The Interior Castle or The Mansions

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THE INTERIOR CASTLE

OR

THE MANSIONS

By

St. Teresa of Avila

Translated from the Autograph of St. Teresa of Jesus by

The Benedictines of Stanbrook

Revised, with Notes and an Introduction, by the

Very Rev. Fr. Benedict Zimmerman, O.C.D.

PRIOR

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DEDICATED TO

The Martyred Daughters of St. Teresa,

The Blessed Martyrs of Compiegne, France,

by the Descendants of Their Fellow Prisoners.

Stanbrook Abbey

Day of the Beatification

May 27, 1906

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NOTE

IN this new edition the wording has been revised and condensed, chiefly

with a view to rendering the translation more pregnant. Only one

passage (VI. Mansion, ch. v. r 3) has been substantially changed, in

conformity with an explanation received from a high authority. It is

admittedly a very difficult passage which appears to have been

misunderstood by nearly all translators; but it is gratifying to notice

that the new French translation by the Carmelite nuns of Anderlecht

agrees with our interpretation. The editor is under an obligation to

that translation for several interesting facts embodied in the

Introduction and in the notes to the text.

B. Z.

WINCANTON

December 25, 1911

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THE

INTERIOR CASTLE

OR

THE MANSIONS

The Benedictines of Stanbrook desire to express their gratitude to the

very Rev. Benedict Zimmerman for having kindly revised the translation

of the Interior Castle' and also for the Introduction, Notes, and Index

which he has added to the book.

INTRODUCTION

SAINT TERESA began to write the Interior Castle on June 2, 1577,

Trinity Sunday, and completed it on the eve of St. Andrew, November 29,

of the same year. But there was a long interruption of five months, [1]

so that the actual time spent in the composition of this work was

reduced to about four weeks--a fortnight for the first, and another

fortnight for the second half of the book. The rapidity with which it

was written is easily explained by the fact that the Saint had

conceived its plan some time previously. On January 17, 1577, she had

written to her brother, Don Lorenzo de Cepeda, at Avila: I have asked

the bishop--Don Alvaro Mendoza--for my book (the Life) because I shall

perhaps complete it by adding those new favours our Lord has lately

granted me. With these one may even compose a new work of considerable

size, provided God grants me the grace of explaining myself; otherwise

the loss will be of small account.' [2] She never asked for

permission to write anything, but waited until she received a command

from her superiors, which, in this case, came from Father Jerome

Gracian, superior of the Discalced J. Carmelites of the Provinces of

Andalusia and Castille, and from Don Alonso Velasquez, canon of Toledo,

afterwards bishop of Osma. [3] The Saint was not in good health at

the time; she repeatedly complains of noises in the head and other

infirmities, but, worst of all, she was weighed down by troubles and

anxieties resulting from the action of the superiors of the Order and

of the Papal Nuncio against the nuns and friars of the Reform. Matters

became even more serious when, in October, the nuns of the Incarnation

of Avila proceeded to the election of a new prioress. Notwithstanding

the prohibition of the provincial, fifty-five electors recorded their

votes in favour of the Saint and were immediately declared

excommunicated. The whole work of the Reform seemed on the brink of

ruin, the Saint, as well as all her friends, was in disgrace, subject

to obloquy and ill-treatment.

No trace of these trials is to be found in the Interior Castle. Saint

Teresa possessed the power of concentration of thought in a marvellous

degree. The early mornings and late evenings were devoted to the

composition of the book, while the rest of the day was taken up by the

affairs of the Order. Mother Mary of the Nativity, a member of the

community of Toledo, where the book was begun, declared afterwards, [4]

that she often saw her writing, generally after Holy Communion, her

face resplendent, with such rapidity and so absorbed in her occupation

that she seemed undisturbed by, and in fact quite unconscious of, any

noise that was made. Mother Mariana of the Angels [5] reports having

heard from the same witness, that entering her cell one day to deliver

a message, the holy Mother was just beginning a new sheet of her book.

While taking off her spectacles to listen to the message she was seized

by a trance in which she remained for several hours. The nun, terrified

at this, did not stir, but kept her eyes steadily on the Saint. When

she came to, it was seen that the paper, previously blank, was covered

with writing. Noticing that her visitor had discovered it, Saint Teresa

put the paper quietly in the box. Another nun, Mary of St. Francis,

left the following declaration: I know that our holy Mother wrote four

books, the Life, the Way of Perfection, the Foundations, and the

Mansions, which I have seen her writing. Once, while she was composing

the last-named work, I entered to deliver a message, and found her so

absorbed that she did not notice me; her face seemed quite illuminated

and most beautiful. After having listened to me she said: "Sit down, my

child, and let me write what our Lord has told me ere I forget it," and

she went on writing with great rapidity and without stopping.' [6]

Mary of St. Joseph says she heard from Mary of the Nativity that Father

Jerome Gracian commanded the Saint to write the Mansions; she, however,

begged to be excused, because so many books having been written by holy

and learned men, there remained nothing for a woman to write. At length

she yielded under obedience. This nun (Mary of the Nativity) was

frequently in the Saint's cell while she was writing and she noticed

her resplendent face and the almost preternatural velocity with which

her hand travelled over the paper. [7]

Writing to Mother Mary of St. Joseph, Prioress of Seville, November 8,

1581, St. Teresa gives her a message for Father Rodrigo Alvarez, S. J.:

Our Father (Jerome Gracian, then provincial) tells me that he has

handed you a book written by me, which perhaps you do not feel inclined

to read yourself. Kindly read to Father Rodrigo Alvarez, at his next

visit, the last Mansion, but under the seal of confession, as he asks

this in his superior wisdom. This is only for you two. Tell him that

the person he knows has arrived at this Mansion and enjoys the peace

there described; that she is entirely at rest, and that some grave

theologians have assured her that she is on a safe road. In case you

could not read these pages to him do not send him the book, for it

might lead to unpleasantness. Until I have his answer on this matter I

will not write to him. Give him my compliments.'

At the end of the original manuscript, before the epilogue (marked with

Ihs.) there is a notice in Father Alvarez' hand-writing to this effect:

The Mother Prioress of the convent of Seville has read to me this

seventh Mansion, whither a soul may arrive in the present life. Let all

the saints praise the infinite goodness of God, Who communicates

Himself to His creatures so that they truly seek His glory and the

salvation of their neighbour. What I feel and judge of this matter is,

that everything that has been read to me is conformable to Catholic

truth and in accordance with Holy Scripture and the teaching of the

Saints. Whosoever has read the doctrine of the Saints, such as the

books of St. Gertrude, St. Catharine of Siena, or St. Bridget of

Sweden, and other saints and spiritual writers, will clearly understand

that the spirit of Mother Tireza (sic) of Jesus is true, since it leads

to the same effects as are to be found in the saints; and because this

is in truth my judgment and opinion, I have hereunto set my name, this,

the 22nd day of February, 1582. P. Rodrigo Alvarez.' [8]

The work was copied, probably under the supervision of the Saint, who

introduced many changes; when completed the original was handed to

Father Jerome Gracian and to the Dominican, Fray Diego de Yanguas, for

approval. Both, particularly the former, made numerous corrections,

which Fuente, not without reason, calls impertinent, scratching out

whole sentences and adding others. The book thus revised must have

enjoyed a certain celebrity, though not to the same extent as the Life,

to which St. Teresa herself preferred it. Scarcely a week after its

completion she wrote to Father Salazar, S.J.: If Se�or Carillo [Salazar

himself] came, the person in question [the Saint] thinks he would find

another jewel which in her opinion is superior to the former [the

Life]. This one reflects nothing foreign to itself, but is resplendent

in its own beauty. It is enriched with more delicate enamels than the

former, the workmanship, too, is more perfect. For, as the person in

question says, the jeweller was less experienced when he fashioned the

previous one. Moreover, the gold of the new one is of better quality

than that of the former, though the precious stones are not so well

set. It has been done, as might be expected, according to the designs

of the Jeweller Himself.' [9] Later on she wrote to Father Jerome

Gracian: The book I have written since seems to me superior [to the

Life]; at least I had more experience when I wrote it.' [10]

One day, speaking with Mother Mary of Jesus on spiritual matters, she

said that our Lord had communicated so much to her since she had

reached what she described in the seventh Mansion,--the spiritual

Marriage,--that she did not consider it possible to advance further in

this life, in the way of prayer, nor even to wish to do so. [11]

The book was eagerly read by those who were able to obtain copies. At

the archiepiscopal Seminary at Salamanca it was read publicly after

dinner; the students, contrary to custom, sacrificing the recreation

rather than miss so edifying an instruction. The result was that

several entered the religious life, one becoming a Franciscan, two

others, who had already taken their degrees, joining the Discalced

Carmelites. [12] We also know of a lady who became a Poor Clare

through reading the Interior Castle. [13] The process of

Beatification contains the following evidence of Don Francisco de Mora,

architect to Philip III: The same prioress (of aconvent of Dominican

nuns) being concerned about my salvation gave me a book in manuscript,

called The Mansions, by Mother Teresa, hoping I should derive some

benefit from it. I fear this was not the case, but it made me

acquainted with Teresa of Jesus, the foundress of the Discalced

Carmelite nuns, of whom I had not yet heard, but for whom I now felt

devotion.' [14]

In August 1586 it was decided to print Saint Teresa's works, the

Augustinian Fray Luis de Leon being selected as editor, as he was

unconcerned in the quarrels raging round the Reform. Accordingly, the

manuscript of the Interior Castle was handed to him. On the first leaf

he wrote the following note:

'Many passages of this book written by the holy Mother have been scored

through, other words being substituted or notes being added in the

margin. Most of these corrections are badly done, the original text

being much better. It will be noticed that the holy Mother's sentences

are superior and agree with the context, which is not the case with the

corrections. These improvements and glosses may therefore be dispensed

with. Having myself read and considered everything with great care, it

appears to me that the reader, too, should have before him the words of

the author who knew best what to say; for this reason I have left out

the additions, and have restored what has been changed, excepting only

a few corrections made by the writer herself. I beg of the reader that

he would in charity reverence the words and even the letters traced by

so holy a hand, and strive to understand what has been written. He will

then see that there was no need for corrections; should he fail to

understand her, let him believe that the writer knew what she said, and

that her words cannot be tampered with if they are not to lose their

meaning; otherwise what was to the point will seem out of place. This

is how books become corrupted, useless, and are finally lost.' [15]

When Luis de Leon undertook the editing of St. Teresa's writings he

received a long letter from Don Diego de Yepes, afterwards Bishop of

Tarazona, a former friend and confessor of the Saint, in which he

records his personal recollections. I shall only insert here what he

says about the Interior Castle:

'This holy Mother desired to see the beauty of a soul in the state of

grace, a thing greatly to be coveted both for the sake of seeing and of

possessing it. While this desire lasted, she was commanded to write a

treatise on prayer, of which she had much personal experience. On the

eve of the Blessed Trinity, while considering what subject to choose

for this treatise, God, Who disposes everything in due season,

fulfilled her wish and furnished a suitable subject. He showed her a

most beautiful globe of crystal, in the shape of a castle, with seven

rooms, the seventh, situated in the centre, being occupied by the King

of glory, resplendent with the most exquisite brilliancy, which shone

through and adorned the remaining rooms. The nearer these lay to the

centre, the more did they partake of that wondrous light. It did not,

however, penetrate beyond the crystal, for everything round about was a

mass of darkness and impurity, full of toads and vipers and other

venomous animals.

She was still admiring this beauty which, by the grace of God dwells in

the soul, when, to! the light suddenly disappeared, and the crystal,

wherein the King of glory was still residing, became opaque and as dark

as coal, emitting an intolerable odour; the venomous animals, formerly

held in check outside, obtained admittance into the castle. The holy

Mother wished that every one should behold this vision, for she thought

that no one having seen the beauty and splendour of grace, which is

forfeited by sin and replaced by such repulsive misery, would ever dare

to offend God.

'She told me this vision on the same day, for in this as well as in

other things she was so communicative that on the following morning she

said to me: "How I forgot myself yesterday! I cannot think how it could

have happened. Those high aspirations of mine, and the affection I have

for you must have caused me to go beyond all reasonable limits. God

grant I may have derived some profit therefrom." I promised her to say

nothing about it during her lifetime, but since her death I should like

to make it known to all men. From this vision she learnt four important

matters.

'First, she came to understand this axiom, which in this form she had

never heard of in her life, [16] that God is present in all things by

His essence, presence, and power. As she was deeply humble and

submissive and obedient to the doctrine of the Church and the teaching

of the learned ministers of God, she never rested until her revelations

had been approved of by her superiors and by theologians, and were

shown to be conformable to Holy Scripture. She went so far as to say

that if all the angels of heaven said one thing, and her superiors

another, though she could not doubt that the former were true angels,

yet she would hold what was told her by her superiors, because faith

comes through these and there remains no room for deceit, whereas

revelations coming from angels might be illusionary.

'With such regard for obedience, she asked me one day at

Toledo--probably at the time when she saw the vision of the

Castle--whether it was true that God was in all things by His power,

presence, and essence, to which I replied in the affirmative,

explaining it as best I could on the authority of St. Paul,

particularly where he says "the sufferings of this time are not worthy

to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us,"

[17] Laying stress on these words, "shall be revealed in us," she was

so overjoyed that I was quite astonished. Though in a way it seemed to

me a kind of curiosity, I could not help thinking there was some

mystery about it, for she said: "This is the very thing."

'Secondly, she was greatly surprised at the malice of sin, since,

notwithstanding the presence of God in these various ways, it prevents

the soul from partaking of that powerful light.

'Thirdly, she derived such humility and self-knowledge from this

vision, that from that moment she never thought of herself in all the

good she was doing; for she learnt that all the beauty of the soul

emanates from that resplendent light, and that the powers of the soul

and of the body are enlivened and strengthened by the Power established

in the centre, whence comes all our good, so that we have but a small

share in our good works. All the good she did, she from this moment

referred to God as its principal author.

'Fourthly, she derived from it the subject of the book she was ordered

to write on prayer, comparing the seven rooms of the Castle with as

many degrees of prayer, whereby we enter within ourselves and draw

nearer to God. So that, penetrating to the depths of our soul and

gaining perfect self-knowledge, we reach the seventh room where God

Himself dwells, with Whom we become united by as perfect a union as is

possible in the present life, being made partakers of His light and

love.

'I will say no more of this vision and the Mansions, because your

Reverence must by now have seen this admirable book, and must know with

what accuracy, with what majestic doctrine, with what lucid examples

she describes the progress of the soul from the gate to the very

centre. It is clearly seen in this treatise how she communicated with

our Lord, and how His Majesty vouchsafed to place her in the centre and

to unite her with Himself, as she puts it, by the bonds of marriage and

an inseparable union.' [18]

After the publication of the Interior Castle, in 1588 at Salamanca, it

became not only more widely known, but also more and more appreciated.

Francis Suarez, the great theologian of the Society of Jesus, says in

his deposition in the process of Beatification that he had read some of

St. Teresa's works, particularly the Mansions, which contain an

absolutely safe doctrine and give proof of a wonderful spirit of prayer

and contemplation. [19]

Thomas Hurtado, professor of theology at Seville, speaks as follows:

As often as I read the books of the holy Mother, I admire the

wonderful manner in which God instructed her in mystical theology

for the sake of souls giving themselves truly to familiar

intercourse with His divine Majesty. But where I most regret my

inability of expressing in fitting terms my sentiments towards this

excellent teacher is when I look at, and refresh myself in that

Castle with its seven rooms; for there is seen the effect of infused

knowledge such as St. Denis received from St. Hierotheus [20] and

both from St. Paul, and which has been committed to writing in the

famous book of Mystical Theology. Hence comes, as from a

fountain-head, notwithstanding the obscurity (to our manner of

thinking) of its language, the doctrine of the great masters of the

spiritual life such as Hugh of St. Victor, St. Bernard, Ruysbroek,

Tauler, Gerson, and many others whom I pass by.

'Nevertheless, I will boldly say that no one has given us water more

limpid from that Apostolical and Areopagitical well than the holy

Mother Teresa, who, in her books, but chiefly in the Mansions, has

cleared up in simple language the most difficult questions of this

divine theology, and has brought forth light from darkness, as it is

written: (He) commanded light to shine out of darkness.' [21] Who

has ever been able to show as clearly as our Saint how God takes

possession of the soul, how He unites Himself with its substance,

whence comes to the intellect the light of faith, to the will the

ardour of love, and to the senses the jubilation over His works? No

one has ever turned theory into practice in a more convincing or

more catholic manner. The most profound secrets of this supernatural

wisdom are here treated with such ease, so amiably, so delightfully,

they are illustrated by such nice and homely examples, that instead

of awe-inspiring obscurity, we find lovely flowers and the sweetness

of love, through which, as through an avenue, the soul passes

onwards. When God made known His exalted doctrine to St. Dionysius

and other mystical writers, He made use of their own language and

pen. But St. Teresa in the Mansions is like the light of dawn whose

rays are not intercepted by the clouds of this world; like a soft

rain from above, whereby the soul grows and profits by its

communications with God. Until the teaching of this great door

became known it seemed as though God were inaccessible, being

surrounded by darkness, through which Moses and some other persons

had to pass when approaching Him; [22] but they neither explained

the manner nor showed the way whereby they came to the enjoyment of

the sweetness of the Spouse. Now, however, this way is clear and

patent to all, having been pointed out in the Mansions, in language

so straight and so methodical, and no longer such as could not be

understood, or required further explanation. In my opinion this holy

writer derived not only the substance of her teaching from infused

knowledge, but even the words with which she explains it.' [23]

Likewise Don Alvaro de Villegas, canon of Toledo, expressed his opinion

that the Way of Perfection and the Interior Castle contain heavenly

doctrine.' The weight of the subject-matter, the propriety of the

comparisons, the force of the expressions, the consistency of the

teaching, the sweetness of her well-chosen, vivid words, the clearness

of the arguments, all this proves that she was guided by her heavenly

Spouse, in Whom are hidden the treasures of the wisdom of God; and that

the Holy Ghost, Who more than once was seen resting on her head like a

dove, was dilating these works. Villegas does not believe that any one

could read them, as such books ought to be read, without becoming

himself a master of the spiritual life. For they are like heavenly dew,

rendering the soul fruitful in the matter of prayer. [24]

It would be a mistake to consider the Interior Castle a complete

treatise of mystical theology. Like St. Teresa's other works, it is

intensely personal: she describes the road by which she has been led,

being well aware that others may be led in a different way. In the

heavenly Father's house there are many mansions, not only seven, and

many paths lead to them. What gives the work such high value is, that

it is the result of a most searching inquiry into the various phases

whereby a soul is gradually transformed into the likeness of God

Himself. Here St. Teresa is always at her best. She takes nothing for

granted, even her own personal experiences are admitted only after

having been fully investigated and found to be consistent one with the

other, and conformable to the teaching of the Church and the words of

Holy Scripture.

Mystical theology is generally divided into three parts, respectively

called the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive life. In the

first, man is cleansed from sin and habitual imperfection by the use of

the sacraments and by voluntary mortification of the passions. The mind

is purified by sedulous meditation on the last end and on the Life and

Passion of Christ, which must ever be the great model of the Christian.

This first portion of the way to heaven can be covered by the help of

the ordinary means of grace, without any direct and extraordinary

intervention of divine power. The second part differs in many ways from

the first. It comprises the passive purification of the soul and the

passive enlightenment of the mind. By sending it keen interior and

exterior trials and sufferings, God completes the cleansing of the soul

in a manner far surpassing any voluntary effort of man. By raising it

to the stage of contemplation He gives it fresh light on the mysteries

of our Redemption. The mind is then no longer compelled to strain the

memory, the reason, and the will, in order to dwell upon the great

truths of religion and to derive some personal benefit therefrom, for

these truths are now more or less permanently before it and fill it

with holy thoughts, sometimes giving it consolation in trouble, at

other times striking a warning note against imperfection. Again, the

subtraction of sensible consolation, and the interior aridity arising

therefrom, leave a terrible blank in the soul, showing it that, without

God's help, it is mere nothingness. This apparent estrangement from God

is the keenest trial that can befall a soul, but also the most powerful

means of cleansing it from the least, the most subtle imperfections.

Emerging from this state of probation, the soul enters upon the third

stage, in which, though perhaps in the midst of severe suffering and

sharp persecution, it knows itself to be a chosen child of God, to Whom

it is united by perfect conformity of the will. Such phenomena as

revelations, visions, locutions, and even more wonderful

manifestations, like the wound of love, spiritual betrothal and

nuptials, are incidental rather than essential to the second and third

stages. Some great contemplatives have never experienced anything of

the kind, while, on the other hand, some of these occurrences may

sometimes have been merely the work of an exuberant imagination, or

even the result of diabolical illusion. They should therefore never be

wished for, or cherished, but rather shunned and ignored, in as far as

that is possible. If they are real and come from God, they will do

their work without the co-operation of the soul. The danger of

self-deception is so great that a person labouring under such phenomena

should offer every resistance, and the spiritual director should

exercise the utmost vigilance. St. Teresa is very eloquent on this

point, and undeceived many would-be contemplatives, while her disciple,

St. John of the Cross, is even more thorough-going in the deprecation

of spiritual favours. Among the numerous marks whereby the trained

theologian may discriminate between real and imaginary phenomena, there

is one about which Saint Teresa speaks with wonderful clearness. If

they proceed from hysteria the imagination alone is active and the

higher powers of the soul are torpid; if, however, they come from God,

the intellect and the will are so intensely active, that the lower

powers and even the body lose all strength for the time being.

It will be noticed that the first two Mansions belong to the purgative

life, the third and fourth to the illuminative, and the remaining three

to the unitive life. Compared with similar works, the treatment of the

first stage must be called meagre. True, in her Life and in the Way of

Perfection St. Teresa has dealt with this subject somewhat more fully.

Indeed, the last-named work was designed as a treatise on Christian

Ascetics, dealing with the purgation of the soul by mortification and

the enlightenment of the mind by meditation. There, too, appears the

first idea of the Mansions, [25] and Fuente remarks that the passage

in question may be taken for the parting of the ways between the two

works. However, this is not the only, nor, indeed, the chief reason why

St. Teresa is so reticent about the preliminary stage of the

contemplative life. The fact is that she herself did not pass through

these experiences. By God's grace she was preserved from childhood from

grievous sin and gross imperfection. Though she never grows tired of

bewailing her faults and unfaithfulness, these avowals must be taken

cum grano salis. While yet a child, she sometimes gave way to vanity in

dress and wasted her time in reading romances. As a young religious,

she was sought after by friends and relatives who took pleasure in her

attractive conversation. This proved further loss of time and caused

distractions. Owing to acute suffering, she for some years left off the

practice of mental prayer, though she faithfully performed all her

religious obligations, as far as her weak state of health allowed. This

is all. The war of the flesh against the spirit, the insubordination of

the lower parts of nature, the fickleness of the will, which so often

thwart the most noble aspirations of a soul, were unknown to her. Under

these circumstances, we cannot be surprised to find her entering upon

the journey towards God at a point which in many cases marks but the

closing stage.

As to the remaining parts of this book, it will be seen from the

parallel passages that they cover much the same ground as her Life and

the Relations. With her singular gift of introspection and analysis,

the Saint studied her own case from every point of view, so as to make

sure that her extraordinary experiences were due to no illusion, and

offered no obstacle to the safety of her soul. Although the Interior

Castle contains little that we do not already know from her other

works, it is superior to them by reason of its logical order and the

masterly treatment of the most recondite matters of mystical theology.

While ostensibly dealing with general facts, St. Teresa in reality

records her personal experiences. How definite these were, how little

room there remained for the freaks of the imagination, will appear from

the fact that she nearly always repeats the very words she had used in

her Life and in the other reports of her interior progress, although

she did not have these writings before her eyes, nor had she ever seen

them since they first left her hands. Every one of her experiences must

have produced a profound impression to be remembered so minutely after

an interval of years.

There is that in the Interior Castle which reminds one of Dante's

Paradiso. In the one and the other, the soul, purified from earthly

dross, is gradually being invested with new and glorious qualities, and

is being led through regions unknown until it arrives at the very

threshold of the throne of God. Not even the boldest imagination could

have designed so wonderful a picture of a soul adorned with graces at

once so varied and so true. In one case we know, the poet has drawn

abundantly from the treasury of the Angelical Doctor, putting in verse

the conclusions of the scholastic theologian. In the other case we can

follow, chapter by chapter, the influence of the teaching of St. Thomas

Aquinas. St. Teresa had never studied it herself, but her directors and

confessors were deeply versed in it and solved her doubts and

perplexities on the lines of the greatest of the school men. The

Interior Castle might almost be considered a practical illustration of

certain parts of the Summa theologica, [26] as it describes the

progress of the soul through every stage of perfection. When we have

reached the second chapter of the seventh Mansion, there remains but

one thing: the Beatific Vision, and this is reserved for the next life.

After the publication of the Interior Castle by Luis de Leon, the

manuscript came into the possession of Father Jerome Gracian, who,

after having made a copy of it which is still extant, presented the

original, on the occasion of a visit to the convent of Seville, to Don

Pedro Cereso Pardo, a great friend of the Saint, and a benefactor to

the convent. When his only daughter took the habit there, the precious

manuscript was part of her dowry. Do�a Juana de Mendoza, Duchess of

Beguiar, a novice in the same convent, had it bound in silver and

precious stones. It is still there, [27] and the present writer had

the privilege of seeing it. It comprises a hundred and thirteen leaves

in folio, but originally there must have been some more leaves which at

a later period were torn out. These, it is presumed, contained the

headings of the chapters. Unlike the Life and the Foundations, the text

of the Castle is divided only by figures, without indication of the

contents of each chapter, but the arguments which have come down to us

are so entirely similar to those of the two works named, that it is

impossible to consider them otherwise than the genuine work of the

author. In the present translation they have been inserted in their

proper places.

On the occasion of the ter-centenary of Saint Teresa's death, a

photo-lithographic edition of the original was published under the

direction of Cardinal Lluch, Carmelite of the old observance,

Archbishop of Seville:

El Castillo Ynterior � Tratado de las Moradas,

escrito por Sta. Teresa de Jes�s.

Litografia de Juan Moyano (Seville) 1882.

The present translation, the third in English, [28] has been made

directly from this autograph edition. It has been thought advisable

that, as far as the genius of the language allows it, the wording of

the author should be strictly adhered to, and that not even a shade of

her expression should be sacrificed. For Teresa is not only a saint

whose every word is telling, but she is a classic in her own language

who knows how to give expression to her deepest thoughts. Having

compared word for word the translation with the original, I am in a

position to affirm that this programme has been faithfully carried out.

For the foot-notes--with few exceptions--as well as for the Index, I am

responsible. It seemed to me important to point out all the parallel

passages from the various works of the Saint. Only by this means can it

be seen how consistent Saint Teresa is in all her writings. [29] It

would have been easy to multiply quotations from the works of other

writers on mystical theology. Thus, the influence of the Imitation of

Christ and of the Life of our Lord by Ludolphus the Carthusian can be

distinctly traced in the Interior Castle. Both these works, as well as

some Spanish books, were held in such esteem by St. Teresa, that she

ordered the prioress of each convent to keep them at the disposal of

the nuns. As there is a limit to footnotes, I have contented myself

with such references as seemed to me conducive to the elucidation of

the doctrine laid down in this treatise.

In conclusion I venture to express the hope that this new translation

will be found helpful by those who feel called to a higher life.

BENEDICT ZIMMERMAN,

Prior, O.C.D.

ST. LUKE'S PRIORY,

WINCANTON, SOMERSET.

July, 1, 1905, and December 25, 1911.

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[1] Castle, Mansions v. ch. iv. I.

[2] Letters of St. Teresa, Vol. ii.

[3] The French Carmelite nuns in their new translation, OEuvres

compl�tes de Sainte Th�r�se, t. vi, Introduction, p. 5, quoting the A�o

Teresiano, t. vii ad 7 July, and Father Gracian's Dilucidario, as well

as his additions to Ribera, show the exact share of Fr. Gracian and Dr.

Velasquez in the preliminaries of this work.

[4] Fuente, Obras de Santa Teresa de Jesus. Edit. 1881, Vol. vi, p.

278.

[5] Ibid. p. 178. A somewhat similar incident is reported by Mother

Anne of the Incarnation (Ibid. p. 213), but it appears to be wrongly

brought into connection with the composition of the Castle. The nun in

question had belonged to the convent of St. Joseph at Segovia at an

earlier period, but there is no evidence that St. Teresa visited this

place in the course of the six months during which she composed this

work. The Bollandists, indeed, maintain that it was commenced at

Toledo, continued at Segovia and completed at Avila (n. 1541), but

their sole authority for including Segovia is the passage in question,

which, however, must refer to some other work of the Saint. The sister,

passing St. Teresa's door, saw her writing, her face being lit up as by

a bright light. She wrote very fast without making any corrections.

After an hour, it being about midnight, she ceased and the light

disappeared. The Saint then knelt down and remained in prayer for three

hours, after which she went to sleep.

[6] Fuente, p. 223.

[7] Ibid. p. 255.

[8] Autograph, fol. cx.

[9] December 7, 1577. Letters Vol. II.

[10] Jan. 14, 1580. Letters Vol. IV:

[11] Fuente, Obras. l.c. p. 275.

[12] l.c. p. 217.

[13] Ibid. p. 227.

[14] Fuente, Obras. p. 190.

[15] Autograph. fol. 1.

[16] See Life, ch. xviii. 20. Mansions v. ch. i. 9. The ignorance of

the priest who had told her that God was only present by His grace,

made a lasting impression on St. Teresa. She was first undeceived by a

Dominican.

[17] Rom. viii. 18.

[18] Fuente; pp. 131-133.

[19] l.c. 184.

[20] Allusion to the famous Mystical Theology attributed to Dionysius

the Areopagite, and long considered the chief authority on this

subject.

[21] 2 Cor. iv. 6.

[22] The example of Moses is scarcely to the point (cf. Exod. xxxiii.

11, and Num. xii. 7, 8).

[23] Fuente, pp. 330-332.

[24] l.c. p. 334. These testimonies could be easily multiplied.

[25] Way of Perf. ch. xx. 1

[26] S. Theol. 2da 2d�, qq. 171-184.

[27] Bollandists, Acta, n. 1495. See also Impressions in Spain. By Lady

Herbert. London, 1867, p, 171.

[28] The first translation is to be found in the Works of the Holy

Mother St. Teresa of Jesus (third part). Printed in the year MDCLXXV,

pp. 137-286. It bears the title: The Interiour Castle: or, Mansions. As

to the authors of this translation--Abraham Woodhead and another, whose

name is not known--see my book Carmel in England, p. 342, note. It is

stated there that the third part, containing the Way of Perfection and

the Castle, has no title-page. This is true with regard to the copy I

had before me when writing that book. The one I have now is more

complete. The second translation, by the Rev. John Dalton, appeared in

1852 and has been repeatedly reprinted. It was dedicated to Bishop

Ullathorne. Of foreign translations it will be sufficient to mention

the one by Cyprien de la Nativit�, in OEuvres de la Sainte M�re T�r�se

de J�sus, Paris, 1657, and the new one in OEuvres already mentioned.

[29] The present translation ought to dispose of the reservations

expressed by an able critic in his otherwise valuable appreciation of

the works of the Saint. See Santa Teresa, by the late Alexander Whyte,

D.D. London, 1898, p. 32. Criticisms which have appeared in various

papers, or have been privately conveyed, have been gratefully received

and acted upon in the second and the present edition.

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THE INTERIOR CASTLE

OR THE MANSIONS

BY ST. TERESA

IHS

THIS TREATISE, STYLED THE INTERIOR CASTLE, WAS WRITTEN BY TERESA OF

JESUS, NUN OF OUR LADY OF CARMEL, FOR HER SISTERS AND DAUGHTERS, THE

DISCALCED CARMELITE NUNS.

RARELY has obedience laid upon me so difficult a task as this of

writing about prayer; for one reason, because I do not feel that God

has given me either the power or the desire for it, besides which,

during the last three months I have suffered from noises and a great

weakness in my head that have made it painful for me to write even on

necessary business. [30]

However, as I know the power obedience has of making things easy which

seem impossible, my will submits with a good grace, although nature

seems greatly distressed, for God has not given me such strength as to

bear, without repugnance, the constant struggle against illness while

performing many different duties. May He, Who has helped me in other

more difficult matters, aid me with His grace in this, for I trust in

His mercy. I think I have but little to say that has not already been

put forth in my other works written under obedience; in fact, I fear

this will be but repetition of them. I am like a parrot which has

learnt to talk; only knowing what it has been taught or has heard, it

repeats the same thing over and over again. If God wishes me to write

anything new, He will teach it me, or bring back to my memory what I

have said elsewhere. I should be content even with this, for as I am

very forgetful, I should be glad to be able to recall some of the

matters about which people say I have spoken well, lest they should be

altogether lost. If our Lord will not even grant me this, still, if I

weary my brains and increase my headache by striving to obey, I shall

gain in merit, though my words should be useless to any one. So I begin

this work on the Feast of the Blessed Trinity in the year 1577, in the

Convent of St. Joseph of Carmel at Toledo, where I am living, and I

submit all my writings to the judgment of those learned men by whose

commands I undertake them. That it will be the fault of ignorance, not

malice, if I say anything contrary to the doctrine of the Holy Roman

Catholic Church, may be held as certain. By God's goodness I am, and

always shall be, faithful to the Church, as I have been in the past.

May He be for ever blessed and glorified. Amen.

He who bids me write this, tells me that the nuns of these convents of

our Lady of Carmel need some one to solve their difficulties about

prayer: he thinks that women understand one another's language best and

that my sisters' affection for me would make them pay special attention

to my words, therefore it is important for me to explain the subject

clearly to them. Thus I am writing only to my sisters; the idea that

any one else could benefit by what I say would be absurd. Our Lord will

be doing me a great favour if He enables me to help but one of the nuns

to praise Him a little better; His Majesty knows well that I have no

other aim. If anything is to the point, they will understand that it

does not originate from me and there is no reason to attribute it to

me, as with my scant understanding and skill I could write nothing of

the sort, unless God, in His mercy, enabled me to do so.

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[30] 'I am always suffering from my head.' Letter of June 28, 1577.

Letters. VOL. II.

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THE FIRST MANSIONS

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CHAPTER I.

THIS CHAPTER TREATS OF THE BEAUTY AND DIGNITY OF OUR SOULS AND MAKES A

COMPARISON TO EXPLAIN THIS. THE ADVANTAGE OF KNOWING AND UNDERSTANDING

THIS AND THE FAVOURS GOD GRANTS TO US IS SHOWN, AND HOW PRAYER IS THE

GATE OF THE SPIRITUAL CASTLE.

