie therto. Thou schalte
undirstonden that there is two maner of mekenesse. Oon is had bi wirkynge of resoun.

Anothir is feelth bi special gifte of love. But bothe aren of love. But that oon love wirketh
bi resoun of the soule; that othir wirketh bi himself. The firste is imperfect, that othir is
perfight.

The first mekenesse a man feelith of bihaldynge of his owen synnes and of his owen
wrecchidnesse, thorugh which bihaldynge he thenketh himself unworthy for to have
ony gifte or grace or ony meede of God; but he thenketh it inowgh that He wolde of His

http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/hiltxt2.htm
grete merci graunte hym forgiveynesse of his synnes. And also he thenketh hym bicause
of his owene synnes that he is wers than the moste synnere that lyveth, and that everi
man doth betere than he. And so bi siche biholdynge casteth himsylf doun in his thoughtis
undir alle men; and he is bisie for to agenstonde the stirynges of pride as mykil as he
mai perceyve it, he is yvel paid with himsylf, and hath sorwe for it in herte, and
asketh forgynesse for it of God and scheweth him to his confessour; and he accusith
himsylf mekeli, and receyveth his penaunce. This is good mekenesse, but it is not yit
perfte, for it is of soulis that are bigynnende and profitende in grace, causid of bihooldynge
of synnes. Love werketh this mekenesse bi resoun of the soule.

Parfite mekenesse a soule feeleth of the sight and the goostli knowynge of Jhesu. For
whanne the Holi Goost lightneth the reson into the sight of soothfastenesse, hou Jhesu
is al and that He dooth al, the soule hath so grete love, and so grete joie in that goostli
sight, for it is soothfaste that it forgeteth itsilf and fulli leneth to Jhesu with al the love
that it hath for to biholde Hym. It taketh no kepe of the unworthinesse of itsilf ne of
synnes before doon. But setteth at nought itsilf with alle the synnes and alle the good
deedis that evere he dide, as yif there were nothinge but Jhesu. Thus meke was David
whanne he seide thus: *Et substancia mea tanquam nichillum ante te* (Psalms 38:6).

That is: Lord Jhesu, the sight of Thi blissid unmaad substance and Thyn endelee benge
scheweth wel unto me that my substance and the benge of my soule that is chaungeable
is as nought agens Thee. Also anemptis his even Cristene he hath no reward to hem, ne
demyn of hem, whethir thei ben betere or worse thanne himsylf is. For he hooldeth
himsylf and alle othere men as it were evene, ilike nought of hemself anemptis God; and
that is sooth, for al the goodnesse that is doon in himsylf or in hem is onli of God, whom
he biholeth as al. And theryfore setteth he alle othere creatures at nought, as he dooth
himsylf. Thus meke was the prophete whanne he seide thus: *Omnes gentes quasi non
sint, sic sunt coram eo, et quasi nichillum et inane ita reputati sunt* (Isaiah 40:17). Alle
men aren afore oure Lord as nought and as veyn and nought thei aren acconttid to Him.

