

THE INFLUENCE OF ST JOHN OF THE CROSS IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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St John of the Cross is universally recognised, even among members of the great religions of the East, as eminent in the field of mysticism. He is regarded as an experienced master, exacting and uncompromising with himself and his disciples, capable of describing in words of technical precision and ardent passion the terrific journey through the dark night and the inebriating delights that drench the purified spirit in divine light and love. Not that many people take him as their favourite spiritual author. He presents the rules of the road that leads up the Mount of Perfection too starkly to be venerated at a popular level. Many people harbour a lurking respect for the man and the mystic, but look with uncomprehending eyes on the early chapters of his classical writings. They often go no further with their reading.

Yet saints and scholars of the past four centuries have found in San Juan's life and writings a challenge that is both intriguing and rewarding. His doctrine has received as much if not more scholarly attention and analysis since his death than that of his contemporary St Teresa of Jesus. The number of hidden souls who have been enlightened and encouraged by his writings is known to God alone. An apposite example at this moment is Thérèse Martin. In the novitiate of the Lisieux Carmel a hundred years ago, as the Church celebrated the third centenary of the death of St John of the Cross, she eagerly read his writings in a French translation that had appeared ten years previously and found in him a soul friend: «at the ages of seventeen and eighteen (1890-1891!) I had no other spiritual nourishment»¹.

¹ *Story of a Soul*. The Autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux. A New Translation from the Original Manuscripts by JOHN CLARKE, O.C.D.

However, it is the English-speaking world on this side of the Atlantic that interests us at the moment. In this study we offer a general outline of the influence exercised by the *Doctor mysticus* on British and Irish writers in the field of spirituality and mysticism. One need have but a scant knowledge of publications here to be aware that St John of the Cross has not influenced theological, literary and philosophical thought in a manner comparable to that in Spain, France and Italy. Many eminent writers on these subjects make little or no reference to him at all.

John Henry Newman is a case in point. Among the books he had in his room at the Birmingham Oratory were the two volumes of *The Complete Works of Saint John of the Cross, of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel* in the Lewis translation². He received them most probably as a gift from the translator, for we have a letter of his addressed to David Lewis, dated June 22, 1864, thanking him for books³. These two volumes however illustrate our point: their pages are still uncut, except for the *Preface* (by Cardinal Wiseman) and the first two chapters of the first Book of the *Ascent*.

Newman had a cursory acquaintance with the lives of many of the Saints, including that of St John of the Cross. He knew about the Carmelite's hardships and sufferings, and in a period of severe trouble in his own life, when facing the Achilli trial, he composed a litany invoking the assistance of the Saints, especially those who had been persecuted or condemned unjustly. Among the invocations is one to the Spanish mystic: «St John of the Cross, imprisoned by the envious, pray for us»⁴. Cardinal Newman's own life went through a dark night of purification occasioned by suspicion, misunderstanding and lack of appreciation on the part of others. It could be fruitfully investigated under

Washington, D.C., ICS Publications, 1975, p.179.

² Translated from the Original Spanish by DAVID LEWIS, Esq. M.A. Edited by the Oblate Fathers of Saint Charles. With a Preface by His Eminence Cardinal Wiseman. 2 Vols. London, Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864.

³ *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*. Edited at the Birmingham Oratory with notes and an introduction by CHARLES STEPHEN DESSAIN of the same Oratory, and others. London, Thomas Nelson, 1971, Vol. XXI, pp. 126-7. "I am glad to have received your volumes - but sad to say I have not yet been able to open them". (*Ibid.*, p. 127).

⁴ *Ibid.*, London 1963, Vol. XIV, p. 511.

this aspect. Nevertheless, the mystical journey was not Newman's way and the writings of the mystics, outside the patristic era, did not attract his attention. He rarely mentions St John of the Cross by name and never refers to any point of doctrine illustrated by the Spanish mystic.

This does not mean that the British and Irish scene is bereft of sanjuanistic interest. The Spanish Carmelite has had his admirers and disciples here. Still, his entry into English-speaking countries demanded the overthrow of much bias and the tenacious commitment of pioneers and scholars.

The breakdown of prejudice and ignorance

The year 1864 saw the first translation into English of the *Complete Works* of St John of the Cross. It was done at the request of Father Faber of the London Oratory. It opened up the entire teaching of the Spanish mystic, as then available, to English readers. Adequate for its century it was the work of David Lewis, a younger member of the Oxford Movement, who had been a resident curate at St Mary the Virgin's during Newman's last years there as vicar. Lewis was received into the Catholic Church on May 30, 1846. His translation was later published in single volumes, which contained corrections and introductory essays by the eminent Carmelite historian, Benedict Zimmerman: *Ascent of Mount Carmel* (1906); *Dark Night of the Soul* (1908); *Spiritual Canticle* (1909); *Living Flame of Love, Letters, Poems and Minor Writings* (1912. The latter also contained Cardinal Wiseman's *Essay* which was the *Preface* to the 1864 edition). As far as the translation was concerned, that by David Lewis was good, for he had a respectable knowledge of Spanish. It remained the standard version until Professor Allison Peers published his splendid translation in 1934-1935.

Lives and studies of St John of the Cross began to appear in England after the appearance of his *Works* in translation. An author who remained anonymous published a *Life of Saint John of the Cross of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel* in London 1873, compiled mainly from that of José de Jesús Maria Quiroga which had been published 1628 in Brussels: *Historia del Venerabile Padre Fray Juan de*

la Cruz. David Lewis also published a *Life* in 1888, drawn from various Spanish and other biographical sources⁵. In 1927, Fr Benedict Zimmerman, in an *Introduction* he wrote for a *Life* by the Sisters of Notre Dame, remarked that a biography of the Saint had been «a desideratum for many years»⁶. Father Zimmerman, ocd, was in fact the inspiration of a lot of sanjuanistic literature in England in the early decades of this century. A culminating point was reached in 1933, with what *The Church Times* termed his «splendid English edition» of Father Bruno's *Life* of St John of the Cross⁷. Zimmerman's *Postscript* at the end of this volume was highly praised by reviewers, Montgomery Carmichael going so far as to call it, somewhat overestimatingly, «in a manner the most important feature of the volume»⁸. It is true however that Zimmerman's groundwork in those early days has not been fully appreciated. In any case, the publication during the following two years of the translation of the *Complete Works* by Allison Peers gave the decisive thrust to sanjuanistic interest and study in Britain and Ireland, that