1. Plan of this book. 2. The Interior Castle. 3. Our curable self

ignorance. 4. God dwells in the centre of the soul. 5. Why all souls do

not receive certain favours. 6. Reasons for speaking of these favours.

7. The entrance of the Castle. 8. Entering into oneself. 9. Prayer. 10.

Those who dwell in the first mansion. 11. Entering. 12. Difficulties of

the subject.

1. WHILE I was begging our Lord to-day to speak for me, since I knew

not what to say nor how to commence this work which obedience has laid

upon me, an idea occurred to me which I will explain, and which will

serve as a foundation for that I am about to write.

2. I thought of the soul as resembling a castle, [31] formed of a

single diamond or a very transparent crystal, [32] and containing

many rooms, just as in heaven there are many mansions. [33] If we

reflect, sisters, we shall see that the soul of the just man is but a

paradise, in which, God tells us, He takes His delight. [34] What, do

you imagine, must that dwelling be in which a King so mighty, so wise,

and so pure, containing in Himself all good, can delight to rest?

Nothing can be compared to the great beauty and capabilities of a soul;

however keen our intellects may be, they are as unable to comprehend

them as to comprehend God, for, as He has told us, He created us in His

own image and likeness. [35]

3. As this is so, we need not tire ourselves by trying to realize all

the beauty of this castle, although, being His creature, there is all

the difference between the soul and God that there is between the

creature and the Creator; the fact that it is made in God's image

teaches us how great are its dignity and loveliness. It is no small

misfortune and disgrace that, through our own fault, we neither

understand our nature nor our origin. Would it not be gross ignorance,

my daughters, if, when a man was questioned about his name, or country,

or parents, he could not answer? Stupid as this would be, it is

unspeakably more foolish to care to learn nothing of our nature except

that we possess bodies, and only to realize vaguely that we have souls,

because people say so and it is a doctrine of faith. Rarely do we

reflect upon what gifts our souls may possess, Who dwells within them,

or how extremely precious they are. Therefore we do little to preserve

their beauty; all our care is concentrated on our bodies, which are but

the coarse setting of the diamond, or the outer walls of the castle.

[36]

4. Let us imagine, as I said, that there are many rooms in this castle,

of which some are above, some below, others at the side; in the centre,

in the very midst of them all, is the principal chamber in which God

and the soul hold their most secret intercourse. [37] Think over this

comparison very carefully; God grant it may enlighten you about the

different kinds of graces He is pleased to bestow upon the soul. No one

can know all about them, much less a person so ignorant as I am. The

knowledge that such things are possible will console you greatly should

our Lord ever grant you any of these favours; people themselves

deprived of them can then at least praise Him for His great goodness in

bestowing them on others. The thought of heaven and the happiness of

the saints does us no harm, but cheers and urges us to win this joy for

ourselves, nor will it injure us to know that during this exile God can

communicate Himself to us loathsome worms; it will rather make us love

Him for such immense goodness and infinite mercy.

5. I feel sure that vexation at thinking that during our life on earth

God can bestow these graces on the souls of others shows a want of

humility and charity for one's neighbour, for why should we not feel

glad at a brother's receiving divine favours which do not deprive us of

our own share? Should we not rather rejoice at His Majesty's thus

manifesting His greatness wherever He chooses? [38] Sometimes our

Lord acts thus solely for the sake of showing His power, as He declared

when the Apostles questioned whether the blind man whom He cured had

been suffering for his own or his parents' sins. [39] God does not

bestow these favours on certain souls because they are more holy than

others who do not receive them, but to manifest His greatness, as in

the case of St. Paul and St. Mary Magdalen, and that we may glorify Him

in His creatures.

6. People may say such things appear impossible and it is best not to

scandalize the weak in faith by speaking about them. But it is better

that the latter should disbelieve us, than that we should desist from

enlightening souls which receive these graces, that they may rejoice

and may endeavour to love God better for His favours, seeing He is so

mighty and so great. There is no danger here of shocking those for whom

I write by treating of such matters, for they know and believe that God

gives even greater proofs of His love. I am certain that if any one of

you doubts the truth of this, God will never allow her to learn it by

experience, for He desires that no limits should be set to His work:

therefore, never discredit them because you are not thus led

yourselves.

7. Now let us return to our beautiful and charming castle and discover

how to enter it. This appears incongruous: if this castle is the soul,

clearly no one can have to enter it, for it is the person himself: one

might as well tell some one to go into a room he is already in! There

are, however, very different ways of being in this castle; many souls

live in the courtyard of the building where the sentinels stand,

neither caring to enter farther, nor to know who dwells in that most

delightful place, what is in it and what rooms it contains.

8. Certain books on prayer that you have read advise the soul to enter

into itself, [40] and this is what I mean. I was recently told by a

great theologian that souls without prayer are like bodies, palsied and

lame, having hands and feet they cannot use. Just so, there are souls

so infirm and accustomed to think of nothing but earthly matters, that

there seems no cure for them. It appears impossible for them to retire

into their own hearts; accustomed as they are to be with the reptiles

and other creatures which live outside the castle, they have come at

last to imitate their habits. Though these souls are by their nature so

richly endowed, capable of communion even with God Himself, yet their

case seems hopeless. Unless they endeavour to understand and remedy

their most miserable plight, their minds will become, as it were,

bereft of movement, just as Lot's wife became a pillar of salt for

looking backwards in disobedience to God's command. [41]

9. As far as I can understand, the gate by which to enter this castle

is prayer and meditation. I do not allude more to mental than to vocal

prayer, for if it is prayer at all, the mind must take part in it. If a

person neither considers to Whom he is addressing himself, what he

asks, nor what he is who ventures to speak to God, although his lips

may utter many words, I do not call it prayer. [42] Sometimes,

indeed, one may pray devoutly without making all these considerations

through having practised them at other times. The custom of speaking to

God Almighty as freely as with a slave--caring nothing whether the

words are suitable or not, but simply saying the first thing that comes

to mind from being learnt by rote by frequent repetition--cannot be

called prayer: God grant that no Christian may address Him in this

manner. I trust His Majesty will prevent any of you, sisters, from

doing so. Our habit in this Order of conversing about spiritual matters

is a good preservative against such evil ways.

10. Let us speak no more of these crippled souls, who are in a most

miserable and dangerous state, unless our Lord bid them rise, as He did

the palsied man who had waited more than thirty years at the pool of

Bethsaida. [43] We will now think of the others who at last enter the

precincts of the castle; they are still very worldly, yet have some

desire to do right, and at times, though rarely, commend themselves to

God's care. They think about their souls every now and then; although

very busy, they pray a few times a month, with minds generally filled

with a thousand other matters, for where their treasure is, there is

their heart also. [44] Still, occasionally they cast aside these

cares; it is a great boon for them to realize to some extent the state

of their souls, and to see that they will never reach the gate by the

road they are following.

11. At length they enter the first rooms in the basement of the castle,

accompanied by numerous reptiles [45] which disturb their peace, and

prevent their seeing the beauty of the building; still, it is a great

gain that these persons should have found their way in at all.

12. You may think, my daughters, that all this does not concern you,

because, by God's grace, you are farther advanced; still, you must be

patient with me, for I can explain myself on some spiritual matters

concerning prayer in no other way. May our Lord enable me to speak to

the point; the subject is most difficult to understand without personal

experience of such graces. Any one who has received them will know how

impossible it is to avoid touching on subjects which, by the mercy of

God, will never apply to us.

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[31] Way of Perfection, ch. xxviii, 9.

[32] In her Life St. Teresa likened God to a diamond (ch. xl, 14); and

elsewhere (ch. xi, 10) the soul to a garden wherein our Lord takes His

delight.

[33] St. John xiv. 2: In domo Patris mei mansiones mult� sunt.' St.

John of the Cross uses the same comparison: If the soul shall overcome

the devil in the first combat, it shall then pass on to the second; and

if it shall be victorious there also, it shall then pass on to the

third; and then through the seven mansions, the seven degrees of love,

until the Bridegroom shall bring it to the "cellar of wine" of perfect

charity.' (Ascent of Mount Carmel, bk. ii. ch. xi. 7.)

[34] Prov. viii. 31: Delici� me� esse cum filiis hominum.'

[35] Gen. i. 26: Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem

nostram.'

[36] Way of Perf. ch. xxviii.

[37] St. John of the Cross on the words of his stanza: In the inner

cellar of my Beloved have I drunk.' Here the soul speaks of that

sovereign grace of God in taking it into the house of His love, which

is the union or transformation of love in God . . . The cellar is the

highest degree of love to which the soul can attain in this life, and

is therefore said to be the inner. It follows from this that there are

other cellars not so interior; that is, the degrees of love by which

souls reach to this, the last. These cellars are seven in number, and

the soul has entered them all when it has in perfection the seven gifts

of the Holy Ghost, so far as it is possible for it. . . . Many souls

reach and enter the first cellar, each according to the perfection of

its love, but the last and inmost cellar is entered by few in this

world, because therein is wrought the perfect union with God, the union

of the spiritual marriage.' A Spiritual Canticle, stanza xxvi. 1-3.

Concept. ch. vi. (Minor Works of St. Teresa.)

[38] St. Matt. xx. 15: Alit non licet mihi quod volo, facere? an oculus

tuus nequam est, quia ego bonus sum?'

[39] St. John ix. 2: Quis peccavit, hic, aut parentes ejus, ut c�cus

nasceretur?'

[40] Imitation, bk. II. ch. 1: Regnum Dei intra vos est.' Luke. xvii.

21. The Imitation is one of the books which according to St. Teresa's

Constitutions, (� 7) every prioress was bound to provide for her

convent.

[41] Gen. xix. 26: Respiciensque uxor ejus post se, versa est in

statuam salis.'

[42] Way of Perf. ch. xxi. 6; xxix. 4.

[43] St. John v. 5: Erat autem quidam homo ibi triginta et octo annos

habens in infirmitate sua.'

[44] St. Matt. vi. 21: Ubi enim est thesaurus tuus ibi est et cor tuum.

[45] Many an ancient castle was provided with a bear-garden where rare

animals were kept for the amusement of the inhabitants. This may have

supplied the material for St. Teresa's comparison.

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CHAPTER II.

DESCRIBES THE HIDEOUS APPEARANCE OF A SOUL IN MORTAL SIN AS REVEALED BY

GOD TO SOME ONE: OFFERS A FEW REMARKS ON SELF-KNOWLEDGE: THIS CHAPTER

IS USEFUL AS IT CONTAINS SOME POINTS REQUIRING ATTENTION. AN

EXPLANATION OF THE MANSIONS.

1. Effects of mortal sin. 2. It prevents the soul's gaining merit. 3.

The soul compared to a tree. 4. Disorder of the soul in mortal sin. 5.

Vision of a sinful soul. 6. Profit of realizing these lessons. 7.

Prayer. 8. Beauty of the Castle. 9. Self-knowledge 10. Gained by

meditating on the divine perfections. 11. Advantages of such

meditation. 12. Christ should be our model. 13. The devil entraps

beginners. 14. Our strength must come from God. 15. Sin blinds the

soul. 16. Worldliness. 17. The world in the cloister. 18. Assaults of

the devil. 19. Examples of the devil's arts. 20. Perfection consists in

charity. 21. Indiscreet zeal. 22. Danger of detraction.

1. BEFORE going farther, I wish you to consider the state to which

mortal sin [46] brings this magnificent and beautiful castle, this

pearl of the East, this tree of life, planted beside the living waters

of life [47] which symbolize God Himself. No night can be so dark, no

gloom nor blackness can compare to its obscurity. Suffice it to say

that the sun in the centre of the soul, which gave it such splendour

and beauty, is totally eclipsed, though the spirit is as fitted to

enjoy God's presence as is the crystal to reflect the sun. [48]

2. While the soul is in mortal sin nothing can profit it; none of its

good works merit an eternal reward, since they do not proceed from God

as their first principle, and by Him alone is our virtue real virtue.

The soul separated from Him is no longer pleasing in His eyes, because

by committing a mortal sin, instead of seeking to please God, it

prefers to gratify the devil, the prince of darkness, and so comes to

share his blackness. I knew a person to whom our Lord revealed the

result of a mortal sin [49] and who said she thought no one who

realized its effects could ever commit it, but would suffer

unimaginable torments to avoid it. This vision made her very desirous

for all to grasp this truth, therefore I beg you, my daughters, to pray

fervently to God for sinners, who live in blindness and do deeds of

darkness.

3. In a state of grace the soul is like a well of limpid water, from

which flow only streams of clearest crystal. Its works are pleasing

both to God and man, rising from the River of Life, beside which it is

rooted like a tree. Otherwise it would produce neither leaves nor

fruit, for the waters of grace nourish it, keep it from withering from

drought, and cause it to bring forth good fruit. But the soul by

sinning withdraws from this stream of life, and growing beside a black

and fetid pool, can produce nothing but disgusting and unwholesome

fruit.

Notice that it is not the fountain and the brilliant sun which lose

their splendour and beauty, for they are placed in the very centre of

the soul and cannot be deprived of their lustre. The soul is like a

crystal in the sunshine over which a thick black cloth has been thrown,

so that however brightly the sun may shine the crystal can never

reflect it.

4. O souls, redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ, take these things to

heart; have mercy on yourselves! If you realize your pitiable

condition, how can you refrain from trying to remove the darkness from

the crystal of your souls? Remember, if death should take you now, you

would never again enjoy the light of this Sun. O Jesus! how sad a sight

must be a soul deprived of light! What a terrible state the chambers of

this castle are in! How disorderly must be the senses--the inhabitants

of the castle--the powers of the soul its magistrates, governors, and

stewards--blind and uncontrolled as they are! In short, as the soil in

which the tree is now planted is in the devil's domain, how can its

fruit be anything but evil? A man of great spiritual insight once told

me he was not so much surprised at such a soul's wicked deeds as

astonished that it did not commit even worse sins. May God in His mercy

keep us from such great evil, for nothing in this life merits the name

of evil in comparison with this, which delivers us over to evil which

is eternal.

5. This is what we must dread and pray God to deliver us from, for we

are weakness itself, and unless He guards the city, in vain shall we

labour to defend it. [50] The person of whom I spoke [51] said that

she had learnt two things from the vision granted her. The first was, a

great fear of offending God; seeing how terrible were the consequences,

she constantly begged Him to preserve her from falling into sin.

Secondly, it was a mirror to teach her humility, for she saw that

nothing good in us springs from ourselves but comes from the waters of

grace near which the soul remains like a tree planted beside a river,

and from that Sun which gives life to our works. She realized this so

vividly that on seeing any good deed performed by herself or by other

people she at once turned to God as to its fountain head--without whose

help she knew well we can do nothing--and broke out into songs of

praise to Him. Generally she forgot all about herself and only thought

of God when she did any meritorious action.

6. The time which has been spent in reading or writing on this subject

will not have been lost if it has taught us these two truths; for

though learned, clever men know them perfectly, women's wits are dull

and need help in every way. Perhaps this is why our Lord has suggested

these comparisons to me; may He give us grace to profit by them!

7. So obscure are these spiritual matters that to explain them an

ignorant person like myself must say much that is superfluous, and even

alien to the subject, before coming to the point. My readers must be

patient with me, as I am with myself while writing what I do not

understand; indeed, I often take up the paper like a dunce, not knowing

what to say, nor how to begin. Doubtless there is need for me to do my

best to explain these spiritual subjects to you, for we often hear how

beneficial prayer is for our souls; our Constitutions oblige us to pray

so many hours a day, yet tell us nothing of what part we ourselves can

take in it and very little of the work God does in the soul by its

means. [52] It will be helpful, in setting it before you in various

ways, to consider this heavenly edifice within us, so little understood

by men, near as they often come to it. Our Lord gave me grace to

understand something of such matters when I wrote on them before, yet I

think I have more light now, especially on the more difficult

questions. Unfortunately I am too ignorant to treat of such subjects

without saying much that is already well known.

8. Now let us turn at last to our castle with its many mansions. You

must not think of a suite of rooms placed in succession, but fix your

eyes on the keep, the court inhabited by the King. [53] Like the

kernel of the palmito, [54] from which several rinds must be removed

before coming to the eatable part, this principal chamber is surrounded

by many others. However large, magnificent, and spacious you imagine

this castle to be, you cannot exaggerate it; the capacity of the soul

is beyond all our understanding, and the Sun within this palace

enlightens every part of it.

9. A soul which gives itself to prayer, either much or little, should

on no account be kept within narrow bounds. Since God has given it such

great dignity, permit it to wander at will through the rooms of the

castle, from the lowest to the highest. Let it not force itself to

remain for very long in the same mansion, even that of self-knowledge.

Mark well, however, that self-knowledge is indispensable, even for

those whom God takes to dwell in the same mansion with Himself. Nothing

else, however elevated, perfects the soul which must never seek to

forget its own nothingness. Let humility be always at work, like the

bee at the honeycomb, or all will be lost. But, remember, the bee

leaves its hive to fly in search of flowers and the soul should

sometimes cease thinking of itself to rise in meditation on the

grandeur and majesty of its God. It will learn its own baseness better

thus than by self-contemplation, and will be freer from the reptiles

which enter the first room where self-knowledge is acquired. Although

it is a great grace from God to practise self-examination, yet too much

is as bad as too little,' as they say; believe me, by God's help, we

shall advance more by contemplating the Divinity than by keeping our

eyes fixed on ourselves, poor creatures of earth that we are.

10. I do not know whether I have put this clearly; self-knowledge is of

such consequence that I would not have you careless of it, though you

may be lifted to heaven in prayer, because while on earth nothing is

more needful than humility. Therefore, I repeat, not only a good way,

but the best of all ways, is to endeavour to enter first by the room

where humility is practised, which is far better than at once rushing

on to the others. This is the right road;--if we know how easy and safe

it is to walk by it, why ask for wings with which to fly? Let us rather

try to learn how to advance quickly. I believe we shall never learn to

know ourselves except by endeavouring to know God, for, beholding His

greatness we are struck by our own baseness, His purity shows our

foulness, and by meditating on His humility we find how very far we are

from being humble.

11. Two advantages are gained by this practice. First, it is clear that

white looks far whiter when placed near something black, and on the

contrary, black never looks so dark as when seen beside something

white. Secondly, our understanding and will become more noble and

capable of good in every way when we turn from ourselves to God: it is

very injurious never to raise our minds above the mire of our own

faults. I described how murky and fetid are the streams that spring

from the source of a soul in mortal sin. [55] Thus (although the case

is not really the same, God forbid! this is only a comparison), while

we are continually absorbed in contemplating the weakness of our

earthly nature, the springs of our anions will never flow free from the

mire of timid, weak, and cowardly thoughts, such as: I wonder whether

people are noticing me or not! If I follow this course, will harm come

to me? Dare I begin this work? Would it not be presumptuous? Is it

right for any one as faulty as myself to speak on sublime spiritual

subjects? [56] Will not people think too well of me, if I make myself

singular? Extremes are bad, even in virtue; sinful as I am I shall only

fall the lower. Perhaps I shall fail and be a source of scandal to good

people; such a person as I am has no need of peculiarities.'

12. Alas, my daughters, what loss the devil must have caused to many a

soul by such thoughts as these! It thinks such ideas and many others of

the same sort I could mention arise from humility. This comes from not

understanding our own nature; self-knowledge becomes so warped that,

unless we take our thoughts off ourselves, I am not surprised that

these and many worse fears should threaten us. Therefore I maintain, my

daughters, that we should fix our eyes on Christ our only good, and on

His saints; there we shall learn true humility, and our minds will be

ennobled, so that self-knowledge will not make us base and cowardly.

Although only the first, this mansion contains great riches and such

treasures that if the soul only manages to elude the reptiles dwelling

here, it cannot fail to advance farther. Terrible are the wiles and

stratagems the devil uses to hinder people from realizing their

weakness and detecting his snares.

13. From personal experience I could give you much information as to

what happens in these first mansions. I will only say that you must not

imagine there are only a few, but a number of rooms, for souls enter

them by many different ways, and always with a good intention. The

devil is so angry at this that he keeps legions of evil spirits hidden

in each room to stop the progress of Christians, whom, being ignorant

of this, he entraps in a thousand ways. He cannot so easily deceive

souls which dwell nearer to the King as he can beginners still absorbed

in the world, immersed in its pleasures, and eager for its honours and

distinctions. As the vassals of their souls, the senses and powers

bestowed on them by God, are weak, such people are easily vanquished,

although desirous not to offend God.

14. Those conscious of being in this state must as often as possible

have recourse to His Majesty, taking His Blessed Mother and the saints

for their advocates to do battle for them, because we creatures possess

little strength for self-defence. Indeed in every state of life all our

help must come from God; may He in His mercy grant it us, Amen! What a

miserable life we lead! As I have spoken more fully in other writings

[57] on the ill that results from ignoring the need of humility and

self-knowledge, I will treat no more about it here, my daughters,

although it is of the first importance. God grant that what I have said

may be useful to you.

15 You must notice that the light which comes from the King's palace

hardly shines at all in these first mansions; although not as gloomy

and black as the soul in mortal sin, yet they are in semi-darkness, and

their inhabitants see scarcely anything. I cannot explain myself; I do

not mean that this is the fault of the mansions themselves, but that

the number of snakes, vipers, and venomous reptiles from outside the

castle prevent souls entering them from seeing the light. They resemble

a person entering a chamber full of brilliant sunshine, with eyes

clogged and half closed with dust. Though the room itself is light, he

cannot see because of his self-imposed impediment. In the same way,

these fierce and wild beasts blind the eyes of the beginner, so that he

sees nothing but them.

16. Such, it appears to me, is the soul which, though not in a state of

mortal sin, is so worldly and preoccupied with earthly riches, honours,

and affairs, that as I said, even if it sincerely wishes to enter into

itself and enjoy the beauties of the castle, it is prevented by these

distractions and seems unable to overcome so many obstacles. It is most

important to withdraw from all unnecessary cares and business, as far

as compatible with the duties of one's state of life, in order to enter

the second mansion. This is so essential, that unless done immediately

I think it impossible for any one ever to reach the principal room, or

even to remain where he is without great risk of losing what is already

gained; otherwise, although he is inside the castle, he will find it

impossible to avoid being bitten some time or other by some of the very

venomous creatures surrounding him.

17. What then would become of a religious like ourselves, my daughters,

if, after having escaped from all these impediments, and having entered

much farther into the more secret mansion, she should, by her own

fault, return to all this turmoil? Through her sins, many other people

on whom God had bestowed great graces would culpably relapse into their

wretched state. In our convents we are free from these exterior evils;

please God our minds may be as free from them, and may He deliver us

from such ills.

18. Do not trouble yourselves, my daughters, with cares which do not

concern you. You must notice that the struggle with the demons

continues through nearly all the mansions of this castle. True, in some

of them, the guards, which, as I explained, are the powers of the soul,

have strength for the combat, but we must be keenly on the watch

against the devils's arts, lest he deceive us in the form of an angel

of light. He creeps in gradually, in numberless ways, and does us much

harm, though we do not discover it until too late. [58]

19. As I said elsewhere, [59] he works like a file, secretly and

silently wearing its way: I will give you some examples to show how he

begins his wiles. For instance: a nun has such a longing for penance as

to feel no peace unless she is tormenting herself in some way. [60]

This is good in itself; but suppose that the Prioress has forbidden her

to practise any mortifications without special leave, and the sister

thinking that, in such a meritorious cause, she may venture to disobey,

secretly leads such a life that she loses her health and cannot even

fulfil the requirements of her rule--you see how this show of good

ends. Another nun is very zealous about religious perfection; this is

very right, but may cause her to think every small fault she sees in

her sisters a serious crime, and to watch constantly whether they do

anything wrong, that she may run to the Prioress to accuse them of it.

At the same time, may be she never notices her own shortcomings because

of her great zeal about other people's religious observance, while

perhaps her sisters, not seeing her intention but only knowing of the

watch she keeps on them, do not take her behaviour in good part.

20. The devil's chief aim here is to cool the charity and lessen the

mutual affection of the nuns, which would injure them seriously. Be

sure, my daughters, that true perfection consists in the love of God

and our neighbour, and the better we keep both these commandments, the

more perfect we shall be. The sole object of our Rule and Constitutions

is to help us to observe these two laws.

21. Indiscreet zeal about others must not be indulged in; it may do us

much harm; let each one look to herself. However, as I have spoken

fully on this subject elsewhere, [61] I will not enlarge on it here,

and will only beg you to remember the necessity of this mutual

affection. Our souls may lose their peace and even disturb other

people's if we are always criticizing trivial actions which often are

not real defects at all, but we construe them wrongly through ignorance

of their motives. See how much it costs to attain perfection! Sometimes

the devil tempts nuns in this way about the Prioress, which is still

more dangerous. Great prudence is then required, for if she disobeys

the Rule or Constitutions the matter must not always be overlooked, but

should be mentioned to her; [62] if, after this, she does not amend,

the Superior of the Order should be informed of it. It is true charity

to speak in this case, as it would be if we saw our sisters commit a

grave fault; to keep silence for fear that speech would be a temptation

against charity, would be that very temptation itself. [63]

22. However, I must warn you seriously not to talk to each other about

such things, lest the devil deceive you. He would gain greatly by your

doing so, because it would lead to the habit of detraction; rather, as

I said, state the matter to those whose duty it is to remedy it. Thank

God our custom here of keeping almost perpetual silence gives little

opportunity for such conversations, still, it is well to stand ever on

our guard.

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[46] Life, ch. xxxviii. 31; ch. xl. 15.

[47] Ps. i. 3: Et erit tamquam lignum quod plantatum eat secus decursus

aquarum.'

[48] Way of Perf. ch. xxviii. 9.

[49] In this as in most other cases when the Saint speaks of a person

she knows,' she means herself. Life, ch. xl, 15.

[50] cxxvi. 1: 'Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem, frustra vigilat qui

custodit eam.'

[51] Life, ch. xxxviii. 33; ch. xl. 15, 16.

[52] Life, ch. x. 2 sqq. Constitut. 2, 6.

[53] Way of Perf.. ch. xxviii. 1.

[54] The palmito here referred to is not a palm, but a shrub about four

feet high and very dense with leaves, resembling palm leaves. The

poorer classes and principally children dig it up by the roots, which

they peel of its many layers until a sort of kernel is disclosed, which

is eaten, not without relish, and is somewhat like a filbert in taste.

See St. John of the Cross, Accent of Mount Carmel, bk. ii. ch, xiv, 3.

[55] Supra, � 3.

[56] Life, ch. viii. 6, x. 4, xxiii. 3-5. Way of Perf. ch. xxxix. 1.

[57] Life ch. xiii. 23. Way of Perf. ch. x. 4. Castle, M. iii. ch. ii.

8. Concep. ch. ii. 20. Const. 21.

[58] Life ch. xxxi. 23.

[59] No doubt the Saint often used this excellent comparison in her

verbal instructions, but it occurs nowhere else in her writings.

[60] Way of Perf. ch. x. 5; xxxix. 4; Rel. iii. 12.

[61] The Saint must frequently have spoken on the subject, but she

never treated it more fully than in this place. Way of Perf. ch. xii.

7. Life, ch. xiii. 11, 14 sqq. Visitation of convents.

[62] Way of Perfection, ch. ii. 3. Visit. 20-22, 34, 36.

[63] 'It is terrible to think what harm a Prioress can do! For although

the Sisters witness things which scandalize them (of which there are

plenty here!), yet they think it would be sinning against obedience to

see any harm in them.' (Letter to Father Gracian, written at Malagon at

the beginning of December, 5579. Letters, Vol. III.)

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THE SECOND MANSIONS

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ONLY CHAPTER

TREATS OF THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF PERSEVERANCE IN ORDER TO ENTER THE

LAST MANSIONS, AND OF THE FIERCE WAR THE DEVIL WAGES AGAINST US. HOW

ESSENTIAL IT IS TO TAKE THE RIGHT PATH FROM THE VERY COMMENCEMENT OF

OUR JOURNEY. A METHOD OF ACTION WHICH HAS PROVED VERY EFFICACIOUS.

1. Souls in the second mansions. 2. Their state. 3. Their sufferings.

4. They cannot get rid of their imperfections. 5. How God calls these

souls. 6. Perseverance is essential. 7. Temptations of the devil. 8.

Delusion of earthly joys. 9. God alone to be loved. 10. Reasons for

continuing the journey. 11. War fare of the devil. 12. Importance of

choice of friends. 13. Valour required. 14. Presumption of expecting

spiritual consolations at first. 15. In the Cross is strength. 16. Our

falls should raise us higher. 17. Confidence and perseverance. 18.

Recollection. 19. Why we must practise prayer. 20. Meditation kindles

love.

1. Now let us consider which are the souls that enter the second

mansions, and what they do there: I do not wish to enlarge on this

subject, having already treated it very fully elsewhere, [64] for I

could not avoid repeating myself, as my memory is very bad. If I could

state my ideas in another form they would not weary you, for we never

tire of reading books on this subject, numerous as they are. 2. In this

part of the castle are found souls which have begun to practise prayer;

they realize the importance of their not remaining in the first

mansions, yet often lack determination to quit their present condition

by avoiding occasions of sin, which is a very perilous state to be in.

3. However, it is a great grace that they should sometimes make good

their escape from the vipers and poisonous creatures around them and

should understand the need of avoiding them. In some way these souls

suffer a great deal more than those in the first mansions, although not

in such danger, as they begin to understand their peril and there are

great hopes of their entering farther into the castle. I say that they

suffer a great deal more, for those in an earlier stage are like

deaf-mutes and are not so distressed at being unable to speak, while

the others, who can hear but cannot talk, find it much harder. At the

same time, it is better not to be deaf, and a decided advantage to hear

what is said to us.

4. These souls hear our Lord calling them, for as they approach nearer

to where His Majesty dwells He proves a loving Neighbour, though they

may still be engaged in the amusements and business, the pleasures and

vanities of this world. While in this state we continually fall into

sin and rise again, for the creatures amongst whom we dwell are so

venomous, so vicious, and so dangerous, that it is almost impossible to

avoid being tripped up by them. Yet such are the pity and compassion of

this Lord of ours, so desirous is He that we should seek Him and enjoy

His company, that in one way or another He never ceases calling us to

Him. So sweet is His voice, that the poor soul is disconsolate at being

unable to follow His bidding at once, and therefore, as I said, suffers

more than if it could not hear Him.

5. I do not mean that divine communications and inspirations received

in this mansion are the same as those I shall describe later on; God

here speaks to souls through words uttered by pious people, by sermons

or good books, and in many other such ways. Sometimes He calls souls by

means of sickness or troubles, or by some truth He teaches them during

prayer, for tepid as they may be in seeking Him, yet God holds them

very dear.

6. Do not think lightly, sisters, of this first grace, nor be downcast

if you have not responded immediately to Our Lord's voice, for His

Majesty is willing to wait for us many a day and even many a year,

especially when He sees perseverance and good desires in our hearts.

Perseverance is the first essential; with this we are sure to profit

greatly. However, the devils now fiercely assault the soul in a

thousand different ways: it suffers more than ever, because formerly it

was mute and deaf, or at least could hear very little, and offered but

feeble resistance, like one who has almost lost all hope of victory.

7. Here, however, the understanding being more vigilant and the powers

more on the alert, we cannot avoid hearing the fighting and cannonading

around us. For now the devils set on us the reptiles, that is to say,

thoughts about the world and its joys which they picture as unending;

they remind us of the high esteem men held us in, of our friends and

relations; they tell us how the penances which souls in this mansion

always begin to wish to perform would injure our health: in fine, the

evil spirits place a thousand impediments in the way.

8. O Jesus! What turmoil the devils cause in the poor soul! How unhappy

it feels, not knowing whether to go forward or to return to the first

mansion! On the other hand, reason shows it the delusion of overrating

worldly things, while faith teaches what alone can satisfy its

cravings. Memory reminds the soul how all earthly joys end, recalling

the death of those who lived at ease; how some died suddenly and were

soon forgotten, how others, once so prosperous, are now buried beneath

the ground and men pass by the graves where they lie, the prey of

worms, [65] while the mind recalls many other such incidents.

9. The will inclines to love Our Lord and longs to make some return to

Him Who is so amiable, and Who has given so many proofs of His love,

especially by His constant presence with the soul, which this faithful

Lover never quits, ever accompanying it and giving it life and being.

The understanding aids by showing that however many years life might

last, no one could ever wish for a better friend than God; that the

world is full of falsehood, and that the worldly pleasures pictured by

the devil to the mind were but troubles and cares and annoyances in

disguise.

10. Reason convinces the soul that as outside its interior castle are

found neither peace nor security, it should cease to seek another home

abroad, its own being full of riches that it can enjoy at will.

Besides, it is not every one who, like itself, possesses all he needs

within his own dwelling, and above all, such a Host, Who will give it

all it can desire, unless, like the prodigal son, it chooses to go

astray and feed with the swine. [66] Surely these arguments are

strong enough to defeat the devil's wiles! But, O my God, how the force

of worldly habits and the example of others who practise them ruin

everything! Our faith is so dead that we trust less to its teaching

than to what is visible, though, indeed, we see that worldly lives

bring nothing but unhappiness. All this results from those venomous

thoughts I described, which, unless we are very careful, will deform

the soul as the sting of a viper poisons and swells the body.

11. When this happens, great care is evidently needed to cure it, and

only God's signal mercy prevents its resulting in death. Indeed, the

soul passes through severe trials at this time, especially when the

devil perceives from a person's character and behaviour that she is

likely to make very great progress, for then all hell will league

together to force her to turn back. O my Lord! what need there is here

that, by Thy mercy, Thou shouldst prevent the soul from being deluded

into forsaking the good begun! Enlighten it to see that its welfare

consists in perseverance in the right way, and in the withdrawing from

bad company.

12. It is of the utmost importance for the beginner to associate with

those who lead a spiritual life, [67] and not only with those in the

same mansion as herself, but with others who have travelled farther

into the castle, who will aid her greatly and draw her to join them.

The soul should firmly resolve never to submit to defeat, for if the

devil sees it staunchly determined to lose life and comfort and all

that he can offer, rather than return to the first mansion, he will the

sooner leave it alone.

13. Let the Christian be valiant; let him not be like those who lay

down to drink from the brook when they went to battle (I do not

remember when). [68] Let him resolve to go forth to combat with the

host of demons, and be convinced that there is no better weapon than

the cross. I have already said, [69] yet it is of such importance

that I repeat it here: let no one think on starting of the reward to be

reaped: this would be a very ignoble way of commencing such a large and

stately building. If built on sand it would soon fall down. [70]

Souls who acted thus would continually suffer from discouragement and

temptations, for in these mansions no manna rains; [71] farther on,

the soul is pleased with all that comes, because it desires nothing but

what God wills.