That is, anemptis the eendeeles benge and the unchaungeable kynde of God mankynde
is as nought. For of nought it is maad, and into nought it schulde turnen, but yif he
kepide it in the benge that made it of nought. This is soothfastnesse, and this schulde
make a soule meke yif it myght see thorugh grace this soothfastenesse. Therefore
whanne love openeth the innere iye of a soule for to seen this soothfastnesse with
othere circumstaunces that cometh withal, thanne bigynneth the soule for to be soothfasteli
meke. For thanne bi the sight of God it feelith and seeth itself as it is; and thanne
forsaketh the soule the bihooldynge and the lenyng to itsilf, and fulli fallith to the
biholdynge of Hym. And whanne it dooth so, thanne setteth the soule right nought bi al
the joie and alle the worschipe of this world; for the joie of wordli worschipe is so litil
and so nought in regarde of that joie and that love that it feelith in the goostli sight of
Jhesu and knowynge of soothfastnesse, that though he myght have it withuten ony
synne, he wolde not of it. Ne though men wolde worschipen him, preisen hym, favoren
hym, and sette hym at greet staat, it liketh hym right nought, ne though he hadde the
kunynge of alle the seveng artis of clergie, and of alle craftes undir sunne, or hadde
powere for to wirke alle maner miraclis, he hath no more deynté of al this, ne more
savoure of hem, thanne for to gnawen upon a drie stikke. He hadde wel levere forgeten
al this and for to ben alone out of the sight of the world, than for to thenken on hem and
be worschiped of alle men. For the herte of a trewe lovere of Jhesu is maad so mykil
and so large thorugh a litil sight of Him and a litil feelynge of His goostli love, that al the
lykynge and al the joie of al erthe mai not sufficen for to fillen oon corner of it. And
thanne semeth it wel that thise wrecchid wordli lovers that aren, as it were, ravesched
in love of here own worschiphe, and pursuen aftir it for to han it and with al the myght
and al the witte that thei han, thei have no savoure in this mekenesse, thei aren wondir
fer therfro. But the lovere of Jhesu hath this mekenesse lastandeli, and that not with
hevynesse and stryvyng for it, but with likynge and goostli gladnesse, the whiche
gladnesse it hath, not for it forsaketh al the worschiphe of this world, for that were a
proude mekenesse that longeth to an ypocrite, but for he hath a sight and a goostli
knowynge of soothfastnesse and of worthinesse of Jhesu thorough gifte of the Hooli
Goost.

That reverent sight and that loveli bihaldynge of Jhesu conforteth the soule so
wondirfulli and berith it up so myghtili and so softli, that it mai not liken ne fulli resten in
noon erthelio joie, ne it wole not. He maketh no fors whethir men lakken him or preisen
hym, worschipen him or despicen hym as fore hymsilf. He setteth it not at herte neithir
for to be wel paied yif men despicen him, as for more mekenesse, ne for to be yvel
paied that men schulde worschiphe hym or praise him. He hadde wel leverre forgete bothe
that oon and that othir, and oonli thenken on Jhesu, and gete mekenesse bi that weie;
and this is mykil the sikere weie, whoso myght come therto. Thus dide David whanne
he seide thus: Oculi mei semper ad dominum, quoniam ipse evellet de laqueo pedes
(Psalms 24:15). That is, myn iyen aren ai upon Jhesu my Lord, for whi He schal
kepe my feet from the snaris of synne. For whanne he dooth so, thanne forsaketh he
uttirli hymself and undircasteth hym hooli to Jhesu. And thanne is he in a siker warde,
for the schelde of soothfastnesse, that he biholdeth, kepeth hym so wel that He schal
not ben hurte thorugh no styringe of pride as longe as he holdeth hym withinne the
schelde.

As the prophete seith: Scuto circumdabit te veritas eius; non timebis a timore nocturno
(Psalms 90:5). Sothfastnesse of God schal umbiclippe thee with a scheeld, and that is
yif thou, alle othere thynge lefte, oonli biholde Hym. For thanne schalt thou not dreden
for the nyghtes drede, that is, thou schalt not dreden the spirit of pride, whethir he come
by nyght or bi dai, as the next vers seith thus: A sagitta volante in die (Psalms 90:6).
Pride cometh bi nyght for to assaile a soule, whanne it is despiced and repreved of
othere men, that it schulde bi that falle into hevynesse and into sower. It cometh also as
an arwe fleyng in the dai, whanne a man is worschipid and preysed of alle men,
whethir it be for wordli doynge or for goostli, that he schulde have veyne joie in hymsilf
and fals gladdenesse restyngli in a passynge thynge. This is a scharp arwe and a peril-
ous arwe; it fleeth swifteli, it striketh softeli, but it woundeth deedli.