⁵ *The Ascent of Mount Carmel, by Saint John of the Cross, of the Order of our Lady of Carmel. Translated from the Spanish, with A Life of the Saint*, by DAVID LEWIS, M.A. London, Thomas Baker, 1889. Second edition, revised. This *Life* appeared as a separate volume later: London, Thomas Baker, 1897. Cf. A RELIGIOUS OF ST. MARY'S CONVENT, YORK. *The Life of St. John of the Cross*. London, R. Washbourne, 1879; WILLIAM HENRY HUTCHINGS, *Exterior and Interior Life of St. John of the Cross*. Oxford, A.R. Mowbray, 1880-1881. 2 Vols.; A.E. FARRINGTON, C.C., *The Life of St John of the Cross*. Dublin, J. Duffy and Co., 1888. For a more complete list of translations see P. BENNO A S. IOSEPH, O.C.D., *Bibliographia S. Ioannis a Cruce, O.C.D. Specimen (1891-1940)*, in *Ephemerides Carmeliticæ* 1 (1947) 163-210; 367-381; 3 (1949) 405-424; especially 1 (1947) 189-198; PIER PAOLO OTTONELLO, *Bibliografia di S. Juan de la Cruz*. Roma, Edizioni del Teresianum, 1967.

⁶ *Life of Saint John of the Cross. Mystical Doctor by The Sisters of Notre Dame, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool*. With Introduction by FATHER BENEDICT ZIMMERMAN, O.C.D. London, Thomas Baker, 1927. Cf. p. ix.

⁷ *St. John of the Cross*. By FR. BRUNO, O.D.C. Edited by FR. BENEDICT ZIMMERMAN, O.D.C. with an Introduction by JACQUES MARITAIN. London, Sheed and Ward, 1932. Cf. *The Church Times*, 25 November, 1933. Cf. also by BENEDICT ZIMMERMAN, *John of the Cross, Saint, founder (with St. Teresa) of the Discalced Carmelites, doctor of Mystic theology, (1542-1591)*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. VIII (1910) 480-481; *The problem of the Spiritual Canticle (A Postscript to Mr. Carmichael's article)*, in *The Dublin Review* N° 389 (1934) 258-266.

⁸ *The Dublin Review* N° 384 (1933) 161. Cf. pp. 159-164.

would reach a climax over a decade later.

Thus the last half of the nineteenth century and the first three decades of the present one witnessed the reactions of English readers to their first contact with the corpus of St John's writings in translation. There were prejudices and false interpretations, misunderstandings and criticisms. Already in the *Preface* to the first edition of the Lewis translation in 1864, Cardinal Wiseman mentioned the «prejudice, firmly rooted in many English minds» making them imagine «a contemplative life to be only a cloak for idleness...and those who profess to lead it are considered as the drones of the human hive, who leave its work to others, and yet exact a share of its sweets»⁹.

The review of the first volume of this translation which appeared in the *Dublin Review* concentrated almost exclusively on Protestant bias against the whole notion of a mystical and contemplative life, and on Wiseman's *Preface* with its refutation of such an attitude and his defence of a life of contemplative prayer¹⁰.

This gives an idea of the unfavourable atmosphere into which the teaching of the Carmelite mystics entered a century ago. It had not been always so in England: the Caroline Divines of the 17th century, in particular Jeremy Taylor had read and been influenced by the Spanish spiritual theology of the Counter-Reformation¹¹. But times had changed two and a half centuries later. St John of the Cross was variously regarded as a quietist¹² or bordering on Buddhism¹³ or at

⁹ Cf. *The Complete Works...*, Vol.I, pp. xii-xiii.

¹⁰ *The Dublin Review* 2 (1864) 499-500.

¹¹ Cf. MARTIN THORNTON, (Priest of the Oratory of the Good Shepherd). *English Spirituality*. An Outline of Ascetical Theology according to the English Pastoral Tradition. London, SPCK, 1963, pp. 233-4; 254-6.

¹² Cf. WILLIAM RALPH INGE, *Christian Mysticism*. London 1899.

¹³ Even Abbot Chapman could write: "But the problem of *reconciling* (not merely uniting) Mysticism with Christianity is more difficult. The Abbot [a footnote reads: (?) Abbot Marmion of Maredsous] says St. John of the Cross is like a sponge full of Christianity. You can squeeze it all out, and the full mystical theory remains. Consequently, for fifteen years or so, I hated St. John of the Cross, and called him a Buddhist...Then I found I had wasted fifteen years, so far as prayer was concerned!" (*The Spiritual Letters of Dom John Chapman O.S.B.* Fourth Abbot of Downside. Edited with an introductory memoir by Dom Roger Huddleston O.S.B. of the same Abbey. Second edition enlarged. London, Sheed and Ward, 1935, p. 269). It

least an inhuman and gloomy ascetic, abstruse in his doctrine and irrelevant to daily christian living. Prof. Allison Peers in the Rede Lecture at Cambridge University in 1932 and later, at a more popular level in his study *Spirit of Flame* did much to offset these false impressions that were quite widespread¹⁴. Still, even in 1963, Dr Martin Thornton could express his reservations about the possibility of adapting and incorporating the spiritual and theological systems of the Spanish mystics into the tradition of English spirituality. He makes the seemingly reluctant admission with a caution *ne quid nimis*: «There is no reason why it (the spirituality of 16th century Spain) should not be read today, but in proportion and as little more than an appendage to our own system.»¹⁵.

However, amid the number of those who voiced their criticism or their suspicion, there emerged a more discerning circle of readers. Already in 1899, Arthur Symons had translated and published the poems of San Juan and placed them among the great love poems of all ages: «this monk can give lessons to lovers»¹⁶. Then in the years preceding the first world war and in subsequent decades, a number of books on mysticism in general by the Anglican writer Evelyn Underhill, later Fellow of King's College, London, brought the Carmelite mystics, and especially St John of the Cross, to the attention of a wide readership (especially Anglican) in Britain. The author draws on a wide spectrum of christian and non-christian mystics and philosophers, but John of the Cross would seem to hold pride of place among those who influenced her thought¹⁷. The mystical life

seems very unlikely that Abbot Marmion is meant. An Irish Jesuit, William Johnston, who teaches in Sophia University of Tokyo and who is a specialist in Buddhism, wrote with authority against such a misinterpretation of San Juan: "... those who call St John of the Cross Buddhist and overlook the Christo-centric dimension of his work miss the whole point ... Without Christ his doctrine would scarcely be human". (*The Inner Eye of Love. Mysticism and Religion*. London, Collins, 1978, p. 125).