14. What a farce it is! Here are we, with a thousand obstacles,

drawbacks, and imperfections within ourselves, our virtues so newly

born that they have scarcely the strength to act (and God grant that

they exist at all!) yet we are not ashamed to expect sweetness in

prayer and to complain of feeling dryness. [72]

15. Do not act thus, sisters; embrace the cross your Spouse bore on His

shoulders; know that your motto should be: Most happy she who suffers

most if it be for Christ!' [73] All else should be looked upon as

secondary: if our Lord give it you, render Him grateful thanks. You may

imagine you would be resolute in enduring external trials if God gave

you interior consolations: His Majesty knows best what is good for us;

it is not for us to advise Him how to treat us, for He has the right to

tell us that we know not what we ask. [74] Remember, it is of the

greatest importance--the sole aim of one beginning to practise prayer

should be to endure trials, and to resolve and strive to the utmost of

her power to conform her own will to the will of God. [75] Be certain

that in this consists all the greatest perfection to be attained in the

spiritual life, as I will explain later. She who practises this most

perfectly will receive from God the highest reward and is the farthest

advanced on the right road. Do not imagine that we have need of a

cabalistic formula or any other occult or mysterious thing to attain it

our whole welfare consists in doing the will of God. If we start with

the false principle of wishing God to follow our will and to lead us in

the way we think best, upon what firm foundation can this spiritual

edifice rest?

16. Let us endeavour to do our best: beware of the poisonous

reptiles--that is to say, the bad thoughts and aridities which are

often permitted by God to assail and torment us so that we cannot repel

them. Indeed, perchance we feel their sting! He allows this to teach us

to be more on our guard in the future and to see whether we grieve much

at offending Him. Therefore if you occasionally lapse into sin, do not

lose heart and cease trying to advance, for God will draw good even out

of our falls, like the merchant who sells theriac, who first takes

poison, then the theriac, to prove the power of his elixir. [76] This

combat would suffice to teach us to amend our habits if we realized our

failings in no other way, and would show us the injury we receive from

a life of dissipation. Can any evil be greater than that we find at

home? What peace can we hope to find elsewhere, if we have none within

us? What friends or kindred can be so close and intimate as the powers

of our soul, which, whether we will or no, must ever bear us company?

These seem to wage war on us as if they knew the harm our vices had

wrought them. Peace, peace be unto you,' my sisters, as our Lord said,

and many a time proclaimed to His Apostles. [77] Believe me, if we

neither possess nor strive to obtain this peace at home, we shall never

find it abroad.

17. By the blood which our Lord shed for us, I implore those who have

not yet begun to enter into themselves, to stop this warfare: I beg

those already started in the right path, not to let the combat turn

them back from it. Let them reflect that a relapse is worse than a

fall, and see what ruin it would bring. They should confide in God's

mercy, trusting nothing in themselves; then they will see how His

Majesty will lead them from one mansion to another, and will set them

in a place where these wild beasts can no more touch or annoy them, but

will be entirely at their mercy and merely objects of ridicule. Then,

even in this life, they will enjoy a far greater happiness than they

are able even to desire.

18. As I said at the beginning of this work, I have explained elsewhere

[78] how you should behave when the devil thus disturbs you. I also

told you that the habit of recollection is not to be gained by force of

arms, but with calmness, which will enable you to practise it for a

longer space of time. [79] I will say no more now, except that I

think it very helpful for those of you who are beginners to consult

persons experienced in such matters, lest you imagine that you are

injuring yourselves by leaving your prayer to perform any necessary

duties. This is not the case; our Lord will direct such things to our

profit, although we may have no one to counsel us. [80] The only

remedy for having given up a habit of recollection is to recommence it,

otherwise the soul will continue to lose it more and more every day,

and God grant it may realize its danger.

19. You may think, that if it is so very injurious to desist, it would

have been better never to have begun, and to have remained outside the

castle. But, as I began by saying, and as God Himself declares: He that

loves danger shall perish by it,' [81] and the door by which we must

enter this castle is prayer. Remember, we must get to heaven, and it

would be madness to think we could do so without sometimes retiring

into our souls so as to know ourselves, or thinking of our failings and

of what we owe to God, or frequently imploring His mercy. Our Lord also

says, No man cometh to the Father but by Me' [82] (I am not sure

whether this quotation is correct, but I think so), and, He that seeth

Me seeth the Father also.' [83]

20. If we never look up at Him and reflect on what we owe Him for

having died for us, I do not understand how we can know Him, or perform

good deeds in His service. What value is there in faith without works?

and what are they worth if they are not united to the merits of Jesus

Christ, our only good? What would incite us to love our Lord unless we

thought of Him? May He give us grace to understand how much we cost

Him; that the servant is not above his lord' [84] ; that we must toil

for Him if we would enjoy His glory; and prayer is a necessity to

prevent us from constantly falling into temptation. [85]

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[64] Life, ch. xi-xiii. Way of Perf. ch. xx.-xxix.

[65] 'How many, thinking to live long, have been deceived and

unexpectedly have been snatched away! How often hast thou heard that

such a one was slain by the sword; another drowned; another, falling

from on high, broke his neck; this man died at the table; that other

came to his death while he was at play. . . . Thus death is the end of

all; and man's life passeth suddenly like a shadow' (Imitation, bk. 1.

ch. xxiii. 7). The edition of the Imitation known to St. Teresa under

the title of Contemptus Mundi was translated by Luis de Granada,

printed at Seville in 1536, at Lisbon in 1542, and at Alcal� in 1548.

See Life, ch. xxxix. 21, note.

[66] St. Luke xv. 16: Et cupiebat implere ventrem suum de siliquis quas

porci manducabant.'

[67] Life, ch. vii. 33-37; xvi. 1 2; XXX. 6. Way of Perfection, ch. vi.

1; Vii. 4.

[68] With Gedeon. Jud. vii. 5: Qui lingua lambuerint aquas, sicut

solent canes lambere, separabis eos seorsum.'

[69] Life, ch. xi 16.

[70] St. Matt. vii. 26, 27: Qui �dificavit domum suam super arenam . .

. et fuit ruina illius magna.'

[71] Ps. lxxvii. 24: Pluit illis manna ad manducandum.' Way of Perf.

ch. x. 4.

[72] Life, ch. xii. 5.

[73] Way of Perf. ch. xvii. 6; xxiii. 1.

[74] St. Matt. xx. 22: Nescitis quid petatis.'

[75] Way of Perf. ch. xvi. 2. Found. ch. v. 2, 3. Life, ch. iv. II; xi.

20.

[76] A drug greatly in vogue until recent times. It was composed of all

the essences supposed to contain life-giving and life-preserving

qualities of animals and plants.

[77] St. Luke xxiv. 36. St. John xx. 19.

[78] Life, ch. xi. and xix. 8. Way of Perfection, ch. xxiii. 3.

[79] Way of Perf. ch. xix. 3.

[80] Way of Perf. ch. xxiii. 3.

[81] Ecclus. iii. 27: Qui amat periculum, in illo peribit.'

[82] St. John xiv. 6: Nemo venit ad Patrem, nisi per Me.'

[83] St. John xiv. 9. Qui videt me, videt et Patrem.'

[84] St. Matt. x. 24: Nec servus super dominum suum.'

[85] St. Matt. xxvi. 41: Orate ut non intretis in tentationem.'

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THE THIRD MANSIONS

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CHAPTER I.

TREATS OF THE INSECURITY OF LIFE IN THIS EXILE, HOWEVER HIGH WE MAY BE

RAISED, AND OF HOW WE MUST ALWAYS WALK IN FEAR. CONTAINS SOME GOOD

POINTS.

1. Souls in the Third Mansions. 2. Insecurity of this life. 3. Our

danger of falling from grace. 4. The Saint bewails her past life. 5.

Our Lady's patronage. 6. Fear necessary even for religious. 7. St.

Teresa's contrition. 8. Characteristics of those in the Third Mansions.

9. The rich young man in the Gospel. 10. Reason of aridities in prayer.

11. Humility. 12. Tepidity. 13. We must give all to God. 14. Our debt.

15. Consolations and aridities.

1. As for those who, by the mercy of God, have vanquished in these

combats and persevered until they reached the third mansions, what can

we say to them but Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord'? [86] It

is no small favour from God that I should be able to translate this

verse into Spanish so as to explain its meaning, considering how dense

I usually am in such matters. We may well call these souls blessed,

for, as far as we can tell, unless they turn back in their course they

are on the safe road to salvation. Now, my sisters, you see how

important it is for them to conquer in their former struggles, for I am

convinced that our Lord will henceforth never cease to keep them in

security of conscience, which is no small boon.

2. I am wrong in saying security,' for there is no security in this

life; understand that in such cases I always imply: If they do not

cease to continue as they have begun.' What misery to live in this

world! We are like men whose enemies are at the door, who must not lay

aside their arms, even while sleeping or eating, and are always in

dread lest the foe should enter the fortress by some breach in the

walls. O my Lord and my all! How canst Thou wish us to prize such a

wretched existence? We could not desist from longing and begging Thee

to take us from it, were it not for the hope of losing it for Thy sake

or devoting it entirely to Thy service--and above all because we know

it is Thy will that we should live. Since it is so, Let us die with

Thee!' [87] as St. Thomas said, for to be away from Thee is but to

die again and again, haunted as we are by the dread of losing Thee for

ever!

3. This is why I say, daughters, that we ought to ask our Lord as our

boon to grant us one day to dwell in safety with the Saints, for with

such fears, what pleasure can she enjoy whose only pleasure is to

please God? Remember, many Saints have felt this as we do, and were

even far more fervent, yet fell into grave sin, and we cannot be sure

that God would stretch forth His hand to raise us from sin again to do

such penance as they performed. This applies to extraordinary grace.

[88] Truly, my daughters, I feel such terror as I tell you this, that

I know not how to write it, nor even how to go on living, when I

reflect upon it as I very often do. Beg of His Majesty, my daughters,

to abide within me, for otherwise, what security could I feel, after a

life so badly spent as mine has been?

4. Do not grieve at knowing this. I have often seen you troubled when I

spoke about it, for you wish that my past had been a very holy one, in

which you are right--indeed, I wish the same myself. But what can be

done, now that I have wasted it entirely through my own fault? I have

no right to complain that God withheld the aid I needed to fulfil your

wishes. It is impossible for me to write this without tears and great

shame, when I see that I am explaining these matters to those capable

of teaching me. What a hard task has obedience laid, upon me! God grant

that, as I do it for Him, it may be of some service to you; therefore

beg Him to pardon me for my miserable presumption.

5. His Majesty knows that I have nothing to rely upon but His mercy; as

I cannot cancel the past, I have no other remedy but to flee to Him,

and to confide in the merits of His Son and of His Virgin Mother, whose

habit, unworthy as I am, I wear as you do also. Praise Him, then, my

daughters, for making you truly daughters of our Lady, so that you need

not blush for my wickedness as you have such a good Mother. Imitate

her; think how great she must be and what a blessing it is for you to

have her for a patroness, since my sins and evil character have brought

no tarnish on the lustre of our holy Order.

6. Still I must give you one warning: be not too confident because you

are nuns and the daughters of such a Mother. David was very holy, yet

you know what Solomon became. [89] Therefore do not rely on your

enclosure, on your penitential life, nor on your continual exercise of

prayer and constant communion with God, nor trust in having left the

world or in the idea that you hold its ways in horror. All this is

good, but is not enough, as I have already said, to remove all fear;

therefore meditate on this text and often recall it: 'Blessed is the

man that feareth the Lord.' [90]

7. I do not recollect what I was saying, and have digressed very much:

for when I think of myself my mind cannot soar to higher things but is

like a bird with broken wings; so I will leave this subject for the

present.

8. To return to what I began to explain about the souls which have

entered the third mansions. God has shown them no small favour, but a

very great one, in enabling them to pass through the first

difficulties. Thanks to His mercy I believe there are many such people

in the world: they are very desirous not to offend His Majesty even by

venial sins, they love penance and spend hours in meditation, they

employ their time well, exercise themselves in works of charity to

their neighbours, are well-ordered in their conversation and dress, and

those who own a household govern it well. This is certainly to be

desired, and there appears no reason to forbid their entrance to the

last mansions; nor will our Lord deny it them if they desire it, for

this is the right disposition for receiving all His favours.

9. O Jesus! can any one declare that he does not desire this great

blessing, especially after he has passed through the chief

difficulties? No; no one can! We all say we desire it, but there is

need of more than that for the Lord to possess entire dominion over the

soul. It is not enough to say so, any more than it was enough for the

young man when our Lord told him what he must do if he desired to be

perfect. [91] Since I began to speak of these dwelling-rooms I have

him constantly before my mind, for we are exactly like him; this very

frequently produces the great dryness we feel in prayer, though

sometimes it proceeds from other causes as well. I am not speaking of

certain interior sufferings which give intolerable pain to many devout

souls through no fault of their own; from these trials, however, our

Lord always delivers them with much profit to themselves. I also except

people who suffer from melancholy and other infirmities. But in these

cases, as in all others, we must leave aside the judgments of God.

10. I hold that these effects usually result from the first cause I

mentioned; such souls know that nothing would induce them to commit a

sin (many of them would not even commit a venial sin advertently), and

that they employ their life and riches well. They cannot, therefore,

patiently endure to be excluded from the presence of our King, Whose

vassals they consider themselves, as indeed they are. An earthly king

may have many subjects yet all do not enter his court. Enter then,

enter, my daughters, into your interior; pass beyond the thought of

your own petty works, which are no more, nor even as much, as

Christians are bound to perform: let it suffice that you are God's

servants, do not pursue so much as to catch nothing. [92] Think of

the saints, who have entered the Divine Presence, and you will see the

difference between them and ourselves.

11. Do not ask for what you do not deserve, nor should we ever think,

however much we may have done for God, that we merit the reward of the

saints, for we have offended Him. Oh, humility, humility! I know not

why, but I am always tempted to think that persons who complain so much

of aridities must be a little wanting in this virtue. However, I am not

speaking of severe interior sufferings, which are far worse than a want

of devotion.

12. Let us try ourselves, my sisters, or let our Lord try us; He knows

well how to do so (although we often pretend to misunderstand Him). We

will now speak of these well-ordered souls. Let us consider what they

do for God and we shall see at once what little right we have to murmur

against His Majesty. If we turn our backs on Him and go away

sorrowfully like the youth in the Gospel [93] when He tells us what to

do to be perfect, what can God do? for He must proportion the reward to

our love for Him. This love, my daughters, must not be the fabric of

our imagination; we must prove it by our works. Yet do not suppose that

our Lord has need of any works of ours; He only expels us to manifest

our goodwill. [94]

13. It seems to us we have done everything by taking the religious

habit of our own will, and renouncing worldly things and all our

possessions for God (although they may have been but the nets of St.

Peter, [95] yet they seemed much to us, for they were our all). This

is an excellent disposition: if we continue in it and do not return,

even in desire, to the company of the reptiles of the first rooms,

doubtless, by persevering in this poverty and detachment of soul, we

shall obtain all for which we strive. But, mark this--it must be on one

condition--that we hold ourselves for unprofitable servants,' [96] as

we are told either by St. Paul or by Christ, and that we do not

consider that our Lord is bound to grant us any favours, but that, as

we have received more from Him, we are the deeper in His debt.

14. How little is all we can do for so generous a God, Who died for us,

Who created us, Who gives us being, that we should not think ourselves

happy to be able to acquit ourselves of part of the debt we owe Him for

having served us, without asking Him for fresh mercies and favours? I

am loath to use this expression, yet so it is, for He did nothing else

during the whole time He lived in this world but serve us.

15. Think well my daughters, over some of the points I have treated,

although confusedly, for I do not know how to explain them better. Our

Lord will make you understand them, that you may reap humility from

your dryness, instead of the disquietude the devil strives to cause by

it. I believe that where true humility exists, although God should

never bestow consolations, yet He gives a peace and resignation which

make the soul happier than are others with sensible devotion. These

consolations, as you have read, are often given by the Divine Majesty

to the weakest souls who, I suppose would not exchange them for the

fortitude of Christians serving God in aridities: we love consolations

better than the cross! Do Thou, O Lord, Who knowest all truth, so prove

us that we may know ourselves.

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[86] Ps. cxi: 1. Beatus vir qui timet Dominum.'

[87] St. John xi. 16: Eamus et nos ut moriamur cum eo.'

[88] These last words, in the margin, but in the handwriting of the

Saint, were scored through by one of the censors, but Fr. Luis de Leon

wrote underneath, (as he did in other cases) Nothing to be crossed

out.'

[89] St. Teresa wrote Solomon'; Father Gracian corrected Absalom,' and

Fr. Luis de Leon restored the original text.

[90] Ps. cxi. 1.

[91] Matt. xix. 21.

[92] Proverbially, like having too many irons in the fire.'

[93] St. Mark. x. 22. Way of Perf. ch. xvii. 5.

[94] Rel. ix. 15.

[95] St. Matt. iv. 20: Relictis retibus secuti sunt eum.'

[96] St. Luke xvii. 10: Servi inutiles sumus: quod debuimus facere

fecimus.'

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CHAPTER II.

CONTINUES THE SAME SUBJECT AND SPEAKS OF ARIDITIES IN PRAYER AND THEIR

RESULTS: OF THE NECESSITY OF TRYING OURSELVES AND HOW OUR LORD PROVES

THOSE WHO ARE IN THESE MANSIONS.

1. Imperfections of dwellers in the first three mansions. 2. Our trials

show us our weakness. 3. Humility learnt by our faults. 4. Love of

money. 5. Liberty of spirit. 6. On bearing contempt. 7. Detachment

proved by trials. 8. Virtue and humility are the essentials. 9.

Perfection requires detachment. 10. We should try to make rapid

progress. 11. Leave our cares in God's hands. 12. Humility more

necessary than corporal penances. 13. Consolations rarely received

until the fourth mansions. 14. Advantages of hearing of them. 15.

Perfection consists in love, not in reward. 16. St. Teresa's joy at

seeing other souls favoured. 17. These graces should be striven for.

18. Obedience and direction, 19. Misguided zeal for others.

1. I HAVE known some, in fact, I may say numerous souls, who have

reached this state, and for many years lived, apparently, a regular and

well-ordered life, both of body and mind. It would seem that they must

have gained the mastery over this world, or at least be extremely

detached from it, yet if His Majesty sends very moderate trials they

become so disturbed and disheartened as not only to astonish but to

make me anxious about them. Advice is useless; having practised virtue

for so long they think themselves capable of teaching it, and believe

that they have abundant reason to feel miserable.

2. The only way to help them is to compassionate their troubles; [97]

indeed, one cannot but feel sorry at seeing people in such an unhappy

state. They must not be argued with, for they are convinced they suffer

only for God's sake, and cannot be made to understand they are acting

imperfectly, which is a further error in persons so far advanced. No

wonder that they should feel these trials for a time, but I think they

ought speedily to overcome their concern about such matters. God,

wishing His elect to realize their own misery, often temporarily

withdraws His favours: no more is needed to prove to us in a very short

time what we really are. [98]

3. Souls soon learn in this way; they perceive their faults very

clearly, and sometimes the discovery of how quickly they are overcome

by but slight earthly trials is more painful than the subtraction of

God's sensible favours. I consider that God thus shows them great

mercy, for though their behaviour may be faulty, yet they gain greatly

in humility. Not so with the people of whom I first spoke; they believe

their conduct is saintly, and wish others to agree with them. I will

give you some examples which will help us to understand and to try

ourselves, without waiting for God to try us, since it would be far

better to have prepared and examined ourselves beforehand.

4. A rich man, without son or heir, loses part of his property, [99]

but still has more than enough to keep himself and his household. If

this misfortune grieves and disquiets him as though he were left to beg

his bread, how can our Lord ask him to give up all things for His sake?

This man will tell you he regrets losing his money because he wished to

bestow it on the poor.

5. I believe His Majesty would prefer me to conform to His will, and

keep peace of soul while attending to my interests, to such charity as

this. If this person cannot resign himself because God has not raised

him so high in virtue, well and good: let him know that he is wanting

in liberty of spirit; let him beg our Lord to grant it him, and be

rightly disposed to receive it. Another person has more than sufficient

means to live on, when an opportunity occurs for acquiring more

property: if it is offered him, by all means let him accept it; but if

he must go out of his way to obtain it and then continues working to

gain more and more--however good his intention may be (and it must be

good, for I am speaking of people who lead prayerful and good lives),

he cannot possibly enter the mansions near the King.

6. Something of the same sort happens if such people meet with contempt

or want of due respect. God often gives them grace to bear it well, as

He loves to see virtue upheld in public, and will not have it condemned

in those who practise it, or else because these persons have served Him

faithfully, and He, our supreme Good, is exceedingly good to us all;

nevertheless, these persons are disturbed, and cannot overcome or get

rid of the feeling for some time. [100] Alas! have they not long

meditated on the pains our Lord endured and how well it is for us to

suffer, and have even longed to do so? They wish every one were as

virtuous as they are; and God grant they do not consider other people

to blame for their troubles and attribute merit to themselves!

7. You may think, my daughters, that I have wandered from the subject,

for all this does not concern you: nothing of the sort occurs to us

here, where we neither own nor wish for any property, nor endeavour to

gain it, and no one does us any wrong. The instances I have mentioned

do not coincide exactly, yet conclusions applicable to us may be drawn

from them, which it would be neither well nor necessary to state. These

will teach you whether you are really detached from all you have left;

trifling occasions often occur, although perhaps not quite of the same

kind, by which you can prove to yourselves whether you have obtained

the mastery over your passions.

8. Believe me, the question is not whether we wear the religious habit

or not, but whether we practise the virtues and submit our will in all

things to the will of God. The object of our life must be to do what He

requires of us: let us not ask that our will may be done, but His. If

we have not yet attained to this, let us be humble, as I said above.

Humility is the ointment for our wounds; if we have it, although

perhaps He may defer His coming for a time, God, Who is our Physician,

will come and heal us. 9. The penances performed by the persons I spoke

of are as well regulated as their life, which they value very highly

because they wish to serve our Lord with it--in which there is nothing

to blame--so they are very discreet in their mortifications lest they

should injure their health. Never fear they will kill themselves: they

are far too sensible! Their love is not strong enough to overcome their

reason; I wish it were--that they might not be content to creep on

their way to God: a pace that will never bring them to their journey's

end!

10. We seem to ourselves to be making progress, yet we become weary,

for, believe me, we are walking through a mist; it will be fortunate if

we do not lose ourselves. Do you think, my daughters, if we could

travel from one country to another in eight days, that it would be well

to spend a year on the journey, through wind, snow, and inundations and

over bad roads? [101] Would it not be better to get it over at once,

for it is full of dangers and serpents? Oh, how many striking instances

could I give you of this! God grant that I have passed beyond this

state myself: often I think that I have not.

11. All things obstruct us while prudence rules our actions; we are

afraid of everything and therefore fear to make progress--as if we

could reach the inner chambers while others make the journey for us! As

this is impossible, sisters, for the love of God let us exert

ourselves, and leave our reason and our fears in His hands, paying no

attention to the weaknesses of nature which might retard us. Let our

Superiors, to whom the charge belongs, look after our bodies; let our

only care be to hasten to our Lord's presence--for though there are few

or no indulgences to be obtained here, yet, regard for health might

mislead us and it would be none the better for our care, as I know

well.

12. I know, too, that our bodies are not the chief factors in the work

we have before us; they are accessory: extreme humility is the

principal point. It is the want of this, I believe, that stops people's

progress. It may seem that we have made but little way: we should

believe that is the case, and that our sisters are advancing much more

rapidly than we are. Not only should we wish others to consider us the

worst of all; we should endeavour to make them think so. If we act in

this manner, our soul will do well; otherwise we shall make no progress

and shall always remain the prey to a thousand troubles and miseries.

The way will be difficult and wearisome without self-renunciation,

weighed down as we are by the burden and frailties of human nature,

which are no longer felt in the more interior mansions.

13. In these third mansions the Lord never fails to repay our services,

both as a just and even as a merciful God, Who always bestows on us far

more than we deserve, giving us greater happiness than could be

obtained from any earthly pleasures and amusements. I think He grants

few consolations here, except, perhaps, occasionally to entice us to

prepare ourselves to enter the last mansions by showing us their

contents. There may appear to you to be no difference except in name

between sensible devotion, and consolations and you may ask why I

distinguish them. I think there is a very great difference, but I may

be mistaken.

14. This will be best explained while writing of the fourth mansion,

which comes next, when I must speak of the consolations received there

from our Lord. The subject may appear futile, yet may prove useful by

urging souls who know what each mansion contains to strive to enter the

best. It will solace those whom God has advanced so far; others, who

thought they had reached the summit, will be abashed, yet if they are

humble they will be led to thank God.

15. Those who do not receive these consolations may feel a despondency

that is uncalled for, since perfection does not consist in consolation

but in greater love; our reward will be in proportion to this, and to

the justice and sincerity of our actions. Perhaps you wonder, then, why

I treat of these interior favours and their nature. I do not know; ask

him who bade me write this. I must obey Superiors, not argue with them,

which I have no right to do.

16. I assure you that when I had neither received these favours, [102]

nor understood them by experience, or ever expected to (and rightly

so, for I should have felt reassured if I had known or even conjectured

that I was pleasing to God in any way), yet when I read of the mercies

and consolations that our Lord grants to His servants, I was delighted

and praised Him fervently. If such as myself acted thus, how much more

would the humble and good glorify Him! I think it is worth while to

explain these subjects and show what consolations and delights we lose

through our own fault, if only for the sake of moving a single soul to

praise God once.

17. When these joys are from God they come laden with love and

strength, which aid the soul on its way and increase its good works and

virtues. Do not imagine that it is unimportant whether you try to

obtain these graces or no; if you are not to blame, the Lord is just:

what He refuses in one way, His Majesty will give you in another, as He

knows how; His secret ways are very mysterious, and doubtless He will

do what is best for you.

18. Souls who by God's mercy are brought so far (which, as I said, is

no small mercy, for they are likely to ascend still higher) will be

greatly benefited by practising prompt obedience. Even if they are not

in the religious state, it would be well if they, like certain other

people, were to take a director, [103] so as never to follow their

own will, which is the cause of most of our ills. They should not

choose one of their own turn of mind [104] (as the saying goes), who

is over prudent in his actions, but should select one thoroughly

detached from worldly things; it is very helpful to consult a person

who has learnt and can teach this. It is encouraging to see that trials

which seemed to us impossible to submit to are possible to others, and

that they bear them sweetly. Their flight makes us try to soar, like

nestlings taught by the elder birds, who, though they cannot fly far at

first, little by little imitate their parents: I know the great benefit

of this. However determined such persons may be not to offend our Lord,

they must not expose themselves to temptation: they are still near the

first mansions to which they might easily return. Their strength is not

yet established on a solid foundation like that of souls exercised in

sufferings, who know how little cause there is to fear the tempests of

this world and care nothing for its pleasures: beginners might succumb

before any severe trial. Some great persecution, such as the devil

knows how to raise to injure us, might make beginners turn back; while

zealously trying to withdraw others from sin they might succumb to the

attacks made upon them.

19. Let us look at our own faults, and not at other persons'. People

who are extremely correct themselves are often shocked at everything

they see [105] ; however, we might often learn a great deal that is

essential from the very persons whom we censure. Our exterior

comportment and manners may be better--this is well enough, but not of

the first importance. We ought not to insist on every one following in

our footsteps, nor to take upon ourselves to give instructions in

spirituality when, perhaps, we do not even know what it is. Zeal for

the good of souls, though given us by God, may often lead us astray,

sisters; it is best to keep our rule, which bids us ever to live in

silence and in hope. [106] Our Lord will care for the souls belonging

to Him; and if we beg His Majesty to do so, by His grace we shall be

able to aid them greatly. May He be for ever blessed!

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[97] See letter concerning Francisco de Salcedo. Nov. 1576. Vol. II.

[98] Way of Perf. ch, xxxviii. 7.

[99] Way of Perf. ch, xxxviii, 10. Concep. ch. ii. 11, 12. Life, xi. 3.

[100] Way of Perf.. ch. xxxviii. 12.

[101] St. Teresa very probably had in her mind her journey, to make a

foundation at Seville, when the boat, which was crossing the

Guadalquivir, narrowly escaped being carried down the river by the

current. Found. ch. xxiv, 6

[102] Life, ch. xii. 2. Rel. vii. 3.

[103] Life. ch. xiii. 29.

[104] Rel. vii. 18.

[105] Way of Perf. ch. vii. 6. Castle, M. I. ch. ii. 20, 21.

[106] Isa. xxx. 15: In silentio et in spe erit fortitudo vestra.' Rule

� 13.

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THE FOURTH MANSIONS

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CHAPTER I.

HOW SWEETNESS AND TENDERNESS IN PRAYER DIFFER FROM CONSOLATIONS.

EXPLAINS HOW ADVANTAGEOUS IT WAS FOR ST. TERESA TO COMPREHEND THAT THE

IMAGINATION AND THE UNDERSTANDING ARE NOT THE SAME THING. THIS CHAPTER

IS USEFUL FOR THOSE WHOSE THOUGHTS WANDER MUCH DURING PRAYER.

1. Graces received in this mansion. 2. Mystic favours. 3. Temptations

bring humility and merit. 4. Sensible devotion and natural joys. 5.

Sweetness in devotion. 6. St. Teresa's experience of it. 7. Love of

God, and how to foster it. 8. Distractions. 9. They do not destroy

divine union. 10. St. Teresa's physical distractions. 11. How to treat

distractions. 12. They should be disregarded. 13. Self-knowledge

necessary.

1. Now that I commence writing about the fourth mansions, it is

requisite, as I said, [107] to commend myself to the Holy Ghost and

to beg Him henceforth to speak for me, that I may be enabled to treat

these matters intelligibly. Henceforth they begin to be supernatural

and it will be most difficult to speak clearly about them, [108]

unless His Majesty undertakes it for me, as He did when I explained the

subject (as far as I understood it) somewhat about fourteen years ago.

[109] I believe I now possess more light about the favours God grants

some souls, but that is different from being able to elucidate them.

[110] May His Majesty enable me to do so if it would be useful, but

not otherwise.

2. As these mansions are nearer the King's dwelling they are very

beautiful, and so subtle are the things seen and heard in them, that,

as those tell us who have tried to do so, the mind cannot give a lucid

idea of them to those inexperienced in the matter. People who have

enjoyed these favours, especially if it was to any great extent, will

easily comprehend me.

3. Apparently a person must have dwelt for a long time in the former

mansions before entering these; although in ordinary cases the soul

must have been in the last one spoken of, yet, as you must often have

heard, there is no fixed rule, for God gives when, how, and to whom He

wills [111] --the goods are His own, and His choice wrongs no one.

[112] The poisonous reptiles rarely come into these rooms, and, if

they enter, do more good than harm. I think it is far better for them

to get in and make war on the soul in this state of prayer; were it not

tempted, the devil might sometimes deceive it about divine

consolations, thus injuring it far more. Besides, the soul would

benefit less, because all occasions of gaining merit would be

withdrawn, were it left continually absorbed in God. I am not confident

that this absorption is genuine when it always remains in the same

state, nor does it appear to me possible for the Holy Ghost to dwell

constantly within us, to the same extent, during our earthly exile.

4. I will now describe, as I promised, the difference between sweetness

in prayer and spiritual consolations. It appears to me that what we

acquire for ourselves in meditation and petitions to our Lord may be

termed sweetness in devotion.' [113] It is natural, although

ultimately aided by the grace of God. I must be understood to imply

this in all I say, for we can do nothing without Him. This sweetness

arises principally from the good work we perform, and appears to result

from our labours: well may we feel happy at having thus spent our time.

We shall find, on consideration, that many temporal matters give us the

same pleasure--such as unexpectedly coming into a large fortune,

suddenly meeting with a dearly-loved friend, or succeeding in any

important or influential affair which makes a sensation in the world.

Again, it would be felt by one who had been told her husband, brother,

or son was dead, and who saw him return to her alive. I have seen

people weep from such happiness, as I have done myself. I consider both

these joys and those we feel in religious matters to be natural ones.

Although there is nothing wrong about the former, yet those produced by

devotion spring from a more noble source--in short, they begin in

ourselves and end in God. Spiritual consolations, on the contrary,

arise from God, and our nature feels them and rejoices as keenly in

them, and indeed far more keenly, than in the others I described.

5. O Jesus! how I wish I could elucidate this point! It seems to me

that I can perfectly distinguish the difference between the two joys,

yet I have not the skill to make myself understood; may God give it me!

I remember a verse we say at Prime at the end of the final Psalm; the

last words are: Cum dilatasti cor meum'--When Thou didst dilate my

heart: [114] To those with much experience, this suffices to show the

difference between sweetness in prayer and spiritual consolations;

other people will require more explanation. The sensible devotion I

mentioned does not dilate the heart, but generally appears to narrow it

slightly; although joyful at seeing herself work for God, yet such a

person sheds tears of sorrow which seem partly produced by the

passions. I know little about the passions of the soul, or I could

write of them more clearly and could better define what comes from the

sensitive disposition and what is natural, having passed through this

state myself, but I am very stupid. Knowledge and learning are a great

advantage to every one.

6. My own experience of this delight and sweetness in meditation was

that when I began to weep over the Passion I could not stop until I had

a severe headache; [115] the same thing occurred when I grieved over

my sins: this was a great grace from our Lord. I do not intend to

inquire now which of these states of prayer is the better, but I wish I

knew how to explain the difference between the two. In that of which I

speak, the tears and good desires are often partly caused by the

natural disposition, but although this may be the case, yet, as I said,

these feelings terminate in God. Sensible devotion is very desirable if

the soul is humble enough to understand that it is not more holy on

account of these sentiments, which cannot always with certainty be

ascribed to charity, and even then are still the gift of God.

7. These feelings of devotion are most common with souls in the first

three mansions, who are nearly always using their understanding and

reason in making meditations. This is good for them, for they have not

been given grace for more; they should, however, try occasionally to

elicit some acts such as praising God, rejoicing in His goodness and

that He is what He is: let them desire that He may be honoured and

glorified. They must do this as best they can, for it greatly inflames

the will. Let them be very careful, when God gives these sentiments,

not to set them aside in order to finish their accustomed meditation.