But the lovere of Jhesu, that stabli biholdeth Hym bi devoute praieres and bisili thenkynge
on Hym, is so umbilapped with the siker schelde of soothfastnesse that he dredeth not,
for this arwe mai not entren into the soule; ne though it come, it hurteth not, but glenteth
away and passeth forth. And thus is the soule maad meke, as I undirstonde, bi wrikynge
of the Holi Gost, that is, the gifte of love; for he openeth the iye of the soule for to seen
and to loven Jhesu, and he kepith the soule in that sight restfulli and sikirly, and he sleeth
alle the styringes of pride wondir privelie and softeli, and the soule woot nevere how, and
he also bringeth in bi that wai soothfasteli and loveli the vertu of mekenesse. Al this
dooth love, but not in alle hise loveres ilikeful. For sum men han this grace but schorteli
and litil, as it were yit in the bygynnynge of it, and a litil assaiynge towarde it, for her
conscience is not yit fulli clensid thorugh grace. And sum men han it more fulli, for thei
han clerere sight of Jhesu, and thei feele more of His love. And sum men han it most
fulli, for thei han the ful gifte of contemplacion. Nevertheless he that leste hath on this
manere as I have seid, sothli he hath the gifte of perfite mekenesse, for he hath the gifte
of perfighte love.

Chapter Thirty-eight

Hou love sleeth alle stirynges of ire and envie softeli, and reformeth in the soule the
vertues of pees and pacience and of perfite charité to his even Cristene, as he deede
speciali in the apostelis and martyres.

Love wirketh wiseli and softeli in a soule there he wole, for he sleeth myghtili ire and
envie and alle passions of angrinesse and malincolie in it, and brengeth into a soule
vertues of pacience and myldenesse, pesiblité and lovereden to his even Cristene. It is
ful gret maistrie and grete hardenesse to a man that stondeth oonli in the wirkynghe of his
own resoun for to kepen pacience, oonli reste and softnesse in herte, and charité
anemptis his even Cristen yif thei disese him unskilfulli and doon hym wrong, that he ne
schal doon sumwhat agens hem thorugh stirynghe of ire or of malencolie, either in
spekyng or in wirkynghe or in bothe. And neverthelethes, though a man be stired or trobeled
in himsilf and be maad unrestful, bi so that it be not to mykil, passende over the boundis
of resoun, and that he kepe his hand and his tunge and be redi for to forguye trespace
whanne merci is askid, yit this man hath the vertu of pacience, though it be but weikeli
and nakidli; for as mykil as he wolde have it, and travayleth bisili in refreyngyne of his
unskifulli passiouns that he myght have it, and also is sori that he hath it not so as he
schulde. But to a trewe lovere of Jhesu it is no grete maistrie for to suffren al this, for
whi love feighteth for him, and sleeth wondiri softeli siche risynges of wraththe and al
malencolie, and maketh his soule so esi, so pesible, so suffrande, and so goodli thorugh
the goostli sight of Jhesu, with the feelynge of His blissid love, that though he be dispiced
or reproved of othere men, or take wronge or harm, or schame or velany, he chargeth
it not. He is not mykil stired agens hem, he wil not ben angrid ne sterid agens hem; for
yif he were mykil stired he schulde forbeeren the confort that he feeleth withinne in his
soule, but that wole he not. He mai lightliere forgeten al the wronge that is doon to hym,
thanne anothir man mai forgeven it, though merci were asked. And so he hadde ful
lyvere forgeten than forguye it, for him thenketh it so moste eese to hym.