¹⁴ *Saint John of the Cross*, Cambridge, University Press, 1932; *Spirit of Flame* London Student Christian Movement Press Ltd., 1943.

¹⁵ *English Spirituality...*, p. 55.

¹⁶ ARTHUR SYMONS, *The Poetry of Santa Teresa and San Juan de la Cruz*, in *The Contemporary Review* 75 (April 1899) 546. Cf. pp. 542-551.

¹⁷ Cf. *Mysticism. A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's spiritual Consciousness*. London, Methuen, 1911. In her other books she

is investigated not so much in its inner wealth of grace and virtue, but in that «organic process which involves the perfect consummation of the Love of God»¹⁸. E. Underhill impresses readers with the vast range of her culture: her books are a mine of knowledge that provide a speculative but interesting discussion on the reality of the spiritual Absolute as experienced in the conscious world of the mystic. Her writings, sympathetic to if not specialized in the Carmelite Doctor, touched a whole generation and her study on *Mysticism* ran into over twenty editions.

The interest shown by non-Catholics in St John of the Cross has remained a feature of sanjuanistic scholarship in Britain down to the present day. His outstanding qualities as a poet and a mystic provide the fundamental explanation for the influence which this austere Carmelite friar of the 16th century wields among Christians of all denominations. His appeal is enhanced by the spiritual subjects he discusses: it has been already noted that all he wrote «could have been written - in almost every paragraph - by a Protestant»¹⁹. Undoubtedly, his personal life and spirituality rested firmly on the whole body of Catholic doctrine as well as on its liturgy and sacramental system. Yet his writings are singularly devoid of points of Roman Catholic faith and devotion that could be stumbling blocks for members of other Churches. He rarely mentions the Eucharist, or the sacraments, or Our Lady. His teaching is firmly based on Sacred Scripture. He goes to essentials, and even when he does mention private practices and devotions, one senses that his main thrust is towards the purifying practice of the theological virtues. This neutral ground has also helped Anglicans and then other Christians to feel at home with his teaching.

admits that her thought had been particularly influenced by St John of the Cross: cf. for example, *The Golden Sequence*. London, Methuen, 1932, p. vii.

¹⁸ *Mysticism...*, p. 97. Elsewhere she says: "Broadly speaking, I understand it (mysticism) to be the expression of the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the transcendental order; whatever be the theological formula under which that order is understood." (p. x).

¹⁹ ROBERT SENCOURT, *Carmelite and Poet*. A Framed Portrait of St. John of the Cross with his Poems in Spanish. London, Hollis and Carter, 1943, p. 208.

The mystics' mystic

The most renowned example of what has just been affirmed is that of the Anglican scholar, Edgar Allison Peers. His name will remain firmly linked to sanjuanistic scholarship of the 20th century. His fame is international and his studies on the Spanish mystics have been translated into the Saint's native language²⁰. The publication of his translation of the *Complete Works* of St John of the Cross was the most important single factor this century in bringing English-speaking readers to a firsthand knowledge of the Carmelite Saint. This massive work with its informative introductions and notes, the translation of the various redactions and variants in the different codices, as well as subsequent studies by Peers himself, gave a new awareness of the treasure of the Spanish Doctor to English readers and a new impetus to studies in the Spanish mystics that reached notable fervour in Oxford circles in the early fifties. Peers' translation stands its ground down to the present day, although English readers now have the choice of another one by two Carmelites, Fr Kieran Kavanaugh from the United States of America and Fr. Otilio Rodriguez from Spain²¹. This latter has the advantage of using the most recent scholarship in Spain on St John of the Cross and of giving a more literal rendering in modern idiom of the original. A fair number of readers however miss the elegant grace and flow of the prose used by Peers.

Professor Allison Peers remains an acknowledged expert in the world of Spanish mysticism. To his mind, the three greatest mystics of all times are the African bishop and Doctor, St Augustine, the Flemish writer, Jan Ruysbroeck and the Castilian Carmelite, St John of the Cross. However, he considers the latter as the most complete mystic of all on

²⁰ Cf. *San Juan de la Cruz espíritu de llama*. Traducción por EULALIA GALVARRIATO. Madrid, Instituto "Miguel de Cervantes", 1950; *El Misticismo español*. Buenos Aires, Espasa Calpe, S.A., 1947.

²¹ *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*. Translated by KIERAN KAVANAUGH, O.C.D. and OTILIO RODRIGUEZ, O.C.D. with Introductions by KIERAN KAVANAUGH, O.C.D. New York, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964. A second edition with a useful index, two newly-discovered letters and some emendations was published by ICS Publications, Washington D.C. 1979.

account of his comprehensiveness and method in presenting the entire mystical journey, his pedagogical detail, his objectivity and precision of language in explaining mystical graces and states from a background of personal experience as well as his philosophical, psychological and poetical talent. He calls him «the mystics' mystic»²².

In fact, it is for mystics that St John of the Cross writes, at least for those who are on the way and have the generosity to prepare themselves for higher graces should God wish to grant them. He gives the impression that he is in haste to finish his treatment of the active period of purification, in order to get on to describe the deeper and less explored paths of passive purgation. At this level he is a master. He is aware that he is teaching others and that he has received this talent from God. Nowadays, he would be called a *mystagogue*, not simply a man experienced in the ways of the spirit but one who can introduce and guide others to the summit of perfection, which is union with a Love that consumes before it beatifies. And yet every reader can find light and nourishment from these pages that speak of suffering and love. Allison Peers not only merited the gratitude of English readers for his immense work of translation, and the respect of scholars for his erudite publications on the Spanish mystics, but also the thanks of a multitude of beginners on the spiritual journey for his more popular publications in which he consistently dispelled the main «stumbling-blocks» that confront and often discourage those who approach the Spanish mystic for the first time. He illustrated the attractiveness of this towering mystical Doctor: his awareness of the Divine Transcendence, the coherence of his life that offers a living example of his teaching, the authentic ring of his witness to the possibility of union with the living God in the world of spirit that few have explored. «No one has charted more of this spiritual land than St. John of the Cross. And, though it may never be our «happy chance» to make the journey, the knowledge that the goal exists is surely an invitation to us to tighten up our spiritual life and nerve ourselves to set out for at least a

²² *Spirit of Flame...*, p. 114. Cf. pp. 94-103; 118-151.

small part of the way»²³.