But, having spoken fully on this subject elsewhere, [116] I will say

no more now. I only wish to warn you that to make rapid progress and to

reach the mansions we wish to enter, it is not so essential to think

much as to love much: therefore you must practise whatever most excites

you to this. Perhaps we do not know what love is, nor does this greatly

surprise me. Love does not consist in great sweetness of devotion, but

in a fervent determination to strive to please God in all things, in

avoiding, as far as possible, all that would offend Him, and in praying

for the increase of the glory and honour of His Son and for the growth

of the Catholic Church. These are the signs of love; do not imagine

that it consists in never thinking of anything but God, and that if

your thoughts wander a little all is lost. [117]

8. I, myself, have sometimes been troubled by this turmoil of thoughts.

I learnt by experience, but little more than four years ago, that our

thoughts, or it is clearer to call it our imagination, are not the same

thing as the understanding. I questioned a theologian on the subject;

he told me it was the fact, which consoled me not a little. As the

understanding is one of the powers of the soul, it puzzled me to see it

so sluggish at times, while, as a rule, the imagination takes flight at

once, so that God alone can control it by so uniting us to Himself

[118] that we seem, in a manner, detached from our bodies. It puzzled

me to see that while to all appearance the powers of the soul were

occupied with God and recollected in Him, the imagination was wandering

elsewhere.

9. Do Thou, O Lord, take into account all that we suffer in this way

through our ignorance. We err in thinking that we need only know that

we must keep our thoughts fixed on Thee. We do not understand that we

should consult those better instructed than ourselves, nor are we aware

that there is anything for us to learn. We pass through terrible

trials, on account of not understanding our own nature and take what is

not merely harmless, but good, for a grave fault. This causes the

sufferings felt by many people, particularly by the unlearned, who

practise prayer. They complain of interior trials, become melancholy,

lose their health, and even give up prayer altogether for want of

recognizing that we have within ourselves as it were, an interior

world. We cannot stop the revolution of the heavens as they rush with

velocity upon their course, neither can we control our imagination.

When this wanders we at once imagine that all the powers of the soul

follow it; we think everything is lost, and that the time spent in

God's presence is wasted. Meanwhile, the soul is perhaps entirely

united to Him in the innermost mansions, while the imagination is in

the precincts of the castle, struggling with a thousand wild and

venomous creatures and gaining merit by its warfare. Therefore we need

not let ourselves be disturbed, nor give up prayer, as the devil is

striving to persuade us. As a rule, all our anxieties and troubles come

from misunderstanding our own nature.

10. Whilst writing this I am thinking of the loud noise in my head

which I mentioned in the Introduction, and which has made it almost

impossible to obey the command given me to write this. It sounds as if

there were a number of rushing waterfalls within my brain, while in

other parts, drowned by the sound of the waters, are the voices of

birds singing and whistling. This tumult is not in my ears, but in the

upper part of my head, where, they say, is placed the superior part of

the soul. I have long thought that this must be so because the flight

of the spirit seems to take place from this part with great velocity.

[119] Please God I may recollect to explain the cause when writing of

the latter mansions, this not being the proper place for it. It may be

that God has sent this suffering in my head to help me to understand

the matter, for all this tumult in my brain does not interfere with my

prayer, nor with my speaking to you, but the great calm and love and

desires in my soul remain undisturbed and my mind is clear.

11. How, then, can the superior part of the soul remain undisturbed if

it resides in the upper part of the brain? I cannot account for it, but

am sure that I am speaking the truth. This noise disturbs my prayer

when unaccompanied with ecstasy, but when it is ecstatic I do not feel

any pain, however great. I should suffer keenly were I forced to cease

praying on account of these infirmities. We should not be distressed by

reason of our thoughts, nor allow ourselves to be worried by them: if

they come from the devil, he will let us alone if we take no notice of

them; and if they are, as often happens, one of the many frailties

entailed by Adam's sin, let us be patient and suffer them for the love

of God. Likewise, since we must eat and sleep without being able to

avoid it, much to our grief, let us acknowledge that we are human, and

long to be where no one may despise us. [120] Sometimes I recall

these words, spoken by the Spouse in the Canticle; [121] truly never

in our lives have we better reason to say them, for I think no earthly

scorn or suffering can try us so severely as these struggles within our

souls. All uneasiness or conflict can be borne while we have peace in

ourselves, as I said; but if, while seeking for rest amidst the

thousand trials of the world--knowing that God has prepared this rest

for us--the obstacle is found in ourselves, the trial must prove

painful and almost insufferable.

12. Take us therefore, O Lord, to where these miseries can no longer

cause us to be despised, for sometimes it seems as if they mocked our

souls. Even in this life God delivers us from them when we reach the

last mansion, as by His grace I will show you. Everybody is not so

violently distressed and assaulted by these weaknesses as I have been

for many years, [122] on account of my wickedness, so that it seems

as if I strove to take vengeance on myself. [123] Since I suffer so

much in this way, perhaps you may do the same, so I shall continue to

explain the subject to you in different ways, in order to find some

means of making it clear. The thing is inevitable, therefore do not let

it disturb or grieve you, but let the mill clack on while we grind our

wheat; that is, let us continue to work with our will and intellect.

13. These troubles annoy us more or less according to the state of our

health or in different circumstances. The poor soul suffers; although

not now to blame, it has sinned at other times, and must be patient. We

are so ignorant that what we have read and been told has not sufficed

to teach us to disregard wandering thoughts, therefore I shall not be

wasting time in instructing and consoling you about these trials.

However, this will help you but little until God chooses to enlighten

you, and additional measures are needed: His Majesty wishes us to learn

by ordinary means to understand ourselves and to recognize the share

taken in these troubles by our wandering imagination, our nature, and

the devil's temptations, instead of laying all the blame on our souls.

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[107] First Mansions, ch. i. 1.

[108] There are two kinds of contemplation: acquired or natural, and

infused or supernatural. In their widest sense, including many

remarkable phenomena of Natural religion, and, of course, the most

wonderful manifestations recorded in the Old Testament, they form the

system called Mysticism and are the proper object of Mystical theology.

Natural or acquired contemplation is based upon an idealistic turn of

mind which enables the soul to gaze upon the Godhead (simple gaze, as

St. Teresa calls it) without approaching Him by the laborious process

of reasoning, and in so doing embraces Him with its affective powers;

like a person who, devoid of technical skill, takes in and is enamoured

by, the beauty of a painting. Infused contemplation is the highest act

of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost of Knowledge and Wisdom. It is often

impossible, nor is it always essential, to determine where acquired

contemplation ends and infused contemplation begins. But it should be

borne in mind that both the one and the other are operations and not

merely a passive state or mere fruition. Even the highest form of

contemplation, the Beatific Vision, is a supernatural act of the soul,

an operation of unending duration. A ship moved by a gentle breeze is

rightly said to be actually sailing though the rowers are at rest.

[109] Life, ch. xii. 11.

[110] Life, ch. xvii. 7.

[111] Philippus a SS. Trinitate, Summa Tleologi� Mystic�, pars iii.

tract. i. disc. iii. art. 2. Life, ch. xv. 11, xxii. 22, 23. Way of

Perf. ch. xvi. 4, xli. 2. Concep. ch. v. 3.

[112] S. Matt. xx. 15: Aut non licet mihi quod volo facere?'

[113] Way of Perf., ch. xix. 8. Castle, M. iv. ch. ii. 4. The first

three mansions of the Interior Castle correspond with the first water,'

or the prayer of Meditation, explained in ch. xi-xiii. of the Life; the

fourth mansion, or the prayer of Quiet, with the second water,' Life,

ch. xiv. and xv.; the fifth mansion, or the prayer of Union, with the

third water,' Life, ch. xvi. and xvii.; and the sixth mansion, ecstasy,

etc., with the fourth water,' Life, ch. xviii.-xxi.

[114] Ps. cxviii. 32. Way of Perf. ch. xxviii. 11.

[115] Life, ch. iii. 1.

[116] Life, ch. xii. 2-4..

[117] Found. ch. v. 2. Way of Perf. ch. xxxi. 6, 12. Life, ch. xv, 16,

ch. XXX. 19.

[118] Life, ch. xv. 9, 10.

[119] Second Relation addressed to Fr. Rodrigo Alvarez.

[120] Way of Perf. ch. xxxiii. 8. Life, ch. xxi. S. Rel. ii. 12.

[121] According to Fr. Gracian the Saint here refers to Cant. viii. 1:

Et jam me nemo despiciat.'

[122] Way of Perf. ch. xvii. 2.

[123] Way of Perf. ch, xxxi. 9.

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CHAPTER II.

CONTINUES THE SAME SUBJECT, EXPLAINING BY A COMPARISON IN WHAT DIVINE

CONSOLATIONS CONSIST: AND HOW WE OUGHT TO TRY TO PREPARE OURSELVES TO

RECEIVE THEM, WITHOUT ENDEAVOURING TO OBTAIN THEM.

1. Physical results of sensible devotion. 2. Effects of divine

consolations. 3. The two fountains. 4. They symbolize two kinds of

prayer. 5. Divine consolations shared by body and soul. 6. The incense

within the soul. 7. Graces received in this prayer. 8. Such favours not

to be sought after.

1. GOD help me! how I have wandered from my subject! I forget what I

was speaking about, for my occupations and ill-health often force me to

cease writing until some more suitable time. The sense will be very

disconnected; as my memory is extremely bad and I have no time to read

over what is written, even what I really understand is expressed very

vaguely, at least so I fear. I think I said that spiritual consolations

are occasionally connected with the passions. These feelings of

devotion produce fits of sobbing; I have even heard that sometimes they

cause a compression of the chest, and uncontrollable exterior motions

violent enough to cause bleeding at the nose and other painful effects.

[124]

2. I can say nothing about this, never having experienced anything of

the kind myself; but there appears some cause for comfort in it,

because, as I said, all ends in the desire to please God and to enjoy

His presence. What I call divine consolations, or have termed elsewhere

the 'prayer of quiet,' is a very different thing, as those will

understand who, by the mercy of God, have experienced them.

3. To make the matter clearer, let us imagine we see two fountains with

basins which fill with water. I can find no simile more appropriate

than water by which to explain spiritual things, as I am very ignorant

and have poor wits to help me. [125] Besides, I love this element so

much that I have studied it more attentively than other things. God,

Who is so great, so wise, has doubtless hidden secrets in all things He

created, which we should greatly benefit by knowing, as those say who

understand such matters. Indeed, I believe that in each smallest

creature He has made, though it be but a tiny ant, there are more

wonders than can be comprehended. These two basins are filled in

different ways; the one with water from a distance flowing into it

through many pipes and waterworks, while the other basin is built near

the source of the spring itself and fills quite noiselessly. If the

fountain is plentiful, like the one we speak of, after the basin is

full the water overflows in a great stream which flows continually. No

machinery is needed here, nor does the water run through aqueducts.

4. Such is the difference between the two kinds of prayer. The water

running through the aqueducts resembles sensible devotion, which is

obtained by meditation. We gain it by our thoughts, by meditating on

created things, and by the labour of our minds; in short, it is the

result of our endeavours, and so makes the commotion I spoke of, while

profiting the soul. [126] The other fountain, like divine

consolations, receives the water from the source itself, which

signifies God: as usual, when His Majesty wills to bestow on us any

supernatural favours, we experience the greatest peace, calm, and

sweetness in the inmost depths of our being; I know neither where nor

how.

5. This joy is not, like earthly happiness, at once felt by the heart;

after gradually filling it to the brim, the delight overflows

throughout all the mansions and faculties, until at last it reaches the

body. Therefore, I say it arises from God and ends in ourselves, for

whoever experiences it will find that the whole physical part of our

nature shares in this delight and sweetness. While writing this I have

been thinking that the verse Dilatasti cor meum,' Thou hast dilated my

heart,' [127] declares that the heart is dilated. This joy does not

appear to me to originate in the heart, but in some more interior part

and, as it were, in the depths of our being. I think this must be the

centre of the soul, as I have since learnt and will explain later on. I

discover secrets within us which often fill me with astonishment: how

many more must there be unknown to me! O my Lord and my God! how

stupendous is Thy grandeur! We are like so many foolish peasant lads:

we think we know something of Thee, yet it must be comparatively

nothing, for there are profound secrets even in ourselves of which we

know naught. I say comparatively nothing' in proportion with all the

secrets hidden within Thee, yet how great are Thy mysteries that we are

acquainted with and can learn even by the study of such of Thy works as

we see! [128]

6. To return to the verse I quoted, which may help to explain the

dilation begun by the celestial waters in the depths of our being. They

appear to dilate and enlarge us internally, and benefit us in an

inexplicable manner, nor does even the soul itself understand what it

receives. It is conscious of what may be described as a certain

fragrance, as if within its inmost depths were a brazier sprinkled with

sweet perfumes. Although the spirit neither sees the flame nor knows

where it is, yet it is penetrated by the warmth, and scented fumes,

which are even sometimes perceived by the body. Understand me, the soul

does not feel any real heat or scent, but something far more subtle,

which I use this metaphor to explain. Let those who have never

experienced it believe that it really occurs to others: the soul is

conscious of it and feels it more distinctly than can be expressed. It

is not a thing we can fancy or gain by anything we can do; clearly it

does not arise from the base coin of human nature, but from the most

pure gold of Divine Wisdom. I believe that in this case the powers of

the soul are not united to God, but are absorbed and astounded at the

marvel before them. I may possibly be contradicting what I wrote

elsewhere; [129] nor would this be surprising, for it was done about

fifteen years ago, and perhaps God has given me since then a clearer

insight into the matter. I may be entirely mistaken on the subject,

both then and now, but never do I wilfully say what is untrue. No; by

the mercy of God, I would rather die a thousand times than tell a

falsehood: I speak of the matter as I understand it. I believe that in

this case the will must in some way be united with that of God. The

after effects on the soul, and the subsequent behaviour of the person,

show whether this prayer was genuine or no: this is the best crucible

by which to test it.

7. Our Lord bestows a signal grace on the soul if it realizes how great

is this favour, and another greater still if it does not turn back on

the right road. You are longing, my daughters, to enter into this state

of prayer at once, and you are right, for, as I said, the soul cannot

understand the value of the graces there bestowed by God upon it, nor

the love which draws Him ever closer to it: we should certainly desire

to learn how to obtain this favour. I will tell you what I know about

it, setting aside certain cases in which God bestows these graces for

no other reason than His own choice, into which we have no right to

enquire.

8. Practise what I advised in the preceding mansions, then--humility,

humility! for God lets Himself be vanquished by this and grants us all

we ask. [130] The first proof [131] that you possess humility is that

you neither think you now deserve these graces and consolations from

God, nor that you ever will as long as you live. You ask me: How shall

we receive them, if we do not try to gain them?' I answer, that there

is no surer way to obtain them than the one I have told you, therefore

make no efforts to acquire them, for the following reasons. The first

is, that the chief means of obtaining them is to love God without

self-interest. The second, that it is a slight lack of humility to

think that our wretched services can win so great a reward. The third,

that the real preparation for them is to desire to suffer and imitate

our Lord, rather than to receive consolations, for indeed we have all

offended Him. The fourth reason is, that His Majesty has not promised

to give us these favours in the same way as He has bound Himself to

bestow eternal glory on us if we keep His commandments. We can be saved

without these special graces; He sees better than we do what is best

for us and which of us love Him sincerely. I know for a certain truth,

being acquainted with some who walk by the way of love (and therefore

only seek to serve Jesus Christ crucified), that not only they neither

ask for nor desire consolation, but they even beg Him not to give it

them during this life: this is a fact. Fifthly, we should but labour in

vain: this water does not flow through aqueducts, like that we first

spoke of, and if the spring does not afford it, in vain shall we toil

to obtain it. I mean, that though we may meditate and try our hardest,

and though we shed tears to gain it, we cannot make this water flow.

God alone gives it to whom He chooses, and often when the soul is least

thinking of it. We are His, sisters, let Him do what He will with us,

and lead us where He will. If we are really humble and annihilate

ourselves, not only in our imagination (which often deceives us), but

if we truly detach ourselves from all things, our Lord will not only

grant us these favours but many others that we do not know even how to

desire. May He be for ever praised and blessed! Amen.

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[124] 'A clear description of an attack of hysteria with the

significant remark that she herself had never experienced anything of

the kind'. (Dr. Goix, quoted by P. Gr�goire, La pr�tendue hyst�rie de

Sainte Th�r�se, Lyon, Vitte, 1895, p. 53.)

[125] Way of Perf. ch. xix. 5; also St. John of the Cross, Ascent of

Mount Carmel, bk. ii, ch. xiv, 2, and xxi. 3.

[126] Life, ch. x. 2.

[127] Ps. cxviii. 32. Life, ch. xvii. 14,

[128] Life, ch. xiv. 9. Way of Perf. ch. xxviii. 11.

[129] Life, ch. xiv. 3: The faculties are not lost, neither are they

asleep; the will alone is occupied in such a way that without knowing

how it has become a captive it gives a simple consent to become the

prisoner of God.' Ibid. � 4: The other two faculties help the will that

it may render itself capable of the fruition of so great a good;

nevertheless, it occasionally happens even when the will is in union

that they hinder it very much.' See also Way of Perf. ch. xxxi. 8.

[130] Way of Perf. ch. xvi. i. Life, ch. xxii. 16.

[131] Philippus a SS. Trinitate, l.c. art. 3.

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CHAPTER III.

OF THE PRAYER OF RECOLLECTION WHICH GOD GENERALLY GIVES THE SOUL BEFORE

GRANTING IT THAT LAST DESCRIBED. ITS EFFECTS: ALSO THOSE OF THE PRAYER

OF DIVINE CONSOLATIONS DESCRIBED IN THE LAST CHAPTER.

1. The Prayer of recollection compared to the inhabitants of the

castle. 2. The Shepherd recalls His flock into the castle. 3. This

recollection supernatural. 4. It prepares us for higher favours. 5. The

mind must act until God calls it to recollection by love. 6. The soul

should here abandon itself into God's hands. 7. The prayer of

recollection, and distractions in Prayer. 8. Liberty of spirit gained

by consolations. 9. The soul must be watchful. 10. The devil specially

tempts such souls. 11. False trances and raptures. 12. How to treat

those deluded in this way. 13. Risks of delusion in this mansion.

1. THE effects of divine consolations are very numerous: before

describing them, I will speak of another kind of prayer which usually

precedes them. I need not say much on this subject, having written

about it elsewhere. [132] This is a kind of recollection which, I

believe, is supernatural. There is no occasion to retire nor to shut

the eyes, nor does it depend on anything exterior; involuntarily the

eyes suddenly close and solitude is found. Without any labour of one's

own, the temple of which I spoke is reared for the soul in which to

pray: the senses and exterior surroundings appear to lose their hold,

while the spirit gradually regains its lost sovereignty. Some say the

soul enters into itself; others, that it rises above itself. [133] I

can say nothing about these terms, but had better speak of the subject

as I understand it. You will probably grasp my meaning, although,

perhaps, I may be the only person who understands it. Let us imagine

that the senses and powers of the soul (which I compared in my allegory

to the inhabitants of the castle) have fled and joined the enemy

outside. After long days and years of absence, perceiving how great has

been their loss, they return to the neighbourhood of the castle, but

cannot manage to re-enter it, for their evil habits are hard to break

off; still, they are no longer traitors, and they wander about outside.

2. The King, Who holds His court within it, sees their good will, and

out of His great mercy desires them to return to Him. Like a good

Shepherd, He plays so sweetly on His pipe, that although scarcely

hearing it they recognize His call and no longer wander, but return,

like lost sheep, to the mansions. So strong is this Pastor's power over

His flock, that they abandon the worldly cares which misled them and

re-enter the castle.

3. I think I never put this matter so clearly before. To seek God

within ourselves avails us far more than to look for Him amongst

creatures; Saint Augustine tells us how he found the Almighty within

his own soul, after having long sought for Him elsewhere. [134] This

recollection helps us greatly when God bestows it upon us. But do not

fancy you can gain it by thinking of God dwelling within you, or by

imagining Him as present in your soul: this is a good practice and an

excellent kind of meditation, for it is founded on the fact that God

resides within us; [135] it is not, however, the prayer of

recollection, for by the divine assistance every one can practise it,

but what I mean is quite a different thing. Sometimes, before they have

begun to think of God, the powers of the soul find themselves within

the castle. I know not by what means they entered, nor how they heard

the Shepherd's pipe; the ears perceived no sound but the soul is keenly

conscious of a delicious sense of recollection experienced by those who

enjoy this favour, which I cannot describe more clearly.

4. I think I read somewhere [136] that the soul is then like a

tortoise or sea-urchin, which retreats into itself. Those who said this

no doubt understood what they were talking about; but these creatures

can withdraw into themselves at will, while here it is not in our power

to retire into ourselves, unless God gives us the grace. In my opinion,

His Majesty only bestows this favour on those who have renounced the

world, in desire at least, if their state of life does not permit their

doing so in fact. He thus specially calls them to devote themselves to

spiritual things; if they allow Him power to at freely He will bestow

still greater graces on those whom He thus begins calling to a higher

life. Those who enjoy this recollection should thank God fervently: it

is of the highest importance for them to realize the value of this

favour, gratitude for which would prepare them to receive still more

signal graces. Some books advise that as a preparation for hearing what

our Lord may say to us we should keep our minds at rest, waiting to see

what He will work in our souls. [137] But unless His Majesty has

begun to suspend our faculties, I cannot understand how we are to stop

thinking, without doing ourselves more harm than good. This point has

been much debated by those learned in spiritual matters; I confess my

want of humility in having been unable to yield to their opinion. [138]

5. Some one told me of a certain book written on the subject by the

saintly Friar Peter of Alcantara (as I think I may justly call him); I

should have submitted to his decision, knowing that he was competent to

judge, but on reading it I found he agreed with me that the mind must

act until called to recollection by love, although he stated it in

other words. [139] Possibly I may be mistaken, but I rely on these

reasons. Firstly, he who reasons less and tries to do least, does most

in spiritual matters. We should make our petitions like beggars before

a powerful and rich Emperor; then, with downcast eyes, humbly wait.

When He secretly shows us He hears our prayers, it is well to be

silent, as He has drawn us into His presence; there would then be no

harm in trying to keep our minds at rest (that is to say, if we can).

If, however, the King makes no sign of listening or of seeing us, there

is no need to stand inert, like a dolt, which the soul would resemble

if it continued inactive. In this case its dryness would greatly

increase, and the imagination would be made more restless than before

by its very effort to think of nothing. Our Lord wishes us at such a

time to offer Him our petitions and to place ourselves in His presence;

He knows what is best for us.

6. I believe that human efforts avail nothing in these matters, which

His Majesty appears to reserve to Himself, setting this limit to our

powers. In many other things, such as penances, good works, and

prayers, with His aid we can help ourselves as far as human weakness

will allow. The second reason is, that these interior operations being

sweet and peaceful, [140] any painful effort does us more harm than

good. By painful effort' I mean any forcible restraint we place on

ourselves, such as holding our breath. [141] We should rather abandon

our souls into the hands of God, leaving Him to do as He chooses with

us, as far as possible forgetting all self-interest and resigning

ourselves entirely to His will. The third reason is, that the very

effort to think of nothing excites our imagination the more. The fourth

is, because we render God the most true and acceptable service by

caring only for His honour and glory and forgetting ourselves, our

advantages, comfort and happiness. How can we be self-oblivious, while

keeping ourselves under such strict control that we are afraid to move,

or even to think, or to leave our minds enough liberty to desire God's

greater glory and to rejoice in the glory which He possesses? When His

Majesty wishes the mind to rest from working He employs it in another

manner, giving it a light and knowledge far above any obtainable by its

own efforts and absorbing it entirely into Himself. Then, though it

knows not how, it is filled with wisdom such as it could never gain for

itself by striving to suspend the thoughts. God gave us faculties for

our use; each of them will receive its proper reward. Then do not let

us try to charm them to sleep, but permit them to do their work until

divinely called to something higher. [142]

7. In my opinion, when God chooses to place the soul in this mansion it

is best for it to do as I advised, and then endeavour, without force or

disturbance, to keep free from wandering thoughts. No effort, however,

should be made to suspend the imagination entirely from arming, for it

is well to remember God's presence and to consider Who He is. If

transported out of itself by its feelings, well and good; but let it

not try to understand what is passing within it, for this favour is

bestowed on the will which should be left to enjoy it in peace, only

making loving aspirations occasionally. Although, in this kind of

prayer, the soul makes no effort towards it, yet often, for a very

short time, the mind ceases to think at all. I explained elsewhere why

this occurs during this spiritual state. [143] On first speaking of

the fourth mansions, I told you I had mentioned divine consolations

before the prayer of recollection. The latter should have come first,

as it is far inferior to consolations, of which it is the commencement.

Recollection does not require us to give up meditation, nor to cease

using our intellect. In the prayer of quiet, when the water flows from

the spring itself and not through conduits, the mind ceases to act; it

is forced to do so, although it does not understand what is happening,

and so wanders hither and thither in bewilderment, finding no place for

rest. Meanwhile the will, entirely united to. God, is much disturbed by

the tumult of the thoughts: no notice, however, should be taken of

them, or they would cause the loss of a great part of the favour the

soul is enjoying. Let the spirit ignore these distractions and abandon

itself in the arms of divine love: His Majesty will teach it how best

to act, which chiefly consists in its recognizing its unworthiness of

so great a good and occupying itself in thanking Him for it.

8. In order to treat of the prayer of recollection, I passed over in

silence the effects and symptoms to be found in souls thus favoured by

God. Divine consolations evidently cause a dilation or enlargement of

the soul that may be compared to water flowing from a spring into a

basin which has no outlet, but is so constructed as to increase in size

and proportion to the quantity poured into it. God seems to work the

same effect by this prayer, besides giving many other marvellous

graces, so preparing and disposing the soul to contain all He intends

to give it. After interior sweetness and dilation the soul is not so

restrained as formerly in God's service, but possesses much more

liberty of spirit. It is no longer distressed by the terror of hell,

for though more anxious than ever not to offend God, it has lost

servile fear and feels sure that one day it will possess its Lord. It

does not dread the loss of health by austerities; [144] believing

that there is nothing it could not do by His grace, it is more desirous

than before of doing penance. Greater indifference is felt for

sufferings because faith being stronger, it trusts that if borne for

God He will give the grace to endure them patiently. Indeed, such a one

at times even longs for trials, having a most ardent desire to do

something for His sake. As the soul better understands the Divine

Majesty, it realizes more vividly its own baseness. Divine consolation

shows it how vile are earthly pleasures; by gradually withdrawing from

them, it gains greater self-mastery. In short, its virtues are

increased and it will not cease to advance in perfection, unless it

turns back and offends God. Should it act thus, it would lose

everything, however high the state it may have reached.

9. It is not to be supposed that all these effects are produced merely

by God's having shown these favours once or twice. They must be

received continually, for it is on their frequent reception that the

whole welfare of the soul depends. I strongly urge those who have

reached this state to avoid most carefully all occasions of offending

God. [145] The soul is not yet fully established in virtue, but is

like a new-born babe first feeding at its mother's breast: [146] if

it leaves her, what can it do but die? I greatly fear that when a soul

to whom God has granted this favour discontinues prayer, except under

urgent necessity, it will, unless it returns to the practice at once,

go from bad to worse.

10. I realize the danger of such a case, having had the grief of

witnessing the fall of persons I knew through their withdrawal from Him

Who sought, with so much love, to make Himself their friend, as He

proved by His treatment of them. I urgently warn such persons not to

run the risk of sinning, for the devil would rather gain one of these

souls than many to whom our Lord does not grant such graces, [147] as

the former may cause him severe loss by leading others to follow their

example, and may even render great service to the Church of God. Were

there no other reason except that he saw the special love His Majesty

bears these people, it would suffice to make Satan frantic to destroy

God's work in them, so that they might be lost eternally. Therefore

they suffer grievous temptations, and if they fall, they fall lower

than others.

11. You, my sisters, are free from such dangers, as far as we can tell:

God keep you from pride and vainglory! The devil sometimes offers

counterfeits of the graces I have mentioned: this can easily be

detected--the effects being exactly contrary to those of the genuine

ones. [148] Although I have spoken of it elsewhere, [149] I wish to

warn you here of a special danger to which those who practise prayer

are subject, particularly women, whose weakness of constitution makes

them more liable to such mistakes. On account of their penances,

prayers, and vigils, or even merely because of debility of health, some

persons cannot receive spiritual consolation without being overcome by

it. On feeling any interior joy, their bodies being languid and weak,

they fall into a slumber--they call it spiritual sleep--which is a more

advanced stage of what I have described; they think the soul shares in

it as well as the body, and abandon themselves to a sort of

intoxication. The more they lose self-control, the more do their

feelings get possession of them, because the frame becomes more feeble.

They fancy this is a trance and call it one, but I call it nonsense; it

does nothing but waste their time and injure their health.

12. This state lasted with a certain person for eight hours, during

which time she was neither insensible, nor had she any thought of God.

[150] She was cured by being made to eat and sleep well and to leave

off some of her penances. Her recovery was owing to some one who

understood her case; hitherto she had unintentionally deceived both her

confessor and other people, as well as herself. I feel quite sure the

devil had been at work here to serve his own ends and he was beginning

to gain a great deal from it. It should be known that when God bestows

such favours on the soul, although there may be languor both of mind

and body, it is not shared by the soul, which feels great delight at

seeing itself so near God, nor does this state ever continue for more

than a very short time. [151] Although the soul may become absorbed

again, yet, as I said, unless already feeble, the body suffers neither

exhaustion nor pain. I advise any of you who experience the latter to

tell the Prioress, and to divert your thoughts as much as possible from

such matters. The Superior should prevent such a nun from spending more

than a very few hours in prayer, and should make her eat and sleep well

until her usual strength is restored, if she has lost it in this way.

[152] If the nun's constitution is so delicate that this does not

suffice, let her believe me when I tell her that God only calls her to

the active life. There must be such people in monasteries: employ her

in the various offices and be careful that she is never left very long

alone, otherwise she will entirely lose her health. This treatment will

be a great mortification to her: our Lord tests her love for Him by the

way in which she bears His absence. He may be pleased, after a time, to

restore her strength; if not, she will make as much progress, and earn

as great a reward by vocal prayer and obedience as she would have done

by contemplation, and perhaps more.

13. There are people, some of whom I have known, whose minds and

imaginations are so active as to fancy they see whatever they think

about, which is very dangerous. [153] Perhaps I may treat of this

later on, but cannot do so now. I have dwelt at length on this mansion,

as I believe it to be the one most souls enter. As the natural is

combined with the supernatural, the devil can do more harm here than

later on, when God does not leave him so many opportunities. May God be

for ever praised! Amen.

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[132] Life, ch. xiv. 2. The Saint says in the second chapter of this

mansion, � 5, and also in letters dated Dec. 7, 1577 (Vol. II) and Jan.

14, 1580, that when writing the Interior Castle she had more experience

in spiritual things than when she composed her former works. This is

fully borne out by the present chapter. In the corresponding part of

her Life she practically confounded the prayer of recollection with the

prayer of quiet (the second state of the soul). Likewise, in the Way of

Perfection, ch. xxviii., she speaks of but one kind of prayer of

recollection and then passes on to the prayer of quiet. Here, however,

she mentions a second form of the prayer of recollection. See Philippus

a SS. Trinitate, pars iii. tract. i, disc. iii. art. 1, De oratione

recollectionis' (page 81 of the third vol. of the edition of 1874); de

secundo modo recollectionis' (ibid. p. 82.); and art. 2: De oratione

quietis' (ibid. p. 84.) Antonius a Spiritu Sancto, Direct. Mystic.

tract. iv. n. 78: Duo sunt hujus recollectionis modi, primus quidem

activus [reference to the Way of Perfection, l.c.], secundus autem

passivus, [reference to this chapter of the Fourth Mansion].' The

former is not supernatural, in the sense that with special grace from

above it can be acquired; the second is altogether supernatural and

more like gratuitous grace (ibid. no. 80 and 81). On the meaning of

Solitude,' Silence,' etc., see Anton. a Sp. S. l.c., tract. i, n.

78-82.

[133] The edition of Burgos (vol. iv, P. 59) refers appropriately to

the following passage in the Tercer Abecedario (See Life, ch. iv, 8) by

the Franciscan friar Francisco de Osuna, a work which exercised a

profound influence on St. Teresa: 'Entering within oneself; and rising

above oneself, are the two principal points in this exercise, those

which, above all others, one ought to strive after, and which give the

highest satisfaction to the soul. There is less labour in entering

within oneself than in rising above oneself and therefore it appears to

me that when the soul is ready and fit for either, you ought to do the

former, because the other will follow without any effort, and will be

all the more pure and spiritual; however, follow what course your soul

prefers as this will bring you more grace and benefit,' (Tr. ix, ch,

viii).

[134] Some editors of the Interior Castle think that St. Teresa refers

to the following passage taken from the Confessions of St. Augustine:

Too late have I loved Thee, O Beauty, ever ancient yet ever new! too

late have I loved Thee! And behold, Thou wert within me and I abroad,

and there I searched for Thee, and, deformed as I was, I pursued the

beauties that Thou hast made. Thou wert with me, but I was not with

Thee. Those things kept me far from Thee, which, unless they were in

Thee, could have had no being' (St. Augustine's Confessions, bk. x, ch.

xxvii.). The Confessions of St. Augustine were first translated into

Spanish by Sebastian Toscano, a Portuguese Augustinian. This edition,

which was published at Salamanca in 1554, was the one used by St.

Teresa. However, it is more probable that here and elsewhere (Life, ch.

xli. 10; Way of Perf. ch. xxviii. 2) St. Teresa quotes a passage which

occurs in a pious book entitled Soliloquia, and erroneously attributed

to St. Augustine: I have gone about the streets and the broad ways of

the city of this world seeking Thee, but have not found Thee for I was

wrong in seeking without for what was within.' (ch. xxxi.) This

treatise which is also quoted by St. John of the Cross, Spiritual

Canticle, stanza i. 7, Ascent of Mount Carmel, bk. i. ch. v. 1,

appeared in a Spanish translation at Valladolid in 1515, at Medina del

Campo in 1553, and at Toledo in 1565.

[135] Life, ch. xiv. 7, 8; 20.

[136] St. Teresa read this in the Tercer Abecedario of Francisco de

Osuna (tr. vi, ch, iv): This exercise concentrates the senses of man in

the interior of the heart where dwells the daughter of the king'; that

is, the Catholic soul; thus recollected, man may well be compared to

the tortoise or sea-urchin which rolls itself up and withdraws within

itself, disregarding everything outside.'

[137] Life. ch, xii. 8.

[138] Life, ch. xiv, 10.