And love dooth al this, for love openeth the iye of the soule to the sight of Jhesu, and
stablieth it with the likynge of love that it feelith bi that sight, and conforteth it so myghtili
that it taketh no kepe; whatso men jangelen or don agens him, it hangeth nothynge upon
him. The moste harm that he myght have were a forberynge of the goostli sight of
Jhesu. And therfore it is levere to him to suffren alle othere harmes than that aloone. Al
this mai a soule doo wel and esili, withoute grete trochelenge of the goostli sight, whanne
disese falleth al withouteforth and toucheth not the bodi, as is bakbytynghe or scornynghe
or spoilynge of siche as he hath. Al this greveth not. But it goth sumwhat neer whanne
the flesch is touchid, and he feele smert; thanne it is hardere. Nevertheless, though hit
be hard and impossible to the frele kynde of man for to suffre bodeli peyne gladli and
pacientli, withouten bittir stirynes of ire, angir, and malencolie, it is not impossible to
love (that is, the Hooli Gooste) for to werke this in a soule there He toucheth with His
blissid gifte of love. But He geveth to a soule that is in that plight myghti feelynes of
love, and wondirfulli fasteneth it to Jhesu, and departeth the soule wondir feer fro the
sensualité thorugh His privel myght, and comforteth it so sweteli bi His blissid presence
that the soule feelith litil peyne or ellis noon of the sensualité; and this is the special grace
goven to the hooli martires. This grace hadden the apostelis, as Holi Writte seith thus of
hem: Itant apostoli gaudentes a conspectu consilii, quoniam digni habiti sunt pro nom-

ine Jesu contumeliam pati (Acts 5:41). That is, the apostlis yeeden joiande fro the
conceal of the Jewes whanne thei weren beten with scourges, and thei weren glaad that
thei weren worthi for to suffre ony bodili disese for the name of Jhesu. Thei weren not
stired to ire ne to felnnes, for to ben venged of the Jewes that beten hem, as a wordli
man wolde ben whanne he suffreth a litil harm, be hit never so litil, of his even Cristen.
Ne thei were not stired to pride and to heighnesse of hemsilf and to disdeyn and to
demyng of the Jewes, as ipocrites and heretikes aren that wolen suffre mykil bodili
peyne, and aren redi sumtyme for to suffre deeth with grete gladnesse and with myghti
wille as it were in the name of Jhesu, for the love of Hym. Soothli that gladnesse and
that love that thei han in suffrynge of bodili meschef is not of the Holi Gost. It cometh
not fro the fier that brenneth in the highe autier of hevene, but it is feyned by the feend
enflawmed of helle. For it is menged with the highest of pride and of presumpcioun of
hemsilf, and dispite and demynge and disdeyn of hem that thus ponesche hem. And thei
wennen yit that al is charité and that thei suffre al that wronge for the love of God, but
thei aren bigiled bi the myddai feend. A trewe lovere of Jhesu, whanne he suffreth harm
of his even Cristene, is so strengthened thorugh grace of the Hooli Goost, and is maad so
meke, so pacient, and so peseble, and that sothfastli, that what wronge or harm what it
be that he suffre of his even Cristene, he kepeth ai mekenesse. He dispiceth him not, he
demeth him not, but preyth for hym in his herte and hath of hym pité and compassioun,
moche more tendirli thanne of anothir man that nevere dide hym harm; and sothli betere
lovethim and more ferventeli desireth the savacion of his soule, bicause that he seeth
that he schal have so mykil goosteli profite thorough his yvel dede, though it be agens his
wille. But this love and this mekenesse wirketh oonli the Holi Goost, above the kynde of
man, in hem that He maketh trewe loveres of Jhesu.

Chapter Thirty-nine

Hou love sleeth coveitise, leccherie, glotonye, and accidie, and the fleschli savour and
delite in alle the fyve bodili wittes in the perfite love of Jhesu softli and esili thorugh a

gracious biholdynge of Hym.