Peers showed how this doctrine could well be an antidote to puerile elements in popular devotion, and we could well add to soft sentimentalism that pervades many methods and groups of prayer, and even liturgical celebrations, in our day. From the quicksand of feelings and sentiments, St John of the Cross raises us to the firm footing of pure faith, strong hope and selfless love.

Poet and mystic

St John of the Cross is also considered to be one of the greatest lyrical poets of the Spanish language. His poetry, although in translation, has received a lot of attention from English writers. Robert Sencourt approaches him via literature, giving special consideration to his poetry: «It is as a poet that he lives on most vividly as a power in Spain, and in the world of letters. And it is poetry which best tells the secret of his mystical theology»²⁴.

Eminently endowed by nature and grace, San Juan had the artistic sensitiveness, the feel for words, the vivid imagination and the fire of passion that go to make a poet. Moreover, he had the mystic's awareness of divine life and beauty. His natural genius was truly consecrated to and perfected by the divine Love that he experienced and to which he had surrendered himself. Sencourt mentions two characteristics that enhance his writings: his ability with words and his recourse to memory. He used words with the art of a skilled craftsman, and the words in which his mind was steeped were those of Sacred Scripture. He was familiar with the endless images evoked by these sacred expressions. Secondly, he drew on the storehouse of his memory, purified of evil and replete with all that was good and beautiful, as from a mine of hidden images and rich symbols²⁵.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 156. For some further names from Anglicanism and other christian Churches who reflected and spread the doctrine of St John of the Cross, cf. E.W. TRUEMAN DICKEN, *San Juan de la Cruz y la espiritualidad inglesa actual*, in *Revista de Espiritualidad* 27 (1968) 449-457.

²⁴ *Carmelite and Poet...*, p. 198.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 199-202.

Communion with God gives depth, consecration, security and creative insight to the artistic powers of nature. St John of the Cross is, according to Sencourt, an outstanding example of what is gained by the consecration of genius to eternal truth and divine values. By comparing his passionate poetry with that of Spencer and Wordsworth²⁶, he detects how uncontrolled prolixity, blind emotion, concentration on nature alone and the introduction of distasteful themes, show up the flaws of those who lack the vision of a transcending Beauty that underlies its pallid reflections in created glory.

Allison Peers also devoted a number of studies to the literary aspects of the Carmelite mystic. While admitting the defects and limitations of sanjuanistic prose - its frequent pedagogical repetitions, its long, unwieldy sentences, - he gives due praise to its clarity of expression, its wealth of imagery and forceful argumentation. Even in his descriptions of the most sublime and complex experiences of the human spirit, he works with ease, chiselling illuminating phrases and showing no signs of uncertainty or vagueness. The intricate working of human nature with its innate tendencies, its harmony of parts, its wounded passions, are analysed with inescapable logic, making him what Prof. Peers calls «the greatest psychologist in the history of mysticism»²⁷.

Another scholar who has given particular attention to the poetry of St John of the Cross is Colin Thompson, a minister of the United Reformed Church. As the sub-title of his book *The Poet and the Mystic* indicates, it is basically a study of the *Cántico Espiritual*. However, he does not limit himself to this one poem and its commentary, but from it takes into account and evaluates the Spanish Carmelite's literary, spiritual and theological achievement.

The predominant source from which St John of the

²⁶ Cf. ROBERT SENCOURT, *The Consecration of Genius*. London, Hollis and Carter, 1947, pp. 193-203.

²⁷ Cf. *Studies in the Spanish Mystics*. London, S.P.C.K., 1951, Vol. I, pp. 183-233 (For the 1st edition, London 1927, cf. pp. 227-288); *The Source and the Technique of San Juan de la Cruz's poem "Un pastorcico..."*, in *Hispanic Review* 20 (1952) 248-253; *The Alleged Debts of St. John of the Cross to Boscán and Garcilaso de la Vega*, in *Hispanic Review* 21 (1953) 1-19; 93-106.

Cross drew is shown to be scriptural - in particular, the *Song of Songs*. Unless one understands this point and how San Juan gave a mystical interpretation to this love song of the Old Testament, one would fail to appreciate the artistic, creative genius that produced the *Cántico*²⁸.

Dr Thompson rightly sees the teaching of the Spanish mystic, with its wealth of experiential data and daring illustrations, as the unfolding of his christian faith, not as an addition: «His spirituality was a complement - an intensely personal one - to the faith proclaimed from the pulpit and celebrated in the Mass»²⁹. In this sense, he is to be placed more in the line of Paul Tillich's «baptised mysticism» which recognises its own limitations while it acknowledges the exclusive rights of God and the authority of the Church's tradition, rather than in that of Karl Barth who thinks mysticism undermines objective historical revelation, by giving an alternative source of spiritual knowledge. He admits it only in the sense of the Pauline phrase (Gal. 2:20) of union with the one Mediator, Christ, in whom alone perfect union with God has taken place³⁰.

Colin Thompson regards San Juan's contribution to mystical theology to be: his systematic classification of the mystical experiences of spiritual growth; the vision of spiritual fulfilment opened up to every Christian willing to go through a conversion process to divine union; and especially the masterly way he is able to handle and reconcile seemingly conflicting truths³¹.

A good number of English scholars have given unquestioned praise to the poems of St John of the Cross and even undertaken the impossible task of translating them. We have already mentioned Arthur Symons, who at the end of the last century occupied himself with the poetry of the Carmelite mystic, considering it to be «metaphysical fire, a

²⁸ COLIN P. THOMPSON, *The Poet and the Mystic. A Study of the Cántico Espiritual of San Juan de la Cruz*. Oxford University Press, 1977. Cf. pp. 143-5.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

³⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 147-153.

³¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 169-170. For further appreciations of San Juan's poetry, cf. EDWARD INGRAM WATKIN, *The Philosophy of Mysticism*. London, Grant Richards Ltd., 1920, pp. 389-401; ELIZABETH JENNINGS, *Every Changing Shape*. London, Andre Deutsch, 1961, pp. 62-71.

sort of white heat in which the abstract, the almost negative, becomes ecstatically realised by the senses»³². Allison Peers considers these poems to be the most splendid example we have of the «characteristic combination of sonority and grace» of the Castilian language³³. For Gerald Brenan's biographical sketch and examination of St John's poetry and prose, Lynda Nicholson made a special translation of the poems, endeavouring to combine fidelity and rhythm in her verse³⁴. Roy Campbell produced a brilliant literary translation for which he was awarded the William Foyle Poetry Prize in 1951³⁵. And there are still more recent efforts by Margaret Wilson in 1975 and Seán Réamonn in 1990³⁶.

The history of spirituality and mysticism

All writers who turn their attention to the history of spirituality and its development down through the centuries are obliged to take cognizance of the important contribution given by the Carmelite mystics of the 16th century. They are acknowledged as among the most eminent of mystical writers, at least in the West. In the chapter on prayer in his study of mysticism, David Knowles admits that on this subject St Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross are unrivalled. «It is sometimes regretted» he remarks «that these two are quoted so universally, but it must be admitted as inevitable»³⁷. Such

³² *The Contemporary Review* 75 (April 1899) 544.

³³ *The Poems of St John of the Cross*. The Spanish text, with a translation into English verse by E. ALLISON PEERS. London, Burns Oates, 1947. Cf. p. vii.

³⁴ GERALD BRENNAN, *St John of the Cross His Life and Poetry*. With a translation of his Poetry by Lynda Nicholson. Cambridge University Press, 1973. Gerald Brenan was born in Malta in 1894 and lived in Spain for twenty years (1916-1936) before moving to London. His book has also appeared in Spanish: *San Juan de la Cruz*. Barcelona, Editorial Laia, 1974.

³⁵ *The Poems of St John of the Cross*. The Spanish text with a translation by ROY CAMPBELL. Preface by M.C. D'ARCY, S.J. London, Harvill Press, 1951.

³⁶ *San Juan de la Cruz: Poems*. Translated by MARGARET WILSON. London, Grant and Cutler with Tamesis Books, 1975. Cf. the translation by SEÁN RÉAMONN in *Poems of the Spanish Mystics*. Dublin, Bridgefoot Press, 1990.

³⁷ *What is Mysticism?* London, Burns and Oates, 1967, p. 80.

is the wealth and comprehensiveness of their doctrine in this field that they are a necessary point of reference for the great names that have succeeded them down to the present day. Hence his conclusion: «we cannot fail to recognize that no mystical writer since their day has combined breadth and precision, doctrinal purity and personal authority in any comparable degree»³⁸.

With regard to the English mystical tradition, the only figure that St John of the Cross could have influenced would be Father Augustine Baker, 1575-1641. To what extent Father Baker himself was a mystic remains a disputed point. At any rate, as far as John of the Cross is concerned, he seems to have been acquainted only with the *Ascent*. He did not assimilate the teaching of the Carmelite mystics, and on some points, notably that of the relation between active prayer and contemplation, seems not to have understood the mind of the Spanish Doctor³⁹.

Cuthbert Butler, in his eminent work on *Western Mysticism*, deals mainly with three outstanding representatives: St Augustine, 'the prince of mystics', St Gregory the Great and St Bernard. Although he did not possess a completely adequate knowledge of the mystical teaching of St John of the Cross, Abbot Butler does call upon his authority on one vital point, namely, to prove the validity of the mystics' claim to conscious and immediate relationship with the secrets of the divine life. Here he admits that the Spanish Carmelite is outstanding, even more coherent and more easily intelligible than Ruysbroeck. In this context, he gives him unstinted praise, claiming that in the *Spiritual Canticle* and the *Living Flame*, «he attains to a sustained elevation of thought and language probably not equalled - certainly not surpassed - by any other who has essayed to describe the highest mystical experiences»⁴⁰.

Rowan Williams, in a concise study of christian spirituality from a theological and philosophical viewpoint, spans

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

³⁹ Cf. DAVID KNOWLES, *The English Mystical Tradition*. London, Burns and Oates, 1961, pp. 183-7.

⁴⁰ DOM CUTHBERT BUTLER, *Western Mysticism*. The Teaching of Augustine, Gregory and Bernard on Contemplation and the Contemplative Life. Third edition with 'Afterthoughts' and a new Foreword by PROFESSOR DAVID KNOWLES. London, Constable and Co Ltd., 1967, p. 148.

a period going from New Testament times down to the sixteenth century. He concludes his study with St John of the Cross, not because he considers christian spirituality to have come to an end with the death of the Spanish Doctor, but because of the exceptional contribution by San Juan «who sums up, in very many respects, those classical themes of Christian spirituality, of the *distinctively* Christian understanding of spiritual maturation, without which there can be no fruitful new exploration and articulation of the tradition»⁴¹.

One of the most recent surveys of the schools and masters of the spiritual life throughout the centuries, *The Study of Spirituality*, to which over sixty scholars have contributed, gives due recognition to the place of the Spanish mystics in the development of the spiritual and mystical tradition of Christianity. In this volume, the essay on St Teresa of Jesus and St John of the Cross is written by E. W. Trueman Dicken, who is the present authority in Britain on the Spanish mystics.

These two Carmelite Saints, he affirms, together «present us with an overall perspective view of the theology and practice of the spiritual life which, for Christians of the Western Church, constitutes the almost indispensable key to all serious study of the subject in both earlier and later writers»⁴². No other authors have mapped out the spiritual journey as have these two, who complement each other in their writings. They were privileged to possess a vast amount of experiential data which they knew how to formulate in a coherent system. St Teresa was the pioneer, «but it is only in the works of John of the Cross, almost entirely written after Teresa's death, that the theological implications of the empirical data are fully worked out»⁴³.

⁴¹ *The Wound of Knowledge*. Christian Spirituality from the New Testament to St John of the Cross. London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1979, pp. 176-7.