[139] A Golden Treatise of Mental Prayer by St. Peter of Alcantara,

translated by Rev. G. F. Bullock M.A. and edited by Rev. George Seymour

Hollings S.S.J.E. London, Mowbray, 1905, p. 117. Eighth Counsel. Let

the last and chiefest counsel be that in this holy exercise we should

endeavour to unite Meditation with Contemplation making of the one a

ladder for attaining to the other. For this we must know that (p. 118)

the very office of Meditation is to consider Divine things with

studiousness and attention passing from one to another, to move our

hearts to some affection and deep feeling for them, which is as though

one should strike a flint to draw from it the spark. For Contemplation

is to have drawn forth this spark: I mean to have now found this

affection and feeling which were sought for, and to be in peace and

silence enjoying them; not with many discursive and intellectual

speculations but with simple gaze upon the truth. Wherefore, says a

holy teacher, Meditation goes its way and brings forth fruit, with

labour, but Contemplation bears fruit without labour. The one seeketh,

the other findeth; the one consumeth the food, the other enjoys it; the

one discourseth, and maketh reflections, the other is contented with a

simple gaze upon the things, for it hath in possession their love and

joy. Lastly, the one is as the means, the other as the end; the one as

the road and journeying along it, the other as the end of the road and

of the journeying. From this is to be inferred a very common thing,

which all masters of the spiritual life teach, although it is little

(p. 119) understood of those who learn it; which is this, that, as the

means cease when the end has been attained, as the voyaging is over

when the port has been touched, so when, through the working out of our

Meditation, we have come to the repose and sweet savour of

Contemplation, we ought then to cease from that pious and laborious

searching; and being satisfied with the simple gaze upon, and thought

of, God--as though we had Him there present before us--we should rest

in the enjoyment of that affection then given, whether it be of love,

or of admiration, or joy, or other like sentiment. The reason why this

counsel is given is this, that as the aim of this devotion is love and

the affections of the will rather than the speculations of the

understanding, when the will has been caught and taken by this

affection, we should put away all those discursive and intellectual

speculations, so far as we can, in order that our soul with all its

forces may be fastened upon this affection without being diverted by

the action of other influences. A learned teacher, therefore, counsels

us that as soon as anyone feels himself fired by the love of God, he

should first put aside (p. 120.) all these considerations and

thoughts--however exalted they may seem--not because they are really

not good in themselves, but because they are then hindrances to what is

better. and more important. For this is nothing else than that, having

come to the end and purpose of our work, we should stay therein, and

leave Meditation for the love of Contemplation. This may especially be

done at the end of any exercise, that is, after the petition for the

Divine love of which we have spoken, for one reason, because then it is

supposed that the labour of the exercise we have just gone through has

produced some divine devotion and feeling, since, saith the wise man,

Better is the end of prayer than the beginning': and for another

reason, that, after the work of Prayer and Meditation, it is well that

one should give his mind a little rest, and allow it to repose in the

arms of Contemplation. At this point, then, we should put away all

other thoughts that may present themselves, and, quieting the mind and

stilling the memory, fix all upon our Lord; and remembering that we are

then in His presence, no longer dwell upon the details of divine

things. Ibidem p. 121. And not only at the end of the exercise but in

the midst of it, and at whatever part of it, this spiritual swoon

should come upon us, when the intellect is laid to sleep, we should

make this pause, and enjoy the blessing bestowed; and then, when we

have finished the digestion of it, turn to the matter we have in hand,

as the gardener does, when he waters his garden-bed; who, after giving

it (p. 122) a sufficiency of water, holds back the stream, and lets it

soak and spread itself through the depths of the earth; and then when

this hath somewhat dried up, he turns down upon it again the flow of

water that it may receive still more, and be well irrigated.'

[140] Sap. viii. i: Disponit omnia suaviter.'

[141] Life, ch. xv. i.

[142] 'The whole of the time in which our Lord communicates the simple,

loving general attention of which I made mention before, or when the

soul, assisted by grace, is established in that state, we must contrive

to keep the understanding in repose, undisturbed by the intrusion of

forms, figures, or particular knowledge, unless it were slightly and

for an instant, and that with sweetness of love, to enkindle our souls

the more. At other times, however, in all our acts of devotion and good

works, we must make use of good recollections and meditations, so that

we may feel an increase of profit and devotion; most especially

applying ourselves to the life, passion, and death of Jesus Christ, our

Lord, that our life and conduct may be an imitation of His.' (St. John

of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel, bk. ii. ch. xxxii. 7.)

[143] Life, ch. xv. 2.

[144] Life, ch. xxiv. 2.

[145] Way of Perf. ch. xvi. 5. Castle, M. v. ch. i, 2, 3; ii. 4, 5;

iii. 2, 6, 12.

[146] Way of Perf. ch. xxxi. 7. Concept. ch. iv. 6.

[147] Way of Perf. ch. xl. 3.

[148] Life, ch. xx. 31.

[149] Found. ch. vi.

[150] Found. ch. vi. 15.

[151] Life ch. xviii. 16, 17.

[152] Letter of Oct. 23, 1 376. Vol. II.

[153] Found. ch. viii. 7-8.

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THE FIFTH MANSIONS

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CHAPTER I.

BEGINS TO TREAT OF THE UNION OF THE SOUL WITH GOD IN PRAYER. HOW TO BE

SURE THAT WE ARE NOT DECEIVED IN THIS MATTER.

1. Graces of the fifth mansions. 2. Contemplation to be striven for. 3.

Physical effects of the Prayer of union. 4. Amazement of the intellect.

5. The Prayer of union and of quiet contrasted. 6. Divine and earthly

union. 7. Competent directors in these matters. 8. Proof of union. 9.

Assurance left in the soul. 10. Divine union beyond our Power to

obtain.

1. OH, my sisters, how shall I describe the riches, treasures, and joys

contained in the fifth mansions! Would it not be better to say nothing

about them? They are impossible to depict, nor can the mind conceive,

nor any comparisons portray them, all earthly things being too vile to

serve the purpose. Send me, O my Lord, light from heaven that I may

give some to these Thy servants, some of whom by Thy good will often

enjoy these delights, lest the devil in the guise of an angel of light

should deceive those whose only desire is to please Thee.

2. I said some,' but in reality there are very few [154] who never

enter this mansion: some more and some less, but most of them may be

said at least to gain admittance into these rooms. I think that certain

graces I am about to describe are bestowed on only a few of the nuns,

but if the rest only arrive at the portal they receive a great boon

from God, for many are called, but few are chosen.' [155] All we who

wear the holy habit of the Carmelites are called to prayer and

contemplation. This was the object of our Order, [156] to this

lineage we belong. Our holy Fathers of Mount Carmel sought in perfect

solitude and utter contempt of the world for this treasure, this

precious pearl, [157] of which we speak, and we are their

descendants. How little do most of us care to prepare our souls, that

our Lord may reveal this jewel to us! Outwardly we may appear to

practise the requisite virtues, but we have far more to do than this

before it is possible to attain to contemplation, to gain which we

should neglect no means, either small or great. Rouse yourselves, my

sisters, and since some foretaste of heaven may be had on earth, beg

our Lord to give us grace not to miss it through our own fault. Ask Him

to show us where to find it--ask Him to give us strength of soul to dig

until we find this hidden treasure, which lies buried within our

hearts, as I wish to show you if it please God to enable me. I said

strength of soul,' that you might understand that strength of body is

not indispensable when our Lord God chooses to withhold it. He makes it

impossible for no one to gain these riches, but is content that each

should do his best. Blessed be so just a God!

3. But, daughters, if you would purchase this treasure of which we are

speaking, God would have you keep back nothing from Him, little or

great. He will have it all; [158] in proportion to what you know you

have given will your reward be great or small. There is no more certain

sign whether or not we have reached the prayer of union. Do not imagine

that this state of prayer is, like the one preceding it, a sort of

drowsiness (I call it 'drowsiness' because the soul seems to slumber,

being neither quite asleep nor wholly awake). In the prayer of union

the soul is asleep, fast asleep, as regards the world and itself: in

fact, during the short time this state lasts it is deprived of all

feeling whatever, being unable to think on any subject, even if it

wished. No effort is needed here to suspend the thoughts: if the soul

can love it knows not how, nor whom it loves, nor what it desires. In

fact, it has died entirely to this world, to live more truly than ever

in God. This is a delicious death, for the soul is deprived of the

faculties it exercised while in the body: [159] delicious because,

(although not really the case), it seems to have left its mortal

covering to abide more entirely in God. So completely does this take

place, that I know not whether the body retains sufficient life to

continue breathing; on consideration, I believe it does not; at any

rate, if it still breathes, it does so unconsciously.

4. The mind entirely concentrates itself on trying to understand what

is happening, which is beyond its power; it is so astounded that, if

consciousness is not completely lost, at least no movement is possible:

the person may be compared to one who falls into a dead faint with

dismay. [160]

5. Oh, mighty secrets of God! Never should I weary of trying to explain

them if I thought it possible to succeed! I would write a thousand

foolish things that one might be to the point, if only it might make us

praise God more. I said this prayer produced no drowsiness in the mind;

on the other hand, in the prayer (of quiet) described in the last

mansion, until the soul has gained much experience it doubts what

really happened to it. Was it nothing but fancy, or was it a sleep? Did

it come from God or from the devil, disguised as an angel of light?'

The mind feels a thousand misgivings, and well for it that it should,

because, at I said, nature may sometimes deceive us in this case.

Although there is little chance of the poisonous reptiles entering

here, yet agile little lizards will try to slip in, though they can do

no harm, especially if they remain unnoticed. These, as I said, are

trivial fancies of the imagination, which are often very troublesome.

However active these small lizards may be, they cannot enter the fifth

mansion, for neither the imagination, the understanding, nor the memory

has power to hinder the graces bestowed on it. 6. I dare venture to

assert that, if this is genuine union with God, the devil cannot

interfere nor do any harm, for His Majesty is so joined and united with

the essence of the soul, that the evil one dare not approach, nor can

he even understand this mystery. This is certain, for it is said that

the devil does not know our thoughts, much less can he penetrate a

secret so profound that God does not reveal it even to us. [161] Oh,

blessed state, in which this cursed one cannot injure us! What riches

we receive while God so works in us that neither we ourselves nor any

one else can impede Him! What will He not bestow, Who is so eager to

give, and Who can give us all He desires! You may perhaps have been

puzzled at my saying if this is genuine union with God,' as if there

might be other unions. There are indeed--not with God, but with

vanities--when the devil transports the soul passionately addicted to

them, but the union differs from that which is divine and the mind

misses the delight and satisfaction, peace and happiness of divine

union. These heavenly consolations are above all earthly joys,

pleasure, and satisfaction. As great a difference exists between their

origin and that of worldly pleasures as between their opposite effects,

as you know by experience.

7. I said somewhere [162] that the one seems only to touch the

surface of the body, while the other penetrates to the very marrow: I

believe this is correct, and I cannot express myself better. I fancy

that you are not yet satisfied on this question, but are afraid of

deception, for spiritual matters are very hard to explain. Enough,

however, has been said for those who have received this grace, as the

difference between divine union and any other is very striking.

However, I will give you a clear proof which cannot mislead you, nor

leave any doubt whether the favour comes from God or no. His Majesty

brought it back to my memory this very day; it appears to me to be an

unmistakable sign. In difficult questions, although I think I

understand them and am speaking the truth, I always say it appears to

me'; for, in case my opinion is wrong, I am most willing to submit to

the judgment of theologians. Although they may not have had personal

experience in such matters, yet in some way I do not understand, God

Who sets them to give light to His Church enables them to recognize the

truth when it is put before them. If they are not thoughtless and

indevout, but servants of God, they are never dismayed at His mighty

works, knowing perfectly well that it is in His power to perform far

greater wonders. If some of the marvels told are new to them, yet they

have read of others of the same kind, showing the former to be

possible. I have had great experience as to this and have also met with

timid, half-instructed people whose ignorance has cost me very dear.

[163] I am convinced that those who refuse to believe that God can do

far more than this, and that He is pleased now, as in the past, to

communicate Himself to His creatures, shut fast their hearts against

receiving such favours themselves. Do not imitate them, sisters: be

convinced that it is possible for God to perform still greater wonders.

Do not concern yourselves as to whether those who receive these graces

are good or wicked; as I said, He knows best and it is no business of

yours: you should serve Him with a single heart and with humility, and

should praise Him for His works and wonders. [164]

8. Let us now speak of the sign which proves the prayer of union to

have been genuine. As you have seen, God then deprives the soul of all

its senses that He may the better imprint in it true wisdom: it neither

sees, hears, nor understands anything while this state lasts, which is

never more than a very brief time; [165] it appears to the soul to be

much shorter than it really is. God visits the soul in a manner which

prevents its doubting, on returning to itself, that it dwelt in Him and

that He was within it, and so firmly is it convinced of this truth

that, although years may pass before this favour recurs, the soul can

never forget it nor doubt the fact, [166] setting aside the effects

left by this prayer, to which I will refer later on. The conviction

felt by the soul is the main point.

9. But, you may ask, how can a person who is incapable of sight and

hearing see [167] or know these things? I do not say that she saw it at

the time, but that she perceives it clearly afterwards, not by any

vision but by a certitude which remains in the heart which God alone

could give. I know of some one who was unaware of God's being in all

things by presence, power and essence, yet was firmly convinced of it

by a divine favour of this sort. [168] She asked an ill-instructed

priest of the kind I mentioned to tell her in what way God dwelt within

us: he was as ignorant on the subject as she had been before our Lord

revealed to her the truth, and answered that the Almighty was only

present in us by grace. [169] Yet so strong was her conviction of the

truth learnt during her prayer that she did not believe him and

questioned other spiritual persons on the subject, who confirmed her in

the true doctrine, much to her joy. Do not mistake and imagine that

this certainty of God's having visited the soul concerns any corporal

presence such as that of our Lord Jesus Christ Who dwells in the

Blessed Sacrament, although we do not see Him: it relates solely to the

Divinity. If we did not see it, how can we feel so sure of it? That I

do not know: it is the work of the Almighty and I am certain that what

I say is the fact. I maintain that a soul which does not feel this

assurance has not been united to God entirely, but only by one of its

powers, or has received one of the many other favours God is accustomed

to bestow on men. In all such matters we must not seek to know how

things happened: our understanding could not grasp them, therefore why

trouble ourselves on the subject? It is enough to know that it is He,

the all-powerful God, Who has performed the work. We can do nothing on

our own part to gain this favour; it comes from God alone; therefore

let us not strive to understand it.

10. Concerning my words: We can do nothing on our own part,' I was

struck by the words of the Bride in the Canticles, which you will

remember to have heard: 'The King brought me into the cellar of wine,'

[170] (or placed me' I think she says): she does not say she went of

her own accord, although telling us how she wandered up and down

seeking her Beloved. [171] I think the prayer of union is the cellar'

in which our Lord places us when and how He chooses, but we cannot

enter it through any effort of our own. His Majesty alone can bring us

there and come into the centre of our souls. In order to declare His

wondrous works more clearly, He will leave us no share in them except

complete conformity of our wills to His and abandonment of all things:

He does not require the faculties or senses to open the door to Him;

they are all asleep. He enters the innermost depths of our souls

without a door, as He entered the room where the disciples sat, saying

Pax vobis,' [172] and as He emerged from the sepulchre without

removing the stone that closed the entrance. You will see farther on,

in the seventh mansion, far better than here, how God makes the soul

enjoy His presence in its very centre. O daughters, what wonders shall

we see, if we keep ever before our eyes our own baseness and frailty

and recognize how unworthy we are to be the handmaids of so great a

Lord, Whose marvels are beyond our comprehension! May He be for ever

praised! Amen.

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[154] Found. ch. iv. 8.

[155] St. Matt. xx. 16: Multi enim sunt vocati, pauci vero electi.'

[156] Maneant singuli in cellulis suis, vel juxta eas, die ac nocte in

lege Domini meditantes et in orationibus vigilantes.' (Carmelite Rule).

[157] St. Matt, xiii. 46.

[158] 'The reason why there are so few contemplatives is that there are

so few persons who wholly withdraw themselves from transitory and

created things' (Imitation, bk. iii. ch. xxxi. 1). See also Way of

Perf. ch. xvi. 5. Life, ch. xi. 2-4; xxii. 18, 19.

[159] Way of Perf. ch. xxv. 1. Life, ch. xvi. Rel. I. i; viii. 7.

[160] Life, ch. xvii. 2.

[161] According to St. Thomas, angels--whether good or bad--do not know

the thoughts of man unless they become manifest by some exterior sign.

S. Theol. I. q. lvii. art. 4. See also St. John of the Cross, Dark

Night, bk. II, ch. xxiii. 2, 5.

[162] Mansion iv. ch. i, 5.

[163] Life, ch. viii. 15.

[164] Life, ch. xviii. 16.

[165] Life, ch. xx. 13, 24.

[166] Philippus a SS. Trinitate, l.c., pars iii. tr. i. disc. iv. art,

2, where he adds some further signs. Anton. a Sp. S., l.c., tract. i.

no. 116 and 117.

[167] 'The soul does not see the good Master who teaches it, although

clearly conscious of His presence.' (Concept. ch. iv. 3.)

[168] 'There are three ways in which God is present in the soul. The

first is His presence in essence, not in holy souls only, but in

wretched and sinful souls as well, and also in all created things; for

it is by this presence that He gives life and being, and were it

withdrawn at once all things would return to nothing. This presence

never fails in the soul. The second is His presence by grace, whereby

He dwells in the soul, pleased and satisfied with it. This presence is

not in all souls; for those who fall into mortal sin lose it, and no

soul can know in a natural way whether it has it or not. The third is

His presence by spiritual affection. God is wont to show His presence

in many devout souls in divers ways, in refreshment, joy and gladness.'

(St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle, stanza xi. 2.) 'In every

soul, even that of the greatest sinner in the world, God dwells and is

substantially present. This way of union or presence of God, in the

order of nature, subsists between Him and all His creatures; by this He

preserves them in being, and if He withdraws it they immediately perish

and cease to be. And so, when I speak of the union of the soul with

God, I do not mean this substantial presence which is in every

creature, but that union and transformation of the soul in God by love

which is only then accomplished when there subsists the likeness which

love begets.' (St. John of the Cross, Ascent, bk. ii. ch. v. 3.) Fr.

Gracian, Peregrinacion de Anastasio (Burgos, 1905), p. 171.

[169] Life, ch. xviii. 20. Rel. ix. 17; xi. 8. St. Teresa was so deeply

impressed by the ignorance of this priest that she very frequently

referred to it.

[170] Cant. i. 3: Introduxit me rex in cellaria sua.' Castle, M. v. ch.

i. Way of Perf. ch. xviii. I. Concep. ch. iv. 4-8; v. 5; vi. 7; vii.

2-5. Life, ch. xviii. 17.

[171] Cant. iii. 2: Per vicos et plateas qu�ram quem diligit anima

mea.'

[172] St. John, xx. 19.

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CHAPTER II.

CONTINUES THE SAME SUBJECT: EXPLAINS THE PRAYER OF UNION BY A DELICATE

COMPARISON AND SPEAKS OF THE EFFECTS IT LEAVES UPON THE SOUL. THIS

CHAPTER SHOULD RECEIVE GREAT ATTENTION.

1. The soul compared to a butterfly. 2. The grandeurs of creation. 3.

Symbol of the soul and the silkworm. 4. Preparation of the soul for

God's indwelling. 5. Mystic death of the silkworm. 6. Effects of divine

union. 7. Increase of fervour and detachment. 8. Trials succeeding the

prayer of union. 9. Longing for death and zeal for God's honour. 10.

This zeal supernatural. 11. God alone works this grace. 12. The same

zeal as that felt by our Lord on earth. 13. Christ's keenest suffering.

1. You may imagine that there is no more left to be described of the

contents of this mansion, but a great deal remains to be told, for as I

said, it contains favours of various degrees. I think there is nothing

to add about the prayer of union, but when the soul on which God

bestows this grace disposes itself for their reception, I could tell

you much about the marvels our Lord works in it. I will describe some

of them in my own way, also the state in which they leave the soul, and

will use a suitable comparison to elucidate the matter, explaining that

though we can take no active part in this work of God within us, [173]

yet we may do much to prepare ourselves to receive this grace. You

have heard how wonderfully silk is made--in a way such as God alone

could plan--how it all comes from an egg resembling a tiny pepper-corn.

Not having seen it myself, I only know of it by hearsay, so if the

facts are inaccurate the fault will not be mine. When, in the warm

weather, the mulberry trees come into leaf, the little egg which was

lifeless before its food was ready, begins to live. The caterpillar

nourishes itself upon the mulberry leaves until, when it has grown

large, people place near it small twigs upon which, of its own accord,

it spins silk from its tiny mouth until it has made a narrow little

cocoon in which it buries itself. Then this large and ugly worm leaves

the cocoon as a lovely little white butterfly.

2. If we had not seen this but had only heard of it as an old legend,

who could believe it? Could we persuade ourselves that insects so

utterly without the use of reason as a silkworm or a bee would work

with such industry and skill in our service that the poor little

silkworm loses its life over the task? This would suffice for a short

meditation, sisters, without my adding more, for you may learn from it

the wonders and the wisdom of God. How if we knew the properties of all

things? It is most profitable to ponder over the grandeurs of creation

and to exult in being the brides of such a wise and mighty King.

3. Let us return to our subject. The silkworm symbolizes the soul which

begins to live when, kindled by the Holy Spirit, it commences using the

ordinary aids given by God to all, and applies the remedies left by Him

in His Church, such as regular confession, religious hooks, and

sermons; these are the cure for a soul dead in its negligence and sins

and liable to fall into temptation. Then it comes to life and continues

nourishing itself on this food and on devout meditation until it has

attained full vigour, which is the essential point, for I attach no

importance to the rest. When the silkworm is full-grown as I told you

in the first part of this chapter, it begins to spin silk and to build

the house wherein it must die. By this house, when speaking of the

soul, I mean Christ. I think I read or heard somewhere, either that our

life is hid in Christ, or in God (which means the same thing) or that

Christ is our life. [174] It makes little difference to my meaning

which of these quotations is correct.

4. This shows, my daughters, how much, by God's grace, we can do, by

preparing this home for ourselves, towards making Him our

dwelling-place as He is in the prayer of union. You will suppose that I

mean we can take away from or add something to God when I say that He

is our home, and that we can make this home and dwell in it by our own

power. Indeed we can: though we can neither deprive God of anything nor

add aught to Him, yet we can take away from and add to ourselves, like

the silkworms. The little we can do will hardly have been accomplished

when this insignificant work of ours, which amounts to nothing at all,

will be united by God to His greatness and thus enhanced with such

immense value that our Lord Himself will be the reward of our toil.

Although He has had the greatest share in it, He will join our trifling

pains to the bitter sufferings He endured for us and make them one.

5. Forward then, my daughters! hasten over your work and build the

little cocoon. Let us renounce self-love and self-will, [175] care

for nothing earthly, do penance, pray, mortify ourselves, be obedient,

and perform all the other good works of which you know. Act up to your

light; you have been taught your duties. Die! die as the silkworm does

when it has fulfilled the office of its creation, and you will see God

and be immersed in His greatness, as the little silkworm is enveloped

in its cocoon. Understand that when I say you will see God,' I mean in

the manner described, in which He manifests Himself in this kind of

union.

6. Now let us see what becomes of the silkworm,' for all I have been

saying leads to this. As soon as, by means of this prayer, the soul has

become entirely dead to the world, it comes forth like a lovely little

white butterfly! [176] Oh, how great God is! How beautiful is the

soul after having been immersed in God's grandeur and united closely to

Him for but a short time! Indeed, I do not think it is ever as long as

half an hour. [177] Truly, the spirit does not recognize itself,

being as different from what it was as is the white butterfly from the

repulsive caterpillar. It does not know how it can have merited so

great a good, or rather, whence this grace came [178] which it well

knows it merits not. The soul desires to praise our Lord God and longs

to sacrifice itself and die a thousand deaths for Him. It feels an

unconquerable desire for great crosses and would like to perform the

most severe penances; it sighs for solitude and would have all men know

God, while it is bitterly grieved at seeing them offend Him. These

matters will be described more fully in the next mansion; there they

are of the same nature, yet in a more advanced state the effects are

far stronger, because, as I told you, if; after the soul has received

these favours, it strives to make still farther progress, it will

experience great things. Oh, to see the restlessness of this charming

little butterfly, although never in its life has it been more tranquil

and at peace! May God be praised! It knows not where to stay nor take

its rest; everything on earth disgusts it after what it has

experienced, particularly when God has often given it this wine which

leaves fresh graces behind it at every draught.

7. It despises the work it did while yet a caterpillar--the slow

weaving of its cocoon thread by thread--its wings have grown and it can

fly; could it be content to crawl? All that it can do for God seems

nothing to the soul compared with its desire. It no longer wonders at

what the saints bore for Him, knowing by experience how our Lord aids

and transforms the soul until it no longer seems the same in character

and appearance. Formerly it feared penance, now it is strong: it wanted

courage to forsake relations, friends, or possessions: neither its

actions, its resolutions, nor separation from those it loved could

detach the soul, but rather seemed to increase its fondness. Now it

finds even their rightful claims a burden, [179] fearing contact with

them lest it should offend God. It wearies of everything, realizing

that no true rest can be found in creatures.

8. I seem to have enlarged on this subject, yet far more might be said

about it; those who have received this favour will think I have treated

it too briefly. No wonder this pretty butterfly, estranged from earthly

things, seeks repose elsewhere. Where can the poor little creature go?

It cannot return to whence it came, for as I told you, that is not in

the soul's power, do what it will, but depends upon God's pleasure.

Alas, what fresh trials begin to afflict the mind! Who would expect

this after such a sublime grace? [180] In fact in one way or another

we must carry the cross all our lives. If people told me that ever

since attaining to the prayer of union they had enjoyed constant peace

and consolation, I should reply that they could never have reached that

state, but that, at the most, if they had arrived as far as the last

mansion, their emotion must have been some spiritual satisfaction

joined to physical debility. It might even have been a false sweetness

caused by the devil, who gives peace for a time only to wage far

fiercer war later on. I do not mean that those who reach this stage

possess no peace; they do so in a very high degree, for their sorrows,

though extremely severe, are so beneficial and proceed from so good a

source as to procure both peace and happiness.

9. Discontent with this world gives such a painful longing to quit it

that, if the heart finds comfort, it is solely from the thought that

God wishes it to remain here in banishment. Even this is not enough to

reconcile it to fate, for after all the gifts received, it is not yet

so entirely surrendered to the will of God as it afterwards becomes.

Here, although conformed to His will, the soul feels an unconquerable

reluctance to submit, for our Lord has not given it higher grace.

During prayer this grief breaks forth in floods of tears, probably from

the great pain felt at seeing God offended and at thinking how many

souls, both heretics and heathens, are lost eternally, and keenest

grief of all, Christians also! The soul realizes the greatness of God's

mercy and knows that however wicked men are, they may still repent and

be saved; yet it fears that many precipitate themselves into hell.

10. Oh, infinite greatness of God! A few years ago--indeed, perhaps but

a few days--this soul thought of nothing but itself. Who has made it

feel such tormenting cares? If we tried for many years to obtain such

sorrow by means of meditation, we could not succeed.

11. God help me! If for long days and years I considered how great a

wrong it is that God should be offended, and that lost souls are His

children and my brethren; if I pondered over the dangers of this world

and how blessed it would be to leave this wretched life, would not that

suffice? No, daughters, the pain would not be the same. for this, by

the help of God, we can obtain by such meditation; but it does not seem

to penetrate the very depths of our being like the other which appears

to cut the soul to pieces and grind it to powder through no

action--even sometimes with no wish--of its own. What is this sorrow,

then? Whence does it come? I will tell you. Have you not heard (I

quoted the words to you just now, but did not apply to them this

meaning) [181] how the Bride says that God brought her into the

cellar of wine and set in order charity in her'? [182] This is what

happens here. The soul has so entirely yielded itself into His hands

and is so subdued by love for Him that it knows or cares for nothing

but that God should dispose of it according to His will. I believe that

He only bestows this grace on those He takes entirely for His own. He

desires that, without knowing how, the spirit should come forth stamped

with His seal for indeed it does no more than does the wax when

impressed with the signet. It does not mould itself but need only be in

a fit condition--soft and pliable; even then it does not soften itself

but must merely remain still and submit to the impression.

12. How good Thou art, O God! All is done for us by Thee, Who dost but

ask us to give our wills to Thee that we may be plastic as wax in Thy

hands. You see, sisters, what God does to this soul so that it may know

that it is His. He gives it something of His own--that which His Son

possessed when living on earth--He could bestow on greater gift on us.

Who could ever have longed more eagerly to leave this life than did

Christ? As He said at the Last Supper: With desire have I desired'

[183] this. O Lord! does not that bitter death Thou art to undergo

present itself before Thine eyes in all its pain and horror? 'No, for

My ardent love and My desire to save souls are immeasurably stronger

than the torments. This deeper sorrow I have suffered and still suffer

while living here on earth, makes other pain seem as nothing in

comparison.'

13. I have often meditated on this and I know that the torture a friend

of mine [184] has felt, and still feels, at seeing our Lord sinned

against is so unbearable that she would far rather die than continue in

such anguish. Then I thought that if a soul whose charity is so weak

compared to that of Christ--indeed, in comparison with His this charity

might be said not to exist--experiences this insufferable grief, what

must have been the feelings of our Lord Jesus Christ and what must His

life have been? for all things were present before His eyes and He was

the constant witness of the great offences committed against His

Father. I believe without doubt that this pained Him far more than His

most sacred Passion. There, at least, He found the end of all His

trials, while His agony was allayed by the consolation of gaining our

salvation through His death and of proving how He loved His Father by

suffering for Him. Thus, people who, urged by fervent love, perform

great penances hardly feel them but want to do still more and count

even that as little. What, then, must His Majesty have felt at thus

publicly manifesting His perfect obedience to His Father and His love

for His brethren? What joy to suffer in doing God's will! Yet I think

the constant sight of the many sins committed against God and of the

numberless souls on their way to hell must have caused Him such anguish

that, had He not been more than man, one day of such torment would have

destroyed not only His life but many more lives, had they been His.

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[173] Way of Perf. ch. xxv. 3.

[174] Col. iii. 3: 'Vita vestra est abscondita cum Christo in Deo.'

Gal. ii. w: Vivo autem, jam on ego; vivit vero in me Christus.'

[175] Way of Perf. ch. xxxi. i 1.

[176] St. Teresa must have been thinking of this simile when she chose

butterflies' as the pseudonym for her nuns in her letters at the time

when she was obliged to be cautious on account of the troubles of the

Reform.

[177] Life, ch. xviii. 16.

[178] Life, ch. xviii. 5-7.

[179] Rel. ix, 11.

[180] Way of Perf. ch. xviii. 1-4. Castle, M. vi ch. i. 3, sqq. M. vii.

ch. iv. 7.

[181] Fifth Mansions, ch. i. 10.

[182] Cant. ii. 4. Introduxit me in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me

caritatem.'

[183] St. Luke xxii. 15: Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare

vobiscum, antequam patiar.'

[184] This friend is, of course, St. Teresa herself. See Life, ch.

xiii. 14; xxxii. 9. Way of Perf. ch. i. 3. Castle, M. vii. ch. i. 5, 6.

Excl. x. 9.

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CHAPTER III.

THIS CHAPTER CONTINUES THE SAME SUBJECT AND SPEAKS OF ANOTHER KIND OF

UNION WHICH THE SOUL CAN OBTAIN WITH THE HELP OF GOD. THE IMPORTANCE OF

LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR IN THIS MATTER. THIS IS VERY USEFUL TO READ.

1. Zeal for souls left by divine union. 2. The soul may fall from such

a state. 3. How divine union may always be obtained. 4. Union with the

will of God the basis of all supernatural union. 5. Advantage of union

gained by self-mortification. 6. Defects which hinder this union. 7.

Divine union obtained by perfect love of God and our neighbour. 8. Love

for God and our neighbour are proportionate. 9. Real and imaginary

virtues. 10. Illusionary good resolutions. 11. Works, not feelings,

procure union. 12. Fraternal charity will certainly gain this union.

1. LET us now return to our little dove and see what graces God gives

it in this state. This implies that the soul endeavours to advance in

the service of our Lord and in self-knowledge. If it receives the grace

of union and then does no more, thinking itself safe, and so leads a

careless life, wandering off the road to heaven (that is, the keeping

of the commandments) it will share the fate of the butterfly that comes

from the silkworm, which lays some eggs that produce more of its kind

and then dies for ever. I say it leaves some eggs, for I believe God

will not allow so great a favour to be lost but that if the recipient

does not profit by it, others will. For while it keeps to the right

path, this soul, with its ardent desires and great virtues, helps

others and kindles their fervour with its own. Yet even after having

lost this it may still long to benefit others and delight to make known

the mercies shown by God to those who love and serve Him. [185]

2. I knew a person to whom this happened. Although greatly erring, she

longed that others should profit by the favours God had bestowed on her

and taught the way of prayer to people ignorant of it, thus helping

them immensely. God afterwards bestowed fresh light upon her; indeed

the prayer of union had not hitherto produced the above effects in her.

How many people there must be to whom our Lord communicates Himself,

who, like Judas, are called to the Apostleship and made kings by Him,

as was Saul, yet who afterwards lose everything by their own fault! We

should learn from this, sisters, that if we would merit fresh favours

and avoid losing those we already possess, our only safety lies in

obedience and in following the law of God. This I say, both to those

who have received these graces and to those who have not. [186]

3. In spite of all I have written, there still seems some difficulty in

understanding this mansion. The advantage of entering is so great, that

it is well that none should despair of doing so because God does not

give them the supernatural gifts described above. With the help of

divine grace true union can always be attained by forcing ourselves to

renounce our own will and by following the will of God in all things.

[187]

4. Oh, how many of us affirm that we do this, and believe we seek

nothing else--indeed we would die for the truth of what we say! If this

be the case I can only declare, as I fancy I did before, and I shall

again and again, that we have already obtained this grace from God.

Therefore we need not wish for that other delightful union described

above, for its chief value lies in the resignation of our will to that

of God without which it could not be reached. [188] Oh, how desirable

is this union! The happy soul which has attained it will live in this

world and in the next without care of any sort. No earthly events can

trouble it, unless it should see itself in danger of losing God or

should witness any offence offered Him. Neither sickness, poverty, nor

the loss of any one by death affect it, except that of persons useful

to the Church of God, for the soul realizes thoroughly that God's

disposal is wiser than its own desires.