Coveitise also is slayn in a soule bi the wirkyng of love, for it maketh the soule so
covetous of goostli good and to heveneli richesse so ardant, that it setteth right nought
bi al ertheli feend. A trewe lovere of Jhesu, whanne he suffreth harm
of his even Cristene, is so strengthened thorugh grace of the Hooli Goost, and is maad so
meke, so pacient, and so peseble, and that sothfastli, that what wronge or harm what it
be that he suffre of his even Cristene, he kepeth ai mekenesse. He dispiceth him not, he
demeth him not, but preyth for hym in his herte and hath of hym pité and compassioun,
moche more tendirli thanne of anothir man that nevere dide hym harm; and sothli betere
lovethim and more ferventeli desireth the savacion of his soule, bicause that he seeth
that he schal have so mykil goosteli profite thorough his yvel dede, though it be agens his
wille. But this love and this mekenesse wirketh oonli the Holi Goost, above the kynde of
man, in hem that He maketh trewe loveres of Jhesu.
thynges that wordli loveris han in so greet price, and loven so deynteli, schullen passen
awey and turne to nought, bothe the thyng in itsilf and the love of it. And therfore he
bryngeth it in his thought bityme in that plight that it schal ben aftir, and so he accounteth
it at nought. And whan wordli loveres striven and pleten and fighten fore wordli good,
who mai first have it, the lovere of Jhesu stryveth with no man, but kepeth himsilf in
pees and holdeth hym paiied with that that he hath, and he wole stryve for no more; for
hym thenketh hym nedeth no more of alle the richessis in erthe thanne a scant bodili
sustenaunce to for to save the bodili liyf withal, as longe as God wole, and that mai he
glihtli have, and therfore wole he no more han. He is wel at ese whanne he hath no more
than scanteli him nedeth for the tyme, that he mai be freeli discharged from bisynesse
aboute the kepynge and the dispendynge of it, and fulli geven his herte and al his besynesse
aboute the sekyngynge of Jhesu, for to fynde Hym in clennesse of spirit. For that is al his
coveitise, for whi, oonli elene of herte schullen seen Hym.

Also fleschli love of fadir and of modir and of othere wordli frendis hangeth not up
hym. It is evene kut from his herte with the swerde of goostli love, that he hath no more
affeccioun to fadir ne to modir or to ony wordli frend than he hath to anothir man, but
yif he see and feele in hem more grace and more vertu than in othir men. Outetaken this,
that hym were levere that his fadir and his modir hadden the selve grace that summe
othere men han; but neverethelees yif thei ben not so, thanne loveth he othere betere
than hem, and that is charité. And so sleeth the love of Jhesu coveitise of the world and
bringeth into the soule poverté in spirit.

And that dooth love not oonli in hem that han right nought of wordli good, but also in
some creatures that aren in greet wordli estate and have dispendynge of ertheli richesse.
Love sleeth in summe of hem coveitise, so fer forth that thei han no likynge ne savoure
in havynge of hem more than in a stree. Ne though thei ben loste for defaute of hem that
schulde kepe hem, thei sette not therbi; for whi, the herte of Goddis lovere is thorugh
gifte of the Holi Goost taken so fulli with the sight and the love of anothire thynge, that
is so precious and so worthi, that it wole receyve noon othir love restyngli that is
contrarie thereto.

And not onli dooth love this, but also it sleeth the likynge of leccherie and al othir
bodili unclennesse, and bringeth into the soule veri chastité, and turneth hit into likynge.
For the soule feeleth so grete delite in the sight of Jhesu that it liketh for to be chaste,
and it is no grete hardenesse to it for to kepe chastité, for it is the moste eese and the
moste reste.