⁴² *The Study of Spirituality*. Edited by CHESLYN JONES, GEOFFREY WAINWRIGHT, EDWARD YARNOLD, SJ. London, SPCK, 1986, p. 366. Cf. pp. 363-376.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 376. Cf. also: ANDREW LOUTH, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*. From Plato to Denys. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981 (cf. pp. 181-190); HILDA GRAEF, *The Way of the Mystics*, Cork, The Mercier Press, 1948 (cf. pp. 131-153) and *The Story of Mysticism*. London, Peter Davies, 1966: "With St. John we have reached the heights of Western mys-

Compared with St Teresa

The daunting task of offering a systematic presentation of the spiritual journey by harmonising the complementary insights of St Teresa of Jesus and St John of the Cross was undertaken nearly thirty years ago by E. W. Trueman Dicken. This comparative study by an Anglican theologian is a unique and masterly contribution by an English author to the spirituality of the Carmelite mystics⁴⁴.

Trueman Dicken's approach and his purpose are eminently practical, as are the writings of the mystics. He sees the christian faith in Britain under threat and the spiritual journey misunderstood, because people have largely abandoned the essential safeguard given by Christ in the Gospel, namely, prayer. They do not pray. Nor do they know how to pray. His book was written in the belief that prayer is the ultimate remedy for the godless mentality that is creeping over Western society.

The Spanish mystics have given us the most complete doctrine on prayer in the long history of the christian tradition. They have shown that the spiritual journey is made up of definite and progressive stages of growth. While we must be careful not to classify the spiritual life in airtight compartments, each one exclusive of all the others, and while God can and does at times upset the neat divisions of the textbooks, it remains true that there does exist a general pattern of progressive development with definable characteristics. Such a classification has been made by the two Carmelite mystics who have thus become a criterion with which to judge other theories of spiritual growth. «It is from their work that the scientific study of spiritual progress begins, and their own writings represent a summit of achieve-

tical theology; to approach the seventeenth century will mean a descent from the rarefied air surrounding the heights of Mount Carmel to the lesser peaks of the mystical landscape". (p. 248). Cf. also: *Medieval Mystical Tradition and Saint John of the Cross*. By A BENEDICTINE OF STANBROOK ABBEY. London, Burns and Oates, 1954.

⁴⁴ *The Crucible of Love*. A Study of the Mysticism of St Teresa of Jesus and St John of the Cross. London, Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 1963. This study has been translated into Spanish: *El crisol de amor*. La mística de Santa Teresa de Jesús y de San Juan de la Cruz. Trad. española por DANIEL R. BUENO. Barcelona, Herder, 1967.

ment which has never since been equalled in this field. Doubtless they have not spoken the last word on the subject, but they have given us a firm working basis in the anatomy of the spiritual life. The teaching of all their great predecessors slips naturally and smoothly into place within the structure they define, and in succeeding generations the acid test of spiritual literature has been its ability to find a setting within their doctrinal scheme»⁴⁵.

A Carmelite trilogy

We come now to consider three Carmelite authors who in recent years have published books which are more in the line of introductory studies on St John of the Cross.

Long years of quiet meditation on the Carmelite mystics and the formation requirements of his mission as Novice and Student Master have left their imprint on the writings of Fr Norbert Cummins. The impact of St John of the Cross on his life is best known by the many Carmelites who have been spiritually formed by his enlightened tutorship; the influence on his thought and literary publications can be most conveniently gathered from a collection of lectures and essays published under one cover a few years ago⁴⁶.

Here we have a master of the pedagogical approach. He can explain difficult and technical terms in an accessible idiom. His writings are spiced with valuable indications on how to understand St John's terminology and absolute statements. One comes across plenty of unexpected phrases, charged with meaning, that seem so obvious when you read them; to formulate them, however, one has to be a master of the subject under discussion.

Notwithstanding the rigid and uncompromising form of St John's language, especially in his rules for self-denial and self-forgetfulness, Fr Cummins considers him to be essentially a doctor of divine love: «His life bore no other wit-

⁴⁵ *The Crucible of Love...*, pp. 481-2.

⁴⁶ Cf. Fr. NORBERT CUMMINS, OCD, *An Introduction to Saint John of the Cross*. Printed at Darlington Carmel. n.d. Cf. by the same author: *Von Balthasar on St John of the Cross*, in *Mount Carmel* 35 (1987) 177-196.

ness. His writings carry no other message»⁴⁷. Even the stern rules for the journey in faith with the renunciation that seems to give the keynote to all his writings, are explained and postulated by the demands of love. The author understands that the great Spanish mystic does not ask «simply for suffering» but for sufferings borne for Christ's sake. The formidable chapters of the first Book of the *Ascent* should be seen in the light of the subsequent benefits of self-forgetfulness, freedom of spirit and the peace and joy of the purified spirit. Then, the stern literal presentation of the mortification demanded by San Juan, with its apparent unfeeling demands on human nature, «turns out to be the language of a most tender love»⁴⁸. Hence, the dark night leads not to death but to true life and to that part - the most important - of St John's teaching which is «a pure Resurrection spirituality»⁴⁹.

Finally, the relevance of the Spanish mystic's writings is seen in the awareness they convey of God's presence, his transcendence and his immanence. In a world where faith has often grown cold and God seems to many to be more absent and more uncertain than the most hypothetical star in some vaguely discerned galaxy, the language of the mystics and of St John of the Cross in particular is pregnant with the Divine, and could well arouse in many hearts a spark of love for Him who alone matters and who gives ultimate sense to all of creation.

Another Irish Carmelite who has written about St John of the Cross is Noel Dermot O'Donoghue. He is well known to readers in Britain and Ireland, where his thought-provoking articles and books, even when not approved in all their insights, never fail to stimulate and give pleasure. The wide range and creative drift of his mind give his writings a very appealing and readable quality. His style is as fresh and bracing as a Spring morning.

Fr O'Donoghue owes quite a lot of the spiritual flavour of his writings to the Carmelite tradition. Perhaps St John of the Cross is not foremost among the Carmelite authors that have influenced him. He may well be more at home with St

⁴⁷ *An Introduction...*, p. 1.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 98. Cf. pp. 84-89.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

Thérèse of the Child Jesus, or at least need her to smooth down the rough contours of the Spanish giant. Yet he has undoubtedly been influenced by San Juan.

The kernel of his thought on our subject is now available in a single volume: *Lovelier than the Dawn*, or more recently, *Mystics for Our Time*⁵⁰. The four essays in this collection form a unit and cover the main stages of the spiritual and mystical journey, giving us Fr O'Donoghue's personal approach to the Spanish Doctor.