5. You must know that there are different kinds of sorrow: there are

both griefs and joys rising from an impulse of nature or from a charity

which makes us pity our neighbour, like that felt by our Saviour when

He raised Lazarus from the dead. [189] These feelings do not destroy

union with the will of God nor do they disturb the soul by a restless,

turbulent, and lasting passion. They soon pass away, for as I said of

sweetness in prayer, [190] they do not affect the depths of the soul

but only its senses and faculties. They are found in the former

mansions, but do not enter the last of all. Is it necessary, in order

to attain to this kind of divine union, for the powers of the soul to

be suspended? No; God has many ways of enriching the soul and bringing

it to these mansions besides what might be called a short cut.' But, be

sure of this, my daughters: in any case the silkworm must die and it

will cost you more in this way. In the former manner this death is

facilitated by finding ourselves introduced into a new life; here, on

the contrary, we must give ourselves the death-blow. I own that the

work will be much harder, but then it will be of higher value so that

your reward will be greater if you come forth victorious; [191] yet

there is no doubt it is possible for you to attain this true union with

the will of God.

6. This is the union I have longed for all my life and that I beg our

Lord to grant me; it is the most certain and the safest. But alas, how

few of us ever obtain it! Those who are careful not to offend God, and

who enter the religious state, think there is nothing more to do. How

many maggots remain in hiding until, like the worm which gnawed at

Jonas's ivy, [192] they have destroyed our virtues. These pests are

such evils as self-love, self-esteem, rash judgment of others even in

small matters, and a want of charity in not loving our neighbour quite

as much as ourselves. Although perforce we satisfy our obligations

sufficiently to avoid sin, yet we fall far short of what must be done

in order to obtain perfect union with the will of God.

7. What do you think, daughters, is His will? That we may become quite

perfect and so be made one with Him and with His Father as He prayed we

might be. [193] Observe, then, what is wanting in us to obtain this.

I assure you it is most painful for me to write on this subject, for I

see how far I am, through my own fault, from having attained

perfection. There is no need for us to receive special consolations

from God in order to arrive at conformity with His will; He has done

enough in giving us His Son to teach the way. This does not mean that

we must so submit to the will of God as not to sorrow at such troubles

as the death of a father or brother, or that we must bear crosses and

sickness with joy. [194] This is well, but it sometimes comes from

common sense which, as we cannot help ourselves, makes a virtue of

necessity. How often the great wisdom of the heathen philosophers led

them to act thus in trials of this kind! Our Lord asks but two things

of us: love, for Him and for our neighbour: these are what we must

strive to obtain. If we practise both these virtues perfectly we shall

be doing His will and so shall be united to Him. But, as I said, we are

very far from obeying and serving our great Master perfectly in these

two matters: may His Majesty give us the grace to merit union with Him;

it is in our power to gain it if we will.

8. I think the most certain sign that we keep these two commandments is

that we have a genuine love for others. We cannot know whether we love

God although there may be strong reasons for thinking so, but there can

be no doubt about whether we love our neighbour or no. [195] Be sure

that in proportion as you advance in fraternal charity, you are

increasing in your love of God, [196] for His Majesty bears so tender

an affection for us that I cannot doubt He will repay our love for

others by augmenting, in a thousand different ways, that which we bear

for Him. We should watch most carefully over ourselves in this matter,

for if we are faultless on this point we have done all. I believe human

nature is so evil that we could not feel a perfect charity for our

neighbour unless it were rooted in the love of God.

9. In this most important matter, sisters, we should be most vigilant

in little things, taking no notice of the great works we plan during

prayer which we imagine that we would perform for other people, even

perhaps for the sake of saving a single soul. If our actions afterwards

belie these grand schemes, there is no reason to imagine that we should

do anything of the sort. I say the same of humility and the other

virtues. The devil's wiles are many; he would turn hell upside down a

thousand times to make us think ourselves better than we are. He has

good reason for it, for such fancies are most injurious; sham virtues

springing from this root are always accompanied by a vainglory never

found in those of divine origin, which are free from pride.

10. It is amusing to see souls who, while they are at prayer, fancy

they are willing to be despised and publicly insulted for the love of

God, yet afterwards do all they can to hide their small defects; if any

one unjustly accuses them of a fault, God deliver us from their

outcries! Let those who cannot bear such things take no notice of the

splendid plans they made when alone, which could have been no genuine

determination of the will but only some trick of the imagination, or

the results would have been very different. The devil assaults and

deceives people in this way, often doing great harm to women and others

too ignorant to understand the difference between the powers of the

soul and the imagination, and a thousand other matters of the sort. O

sisters! how easy it is to know which of you have attained to a sincere

love of your neighbour, and which of you are far from it. If you knew

the importance of this virtue, your only care would be to gain it.

11. When I see people very anxious to know what sort of prayer they

practise, covering their faces and afraid to move or think lest they

should lose any slight tenderness and devotion they feel, I know how

little they understand how to attain union with God since they think it

consists in such things as these. No, sisters, no; our Lord expects

works from us. If you see a sick sister whom you can relieve, [197]

never fear losing your devotion; compassionate her; if she is in pain,

feel for it as if it were your own and, when there is need, fast so

that she may eat, not so much for her sake as because you know your

Lord asks it of you. This is the true union of our will with the will

of God. If some one else is well spoken of, be more pleased than if it

were yourself; this is easy enough, for if you were really humble it

would vex you to be praised. It is a great good to rejoice at your

sister's virtues being known and to feel as sorry for the fault you see

in her as if it were yours, hiding it from the sight of others.

12. I have often spoken on this subject elsewhere, [198] because, my

sisters, if we fail in this I know that all is lost: please God this

may never be our case. If you possess fraternal charity, I assure you

that you will certainly obtain the union I have described. If you are

conscious that you are wanting in this charity, although you may feel

devotion and sweetness and a short absorption in the prayer of quiet

(which makes you think you have attained to union with God), believe me

you have not yet reached it. Beg our Lord to grant you perfect love for

your neighbour, and leave the rest to Him. He will give you more than

you know how to desire if you constrain yourselves and strive with all

your power to gain it, forcing your will as far as possible to comply

in all things with your sisters' wishes although you may sometimes

forfeit your own rights by so doing. Forget your self-interests for

theirs, how ever much nature may rebel; when opportunity occurs take

some burden upon yourself to ease your neighbour of it. Do not fancy it

will cost you nothing and that you will find it all done for you: think

what the love He bore for us cost our Spouse, Who to free us from

death, Himself suffered the most painful death of all--the death of the

Cross.

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[185] Life, ch. vii. 18. Way of Perf. xli. 8.

[186] Life. ch, vii. 21.

[187] Found. ch. v. 10. These shall not attain to the true liberty of a

pure heart, nor to the grace of a delightful familiarity with Me,

unless they first resign themselves and offer themselves a daily

sacrifice to Me: for without this, divine union neither is nor will be

obtained.' (Imitation, book iii. ch. xxxvii. 4.)

[188] Philippus a SS. Trinitate, l.c., p. iii. tr. i, disc. ii. art. 4.

[189] St. John xi. 35, 36: Et lacrymatus est Jesus. Dixerunt ergo

Jud�i: Ecce quomodo amabat cum.'

[190] Fourth Mansions, ch. i. 5. Fifth Mansions, ch. i. 7.

[191] Way of Perf. ch. xvii. 2.

[192] Jonas iv. 6, 7: And the Lord God prepared an ivy, and it came up

over the head of Jonas, to be a shadow over his head, and to cover him,

for he was fatigued; and Jonas was exceeding glad of the ivy. But God

prepared a worm, when the morning arose on the following day: and it

struck the ivy and it withered.'

[193] St. John xvii. 22, 23: Ut sint unum, sicut et nos unum sumus. Ego

in eis, et tu in me: ut sint consummati in unum.' Way of Perf. ch.

xxxii. 6.

[194] Way of Perf. ch. ix. i, 2.

[195] 1 St. John iv. 20: Qui enim non diligit fratrem suum quem videt,

Deum quem non videt quomodo potest diligere?'

[196] Way of Perf. ch. xviii. 5.

[197] Way of Perf. ch. vii. 4.

[198] Way of Perf. ch. iv. 3; vii. 4.

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CHAPTER IV.

FURTHER EXPLANATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT; EXPLAINS THIS PRAYER. THE

IMPORTANCE OF BEING ON ONE'S GUARD, AS THE DEVIL EAGERLY DESIRES TO

TURN SOULS BACK FROM THE RIGHT PATH.

1. The spiritual espousals. 2. The prayer of union resembles a

betrothal. 3. Before the spiritual nuptials temptations are dangerous.

4. The great good done by souls faithful to these graces. 5. Religious

subject to the devil's deceptions. 6. Satan's strata-gems. 7. Why they

are permitted. 8. Prayer and watchfulness our safeguards. 9. God's

watchfulness over such souls. 10. Progress in virtue. 11.

Insignificance of our actions compared with their reward. 12. St.

Teresa's motives for writing on prayer.

1. You appear anxious to know what has become of the little dove and

where she obtains rest, since obviously she can find it neither in

spiritual consolations nor in earthly pleasures but takes a higher

flight. I cannot tell you until we come to the last mansion: God grant

I may remember or have leisure to write it. It is nearly five months

since I began this work, and as my head is too weak to read it again,

no doubt it will be very disconnected and full of repetitions: however,

as it is only for my sisters, that will matter little. Yet I should

like to express myself more fully about the prayer of union and will

make use, to the best of my scanty wits, of a comparison. Later on we

will speak of the little butterfly, which is never still, for it can

find no true repose, yet always fertile, doing good both to itself and

others. [199] You have often heard that God spiritually espouses

souls: may He be praised for His mercy in thus humbling Himself so

utterly. Though but a homely comparison, yet I can find nothing better

to express my meaning than the Sacrament of Matrimony although the two

things are very different. In divine union everything is spiritual and

far removed from anything corporal, all the joys our Lord gives and the

mutual delight felt in it being celestial and very unlike human

marriage, which it excels a thousand times. Here all is love united to

love; its operations are more pure, refined, and sweet than can be

described, though our Lord knows how to make the soul sensible of them.

2. I think this union does not attain as far as the spiritual espousals

but resembles the preliminaries that take place when two people are

contemplating a betrothal. Their suitability and willingness for the

alliance are first discussed; then they may be allowed to see one

another sometimes so as to come to a decision. Thus it is in the

spiritual espousals: when the preliminary agreement has been made and

the soul thoroughly understands what great advantages she will gain,

having resolved to fulfil the will of her Spouse in all things and to

do all she can to please Him, His Majesty Who knows well whether this

is so in reality, wishes in return to gratify His bride. He therefore

bestows this favour upon her, visits her and draws her into His

presence, as He wishes her to know Him better. We might compare the

prayer of union to a visit, for it lasts but a very little while. [200]

There is no longer any question of deliberation, but the soul in a

secret manner sees to what a Bridegroom it is betrothed; the senses and

faculties could not, in a thousand years, gain the knowledge thus

imparted in a very short time. The Spouse, being Who He is, leaves the

soul far more deserving of completing the espousals, as we may call

them; the enamoured soul in its love for Him makes every effort to

prevent their being frustrated. Should it grow neglectful and set its

affections on anything except our Lord, it will forfeit everything:

this loss is as great as are the favours the soul has continually

received, which are precious beyond description. [201]

3. O Christian souls! you whom God has brought thus far! I implore you

for His dear sake not to grow careless, but to avoid all occasions of

sin; you are not strong enough yet to undergo temptation, as you will

be after the espousals which take place in the next mansion. Here the

betrothed are, as they say, only acquainted by sight, [202] and the

devil will spare no pains to oppose and prevent their nuptials.

Afterwards, when he sees the Bride is wholly given to her Bridegroom,

he is afraid to interfere, having learnt by experience that if he

molests her, while he loses much, she will gain greatly in merit.

4. I can assure you, my daughters, [203] that I have known people far

advanced in the spiritual life who had reached this state of prayer yet

whom the devil reclaimed by his subtlety and wiles: as I have often

said, all hell leagues together against such souls because the loss of

one of them entails the perdition of many more, as Satan is well aware.

If we considered how many men God draws to Himself by means of one, we

should praise Him fervently. Think of the multitudes converted by the

martyrs or by one young maiden like St. Ursula! Again, of how many

victims the evil one was deprived by St. Dominic, St. Francis, and

other founders of religious orders. How many more he loses, even now,

through Father Ignatius [Loyola], who founded the Company [of Jesus]!

As we read their lives, we learn that they received such graces from

God. How was this great good done except by their efforts not to

forfeit, through any fault of theirs, these divine espousals? Oh, my

daughters, how willing our Lord is to grant us the same graces! In

fact, there is even more urgent need now for persons to prepare for

such favours, since there are fewer who care for His honour. We love

ourselves too much and are too prudent to give up any of our rights.

What a deception! May God in His mercy give us light, lest we sink into

such darkness.

5. You may question or be in doubt on two points. Firstly: if the soul

is entirely united with the will of God, as I have stated, how can it

be deceived, since it ever seeks to follow His pleasure? Secondly, how

can the devil enter and work such havoc as to destroy your soul while

you are so utterly withdrawn from the world and constantly frequent the

Sacraments? [204] At the same time you enjoy the society of angels

(as we might call them) and by the mercy of God you desire nothing but

to serve and please Him in all things? [205] It is not surprising

that people in the world should run such risks. I admit you have the

right to say this, for God has shown us signal mercy; but, as I said

above, knowing as I do that Judas was amongst the Apostles and that he

held constant intercourse with God Himself, to Whose words he listened,

I learn that the state of religion does not make us safe.

6. To your first question I reply that doubtless if such a soul is

always faithful to the will of God, it cannot be lost; the evil one,

however, comes with his keen subtlety and, under the pretext of good,

leads it astray in some trivial matter and causes it to commit small

defects which he makes it believe are harmless. Thus, little by little,

the reason is obscured and the will is weakened while the devil fosters

his victim's self-love, until, by degrees, he succeeds in withdrawing

it from union with the will of God and makes it follow its own will.

7. The answer to your first inquiry will serve for the second. No

enclosure can be too strict for Satan to enter nor any desert too

remote for him to visit. Besides, God may permit him to tempt the soul

to prove its virtue; for as He intends it to enlighten others, it is

better for it to fail in the beginning than when it might do them great

harm.

8. We must beg God constantly in our prayers to uphold us by His hand;

we should keep ever in our minds the truth that if He leaves us, most

certainly we shall fall at once into the abyss, for we must never be so

foolish as to trust in ourselves. After this I think the greatest

safeguard is to be very careful and to watch how we advance in virtue;

we must notice whether we are making progress or falling back in it,

especially as regards the love of our neighbour, the desire to be

thought the least of all and how we perform our ordinary, everyday

duties. If we attend to this and beg Our Lord to enlighten us, we shall

at once perceive our gain or loss.

9. Do not suppose that after advancing the soul to such a state God

abandons it so easily that it is light work for the devil to regain it.

When His Majesty sees it leaving Him, He feels the loss so keenly that

He gives it in many a way a thousand secret warnings which reveal to it

the hidden danger. [206]

10. In conclusion, let us strive to make constant progress: we ought to

feel great alarm if we do not find ourselves advancing, for without

doubt the evil one must be planning to injure us in some way; it is

impossible for a soul that has come to this state not to go still

farther, for love is never idle. Therefore it is a very bad sign when

one comes to a stand-still in virtue. She who aspires to become the

spouse of God Himself, and has treated with His Majesty and come to

such an understanding with Him, must not leave off and go to sleep.

[207]

11. To show you, my daughters, how Christ treats the souls He takes for

His brides, I will now speak of the sixth mansions. You will then see

how little in comparison is all that we can do or suffer in His service

to prepare ourselves for the reception of such immense favours. Perhaps

our Lord decreed that I should write this in order that the knowledge

of the great reward to come, and of His infinite mercy in seeking to

give and to manifest Himself to such worms as we are, might make us

forget our wretched, petty, earthly pleasures and run on our way with

eyes fixed on His grandeur, inflamed with love for Him.

12. May He enable me to explain some of these difficult matters; if our

Lord and the Holy Ghost do not guide my pen, I know the task will prove

impossible. 1 beg Him to prevent my saying anything unless it will

profit you. His Majesty knows that, as far as I can judge, I have no

other wish but that His Name may be glorified and that we may strive to

serve a Lord Who thus recompenses our efforts even in this world. What,

then, will be our joy in heaven where it will be continuous, without

the interruptions, labours, and dangers of this tempestuous sea of

life? Were it not for the fear of losing or offending Him, we should

wish to live until the end of the world [208] in order to work for so

great a God--our Lord and our Spouse. May His Majesty enable us to

render Him some service free from the many faults we always commit,

even in good works! Amen.

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[199] Compare: habebit fructum in respectione animarum sanctarum'

(Breviar. Rom. Ant. ad Laudes de Com. Virg.); quasi apis argumentosa

Domino deservisti' (Ibid. Feast of St. C�cilia.)

[200] Life, ch. xviii.

[201] Way of Perf. ch. xxxi. 10.

[202] Phil. a SS. Trinit. l.c. p. iii. tract. i. disc. ii. art. 2.

[203] Contrast with this paragraph what the Saint says in her Life, ch.

xix. � 8.

[204] Life, ch, xxxvi. 26; xxxix. 14. Found. ch. i. 1-4.

[205] Way of Perf. ch. i, 2; xiii. 3. Found. ch. i. 3.

[206] Life, ch. xix. 9.

[207] Life, ch. xix. 7.

[208] Rel. ix. 19.

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THE SIXTH MANSIONS

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CHAPTER I.

THIS CHAPTER SHOWS HOW, WHEN GOD BESTOWS GREATER FAVOURS ON THE SOUL,

IT SUFFERS MORE SEVERE AFFLICTIONS. SOME OF THE LATTER ARE DESCRIBED

AND DIRECTIONS HOW TO BEAR THEM GIVEN TO THE DWELLERS IN THIS MANSION.

THIS CHAPTER IS USEFUL FOR THOSE SUFFERING INTERIOR TRIALS.

1. Love kindled by divine favours. 2. Our Lord excites the soul's

longings. 3. Courage needed to reach the last mansions. 4. Trials

accompanying divine favours. 5. Outcry raised against souls striving

for perfection. 6. St. Teresa's personal experience of this. 7. Praise

distasteful to an enlightened soul. 8. This changes to indifference. 9.

Humility of such souls. 10. Their zeal for God's glory. 11. Perfect and

final indifference to praise or blame. 12. Love of enemies. 13. Bodily

sufferings. 14. St. Teresa's physical ills. 15. A timorous confessor.

16. Anxiety on account of past sins. 17. Fears and aridity. 18.

Scruples and fears raised by the devil. 19. Bewilderment of the soul.

20. God alone relieves these troubles. 21. Human weakness. 22. Earthly

consolations are of no avail. 23. Prayer gives no comfort at such a

time. 24. Remedies for these interior trials. 25. Trials caused by the

devil. 26. Other afflictions. 27. Preparatory to entering the seventh

mansions.

1. BY the aid of the Holy Ghost I am now about to treat of the sixth

mansions, where the soul, wounded with love for its Spouse, sighs more

than ever for solitude, withdrawing as far as the duties of its state

permit from all that can interrupt it, The sight it has enjoyed of Him

is so deeply imprinted on the spirit that its only desire is to behold

Him again. I have already said that, [209] even by the imagination,

nothing is seen in this prayer that can be called sight. I speak of it

as sight' because of the comparison I used.

2. The soul is now determined to take no other Bridegroom than our

Lord, but He disregards its desires for its speedy espousals, wishing

that these longings should become still more vehement and that this

good, which far excels all other benefits, should be purchased at some

cost to itself. And although for so great a gain all that we must

endure is but a poor price to pay, I assure you, daughters, that this

pledge of what is in store for us is needed to inspire us with courage

to bear our crosses.

3. O My God, how many troubles both interior and exterior must one

suffer before entering the seventh mansions! Sometimes, while pondering

over this I fear that, were they known beforehand, human infirmity

could scarcely bear the thought nor resolve to encounter them, however

great might appear the gain. If, however, the soul has already reached

the seventh mansions, it fears nothing: boldly undertaking to suffer

all things for God, [210] it gathers strength from its almost

uninterrupted union with Him.

4. I think it would be well to tell you of some of the trials certain

to occur in this state. Possibly all souls may not be led in this way,

but I think that those who sometimes enjoy such truly heavenly favours

cannot be altogether free from some sort of earthly troubles.

Therefore, although at first I did not intend to speak on this subject,

yet afterwards I thought that it might greatly comfort a soul in this

condition if it knew what usually happens to those on whom God bestows

graces of this kind, for at the time they really seem to have lost

everything.

5. I shall not enumerate these trials in their proper order, but will

describe them as they come to my memory, beginning with the least

severe. This is an outcry raised against such a person by those amongst

whom she lives, and even from others she has nothing to do with but who

fancy that at some time in her life they recollect having seen her.

They say she wants to pass for a saint, that she goes to extremes in

piety to deceive the world and to depreciate people who are better

Christians than herself without making such a parade of it. But notice

that she does nothing except endeavour to carry out the duties of her

state more perfectly. Persons she thought were her friends desert her,

making the most bitter remarks of all. They take it much to heart that

her soul is ruined--she is manifestly deluded--it is all the devil's

work--she will share the fate of so-and-so who was lost through him,

and she is leading virtue astray. They cry out that she is deceiving

her confessors, and tell them so, citing examples of others who came to

ruin in the same way and make a thousand scoffing remarks of the same

sort. [211] 6. I know some one who feared she would be unable to find

any priest who would hear her confession, to such a pass did things

come; but as it is a long story, I will not stop to tell it now. The

worst of it is, these troubles do not blow over but last all her life,

for one person warns the other to have nothing to do with people of her

kind. You will say that, on the other hand, some speak in her favour. O

my daughters, how few think well of her in comparison with the many who

hate her!

7. Besides this, praise pains such a soul more than blame because it

recognizes clearly that any good it possesses is the gift of God and in

no wise its own, seeing that but a short time ago it was weak in virtue

and involved in grave sins. [212] Therefore commendation causes it

intolerable suffering, at least at first, although later on, for many

reasons, the soul is comparatively indifferent to either.

8. The first is that experience has shown the mind that men are as

ready to speak well as ill of others, so it attaches no more importance

to the one than to the other. Secondly, our Lord having granted it

greater light, it perceives that no good thing in it is its own but is

His gift, and becomes oblivious of self, praising God for His graces as

if they were found in a third person.

9. The third reason is that, realizing the benefit reaped by others

from witnessing graces given it by God, such a one thinks that it is

for their profit He causes them to discover in her virtues that do not

exist. 10. Fourthly, souls seeking God's honour and glory more than

their own are cured of the temptation (which usually besets beginners)

of thinking that human praise will cause them the injury they have seen

it do to others. Nor do these souls care much for men's contempt if

only, by their means, any one should praise God at least once--come

what may afterwards.

11. These and other reasons to a certain extent allay the great

distress formerly given by human praise which, however, still causes

some discomfort unless the soul has become utterly regardless of men's

tongues. It is infinitely more grieved at being undeservedly esteemed

by the world than by any calumny; and when at last it becomes almost

indifferent to praise, it cares still less for censure, which even

pleases it and sounds like harmonious music to the ears.

12. This is perfectly true; the soul is rather strengthened than

depressed by its trials, experience having taught it the great

advantages derived from them. It does not think men offend God by

persecuting it, but that He permits them to do so for its greater gain.

[213] So strong is this belief that such a person bears a special

affection for these people, holding them as truer friends and greater

benefactors than those who speak well of her. [214]

13. Our Lord now usually sends severe bodily infirmity. This is a far

heavier cross, especially if acute pain is felt: if this is violent, I

think it is the hardest of earthly trials. I speak of exterior trials;

but corporal pains of the worst kind enter the interior of our being

also, affecting both spirit and body, so that the soul in its anguish

knows not what to do with itself and would far rather meet death at

once by some quick martyrdom than suffer thus. However, these paroxysms

do not last long, for God never sends us more than we can bear and

always gives us patience first.

14. Now to speak of other trials and illnesses of many kinds which

generally occur to people in this state. I knew some one who, from the

time when, forty years ago, [215] our Lord began to bestow on her the

favour described, could not affirm with any truth that she had been a

single day without pain and other kinds of suffering: I am speaking of

physical infirmities besides heavy crosses sent her. [216] True, she

had led a wicked life and therefore held these troubles very light in

comparison with the hell she had deserved. [217] Our Lord leads those

who have offended Him less by some other way, but I should always

choose the way of suffering, if only for the sake of imitating our Lord

Jesus Christ; though, in fact, it profits us in many other manners.

Yet, oh! the rest would seem trifling in comparison could I relate the

interior torments met with here, but they are impossible to describe.

15. Let us first speak of the trial of meeting with so timorous and

inexperienced a confessor that nothing seems safe to him; he dreads and

suspects everything but the commonplace, especially in a soul in which

he deters any imperfection, for he thinks people on whom God bestows

such favours must be angels, which is impossible while we live in our

bodies. [218] He at once ascribes everything to the devil or

melancholy. As to the latter, I am not surprised; there is so much of

it in the world and the evil one works such harm in this way that

confessors have the strongest reasons for anxiety and watchfulness

about it.

16. The poor soul, beset by the same fears, seeks its confessor as

judge, and feels a torture and dismay at his condemnation that can only

be realized by those who have experienced it themselves. [219] For

one of the severe trials of these souls, especially if they have lived

wicked lives, is their belief that God permits them to be deceived in

punishment for their sins. While actually receiving these graces they

feel secure and cannot but suppose that these favours proceed from the

Spirit of God; but this state lasts a very short time, while the

remembrance of their misdeeds is ever before them, so that when, as is

sure to happen, they discover any faults in themselves, these torturing

thoughts return. [220]

17. The soul is quieted for a time when the confessor reassures it

although it returns later on to its former apprehensions, but when he

augments its fears they become almost unbearable. Especially is this

the case when such spiritual dryness ensues that the mind feels as if

it never had thought of God nor ever will be able to do so. When men

speak of Him, they seem to be talking of some person heard of long ago.

18. All this is nothing without the further pain of thinking we cannot

make our confessors understand the case and are deceiving them. [221]

Although such a person may examine her conscience with the greatest

care, and may know that she reveals even the first movement of her mind

to her director, it does not help her. Her understanding being too

obscure to discern the truth, she believes all that the imagination,

which now has the upper hand, puts before her mind, besides crediting

the falsehoods suggested to her by the devil, whom doubtless our Lord

gives leave to tempt her. The evil spirit even tries to make her think

God has rejected her. Many are the trials which assault this soul,

causing an internal anguish so painful and so intolerable that I can

compare it to nothing save that suffered by the lost in hell, for no

comfort can be found in this tempest of trouble. [222]

19. If the soul seeks for consolation from its confessor, all the

demons appear to help him to torment it more. A confessor who dealt

with a person suffering in this manner thought that her state must be

very dangerous as so many things were troubling her; therefore, after

she had recovered from her trials, he bade her tell him whenever they

recurred: however, he found this made matters worse than ever. She lost

all control over herself: although she had learnt to read, yet she

could no more understand a book in the vulgar tongue than if she had

not known the alphabet, for her mind was incapable of acting. [223]

20. In short, there is no other remedy in such a tempest except to wait

for the mercy of God Who, unexpectedly, by some casual word or

unforeseen circumstance, suddenly dispels all these sorrows; then every

cloud of trouble disappears and the mind is left full of light and far

happier than before. [224] It praises our Lord God like one who has

come out victorious from a dangerous battle, for it was He Who won the

victory. The soul is fully conscious that the conquest was not its own

as all weapons of self-defence appeared to be in the enemies' hands.

Thus it realizes its weakness and how little man can help himself if

God forsake him.

21. This truth now needs no demonstration, for past experience has

taught the soul its utter incapacity; it realizes the nothingness of

human nature and what miserable creatures we are. Although in a state

of grace from which it has not fallen--for, in spite of these torments,

it has not offended God, nor would it do so for any earthly thing [225]

--yet so hidden is this grace, that the sufferer believes that neither

now, nor in the past, has she ever possessed the faintest spark of love

for God. [226] If at any time she has done good, or if His Majesty

ever bestowed any favours on her, they seem to have been but a dream or

a fancy, while her sins stand clearly before her.

22. O Jesus! how sad it is to see a soul thus forsaken, and how little,

as I said, can any earthly comfort avail! Do not imagine, sisters, if

you are ever brought to such a state, that rich and independent people

have more resources than yourselves in these troubles. No, no! to offer

such consolations would be like setting all the joys of the world

before people condemned to death: far from mitigating, it would

increase their torture. So with the souls I spoke of: their comfort

must come from above--nothing earthly can help them. This great God

wishes us to acknowledge His sovereignty and our own misery--an

important point for those who are to advance still farther.

23. What can the poor soul do if such a trial lasts for many days?

Prayer makes no difference as far as comforting the heart, which no

consolation can enter, nor can the mind even grasp the meaning of the

words of vocal prayer: mental prayer is out of the question at such a

time, since the faculties are unequal to it. Solitude harms the soul,

yet society or conversation is a fresh torment. Strive as the sufferer

may to hide it, she is so wearied and out of sorts with all around that

she cannot but manifest her condition.

24. How can the soul possibly tell what ails it? Its pains are

indescribable; it is wrung with nameless anguish and spiritual

suffering. The best remedy for these crosses (I do not mean for gaining

deliverance from them, for I know of nothing that will do that, but for

enabling one to bear them) is to perform external works of charity and

to trust in the mercy of God, which never fails those who hope in Him.

[227] May He be for ever blessed! Amen

25. The devils also bring about exterior trials which being more

unusual need not be mentioned. They are far less painful, for whatever

the demons may do, I believe they never succeed in paralysing the

faculties or disturbing the soul in the former manner. In fact, the

reason is able to discern that the evil spirits can do no more harm

than God permits; and while the mind has not lost its powers, all

sufferings are comparatively insignificant.

26. I shall treat of other internal afflictions met with in this

mansion when describing the different kinds of prayer and favours

bestowed here by our Lord. Although some of these latter pains are

harder to endure, as appears by their bodily effects, yet they do not

deserve the name of crosses, nor have we the right to call them so.

Indeed, they are great graces from God as the soul recognizes amidst

its pangs, realizing how far it is from meriting such graces.

27. This severe torture felt by souls just at the entrance of the

seventh mansion is accompanied by many other sufferings, some of which

I will mention: to speak of them all would be impossible, nor could I

portray them because they come from another and far higher source than

the rest. If I have succeeded so ill in writing of trials of a lower

kind, much less could I treat of the others. May God assist me in all

things, through the merits of His Son! Amen.

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[209] Castle, M. v. ch. i. 9. Life, ch. xxviii. 5.

[210] Life, ch. xl. 28. sqq.

[211] The Saint went through all this herself; every detail is taken

from her own experience. See Life, ch. xxv. 20; xxviii. 20-24; xxx. 6;

xxiii. 2. Anton. a Sp. S. l.c. tract, ii. n. 268.

[212] Life, ch. xxviii. 19.

[213] Rel. ii. 4.

[214] Anton. a Sp. S. l.c. ii. n. 272. Way of Perf. ch. xv. i; xvii. 4.

Found. ch. xxvii. 19, 20. Life, ch. xix. 12; xxxi. 13-17, 25.

[215] 'Forty years ago.' The Saint seems to refer to her first

experience in the mystical life, which took place during her illness in

the winter of 1537-38. See Life, ch. iv. 9.

[216] Life, ch. iv. 6; v; vi; vii. 18; xi. 23; XXX. 9.

[217] Ibid. ch. iii. 6, 7.

[218] Life, ch. xiii. 21-27. Way of Perf. ch. v. 1, 2.

[219] Ibid, ch. xxx. 15.

[220] Ibid, ch. xxxviii. 21. Rel. ii. 15.

[221] Life, ch. xxviii. 20 sqq.

[222] Anton. a Sp. S. l.c. tr. ii. n. 313. On this subject which is

commonly called the passive purgation of the intellect, it would be

advisable to consult some good author such as Philippus a SS.

Trinitate, l.c. part. i. tr. iii. disc. iii.-v., especially disc. iv.

art. 5, 6.

[223] Life, ch. xxv. 21.

[224] Ibid. ch. xxv. 23.

[225] Ibid. ch. xxiv. 3. Way of Perf. ch. xli. 5. Castle, M. vii. ch.

iv. 1.

[226] Excl. xvi. 4.

[227] Life, ch. xxxi. 27.

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CHAPTER II.

TREATS OF SEVERAL WAYS WHEREBY OUR LORD QUICKENS THE SOUL; THERE

APPEARS NO CAUSE FOR ALARM IN THEM ALTHOUGH THEY ARE SIGNAL FAVOURS OF

A VERY EXALTED NATURE.

1. Our Lord excites the love of His spouse. 2. The wound of love. 3.

The pain it causes. 4. The call of the Bridegroom. 5. Effect on the

soul. 6. A spark of the fire of love. 7. The spark dies out. 8. This

grace evidently divine. 9. One such wound repays many trials. 10. First

reason of immunity from deception. 11. Second and third reasons. 12.

The imagination not concerned in it. 13. St. Teresa never alarmed at

this prayer. 14. The odour of Thine ointment.' 15. No reason to fear

deception here.

1. IT seems as if we had deserted the little dove for a long time, but

this is not the case, for these past trials cause her to take a far

higher flight. I will now describe the way in which the Spouse treats

her before uniting her entirely to Himself. He increases her longing

for Him by devices so delicate that the soul itself cannot discern

them; nor do I think I could explain them except to people who have

personally experienced them. These desires are delicate and subtle

impulses springing from the inmost depths of the soul; I know of

nothing to which they can be compared.

2. These graces differ entirely from anything we ourselves can gain,

and even from the spiritual consolation before described. [228] In

the present case, even when the mind is not recollected or even

thinking of God, although no sound is heard, His Majesty arouses it

suddenly as if by a swiftly flashing comet or by a clap of thunder.

[229] Yet the soul thus called by God hears Him well enough--so well,

indeed, that sometimes, especially at first, it trembles and even cries

out, although it feels no pain. It is conscious of having received a

delicious wound but cannot discover how, nor who gave it, yet

recognizes it as a most precious grace and hopes the hurt will never

heal.

3. The soul makes amorous complaints to its Bridegroom, even uttering

them aloud; nor can it control itself, knowing that though He is

present He will not manifest Himself so that it may enjoy Him. This

causes a pain, keen although sweet and delicious from which the soul

could not escape even if it wished; but this it never desires. [230]

This favour is more delightful than the pleasing absorption of the

faculties in the prayer of quiet which is unaccompanied by suffering.