And upon the selve wise the gifte of love sleeth fleschli lustis of glotonie, and maketh
the soule sobre and temperat, and berith it up so myghtili that it mai not resten in likynge
of mete and drynke, but it taketh mete and drynke, what it be that leest agreveth the
bodili conpleccioun, yif he mai lightli have it, not for love of itsilf, but for love of God.
And on this maner wise the lovere of Jhesu seeth wel that hym nedeth for to kepen his
bodili liyf with mete and drynk as longe as God wole suffren hem to togedre. Thanne
schal this be the discrecioun of the lovere of Jhesu, as I undirstonde, that hath feelynge
and wirkynge in love; that upon what manere that he mai most kepen his grace hool,
and lest be letted fro the wirkynge in hit thorough takynge of bodili sustenaunce, so schal
he doo. That maner of mete that lest letteth and leest troblith the herte and mai kepe the
bodi in strengthe - be it fleisch, be it fisch, be it breed and ale - that I trowe the soule
chesith for to have yif it mai esily come therbi. For al the besynesse of the soule is for
to thenken on Jhesu with reverent love, ay withoute lettyngynge of onythynge, yif it myght.
And therfore syn that it bihoveth sumwhat be letted and hyndred, the lasse that it is letted and hyndred bi mete and drynk, or bi ony othyr thynge, the leverere it is. It hadde leverer taken and usen the beste mete and most of price that is undir sunne, yif it lesse letted the kepyng of his herte, than for to take but breed and watir, yif that letted him more; for he hath no reward to geten him greet mede for the peyne of fastynge and be put therbi from softenesse in herte. But al his bisynesse is for to kepen his herte as stabli as he may in the sight of Jhesu and in the feelynge of His love. And sotheli, as I trowe, he myght with lasse likyng use the beste mete that is good in the owen kynde, than anothir man that wirketh al in resoun withoute the special gifte of love schulde mowe usen the werste, outetaken mete that thorugh craft of curie is oonli maad for lust: that manere of mete mai he not weel acorden withal. And also on that othir side, yif litil mete, as oonli breed and ale, most helpeth and eseth his herte and kepeth it most in pees, it is thanne most leef to him for to use it so, and nameli yif he feele bodili strengthe oonli of the gifte of love withal.

And yit dooth love more, for it sleeth accidie and fleischli ydelnesse, and maketh the soule lifli and spedi to the service of Jhesu, so fer forth that it coveiteth ai to ben occupied in goodnesse, nameli inward in biholdynge of Him, bi the vertu of whiche sight the soule hath sauvre and goostli delite in praifyng and thenkyng, and in al othir maner wyrkyng that nedeth to be doon, aftir the staat and degree that he stondeth inne asketh (whether he be religious or seculer), withouten hevynesse or pefull bittirnesse. Also it sleeth the veyn likynges of the fyve bodili wittes. First the sight of the iye, that the soule hath no likyng in the sight of ony ertheli thynge, but it feelith rathere pyne and disease in biholdynge of it, be it nevere so faire, ne so precious, ne so wondirful. And therfore as wordli loveres renne oute sumtyme for to seen newe thynges, for to wondren in hem, and so for to feden her herte with the veyn sight of hem; right so a lover of Jhesu is bisi for to renne awai and withdrawen hym from the sight of sich maner thynges, that the innere sight be not letted, for he seeth goostli anothir manere thynge that wolde he not forbere.

Right on the selve wise it is of spekyng and heryng. It is a peyne to the soule of a lover of Jhesu for to speke or heere onythynge that myte letten the fredom of his herte fro thenkyng of Jhesu. What songe or melodie or mynstralsie outeward that it be, yif it lette the thought that it mai not freli and restfulli prayen or thenken on Jhesu, it liketh right nought; and the more delitable that it is to othere men, the more unsaveri it is to him. And also for to heeren ony manere spekyng of othere men but it be sumwhat touchyng the wyrkyng of his soule in the love of Jhesu, it liketh him right nought. He is ellis right soone irke of it. He hadde wel levere ben in pees and speke right nought, ne heere right nought, than for to heere the spekyng or the techynge of the grettest clerke on erthe, with alle the reson that he coude seyn to him thorugh mannys witte onli, but yif he coude speke felandli and stirendli of the love of Jhesu. For that is his craft principalli, and therefore wolde he not ellis heren ne seen, but that myght helpen him and fortheren him into more knowynge and to betere feelynge of Him. Of wordeli specie it is no doute that he hath no savour in spekyng ne in heerynge of it, ne in wordli talis, ne in tydynges, ne in noon siche veyn jangelynge that longeth not to him. And so it is of smellynges and savourynge and touchyng; the more that the thought schulde be distracte and broken of goostli reste bi the use eithir of smellynges or of savourynge or of ony of the bodili wittes, the more he fleeth it. And the lasse that he feeleth of hem, the levere is hym, and yif he myght lyven in the bodi withoute the
feelyng of ony of hem, he wolde nevere feelen hem. For thei troben the herte ofte
sithes and putten oute fro reste, and thei mowen not ben fulli eschewed. But nevertheless, the love of Jhesu is sumtyme so myghti in a soule that it overcometh and sleeth al thynge that is contrarie to it.