This journey that leads up the Mount of Perfection is one that passes through darkness which has deeper and more terrifying shades, not on the lower slopes but on the higher reaches, where the spirit is passively purified in a manner that only «those called to total dedication» are asked to undergo. However, despite the ascetical rigour that, from a surface view, would seem to pervade all of St John's teaching, our author does not picture him principally in this light. He sees him as the gentle guide more than the rigid taskmaster; the *Subida-Noche* he takes to be a training manual for those destined later on for passive purification. The very insistence on darkness could easily lead to a sad interpretation of the sanjuanistic ideal: «For the light at the summit is not *beyond* the darkness but *within* it. Not only that: the light is in strict proportion to the darkness, so that the lesser light is found within the lesser darkness and the greater light within the greater darkness»⁵¹. In fact, he rightly individuates «the very central and all-pervading principle of John's mysticism» in the light of love that draws a person to itself, while it explains and gives courage to face the demands of purification. Or as he finely puts it: «the fire in the heart is the eye of the mind»⁵².

This brings us to a central issue, one which is dear to Fr O'Donoghue, namely, the priority of love over knowledge, of the heart's reasons over the mind's judgments, or in the words of Blaise Pascal: «le coeur a ses raisons que la raison

⁵⁰ *Lovelier than the Dawn*. Meditations on the Mystical Teaching of St John of the Cross. Dublin, Carmelite Centre of Spirituality, 1984; *Mystics For Our Time*. Carmelite Meditations for a New Age. Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1989, pp. 53-109. Cf. also *The 'Mount of Perfection' of St. John of the Cross as presented by Diego de Astor*, in *Mount Carmel* 7 (1959) 77-83.

⁵¹ *Mystics For Our Time...*, p. 68.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 83.

ne connaît point»⁵³. Of course there is no question here of a stubborn voluntarism or of a blind guide leading the way. The love that draws presupposes the whole doctrinal teaching of the Church. Indeed, the attracting power which gives warmth, elan and direction, is a sort of dark *knowledge*, suffused with the impatience and dynamics of love, what San Juan calls *noticia general y amorosa*. It follows that «the fire in the heart is in no way a substitute for insight and understanding at the level of the mind, but rather glows and flashes through the vesture of significant form»⁵⁴. Considered in this light, the Spanish Doctor would seem not to be adverse to the Thomistic and Scholastic doctrine of the precedence of knowledge to love. What excites the fire in the heart and enkindles the will is basically knowledge. True, it is knowledge clouded in mystery for it is knowledge by faith. Nevertheless, it is real and certain. And in fact, St John of the Cross does not speak of «cognitive or conscious love» but of «loving knowledge».

This love's intellectual foundation is illustrated by Noel O'Donoghue in his description of the sanjuanistic doctrine on locutions. Going beyond what the Spanish mystic refers to, he postulates a deeper listening, that of «the bridal soul listening to the voice of the Bridegroom in her innermost heart»⁵⁵. To be noted, however, is the fact that even this listening of love takes place within the dark realm of faith. It is typical of another Carmelite mystic, Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity, who was certainly a «listening, bridal soul.» She expressed it in her famous prayer to the Trinity: «O my God, Trinity whom I adore... May I never leave you there alone but be wholly present, my faith wholly vigilant... O my beloved Christ, crucified by love, I wish to be a bride for Your Heart... I want to spend my life in listening to You...»⁵⁶.

The third Carmelite we present, Ruth Burrows, writes from her enclosure in an English Carmel and has become quite popular in recent years through her publications that

⁵³ *Pensées*. Preface et introduction de LÉON BRUNSCHICG. Paris, Librairie Generale Française, Le Livre du Poche, 1972, Section IV, 277, p. 134.

⁵⁴ *Mystics For Our Time...*, p. 87.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁵⁶ ELISABETH OF THE TRINITY, Carmelite, *I Have Found God. Complete Works*. Volume I. Washington, ICS Publications, 1984, p. 183.

have the aim of presenting the Carmelite mystics «in modern dress»⁵⁷. Her books have reached a wider circle of non-specialized readers than that achieved by any other writer in recent years in Britain and Ireland. She writes with a lively, up-to-date and attractive style. Many young readers have made their first acquaintance with St John of the Cross through the writings of this talented Carmelite nun.

Ruth Burrows endeavours to use the honoured insights of our age in theology, psychology and anthropology, in order to make St John more comprehensible to contemporary readers. She is a self-acknowledged admirer of Karl Rahner's theology. The anthropological tenor of the German theologian's writings and his exaltation of the human and secular, are easily detected in her thought. In his *Foreword to Guidelines for Mystical Prayer*, Bishop Butler warns that there are sentences in her very personal expression of what she sincerely believes that might shock the rigorous censor. The remark would seem to apply more to her treatment of St Teresa than to that of St John of the Cross. Ruth Burrows tries to allow as much as she can to the rights of human nature and the justifiable place of all that is good and pleasant in the divine plan of creation, while she repeats the undeniable need for evangelical simplicity, selfless generosity, prayerfulness and endless patience.

Sister Ruth is concerned with the basic teaching of the Spanish mystic. She deals more with the journey than with the mystical heights which receive only four pages of explicit treatment in the *Ascent to Love*. We have here a woman's approach to an uncompromising teacher of the demands of spiritual purification. There is a vein of subtle humour in her womanly determination and frustration as she is confronted with the monolithic figure of St John of the Cross: «We shall consider John's instructions (in Chapter 13 of Book 1 of the *Ascent*) at considerable length for two reasons. First because they are so much «John» - all-embracing, absolute to the point of offence, and secondly to dispel the offence»⁵⁸. Even St Teresa had her moments of

⁵⁷ *Ascent to Love*. The Spiritual Teaching of St John of the Cross. London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1987; *Guidelines for Mystical Prayer*. London, Sheed and Ward, 1976.

⁵⁸ *Ascent to Love...*, p. 26.

feminine irritation with «fray Juan» which dissolved however into sincere admiration for the spiritual greatness that she intuitively discerned in him. Ruth Burrows also has her baffled moments. She feels at times that St John is too much for the ordinary man or woman in the street, and had little practical notion «of how the world turns and things get done»⁵⁹. And yet Father John of the Cross was a man who always had time for and was interested in people, making no difference between high and low, saints and sinners; he spent months and months working as a mason and carpenter in new foundations; lay people flocked to him for guidance as well as consecrated souls; for a lay woman he wrote the *Living Flame of Love*; had he given more time to the writing of his mystical treatises and less to these other, more commonplace duties, some of his great commentaries might not have remained unfinished.