[231]

4. I am at my wits' end, sisters, as to how to make you understand this

operation of love: I know not how to do so. It seems contradictory to

say that the Beloved clearly shows He dwells in the soul and calls by

so unmistakable a sign and a summons so penetrating, that the spirit

cannot choose but hear it, while He appears to reside in the seventh

mansion. He speaks in this manner, which is not a set form of speech,

and the inhabitants of the other mansions, the senses, the imagination

and the faculties, dare not stir. [232]

5. O Almighty God! how profound are Thy secrets and how different are

spiritual matters from anything that can be seen or heard in this

world! I can find nothing to which to liken these graces, insignificant

as they are compared with many others Thou dost bestow on souls. This

favour acts so strongly upon the spirit that it is consumed by desires

yet knows not what to ask, for it realizes clearly that its God is with

it. You may inquire, if it realizes this so clearly, what more does it

desire and why is it pained? What greater good can it seek? I cannot

tell: I know that this suffering seems to pierce the very heart, and

when He Who wounded it draws out the dart He seems to draw the heart

out too, so deep is the love it feels. [233]

6. I have been thinking that God might be likened to a burning furnace

[234] from which a small spark flies into the soul that feels the

heat of this great fire, which, however, is insufficient to consume it.

The sensation is so delightful that the spirit lingers in the pain

produced by its contact. This seems to me the best comparison I can

find, for the pain is delicious and is not really pain at all, nor does

it always continue in the same degree; sometimes it lasts for a long

time; on other occasions it passes quickly. This is as God chooses, for

no human means can obtain it; and though felt at times for a long

while, yet it is intermittent.

7. In fact it is never permanent and therefore does not wholly inflame

the spirit; but when the soul is ready to take fire, the little spark

suddenly dies out, leaving the heart longing to suffer anew its loving

pangs. No grounds exist for thinking this comes from any natural cause

or from melancholy, or that it is an illusion of the devil or the

imagination. Undoubtedly this movement of the heart comes from God Who

is unchangeable; nor do its effects is resemble those of other

devotions in which the strong absorption of delight makes us doubt

their reality.

8. There is no suspension here of the senses or other faculties: they

wonder at what is happening, without impeding it. Nor do I think that

they can either increase or dispel this delightful pain. Any one who

has received this favour from our Lord will understand my meaning on

reading this: let her thank Him fervently: there is no need to fear

deception but far more fear of not being sufficiently grateful for so

signal a grace. Let her endeavour to serve Him and to amend her life in

every respect; then she will see what will follow and how she will

obtain still higher and higher gifts.

9. A person on whom this grace was bestowed passed several years

without receiving any other favour, yet was perfectly satisfied, for

even had she served God for very many years in the midst of severe

trials, she would have felt abundantly repaid. May He be for ever

blessed! Amen.

10. Perhaps you wonder why we may feel more secure against deception

concerning this favour than in other cases. I think it is for these

reasons. Firstly, because the devil cannot give such delicious pain: he

may cause pleasure or delight which appears spiritual but is unable to

add suffering, especially suffering of so keen a sort, united to peace

and joy of soul. His power is limited to what is external; suffering

produced by him is never accompanied with peace, but with anxieties and

struggles.

11. Secondly, because this welcome storm comes from no region over

which Satan has control. Thirdly, because of the great benefits left in

the soul which, as a rule, is resolute to suffer for God and longs to

bear many crosses. It is also far more determined than before to

withdraw from worldly pleasures and intercourse and other things of the

same sort.

12. It is very clear that this is no fiction: the imagination may

counterfeit some favours but not this, which is too manifest to leave

room for doubt. Should any one still remain uncertain, let her know

that hers were not genuine impulses; [235] that is, if she is dubious

as to whether or no she experienced them, for they are as certainly

perceived by the soul as is a loud voice by the ears. It is impossible

for these experiences to proceed from melancholy whose whims arise and

exist only in the imagination, whereas this emotion comes from the

interior of the soul.

13. I may be mistaken, but I shall not change my opinion until I hear

reasons to the contrary from those who understand these matters. I know

some one who has always greatly dreaded such deceptions, yet could

never bring herself to feel any alarm about this state of prayer. [236]

14. Our Lord also uses other means of rousing the soul; for

instance--when reciting vocal prayer without seeking to penetrate the

sense, a person may be seized with a delightful fervour [237] as if

suddenly encompassed with a fragrance powerful enough to diffuse itself

through all the senses. I do not assert that there really is any

perfume but use this comparison because it somewhat resembles the

manner by which the Spouse makes His presence understood, moving the

soul to a delicious desire of enjoying Him and thus disposing it to

heroic acts, and causing it to render Him fervent praise.

15. This favour springs from the same source as the former, but causes

no suffering here, nor are the soul's longings to enjoy God painful:

this is what is more usually experienced by the soul. For the reasons

already given there appears no cause here for fear, but rather for

receiving it with thanksgiving.

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[228] Mansion iv. ch. i. Life, ch. xxix. 10-15. Rel. ch. viii. 15.

[229] The saint first wrote relampago,' flash of lightning, but

afterwards altered it to 'trueno,' clap of thunder.

[230] Rel. viii. 16. St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Cant. st. i. 22

sqq. Poems 7, 8.

[231] Life, ch. xxix. 18.

[232] Life, ch. xv. 1.

[233] Ibid. ch. xxix. 17, 18.

[234] Ibid. ch. xv, 6; xviii. 4.; xxi. 9.

[235] Life, ch. xv. 15, 16.

[236] Life, ch. xxix. 6-10.

[237] Ibid. ch. xv. 12. On the matter treated by St. Teresa in this

chapter, compare St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle, stanza i.

(circa finem), stanza ix.; The Living Flame of Love, stanza ii.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO CHAPTER III.

BY THE EDITOR

THE readers, especially those not well acquainted with Scholastic

philosophy, will, perhaps, be glad to find here a short explanation of

the various kinds. of Vision and Locution, Corporal, Imaginary, and

Intellectual. The senses of Taste, Touch, and Smell are not so often

affected by mystical phenomena, but what we are about to say in respect

of Sight and Hearing applies, mutatis mutandis, to these also.

1. A CORPORAL VISION is when one sees a bodily object. A Corporal

Locution is when one hears words uttered by a human tongue. In both

cases the respective senses are exercising their normal function, and

the phenomenon differs from ordinary seeing or hearing merely by the

fact that in the latter the object seen is a real body, the words

perceived come from a real tongue, whereas in the Vision or Locution

the object is either only apparent or at any rate is not such as it

seems to be. Thus, when young Tobias set out on a journey, his

companion, Azarias, was not a real human being, but an archangel in

human form. Tobias did really see and hear him, and felt the grip of

his hand; Sara and her parents, as well as Tobias's parents, saw and

heard him too, but all the time the archangel made himself visible and

audible by means of an assumed body, or perhaps of an apparent body. It

would be more correct to describe such a phenomenon as an APPARITION

than as a Vision, and in fact the apparitions of our Risen Lord to the

holy women and the apostles belong to this category. For, though His

was a real body, it was glorified and therefore no longer subject to

the same laws which govern purely human things. (St. Thomas, Summa

theol. III., qu. 54, art. I-3).

St. Teresa tells us more than once that she never beheld a Corporal

Vision, nor heard a Corporal Locution.

II. AN IMAGINARY VISION OR LOCUTION is one where nothing is seen or

heard by the senses of seeing or hearing, but where the same impression

is received that would be produced upon the imagination by the senses

if some real object were perceived by them. For, according to the

Scholastics, the Imagination stands half-way between the senses and the

intellect, receiving impressions from the former and transmitting them

to the latter. This is the reason why imaginary Visions and Locutions

are so dangerous that, according to St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross,

and other spiritual writers, they should not only never be sought for,

but as much as possible shunned and under all circumstances

discountenanced. For the Imagination is closely connected with the

Memory, so that it is frequently impossible to ascertain whether a

Vision, etc., is not perhaps a semi-conscious or unconscious

reproduction of scenes witnessed. It is here also that deception,

wilful or unwilful, self-deception or deception by a higher agency, is

to be feared. Hence the general rule that such Visions or Locutions

should only be trusted upon the strongest grounds. According to St.

Thomas Aquinas, (Summa theol. IIa II�, gu. 175, art. 3 ad q.) the

visions of Isaias, St. John in the Apocalypse etc., were Imaginary.

As an example of Imaginary Visions we may mention St. Stephen, who saw

the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of

God'; or St. Peter, who saw the heaven opened, and a certain vessel

descending, as it were a great linen sheet, let down by the four

corners from heaven to the earth . . . and there came a voice to him:

Arise, Peter, kill and eat.' (Acts, vii. 55; X. 11-13).

These Visions, Locutions, etc., are not hallucinations. The latter are

due to physical disorder which affects the memory and causes it to

represent impressions formerly received by it, in a disorderly and

often grotesque manner. The Imaginary Vision takes place independently

of a morbid state, is caused by an extraneous power, good or evil, and

has for its object things of which the memory neither has nor ever has

had cognizance.

III. AN INTELLECTUAL VISION OR LOCUTION is one where nothing is seen or

heard by the eyes and ears, and where no sensation is received by the

imagination. But the impression which would be delivered by the

imagination to the intellect, had it come through the senses and been

handed on to the imagination, is directly imprinted upon the intellect.

To understand this it is necessary to bear in mind that the impressions

we receive through the senses must undergo a transformation--must be

spiritualized--before they reach the intellect. This is one of the most

difficult problems of psychology; none of the solutions offered by

various schools of philosophy seem to render it entirely free from

obscurity. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, the impression received by

the eye (Species sensibilis) is spiritualized by a faculty called

Intellectus agens by means of abstraction (Species impressa), and is

treasured up in the memory, like lantern slides, available at demand.

The mind, identifying itself with the Species impressa, produces the

Word of the mind' (Verbum mentis), wherein consists the act of

Understanding or Mental Conception. In the Intellectual Vision or

Locution, God, without co-operation on the part of the senses, the

imagination, or the memory, produces directly on the mind the Species

impressa. As this is supernatural with regard to its origin, and often

also with respect to its object, it stands to reason that it is too

exalted for the memory to receive it, so that such Visions and

Locutions are frequently only imperfectly remembered and sometimes

altogether forgotten, as St. Teresa tells us. On the other hand they

are far less dangerous than Corporal or Imaginary Visions and

Locutions, because the senses and imagination have nothing to do with

them, whilst evil spirits are unable to act directly upon the mind, and

self-deception is altogether excluded for the reasons stated by St.

Teresa. An instance of such a vision is mentioned by St. Paul: I know a

man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body I know not,

or out of the body I know not: God knoweth), such an one rapt even to

the third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body or out of

the body, I know not: God knoweth): that he was caught up into

paradise, and heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to

utter' (2 Cor. xii. 2-4).

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CHAPTER III.

TREATS OF THE SAME SUBJECT AND OF THE WAY GOD IS SOMETIMES PLEASED TO

SPEAK TO THE SOUL. HOW WE SHOULD BEHAVE IN SUCH A CASE, IN WHICH WE

MUST NOT FOLLOW OUR OWN OPINION. GIVES SIGNS TO SHOW HOW TO DISCOVER

WHETHER THIS FAVOUR IS A DECEPTION OR NOT: THIS IS VERY NOTEWORTHY.

1. Locutions. 2. Sometimes caused by melancholia. 3. Caution needed at

first. 4. Locutions frequently occur during prayer. 5. Resist those

containing false doctrine. 6. First sign of genuine locutions. 7.

Effect of the words: Be not troubled.' 8. It is I, be not afraid.' 9.

Be at Peace.' 10. Second sign. 11. Third sign. 12. The devil suggests

doubts about true locutions. 13. Confidence of the soul rewarded. 14.

Its joy at seeing God's words verified. 15. Its zeal for God's honour.

16. Locutions coining from the fancy. 17. Imaginary answers given to

prayer. 18. A confessor should be consulted about locutions. 19.

Interior locutions. 20. First sign of genuine interior locutions. 21.

Second sign. 22. Third sign. 23. Fourth sign. 24. Fifth sign. 25.

Results of true locutions. 26. They should remove alarm. 27. Answer to

an objection.

1. GOD arouses the soul in another manner which, though in some ways

apparently a greater favour than the above mentioned, yet may prove

more dangerous, therefore I will give some particulars about it. He

does this by means of words addressed to the soul in many different

ways; sometimes they appear to come from without; at other times from

the inner depths of the soul; or again, from its superior part; while

other speeches are so exterior as to be heard by the ears like a real

voice.

2. At times, indeed very often, this may be only a fancy; especially

with persons of a lively imagination or who are afflicted with

melancholy to any marked extent. I think that no attention should be

paid to either class of people when they say they see, hear, or learn

anything supernaturally. Do not disturb them by saying that it comes

from the devil, [238] but listen to them as if they were sick

persons. Let the prioress or confessor to whom they tell their story

bid them think no more of it as such matters are not essential in the

service of God: the devil has deceived many Christians thus, although

perhaps it is not so in their case; therefore they need not trouble

themselves about it. Thus we must accomodate ourselves to their humour:

if we tell them their fancies proceed from melancholia, there will be

no end to the matter, for they will persist in maintaining they have

seen and heard these things, for so it seems to them.

3. The truth is, care should be taken to keep such people from too much

prayer and to persuade them, as far as possible, to take no notice of

their fancies: the devil makes use of these weak souls to injure

others, even if they themselves escape unhurt. There is need for

caution both with feeble and strong souls at first, until it is certain

from what spirit these things proceed. I maintain that, in the

beginning, it is always wiser to resist these communications; if they

come from God this is the best way to receive more, for they increase

when discouraged. At the same time the soul should not be too strictly

controlled or disquieted, for it cannot help itself in the matter.

4. To return to discuss the words addressed to the soul: any kind I

mentioned may come either from God, the devil, or the imagination. By

the help of God I will endeavour to describe the signs distinguishing

the one from the other, and when these locutions are dangerous, for

they occur to many persons who praise prayer. I do not wish you to

think, sisters, that there is any harm either in believing or in

disregarding them. When they only console you, or warn you of your

faults, it matters not whence they come or whether they are only

fancies.

5. I caution you on one point--although they may come from God, you

must not esteem yourself more highly, for He often spoke to the

Pharisees [239] --all the good consists in profiting by His words. Take

no more notice of any speeches you hear which disagree with the Holy

Scriptures than if you heard them from Satan himself. Though they may

only rise from your vivid imagination, look upon them as a temptation

against the faith. Always resist them; then they will leave you, and

cease, for they have little strength of their own. [240]

6. Now let us return to the first point--whether these communications

come from the inferior or the superior part of the soul, or from

without, does not affect their originating from God.

7. In my opinion these are the most certain signs of their being

divine. The first and truest is the power and authority they carry with

them, for these words are operative. [241] For example: a soul is

suffering all the sorrow and disquiet I have described: the mind is

darkened and dry; but it is set at peace, freed from all trouble and

filled with light merely by hearing the words: Be not troubled.' These

deliver it from all its pains, although it felt as though, if the whole

world and all its theologians had united in trying to persuade it there

was no cause for grief, it could not, in spite of all their efforts,

have been delivered from its affliction. [242]

8. Again, a person is troubled and greatly terrified at being told by

her confessor and other people that her soul is under the influence of

the evil one: she hears a single sentence which says, It is I, be not

afraid,' [243] and is at once freed from all fears and filled with

consolation; indeed, she believes it would be impossible for any one to

disturb her confidence. [244]

9. Again, when exceedingly anxious about important business, not

knowing whether or not it will be successful, on hearing words bidding

her Be at peace; all will go well,' she feels reassured and free from

all care in the matter. [245] Many other instances of the same sort

could be mentioned.

10. The second sign is a great calm and a devout and peaceful

recollection which dwell in the soul together with a desire to praise

God. They say that communications, at any rate in this mansion, are not

uttered direly by God but are transmitted by an angel. [246] Then, O

my God, if a word sent to us by Thee through Thy messenger has such

force, what effects wilt Thou not leave in the soul united to Thee in a

mutual bond of love? [247]

11. The third proof is that these words do not pass from the memory but

remain there for a very long time; sometimes they are never forgotten.

This is not the case with what men may utter, which, however grave and

learned they may be, is not thus impressed on our memory. Neither, if

they prophesy of things to come, do we believe them as we do these

divine locutions which leave us so convinced of their truth that,

although their fulfilment sometimes seems utterly impossible and we

vacillate and doubt about them, there still remains in the soul a

certainty of their verity which cannot be destroyed. Perhaps everything

may seem to militate against what was heard and years pass by, yet the

spirit never loses its belief that God will make use of means unknown

to men for the purpose and that finally what was foretold must surely

happen; as indeed it does. [248]

12. Still, as I said, the soul is troubled at seeing many obstacles in

the way of the accomplishment of the prophecy. The words, their

effects, and the assurance they carry with them convinced the soul at

the moment that they came from God. Afterwards, however, doubts arise

as to whether the locutions came from the devil or from the

imagination, although while hearing them the person would have died to

defend their truth. [249] But, as I said, these misgivings must be

suggested by the evil one to afflict and intimidate her, especially if

by carrying out a command thus given great good will result to souls

and some work be done conducing notably to the honour and service of

God, concerning which great difficulties have to be overcome. In such

cases, where will Satan stop short? At least, he weakens faith, and it

is a terrible evil to doubt that God has power to work in a way far

beyond our understanding.

13. Despite all these difficulties and although the confessors

consulted on these matters say the words were but fancies, while events

take such an unfavourable turn as to make the realization of these

predictions seem impossible, yet there remains so lively a spark of

certainty in the mind (I know not whence it comes) that, although all

other hopes die out, it cannot, if it would, quench this ardent spark

of confidence. At last, as I said, our Lord's words are accomplished,

at which the soul is so satisfied and joyful that it can do nothing but

praise His Majesty--more because it sees His words prove true than on

account of the thing itself, even though it may be of consequence to

the person concerned.

14. I know not why the soul attaches such importance to these

communications being verified. I think that if the person herself were

detected in telling falsehoods, she would not be so grieved as at these

locutions proving untrue--as if she could do anything in the matter

beyond repeating what has been said to her! A certain person was

frequently reminded in such a case of the Prophet Jonas, when he found

Ninive was not to be destroyed. [250]

15. In fact, as these words come from the Spirit of God, it is right

thus to trust them and to desire that He Who is supreme truth should

not be thought a deceiver. Justly, therefore, does their hearer rejoice

when, after a thousand delays and enormous difficulties, they are

accomplished. Although this success may entail great suffering on

herself, she prefers it to the nonfulfilment of what she knows our Lord

most certainly foretold. Possibly every one is not so weak as this, if

indeed it is a weakness, though I cannot myself condemn it as an evil.

16. If these locutions proceed from the imagination [251] they show

no such signs, bringing neither conviction, peace, nor interior joy

with them. But in some cases I have come across, on account of a very

weak constitution or vivid imagination or of other causes I do not

know, persons while absorbed in the prayer of quiet and in spiritual

slumber are so entirely carried out of themselves by their deep state

of recollection as to be unconscious of anything external. All their

senses being thus dormant, as if asleep--as indeed, at times they

really are--they thus, in a sort of dream, fancy they are spoken to or

see things they imagine come from God, but which leave no more effect

than dreams.

17. Again, one who very lovingly asks something of our Lord may fancy

that an answer comes from Him. [252] This often occurs, but I think

that no one accustomed to receive divine communications could be

deceived on this point by the imagination.

18. The devil's deceptions are more dangerous; but if the foregoing

signs are present, we may feel fairly confident that these locutions

are from God, though not so certain but that, if they refer to some

weighty matter in which we are called upon to act or if they concern a

third person, we should consult some confessor who is both learned and

a servant of God, before attempting or thinking of acting on them,

although we may have heard them repeated several times and are

convinced of their truth and divine origin. [253] His Majesty wishes

us to take this course; it is not disobedience to His commands, for He

has bidden us hold our confessor as His representative even where there

is no doubt that the communications come from Him: thus we shall gain

courage if the matter is a very difficult one. Our Lord will reassure

our confessor, whom, when He so chooses, He will inspire with faith

that these locutions are from the Holy Ghost. [254] If not, we are

freed from all further obligations in the matter. I think it would be

very dangerous to act against our confessor's advice and to prefer our

own opinions in such a matter. Therefore, sisters, I admonish you in

the name of our Lord, never to do anything of the sort.

19. God speaks to the soul in another way by a certain intellectual

vision which I think undoubtedly proceeds from Him; it will be

described later on. [255] 8 It takes place far within the innermost

depths of the soul which appears to hear distinctly in a most

mysterious manner, with its spiritual hearing, the words spoken to it

by our Lord Himself. The way in which the spirit perceives these words

and the results produced by them, convince us that they cannot in any

way come from the devil. Their powerful aftereffects force us to admit

this and plainly show they do not spring from the imagination. [256]

Careful consideration will assure us of this for the following

reasons;--

20. Firstly, the clearness of the language varies in the different

kinds of locutions. Those that are divine are so distinct that the

hearer remembers if there were a syllable missing, and what words were

made use of even though a whole sentence was spoken. But if the speech

were only a freak of fancy, it would not be so audible nor would the

words be so distinct but would be only half articulated. [257]

21. The second reason is that often the person was not thinking of what

is heard; sometimes the locution even comes unexpectedly during

conversation, though at times it refers to some thought that passed

quickly through the mind or to a subject it was before engaged upon.

Frequently it concerns things of whose existence the hearer knew

nothing nor even imagined such events could ever come to pass;

therefore it is impossible for the imagination to have framed such

speeches and deceived the mind by fancies about what it had never

wished, nor sought for, nor even thought about. [258]

22. The third reason is that in a genuine case the soul seems to listen

to the words, whereas when the imagination is at work, little by little

it composes what the person wishes to hear. [259]

23. The fourth reason is because divine locutions differ immensely from

others, a single word comprising a depth of meaning which our

understanding could not thus quickly condense into one phrase. [260]

24. Fifthly because, in a manner I cannot explain, these

communications, without any further explanations, frequently give us to

understand far more than is implied by the words themselves. I shall

speak farther on of this way of understanding hidden things which is

very subtle and a favour for which we should thank God. Some people are

exceedingly suspicious about these and other communications of the same

kind. I speak particularly of some one [261] who experienced them

herself, though there may be others who cannot understand them. I know

that she has considered the subject very carefully, God having often

bestowed this grace on her. Her principal difficulty was to discover

whether the locutions were merely fancied. It is easier to know when

they come from the devil although being so wily, he can with facility

imitate the spirit of light. However, he would do this in a form of

words pronounced so distinctly that there would be no more doubt as to

their reality than if they came from the spirit of truth, while those

coming from the imagination leave us uncertain whether we heard the

words or not. But Satan could never counterfeit the effects I spoke of;

[262] he leaves neither peace nor light in the soul, only anxiety and

confusion. In any case, he can do little or no harm to one who is

humble and who, as I advised, does not act on what is heard.

25. If the soul receives favours and caresses from our Lord, let it

examine carefully whether it rates itself more highly in consequence;

unless self-abasement increases with God's expressions of love, they do

not come from the Holy Spirit. Inevitably, when they are divine, the

greater the favours, the less the soul esteems itself and the more

keenly it remembers its sins. [263] It becomes more oblivious of

self-interest: the will and memory grow more fervent in seeking solely

God's honour with no thought of self. It also becomes unceasingly

careful not to deviate deliberately from the will of God and feels a

keener conviction that instead of meriting such favours, it deserves

hell.

26. When these results follow, no graces or gifts received during

prayer need alarm the soul which should rather trust in the mercy of

God, Who is faithful and will not allow the devil to deceive it; but it

is always well to be on one's guard.

27. Those our Lord does not lead by this path may suppose that the soul

can avoid listening to these locutions and that even if they are

interior it is at least possible to distract the attention from them so

as not to hear them and thus escape danger. This cannot be done: I am

not speaking of freaks of fancy which may be prevented by ceasing to

desire certain things or by paying no attention to its inventions. This

is not feasible when these communications come from the Holy Ghost Who,

when He speaks, stops all other thoughts and compels the mind to

listen. [264] Mark this: that I believe it would be easier for a

person with very keen ears to avoid hearing a loud voice, for he could

occupy his thoughts and mind in other things. Not so here; the soul can

do nothing, nor has it ears to stop, nor power to think of aught but

what is said to it. For He Who could stay the sun on its course (at the

prayer of Josue, [265] I believe) can so quiet the faculties and the

interior of the spirit as to make it perceive that another and a

stronger Lord than itself governs this castle; it is thus affected with

profound devotion and humility, seeing that it cannot but listen. May

the divine Majesty vouchsafe that, forgetting ourselves, our only aim

may be to please Him, as I said. Amen. God grant I have succeeded in

explaining what I wished and that it may be some guide to those who may

experience such favours.

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[238] Life, ch. xxiii. 114.

[239] Antonius a Sp. S. l.c. tr. iii. n. 323. St. John of the Cross,

Ascent of Mount Carmel, bk. ii. ch. xxvii.

[240] Life, ch. xxv. 13, 18.

[241] Ps. cxlviii. 5: Ipse dixit et facta sunt.' Life, ch. xxv. 5.

Anton. a Sp. S. l.c. tr. iii. n. 353. St. John of the Cross, Ascent of

Mount Carmel, bk. ii. ch. xxxi. calls these substantial words.'

[242] Life, ch. xxvi. 6; xxx. 17. Rel. i. 26.

[243] St. Luke xxiv. 36.

[244] Life, ch. xxv. 22; xxxiii. 10. Rel. vii. 22. St. John of the

Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel, bk. ii. ch. xxxi. 1.

[245] Life, ch. xxxv. 7. Rel. ix. 6. St. John of the Cross, Ascent of

Mount Carmel, bk. iii. ch. ii. 7.

[246] Rel. v. 14.

[247] Life, ch. xxv. 23-25. See also Schram, Instit. theol. myst. 528

schol.; 529 schol. ii. and iii.; 5 3 I schol. ii.; 5 32 schol. ii.

Exterior locutions may proceed direct from God, but generally are due

to the ministry of angels; the same holds good with regard to the

imaginary ones. Intellectual locutions, in which the words are merely

impressed upon the substance of the soul without intervention of the

imagination, can only proceed from God, Who alone is able to act upon

the substance of the soul. See also Life, ch. xxvii. 7 (end), 8, 9, and

10, and the corresponding chapters in St. John's Ascent of Mount

Carmel.

[248] Life, ch. xxv. 3, 10. Rel. ii. 17.

[249] Ibid, ch. xxv. 10.

[250] Jonas iv. 1: 'Et afflictus est Jonas afflictione magna et iratus

est; et oravit ad Dominum et dixit: Obsecro, Domine, numquid non hoc

est verbum meum cum adhuc essem in terra mea?'

[251] Life, ch. xxv. 4 (end) and 5 (beginning).

[252] Ibid. ch. xxv. 4 (beginning).

[253] Way of Perf. ch. xxxix. 6. Life, ch. xxvi. 4, 5. St. John of the

Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel, bk. ii. ch. xxii. 14-18.

[254] Rel. vii. 15.

[255] Infra, ch. viii.

[256] Life, ch. xxvii, 8.

[257] Life, ch. xxv. 6 and 10 (end).

[258] Ibid. ch. xxv. 9, 16.

[259] Ibid. ch. xxv. 4, 6.

[260] Ibid, ch. xxv. 12 (beginning).

[261] The whole of this chapter as well as chapter xxv. of the Life

prove clearly that the Saint speaks about herself and that she

investigated the subject with the greatest care.

[262] Life, ch. xxv. 15.

[263] Life, ch. xii. 5: The nearer we draw unto God the more this

virtue (humility) should grow'; xv. 16; xix. 2; xx. 38. Rel. ii. 15;

vii. 17; viii. 7, 9. Way of Perf. ch. xvii. 3.

[264] Life, ch. xxv. 21.

[265] Josue x. 12. 13: Tunc locutus est Josue: . . . sol contra Gabaon

ne movearis; steteruntque sol et luna.'

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CHAPTER IV.

TREATS OF HOW GOD SUSPENDS THE SOUL IN PRAYER BY A TRANCE, ECSTASY OR

RAPTURE, WHICH I BELIEVE ARE ALL THE SAME THING. GREAT COURAGE REQUIRED

TO RECEIVE EXTRAORDINARY FAVOURS FROM HIS MAJESTY.

1. Courage required by the soul for the divine espousals. 2. Raptures.

3. Rapture caused by the spark of love. 4. The powers and senses

absorbed. 5. Mysteries revealed during ecstasies. 6. These mysteries

are unspeakable. 7. Moses and the burning bush. 8. Simile of the

museum. 9. St. Teresa's visit to the Duchess of Alva. 10. Joy of the

soul during raptures. 11. No imaginary vision. 12. True and false

raptures. 13. Revelations of future bliss. 14. The soul's preparation.

15. The soul blinded by its faults. 16. God ready to give these graces

to all. 17. Faculties lost during ecstasy. 18. Spiritual inebriation.

19. Fervour and love of suffering left in the soul. 20. Scandal caused

to spectators by such favours. 21. Our Lord's predilection for such a

soul. 22. Illusionary raptures.

1. WHAT rest can the poor little butterfly find, with all the trials I

have told you of and many more? They serve to make her desire the

Bride-groom more ardently. His Majesty, well aware of our weakness,

fortifies her by these and other means in order that she may obtain

courage for union with a Lord so great and may take Him for her Spouse.

Perhaps you will laugh and think I am talking foolishly: there can be

no call for courage here; there is no woman, however low her class, who

would not dare to wed a king. So I think, were he an earthly monarch,

but there is need of more fortitude than you suppose in order to

espouse the King of heaven. [266] Our nature appears too timid and

base for anything so high; without doubt, unless God gave us the grace

it would be impossible for us, however much we might appreciate its

benefits. You will learn how His Majesty ratifies these espousals;

probably this is done when He ravishes the soul by ecstasies, thus

depriving it of its faculties; if the use of these were retained, I

think the sight of its close vicinity to so mighty a Sovereign would

probably deprive the body of life. I am speaking of genuine raptures,

not fancies that come from women's weakness--which so often occur

nowadays--making them imagine everything to be a rapture or an ecstasy.

As I think I said, some are so feebly constituted as to die of a single

prayer of quiet. [267]

2. I should like to describe here several kinds of raptures of which I

have learnt from spiritual persons with whom I have discussed the

subject, but I am not sure whether I shall succeed in explaining them

as I did elsewhere. [268] It has been decided that it will not be

amiss to repeat what was said about these and other things that happen

in this state, if only that I may treat of all the mansions contain in

proper order.

3. In one sort of rapture the soul, although perhaps not engaged in

prayer at the time, is struck by some word of God which it either

remembers or hears. [269] His Majesty, touched with pity by what He

has seen it suffer for so long past in its longing for Him, appears to

increase the spark I described in the interior of the spirit until it

entirely inflames the soul which rises with new life like a phoenix

from the flames. Such a one may piously believe her sins are now

forgiven, [270] supposing that she is in the disposition and has made

use of the means required by the Church. The soul being thus purified,

God unites it to Himself in a way known only to Him and the spirit, nor

does even the latter so understand what happens as to be able to

explain it to others afterwards. Yet the mind had not lost the use of

its faculties, for this ecstasy does not resemble a swoon or a fit in

which nothing either interior or exterior is felt.

4. What I do understand is that the soul has never been more alive to

spiritual things nor so full of light and of knowledge of His Majesty

as it is now. This might seem impossible; if the powers and senses were

so absorbed that we might call them dead, how does the soul understand

this mystery? I cannot tell; perhaps no one but the Creator Himself can

say what passes in these places--I mean this and the following mansions

which may be treated as one, the door leading from one to the other

being wide open. However, as some things in the last rooms are only

shown to those who get thus far, I thought it better to treat the

mansions separately.

5. While the soul is in this suspension, our Lord favours it by

discovering to it secrets such as heavenly mysteries and imaginary

visions, which admit of description afterwards because they remain so

imprinted on the memory that it never forgets them. But when the

visions are intellectual they are not thus easily related, some of

those received at such a time being so sublime that it is not fitting

for man, while living in this world, to understand them in a way that

can be told, although when the use of the faculties returns much can be

described of what was seen in intellectual vision. Possibly you do not

know what a vision is, especially an intellectual one. Since I have

been bidden by one who has authority, I will tell you at the proper

time. Although seemingly superfluous, it may prove useful to certain

people.

6. 'But,' you will ask me, if the very sublime favours our Lord bestows

in this mansion cannot afterwards be remembered, what profit do they

bring?' [271] O daughters! their value cannot be overrated; for

though the recipient is incapable of describing them, they are deeply

imprinted in the centre of the soul and are never forgotten. How can

they be remembered if no image is seen and the powers of the soul do

not comprehend them?' I, too, do not understand this, but I know that

certain truths of the greatness of God remain so impressed on the

spirit by this favour that, did not faith teach Who He is and that it

is bound to believe He is God, the soul would henceforth worship Him as

such, as did Jacob when he saw the ladder. [272] Doubtless the

Patriarch learnt other secrets he was unable to reveal, for unless he

had received more interior light he could never have discovered such

sublime mysteries merely by watching angels ascending and descending

the steps. I am not certain whether this quotation is correct; although

I have heard the passage, I cannot feel sure of recalling it exactly.

7. Neither was Moses able to relate more than God willed of what he had

seen in the burning bush; [273] but unless the Almighty had clearly

revealed certain mysteries to his soul, causing it to see and know its

God was present, the lawgiver could never have undertaken so many and

such great labours. Such sublime revelations were shown him amidst the

thorns of the bush as to give him the needful courage for his great

deeds on behalf of the Children of Israel. We must not, sisters, search

out reasons for understanding the hidden things of God, but, believing

Him to be Almighty, we should be convinced that such worms as

ourselves, with our limited power of intelligence, are unable to

comprehend His wonders. Let us praise Him fervently for allowing us to

understand something of them.

8. I wish I could find some simile for my subject: none seem to suit

the purpose, but I will make use of the following. Imagine that you are

in an apartment--I fancy it is termed camarin (or private

museum)--belonging to a king or a great nobleman, in which are placed

numberless kinds of articles of glass, porcelain, and other things, so

arranged that most of them are at once seen on entering the room.

9. While on a visit to the house of the Duchess of Alva (where at her

request I was bidden by obedience to stay during a journey) [274] I

was taken into such a room. I stood amazed on entering it and wondered

what could be the use of such a jumble of knick-knacks; then I thought

that the sight of so many different things should lead one to praise

God. It is fortunate I saw them, for they offer me a suitable

comparison in this case. Although I was in the room some time, there

were so many objects in it that I forgot what I had seen and could no

more remember each object, nor of what it was made, than if I had never

seen it, though I recalled the sight of the whole collection.

10. Something of this sort occurs when the spirit is very closely

united to God. It is introduced into this mansion of the empyrean

heaven which must be in the centre of our souls for since God resides

in them, He must own one of the mansions. While the soul is in ecstasy,

our Lord does not appear to wish it to apprehend these mysteries and

its inebriation of joy in Him suffices it. But sometimes He is pleased

to withdraw it from this rapture when it at once perceives what the

mansion contains. On returning to itself, the mind can recall what has

been seen but is unable to describe it, nor can it, by its natural

abilities, attain to see more of the supernatural than God has chosen

to show it.