Chapter Forty

What vertues and graces a soule receyveth thorugh openynge of the innere iye into the gracios biiholdynge of Jhesu, and hou it mai not be geten oonli thorugh mannes traveile, but thorugh special grace and traveile also.

Thus werketh love outeward in a soule, openynge the goostli iye into biiholdynge of Jhesu bi inspiracion of special grace, and maketh it clene, solit, and able to the werke of contemplacioun. What this openynge of this goostli iye is the grettest clerk in erthe coude not ymagene bi his kyndeli wit, ne schewe fulli bi his tunge. For it mai not be geten thorugh studie ne bi manyns traveile oonli, but principali thorugh grace of the Hooli Goost and with traveile of man. I drede moche for to speke ought of it, for me thenketh y can nought; it passeth myn assay, and my lippes aren unclene. Nevertheless, for I hope love asketh and love biddeth, therfore I schal seyn a litil more of it as y hope love techeth. This openynge of the goostli iye is that lighti merkenesse and that riche nought that I spak of bifore, and it mai be callide purité of spirit and gosteli reste, inward stillenesse and pees in conscience, highnesse or deepnesse of thought and oonlynesse of soule, a liyfli feelyng of grace and priveté of herte, the waker sleep of the spouse and a taastynge of heveneli savour, brennynge in love, schynynge in light, entré of contemplacion and reformynge in feelyng. Alle this resouns aren seid in holi writynge bi dyvers men, for eche of hem spak of hem aftir his feelyng in grace, and though thei aren dyvers in schewynge of wordes, nevertheless thei aren alle oon in sentence of sothfastnesse.

For a soule that thorugh visitynge of grace hath oon, hath alle; for whi, a sighhende soule to see the face of Jhesu, whanne it is touched thorugh special grace of the Hooli Goost, it is sodeynli chaunged and turned from the plight that it was inne to anothir maner feelyng. It is wondirfulli departed and drawen first into itsilf from love and likynge of al ertheli thynge, so moche that it hath lost savour of the bodili liyf and of al thynge that is, save oonli Jhesu. And thanne it is clene from al the filthe of synne, so fer forth that the mynde of it, and of alle unordinat affeccions to ony creature, is sodeynli wasschen and wipedawai, that there is no mene lettynge atwixe Jhesu and the soule, but oonli the bodili liyf. And thanne is it in goostli reste; for whi, alle the peynful doutes and dredis and othere temptaciouns of goostli enemyes aren dryven oute of the herte, that thei troble it not ne synke not thereinne for the tyme. It is in reste fro the noie of wordli besynesse, peyneful tariynge of wikkid stirynges, but it is ful bisi in the free goostli wirkynge of love, and the more it traveileth so, the more reste it feeleth. This resteful traveile is ful fer fro fleischli ydilnesse, from blynd sikirnesse. It is ful of goostli werk, but it is called reste, for grace looseth the hevy yook of fleischli love fro the soule, and maketh it myghti and free thorough the gifte of goostli love, for to wirken gladli, softeli, and delitabli in al thynge that grace stireth it for to wirken inne. And therfore it is callid an hooli ydinesse and a reste most bisi, and so it is, in stilnesse fro