When Ruth Burrows does get down to explain the doctrine of the Spanish mystic, she writes some very fine pages that will certainly be enlightening for many readers, for example, on the meaning of freedom, on the centrality of Christ, even Christ Crucified, in the thought of St John, and on the control and use of emotions. Here we have the Carmelite Doctor of the sixteenth century confronting and influencing the thought pattern of the psychologically trained mind of the twentieth century. The harmonisation is at times uneasy, but the Mystical Doctor does come across as more credible and comprehensible, at least to many contemporary readers. At the end of the confrontation, however, one does get the impression that St John of the Cross is the winner.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15. Cf. p. 31. Other studies of an introductory nature include: BEDE FROST, *Saint John of the Cross 1542-1591 Doctor of Divine Love. An Introduction to his Philosophy, Theology and Spirituality*. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1937; *The Voice of the Spirit. The Spirituality of St John of the Cross*. Edited and Introduced by ELISABETH HAMILTON. (pp. 9-32 is an introductory study; pp. 33-127 an anthology of his writings); DESMOND B. TILLYER, *Union with God. The teaching of St. John of the Cross*. London-Oxford, A.R. Mowbray and Co., 1984.

Dissertation springboards

Specialization in the doctrine of St John of the Cross has often started with the investigation carried out for a doctoral thesis at a University. This was true for Colin Thompson, already mentioned in this study. It was also the case with Gabriel Barry, o.c.d., who graduated at the Carmelite Theological Faculty in Rome⁶⁰. His study concentrated on three passages in sanjuanistic writings that refer to the three signs of initial contemplation. The latest example of this approach is that of Iain Matthew, who is finishing a thesis in Oxford on *The consciousness of Christ in the light of the writings of Juan de la Cruz*. It is both an experiment in christology and a testing of the value of San Juan's mysticism for systematic theology. Finding the answer given by both exegetes and systematic theologians to the question of Christ's consciousness unsatisfactory, Iain Matthew, a Discalced Carmelite, turns to San Juan for *his* reply. First of all the awareness of the Divine in San Juan's own life, especially in the *Living Flame*, his most experiential work, is examined in order to see if this could illustrate something of Christ's awareness of his Father. The final section is an interesting and daring investigation of San Juan's own christology in an effort to determine where Jesus fits into the experience of the mystic (the «new man») - as a fellow mystic or as something more. It leads to a final attestation, that will not meet with unanimous approval, that Jesus is for San Juan the one who paradigmatically experiences the night of the spirit. No one can take exception, however, to the conclusion that shows the importance of the mystics in rescuing exegesis from dry minimalism and systematic christology from theoretical unreality. The work promises to be a first-rate contribution to sanjuanistic and theological investigations.

⁶⁰ Fr. GABRIEL A BB DIONYSIO ET REDEMPTO, O.C.D., *The Three Signs of Initial Contemplation*. A Comparative Study. Excerpta ex Dissertatione ad Lauream. Romae, Facultas Theologica ... Ordinis Carmelitarum Discalceatorum, 1949.

Conclusion

Within the limits of this study, we have given a panoramic view of the development and contemporary influence of St John of the Cross on the spiritual literature of British and Irish authors. While publications here cannot bear comparison with the production of sanjuanistic scholarship in mainland Europe, particularly in Spain and France, it has nevertheless become a real influence, especially since the middle of this century, on those who engage upon the study of the spiritual and mystical life. Some of these scholars (notably Peers and Trueman Dicken) have had their writings translated into Spanish and are recognised in the Saint's homeland as authorities on his teaching.

A peculiar aspect of San Juan's doctrine in Britain has been its influence on Anglican and other non-Catholic writers. Jacques Maritain's opinion that it takes a Carmelite to write about the Carmelite Doctor⁶¹ has been modified, if not belied, on this side of the English Channel. Interest was launched among Anglicans by Evelyn Underhill's studies on mysticism in the second decade of our century. Under the spell of Prof. Allison Peers, it received new vigour in the years that preceded the Second World War. Around Oxford Colleges in the fifties it was particularly vibrant, and it has been constantly stimulated at Universities that have a Department of Hispanic studies. It still has its contemporary representatives in men like Trueman Dicken and Colin Thompson.

Influence on Catholic writers is more evident on scholars of mysticism and its historical development, as well as on those who come under the ascendancy of his doctrine *ex officio* - his Carmelite sons and daughters. They have presented him as a sure though demanding guide in the ways of prayer, purification and spiritual growth. Perhaps they aim more directly at those who are searching for guidance on the spiritual journey, at those whom Evelyn Underhill eighty years ago called the genuine heirs of St John of the Cross, the uncounted number of hidden souls who are willing to pay the price of the ascent to union with a transcending and transforming Love: «The true spiritual children of

⁶¹ Cf. *Introduction* to Fr. BRUNO, O.D.C., *St. John of the Cross...*, p. vii.

these (Spanish) mystics are to be found, not in their own country, where the religious life which they had lifted to transcendent levels degenerated as soon as their overmastering influence was withdrawn: but amongst the innumerable contemplative souls of succeeding generations who have fallen under the spell of the «Spiritual Exercises», the «Interior Castle», or the «Dark Night of the Soul»⁶².

On the other hand, the number of those who apply themselves in depth to sanjuanistic studies in these isles is lamentably meagre. In 1968, Trueman Dicken deplored the fact that St John of the Cross was little known in England, and by 1985 he still had to regret that few important contributions to sanjuanistic literature have come from English-speaking scholars⁶³. The present Centenary Year of his death in 1591 may offer a challenge to some of the younger generation of scholars now emerging to enter seriously into the fascinating world of the Spanish mystics so as to contribute fittingly to the indepth study of the unparalleled treasures of spiritual doctrine that we have been given in San Juan de la Cruz.

⁶² *Mysticism...*, p. 557.

⁶³ Cf. *Revista de Espiritualidad* 27 (1968) 451; *The Study of Spirituality...*, p. 364.