11. Do I seem to own that the soul really sees something and that this

is an imaginary vision? I mean nothing of the sort: I am speaking of an

intellectual vision, but being so ignorant and dull I can explain

nothing and am well aware that if anything is rightly stated, it does

not come from myself.

12. I think that if the soul learns no mysteries at any time during

raptures, they are no true raptures but some natural weakness that may

occur to people of delicate constitutions, such as women, when by its

strenuous efforts the spirit overpowers physical nature, and produces

stupor, as I think I said in connection with the prayer of quiet. [275]

13. This is not so in genuine raptures, for then I believe God ravishes

the soul wholly to Himself, as being His very own and His bride, and

shows her some small part of the kingdom she has thus won. However

little this may be, all is great that is in this great God. He will

allow of no obstacle from the powers or the senses but bids that the

doors of all the mansions should be closed at once, only leaving open

the one He is in, so that we may enter it. Blessed be such mercy--well

may men be accursed who do not seek to profit by it, but who forfeit

it!

14. O, my sisters! what nothingness is all we have given up, or that we

do, or ever could do for a God who thus wills to communicate Himself to

a worm! If we hope to enjoy this favour even during our mortal life,

what are we doing? Why do we delay? What can repay the loss of the time

of a Memento' [276] in searching for this Lord, like the bride

through the streets and squares. [277] Oh, what a mockery is

everything in this world that does not lead towards and help us to

attain to this state! Even though all the earthly pleasures, riches,

and happiness that can be imagined could last for eternity, they would

be disappointing and base contrasted with the treasures which are to be

enjoyed for ever--and yet even these are nothing compared with the

possession for our own of the Lord of all treasures in heaven and

earth.

15. Oh, human blindness! When, oh, when shall this dust be taken from

our eyes? Although we think it insufficient to blind us, yet I see some

little motes or grains of dust which, if left to spread, will suffice

to harm us greatly. At least, for the love of God, my sisters, let

these faults convince us of our misery, serving to clear our sight as

did the clay the eyes of the blind man who was cured by the Spouse.

[278] Then, realizing our imperfections, we shall beg Him more

fervently to let us benefit by our defers so as to please Him in all

things.

16. I have unconsciously wandered far from my subject: forgive me,

sisters. Believe me, when I come to these wonders of God's greatness (I

mean when I come to speak of them) I cannot but feel keenly grieved at

seeing what we lose by our own fault. It is true that His Majesty

grants such favours to whom He chooses; yet if we sought Him as He

seeks us, He would give them to us all. He only longs for souls on whom

He may bestow them, for His gifts do not diminish His riches.

17. To return to what I was describing. By the commands of the

Bridegroom, the doors of the mansions and even those of the keep and of

the whole castle are closed; for when He intends ravishing the soul He

takes away the power of speech, and although occasionally the other

faculties are retained rather longer, no word can be uttered. [279]

Sometimes the person is at once deprived of all the senses, the hands

and body becoming as cold as if the soul had fled; occasionally no

breathing can be detected. [280] This condition lasts but a short

while; I mean in the same degree, [281] for when this profound

suspension diminishes the body seems to come to itself and gain

strength to return again to this death which gives more vigorous life

to the soul.

18. This supreme state of ecstasy never lasts long, but although it

ceases, it leaves the will so inebriated, [282] and the mind so

transported out of itself that for a day, or sometimes for several

days, such a person is incapable of attending to anything but what

excites the will to the love of God; although wide awake enough to

this, she seems asleep as regards all earthly matters.

19. Oh, when the soul wholly returns to itself, how abashed does it

feel at having received this favour and how passionate are its desires

of serving God in any way He asks of it! If the former states of prayer

caused the powerful effects described, what will not such a signal

grace as this do? Such a person wishes she had a thousand lives [283]

to spend for God; she would have all earthly creatures changed into as

many tongues to praise Him on her account. She longs to perform most

severe penances, [284] nor do they cost her much, for the power of

her love almost prevents their being felt. She realizes how little the

martyrs suffered during their tortures, for pain is easy when our Lord

thus aids us: therefore such a soul complains to His Majesty when He

gives her no suffering? [285]

20. She considers it a great favour when God sends her this rapture in

secret, for when others see it the shame and confusion she feels are so

great as somewhat to diminish her transport. Knowing the malice of the

world, she fears her ecstasy will not be attributed to its proper cause

but may give rise to rash judgment instead of the praise due for it to

God. Although this pain and distress are unavoidable, they seem to me

to show a certain want of humility, for if she wished to be despised,

what would she care? [286]

21. Our Lord once said to some one who was troubled by such thoughts:

Do not be disturbed; people will either praise Me or condemn thee; in

either case thou wilt be the gainer.' [287] I learnt afterwards that

she was greatly encouraged and comforted by this speech; I speak of it

in case others may suffer in the same way. Apparently our Lord would

have all men know that this soul is His own and that none may molest

it, for it is all His. Men are welcome to attack, if they will, the

body, the honour, and the possessions of such a person, for glory will

accrue to His Majesty from all they do; but the soul they may not

assail; unless by a most culpable presumption it withdraws from the

protection of its Spouse, He will defend it against the whole world and

against all hell besides.

22. I do not know whether I have succeeded in teaching you what a

rapture is; to explain it fully would, as I said, be impossible. Still

I do not think time has been lost in describing a genuine rapture. The

effects in false raptures are very different. I do not call them false'

because people who experience them intentionally deceive others, but

because they are themselves unwittingly deceived. As the signs and

effects do not correspond with this great grace, the favour itself

becomes so discredited that naturally, when our Lord afterwards bestows

it on any soul, nobody believes in it. May He be for ever blessed and

praised! Amen, Amen!

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[266] Life, ch. xxxix. 30.

[267] Castle, M. iv. ch. iii. 11.

[268] Life, ch. xx. passim.

[269] Philippus a SS. Trinitate, l.c. tr. i. disc. iii. art. 3.

[270] Rel. ix. 4. Way of Perf. ch. xix. 8.

[271] Philippus a SS. Trinitate, l.c.

[272] Gen. xxviii. 2.

[273] Exod. 2.

[274] Do�a Maria Enriquez, wife of Ferdinand de Toledo, Duke of Alva.

This visit took place in February, 1574, and lasted two days the Saint

being then on her journey from Salamanca to Alva de Tormes. (Found. ch.

xxi.)

[275] Castle, M. iv. ch. iii. 2.

[276] The Saint wrote here and elsewhere Memento, and not momenta as is

commonly printed. It refers, of course, to that short interruption at

Mass when the priest makes a Memento of those for whom he intends to

pray. Likewise St. Teresa often speaks of the space of a Credo or an

Ave Maria' always implying a very short duration.

[277] Cant. iii. 2: Per vicos et plateas qu�ram quem diligit anima

mea.'

[278] St. John ix. 6.

[279] Life, ch. xx. 18. Like a person who, having a rope around his

neck and being strangled, tries to breathe.'

[280] Life, ch. xx 23, 29. Way of Perf. ch. xxxii. Rel. viii. 8, 11.

The first effect of ecstatic prayer concerns the body, which remains as

if the soul had departed; it grows cold from a deficiency of natural

heat, the eyes close gently, and the other senses are suspended; and

yet a weak body recovers health in this prayer.' (Anton. a Spiritu

Sancto, Direct. Mystic. tr. iv. d. 2, � 4, n. 150).

[281] 'Digo para estar in un ser.'

[282]

Christusque nobis sit cibus,

Potusque noster sit fides;

L�ti bibamus sobriam

Ebrietatem Spiritus.

Hymn for Lauds, Feria secunda, old version. (Compare Anton. a Sp. S.

l.c. tr. iv. n. 30.)

[283] Life, ch. xx. 30.

[284] Castle, M. vii. ch. iii. 4. Way of Perf. ch. xxxviii. 1. Excl.

xiv. 3. Life, ch. xl. 27.

[285] Life, ch. xvi. 6. Rel. i. 4.

[286] Ibid. ch. xx. 5, 6.

[287] Life, ch. xxxi. 15. St. John of the Cross in stanza xiii. 8. of

the Spiritual Canticle, refers to this and the following chapters.

This,' he says, is an appropriate opportunity for discussing the

difference between raptures, ecstasies, and other elevations and subtle

flights of the spirit, to which spiritual persons are liable; but as my

object is to do nothing more than explain this canticle, I leave the

subject for those who are better qualified than I am. I do this the

more readily because our mother, the blessed Teresa of Jesus, has

written admirably on this matter, whose writings I hope to see soon

published,'

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CHAPTER V.

TREATS OF THE SAME SUBJECT AS THE LAST CHAPTER AND DESCRIBES THE FLIGHT

OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS ANOTHER WAY BY WHICH GOD ELEVATES THE SOUL:

THIS REQUIRES GREAT COURAGE IN ONE EXPERIENCING IT. THIS FAVOUR, BY

WHICH GOD GREATLY DELIGHTS THE SOUL IS EXPLAINED. THIS CHAPTER IS VERY

PROFITABLE.

1. The flight of the spirit. 2. Self-control completely lost. 3. Symbol

of the two cisterns. 4. Obligations following these favours. 5.

Humility produced by them. 6. How our crucified Lord comforted such a

soul. 7. A humble soul fears these favours. 8. Mysteries learnt during

the flight of the spirit. 9. Imaginary visions sometimes accompany

intellectual ones. 10. How the flight of the spirit takes place. 11.

The soul fortified by it. 12. Three great graces left in the soul. 13.

The third grace. 14. Fear caused by this favour.

1. THERE is another form of rapture, which, though essentially the same

as the last, yet produces very different feelings in the soul. I call

it the flight of the spirit,' [288] for the soul suddenly feels so

rapid a sense of motion that the spirit appears to hurry it away with a

speed which is very alarming, especially at first. Therefore I said

that the soul on whom God bestows this favour requires strong courage,

besides great faith, trust, and resignation, so that God may do what He

chooses with it.

2. Do you suppose a person in perfect possession of her senses feels

but little dismay at her soul's being drawn above her, while sometimes,

as we read, even the body rises with it? [289] She does not know

where the spirit is going, who is raising her, nor how it happens; for

at the first instant of this sudden movement one does not feel sure it

is caused by God. Can it possibly be resisted? No; resistance only

accelerates the motion, as some one told me. God now appears to be

teaching the soul, which has so often placed itself absolutely in His

hands and offered itself entirely to Him, that it no longer belongs to

itself; thus it is snatched away more vehemently in consequence of its

opposition. Therefore this person resolved to resist no more than does

a straw when attracted by amber (a thing you may have seen); she

yielded herself into the hands of Him who is Almighty, seeing it is

best to make a virtue of necessity. Speaking of straw, doubtless it is

as easy for a stalwart, strapping fellow to lift a straw as for our

mighty and powerful Giant to elevate our spirit. [290]

3. It seems that the cistern of water of which I spoke (but I cannot

quite remember where) in the fourth mansion, [291] was formerly

filled gently and quietly, without any movement; but now this great God

Who restrains the springs and the waters and will not permit the ocean

to transgress its bounds, [292] lets loose the streams, which with a

powerful rush flow into the cistern and a mighty wave rises, strong

enough to uplift on high the little vessel of our soul. Neither the

ship herself nor her pilot and sailors can at their choice control the

fury of the sea and stop its carrying the boat where it will: far less

can the interior of the soul now stay where it chooses or force its

senses or faculties to act more than He Who holds them in His dominion

decrees; as for the exterior powers, they are here quite useless.

4. Indeed I am amazed, sisters, while merely writing of this

manifestation of the immense power of this great King and Monarch. Then

what must be felt by those who actually experience it? I am convinced

that if His Majesty were to reveal Himself thus to the greatest sinners

on earth, they would never dare to offend Him again--if not through

love at least through fear of Him. What obligations bind those taught

in so sublime a manner to strive with all their might not to displease

such a Master! In His Name I beg of you, sisters, who have received

these or the like favours, not to rest content with merely receiving

them but to remember that she who owes much has much to pay. [293]

5. This thought terrifies the soul exceedingly: unless the great

courage needed was given it by our Lord, it would suffer great and

constant grief; for looking first at what His Majesty has done for it

and then upon itself, it sees how little good it has performed compared

with what it was bound to do, and that the paltry service it has

rendered was full of faults, failures and tepidity. To efface the

remembrance of the many imperfections of all its good deeds (if indeed

it has ever performed any) it thinks best to forget them altogether and

to be ever mindful of its sins, casting itself on the mercy of God

since it cannot repay its debt to Him and begging for the pity and

compassion He ever shows to sinners.

6. Perhaps He will answer as He did to some one who was kneeling before

a crucifix in great affliction on this account, for she felt she had

never had anything to offer God nor to sacrifice for His sake. The

Crucified One consoled her by saying that He gave her for herself all

the pains and labours He had borne in His passion, that she might offer

them as her own to His Father. [294] I learnt from her that she at

once felt comforted and enriched by these words which she never forgets

but recalls whenever she realizes her own wretchedness and feels

encouraged and consoled. I could relate several other incidents of the

same kind learnt in conversation with many holy people much given to

prayer, but I will not recount them lest you might imagine they relate

to myself.

7. I think this example is very instructive; it shows that we please

our Lord by self-knowledge, by the constant recollection of our poverty

and miseries, and by realizing that we possess nothing but what we have

received from Him. [295] Therefore courage is needed, sisters, in

order to receive this and many other favours which come to a soul

elevated to this state by our Lord; I think that if the soul is humble

it requires more valour than ever for this last mercy. May God grant us

humility for His Name's sake.

8. To return to this sudden rapture of the spirit. The soul really

appears to have quitted the body, which however is not lifeless, and

though, on the other hand, the person is certainly not dead, yet she

herself cannot, for a few seconds, tell whether her spirit remains

within her body or not. [296] She feels that she has been wholly

transported into another and a very different region from that in which

we live, where a light so unearthly is shown [297] that, if during

her whole lifetime she had been trying to picture it and the wonders

seen, she could not possibly have succeeded. In an instant her mind

learns so many things at once that if the imagination and intellect

spent years in striving to enumerate them, it could not recall a

thousandth part of them.

9. This vision is not intellectual but imaginary and is seen by the

eyes of the soul more clearly than earthly things are seen by our

bodily eyes. Although no words are pronounced, the spirit is taught

many truths; for instance, if it beholds any of the saints, it knows

them at once as well as if intimately acquainted with them for years.

[298] Occasionally, besides what the eyes of the soul perceive in

intellectual vision, other things are shown it. In an imaginary vision

it usually sees our Lord accompanied by a host of angels; yet neither

the bodily eyes nor the eyes of the soul [299] see anything, for

these visions and many other things impossible to describe, are

revealed by some wonderful intuition that I cannot explain. Perhaps

those who have experienced this favour and possess more ability than

myself may be able to describe it, although it seems to me a most

difficult task.

10. I cannot tell whether the soul dwells in the body meanwhile or not:

I would neither affirm that it does nor that the body is deprived of

it. I have often thought that as, though the sun does not leave his

place in the heavens yet his rays have power to reach the earth

instantaneously, so the soul and the spirit, which make one and the

same thing (like the sun and its rays) may, while remaining in its own

place, through the strength of the ardour coming to it from the true

Sun of Justice, send up some higher part of it above itself. In fact I

do not understand what I am talking about, but the truth is that, with

the swiftness of a bullet fired from a gun, an upward flight takes

place in the interior of the soul. (I know no other name for it but

flight.') Although noiseless, it is too manifest a movement to be any

illusion [300] and the soul is quite outside itself; at least that is

the impression made upon it. Great mysteries are revealed to it

meanwhile, and when the person returns to consciousness she is so

greatly benefited that she holds all this world's goods as filth

compared with what she has seen. Henceforth earthly life is grievous to

her and what used to please her now remains uncared for and unnoticed.

[301]

11. Those children of Israel who were sent on first to the Land of

Promise brought back tokens from it; [302] so here our Lord seems to

seek to show the soul something of the land to which it is travelling,

to give it courage to pass through the trials of its painful journey,

now that it knows where it must go to find rest. You may fancy that

such profit could not thus quickly be obtained, yet only those who have

experienced what signal benefits this favour leaves in the soul can

realize its value.

12. This clearly shows it to be no work of the devil; neither the

imagination nor the evil one could represent what leaves such peace,

calm, and good fruits in the soul, and particularly the following three

graces of a very high order. [303] The first of these is a perception

of the greatness of God which becomes clearer to us as we witness more

of it. Secondly, we gain self-knowledge and humility from seeing how

creatures so base as ourselves in comparison with the Creator of such

wonders have dared to offend Him in the past or venture to gaze on Him

now.

13. The third grace is a contempt for all earthly things unless they

are consecrated to the service of so great a God. With such jewels the

Bridegroom begins to deck His Bride; they are too valuable for her to

keep them carelessly. [304] These visions are so deeply engraved in

her memory that I believe she can never forget them until she enjoys

them for evermore, for to do so would be the greatest misfortune. [305]

But the Spouse Who gave her these gifts has power to give her grace

not to lose them.

14. I told you that courage was required by the soul, for do you think

it is a trifling matter for the spirit to feel literally separated from

the body, as it does when perceiving that it is losing its senses

without understanding the reason? There is need that He Who gives all

the rest should include fortitude. You will say this fright is well

rewarded, and so say I. May He Who can bestow such graces be for ever

praised and may His Majesty vouchsafe that we may be worthy to serve

Him. Amen.

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[288] Rel. viii. 10, 11. Life, ch. xviii, 8; xx. 3.

[289] Life, ch. xx. 9. St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle,

stanzas xiv.-xv. 23 sqq. Philippus a SS. Trinit. l.c. p. iii. tr. i.

disc. iii. art. 3. 'This prayer of rapture is superior to the preceding

grades of prayer, as also to the ordinary prayer of union, and leaves

much more excellent effects and operations in many other ways.' St.

Catherine of Siena (Dialogue, ch. lxxix. 1) says: Wherefore,

oftentimes, through the perfect union which the soul has made with Me,

she is raised from the earth almost as if the heavy body became light.

But this does not mean that the heaviness of the body is taken away,

but that the union of the soul with Me is more perfect than the union

of the body with the soul; wherefore the strength of the spirit, united

with Me, raises the body from the earth.' (Transl. by Algar Thorold.)

[290] Life, ch. xxii. 20.

[291] Castle, M. iv. ch. ii. 3.

[292] Prov. viii. 29.

[293] St. Luke xii. 48: Cui multum datum est, multum quaeretur ab eo,

et cui commendaverunt multum, plus petent ab eo.'

[294] Rel. ix. 8. This happened at Seville in 1575 or 1576.

[295] 1 Cor. iv. 7: Quid autem habes quod non accepisti?'

[296] 2 Cor. xii. 2: Sive in corpore nescio, sive extra corpus nescio,

Deus scit.'

[297] This is called lumen propheti�' and is a transient form of the

lumen glori�.' See St. Thomas Aquinas, Sum. theol. 2a 2�, q. 175, art.

3 ad 2.

[298] The same thing is related of some Saints while on earth, e.g. St

Paul the first hermit and St. Anthony, who greeted each other by name

though neither knew nor had heard of the other.

[299] These words, though necessary for the context, were only begun,

but not completed by St. Teresa.

[300] Life, ch. xx. 32. Castle, M. iv. ch. i. 10.

[301] Compare �� 8-10 with Philippus a SS. Trinitate, l.c. p. iii. tr.

i. disc. iii. art. 3. 'Muchas veces he pensado, si como el sol

est�ndose en el cielo, que sus rayos tienen tanta fuerza, que no

mud�ndose �l de all�, de presto llegan ac�; si el alma y el esp�ritu

(que son una misma cosa, como le es el soly sus rayos) puede,

qued�ndose ella en su puesto, con la fuerza de calor que le viene del

verdadero Sol de justicia, alguna parte superior salir sobre s� misma.

En fin, yo no s� lo que digo, lo que es verdad es, que con la presteza

que sale la pelota de un arcabuz, cuando le ponen el fuego, se levanta

en lo interior un vuelo (que yo no s� otro nombre que le poner) que

aunque no hace ruido, hace movimento tan claro, que no puede ser antojo

en ninguna manera; y muy fuera de si misma, � todo lo que puede

entender, se le muestran grandes cosas.'

[302] Num. xiii. 24.

[303] Life, ch. xx. 31. The same distinctions with respect to divine

and diabolical locutions may be found in Life, ch. xxv. 5.

[304] 'Dexteram meam et collum meum cinxit lapidibus pretiosis;

tradidit auribus meis inestimabiles margaritas.' From the Office of St.

Agnes.

[305] This is undoubtedly the correct rendering of this difficult and

obscure passage.

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CHAPTER VI.

DESCRIBES AN EFFECT WHICH PROVES THE PRAYER SPOKEN OF IN THE LAST

CHAPTER TO BE GENUINE AND NO DECEPTION, TREATS OF ANOTHER FAVOUR OUR

LORD BESTOWS ON THE SOUL TO MAKE IT PRAISE HIM FERVENTLY.

1. The soul longs for death. 2. The soul cannot help desiring these

favours. 3. St. Teresa bewails her inability to serve God. 3. Fervour

resulting from ecstasies. 5. Excessive desires to see God should be

restrained. 6. They endanger health. 7. Tears often come from Physical

causes. 8. St. Teresa's own experience. 9. Works, not tears, are asked

by God. 10. Confide entirely in God. 11. The jubilee of the soul. 12.

Impossibility of concealing this joy. 13. The world's judgment of this

jubilee. 14. Which is often felt by the nuns of St. Joseph's. 15. The

Saint's delight in this jubilee.

1. THESE sublime favours leave the soul so desirous of fully enjoying

Him Who has bestowed them that life becomes a painful though delicious

torture, and death is ardently longed for. Such a one often implores

God with tears to take her from this exile where everything she sees

wearies her. [306] Solitude alone brings great alleviation for a

time, but soon her grief returns and yet she cannot bear to be without

it. In short, this poor little butterfly can find no lasting rest. So

tender is her love that at the slightest provocation it flames forth

and the soul takes flight. Thus in this mansion raptures occur very

frequently, nor can they be resisted even in public. Persecutions and

slanders ensue; [307] however she may try, she cannot keep free from

the fears suggested to her by so many people, especially by her

confessors.

2. Although in one way she feels great confidence within her soul,

especially when alone with God, yet on the other hand, she is greatly

troubled by misgivings lest she is deceived by the devil and so should

offend Him Whom she deeply loves. She cares little for blame, except

when her confessor finds fault with her as if she could help what

happens. She asks every one to pray for her [308] since she has been

told to do so, and begs His Majesty to direct her by some other way

than this which is so full of danger. Nevertheless, so great are the

benefits left by these favours that she cannot but see that they lead

her on the way to heaven, [309] of which she has read and heard and

learnt in the law of God. As, strive how she may, she cannot resist

desiring to receive these graces, she resigns herself into God's hands.

Yet she is grieved at finding herself forced to wish for these favours

which appears to be disobedience to her confessor, for she believes

that in obedience, and in avoiding any offence against God, lies her

safeguard against deception. Thus she feels she would prefer to be cut

in pieces rather than wilfully commit a venial sin, yet is greatly

grieved at seeing that she cannot avoid unwittingly falling into a

great number. God bestows on such people so intense a desire neither

ever to displease Him in however small a matter, nor to commit any

avoidable imperfection, that, were there no other reason, they would

try to avoid society and they greatly envy those who live in deserts.

[310] On the other hand, they seek to live amidst men in the hopes of

helping if but one soul to praise God better. [311] In the case of a

woman, she grieves over the impediment offered by her sex [312] and

envies those who are free to proclaim aloud to all Who is this mighty

God of hosts. [313]

3. O poor little butterfly! chained by so many fetters that stop thee

from flying where thou wouldst! Have pity on her, O my God, and so

dispose her ways that she may be able to accomplish some of her desires

for Thy honour and glory! Take no account of the poverty of her merits,

nor of the vileness of her nature, Lord, Thou Who hast the power to

compel the vast ocean to retire, and didst force the wide river Jordan

to draw back so that the Children of Israel might pass through! [314]

Yet spare her not, for aided by Thy strength she can endure many

trials. She is resolved to do so--she desires to suffer them. Stretch

forth Thine arm, O Lord, to help her lest she waste her life on

trifles! Let Thy greatness appear in this Thy creature, womanish and

weak as she is, so that men, seeing the good in her is not her own, may

praise Theefor it! Let it cost her what it may and as dear as she

desires, for she longs to lose a thousand lives to lead one soul to

praise Thee but a little better. If as many lives were hers to give,

she would count them well spent in such a cause, knowing as a truth

most certain that she is unworthy to bear the lightest cross, much less

to die for Thee.

4. I cannot tell why I have said this, sisters, nor what made me do so;

indeed I never intended it. You must know that these effects are bound

to follow from such trances or ecstasies: they are not transient, but

permanent desires; when opportunity occurs of acting on them, they

prove genuine. How can I say that they are permanent, when at times the

soul feels cowardly in the most trivial matters and too timorous to

undertake any work for God?

5. I believe it is because our Lord, for its greater good, then leaves

the soul to its natural weakness, which at once convinces it so

thoroughly that any strength it possessed came from His Majesty as to

destroy its self-love, enduing it with a greater knowledge of the mercy

and greatness of God which He deigned to show forth in one so vile.

However, the soul is usually in the former state. Beware of one thing,

sisters; these ardent desires to behold our Lord are sometimes so

distressing as to need rather to be checked than to be encouraged--that

is, if feasible, for in another kind of prayer of which I shall speak

later, it is not possible as you will see.

6. In the state I speak of these longings can sometimes be arrested,

for the reason is at liberty to conform to the will of God and can

quote the words of St. Martin; [315] should these desires become very

oppressive, the thoughts may be turned to some other matter. As such

longings are generally found in persons far advanced in perfection, the

devil may excite them in order to make us think we are of their

number--in any case it is well to be cautious. For my part, I do not

believe he could cause the calm and peace given by this pain to the

soul, but would disturb it by such uneasiness as we feel when afflicted

concerning any worldly matter. A person inexperienced in both kinds of

sorrow cannot understand the difference, but thinking such grief an

excellent thing, will excite it as much as possible which greatly

injures the health, as these longings are incessant or at least very

frequent.

7. You must also notice that bodily weakness may cause such pain,

especially with people of sensitive characters who cry over every

trifling trouble. [316] Times without number do they imagine they are

mourning for God's sake when they are doing no such thing. If for a

considerable space of time, whenever such a person hears the least

mention of God or thinks of Him at all, these fits of uncontrollable

weeping occur, [317] the cause may be an accumulation of humour round

the heart, which has a great deal more to do with such tears than has

the love of God. Such persons seem as if they would never stop crying:

believing that tears are beneficial, they do not try to check them nor

to distract their minds from the subject, but encourage them as much as

possible. The devil seizes this opportunity of weakening nuns so that

they become unable to pray or to keep their Rule.

8. I think you must be puzzling over this and would like to ask what I

would have you do, as I see danger in everything. If I am afraid of

delusions in so good a thing as tears, perhaps I myself am deluded, and

may be I am! But believe me, I do not say this without having witnessed

it in other people although not in my own case, for there is nothing

tender about me and my heart is so hard as often to grieve me. [318]

However, when the fire burns fiercely within, stony as my heart may be,

it distils like an alembic. [319] It is easy to know when tears come

from this source, for they are soothing and gentle rather than stormy

and rarely do any harm. This delusion, when it is one, has the

advantage, with a humble person, of only injuring the body and not the

soul. But if one is not humble, it is well to be ever on one's guard.

9. Let us not fancy that if we cry a great deal we have done all that

is needed--rather we must work hard and practise the virtues: that is

the essential--leaving tears to fall when God sends them, without

trying to force ourselves to shed them. Then, if we do not take too

much notice of them, they will leave the parched soil of our souls well

watered, making it fertile in good fruit; for this is the water which

falls from heaven. [320] However we may tire ourselves in digging to

reach it, we shall never get any water like this; indeed, we may often

work and search until we are exhausted without finding as much as a

pool, much less a springing well!

10. Therefore, sisters, I think it best for us to place ourselves in

the presence of God, contemplate His mercy and grandeur and our own

vileness and leave Him to give us what He will, whether water or

drought, for He knows best what is good for us; thus we enjoy peace and

the devil will have less chance to deceive us.

11. Amongst these favours, at once painful and pleasant, Our Lord

sometimes causes in the soul a certain jubilation [321] and a strange

and mysterious kind of prayer. If He bestows this grace on you, praise

Him fervently for it; I describe it so that you may know that it is

something real. I believe that the faculties of the soul are closely

united to God but that He leaves them at liberty to rejoice in their

happiness together with the senses, although they do not know what they

are enjoying nor how they do so. This may sound nonsense but it really

happens. So excessive is its jubilee that the soul will not enjoy it

alone but speaks of it to all around so that they may help it to praise

God, which is its one desire. [322]

12. Oh, what rejoicings would this person utter and what demonstrations

would she make, if possible, so that all might know her happiness! She

seems to have found herself again and wishes, like the father of the

prodigal son, to invite all her friends to feast with her [323] and

to see her soul in its rightful place, because (at least for the time

being) she cannot doubt its security. I believe she is right, for the

devil could not possibly infuse a joy and peace into the very centre of

her being which make her whole delight consist in urging others to

praise God. It requires a painful effort to keep silent and to

dissemble such impulsive happiness. St. Francis must have experienced

this when, as the robbers met him rushing through the fields crying

aloud, he told them in answer to their questions that he was the herald

of the great King.' [324] So felt other saints who retired into the

deserts so that, like St. Francis, they might proclaim the praises of

their God.

13. I knew Fray Peter of Alcantara who used to do this. I believe he

was a saint on account of the life he led, yet people often took him

for a fool when they heard him. [325] Oh happy folly, sisters! Would

that God might let us all share it! What mercy He has shown you in

placing you where, if He gave you this grace and it were perceived by

others, it would rather turn to your advantage than bring on you

contempt as it would do in the world, where men so rarely hear God

praised that it is no wonder they take scandal at it.

14. Oh miserable times and wretched life spent in the world! How blest

are those whose happy lot it is to be freed from them! [326] It often

delights me, when in my sisters' company to see how the joy of their

hearts is so great that they vie with one another in praising our Lord

for placing them in this convent: it is evident that their praises come

from the very depths of their souls. I should like you to do this

often, sisters, for when one begins she incites the rest to imitate

her. How can your tongues be better employed when you are together than

in praising God, Who has given us so much cause for it?

15. May His Majesty often grant us this kind of prayer which is most

safe and beneficial; we cannot acquire it for ourselves as it is quite

supernatural. Sometimes it lasts for a whole day and the soul is like

one inebriated, although not deprived of the senses; [327] nor like a

person afflicted with melancholia, [328] in which, though the reason

is not entirely lost, the imagination continually dwells on some

subject which possesses it and from which it cannot be freed. These are

coarse comparisons to make in connection with such a precious gift, yet

nothing else occurs to my mind. In this state of prayer a person is

rendered by this jubilee so forgetful of self and everything else that

she can neither think nor speak of anything but praising God, to which

her joy prompts her. Let us all of us join her, my daughters, for why

should we wish to be wiser than she? What can make us happier? And may

all creatures unite their praises with ours for ever and ever. Amen,

amen, amen!

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[306] Excl. ii. See poem 4, Cuan triste es, Dios mio'; and the two

versions of Vivir sin vivir en mi.' (Poems 3 and 4. Minor Works.)

[307] Life, ch. xxv. 18.

[308] Ibid. ch. xxv. 20. Rel. vii. 7.

[309] Ibid. ch. xxvii. 1, 2.

[310] Rel. i. 6.

[311] Life, ch. xxxii. 14; xxxv. 13. Castle, M. vii. ch. iv. 21 .

Found. ch. i. 6, 7.

[312] Way of Perf. ch. i.

[313] III Reg. xix. 10.

[314] Ps. cxiii. 3; Exod. xiv. and Jos. iii.

[315] 'When St. Martin was dying, his brethren said to him: Why, dear

Father, will you leave us? Or to whom can you commit us in our

desolation? We know, indeed, that you desire to be with Christ, but

your reward above is safe and will not be diminished by delay; rather

have pity on us whom you are leaving desolate.' Then Martin, always

pitiful, moved by these lamentations, is said to have burst into tears.

Turning to God, he replied to the mourners around him only by crying: O

Lord, if I am still necessary to Thy people, I do not shrink from toil;

Thy will be done.' (Sulpitius Severus, Life of St. Martin, letter 3.)

[316] Way of Perf.. ch. xvii. 4; xix. 6.

[317] Life, ch. xxix. 12.

[318] Compare with this what we have said in note 1 to the second

chapter of the Fourth Mansions. Rel. ii. 12.

[319] Life, ch. xix. 1-3.

[320] Way of Perf. ch. xix. 6. Life, ch. xviii. 12 sqq.

[321] Philippus a SS. Trinit. l.c. p. iii. tr. i. disc. iv. art. 5.

Antonius a Sp. S. l.c. tr. iv. n.156.

[322] Rel. ii. 12.

[323] St. Luke xv. 23.

[324] 'He plunged into a large forest, and there in a loud voice and in

French, he made the echoes resound with the praises of God. Some

robbers, attracted by his singing, rushed out upon him. But the sight

of so poor a man destroyed their hopes of booty. They questioned him,

and Francis gave them no answer beyond saying in allegorical language:

I am the herald of the great King!' The robbers considered themselves

insulted by these words. They threw themselves upon him, beat him

severely, and went off after having thrown him into a ditch full of

snow. This treatment only added fire to the zeal of Francis. He sang

his holy canticles with greater love than before.' (Rev. Father L�on,

Lives of the Saints of the Order of St. Francis, vol. 1, ch, i,)

[325] 'St. Peter of Alcantara, in the jubilation of his soul through

the impetuosity of divine love, was occasionally unable to refrain from

singing the divine praises aloud in a wonderful manner. To do this more

freely, he sometimes went into the woods where the peasants who heard

him sing took him for one who was beside himself.' (Rev. Alban Butler,

Lives of the Saints.)

[326] Way of Perf. ch. ii. 8; iii. i; viii. 1.

[327] Compare with this what has been said in the fourth chapter of

this Mansion, � 17, note 17.

[328] Melancholia here as elsewhere means hysteria.

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CHAPTER VII.

DESCRIBES THE GRIEF FELT ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR SINS BY SOULS ON WHOM GOD

HAS BESTOWED THE BEFORE-MENTIONED FAVOURS. SHOWS THAT HOWEVER SPIRITUAL

A PERSON MAY BE, IT IS A GREAT ERROR NOT TO KEEP BEFORE OUR MIND THE

HUMANITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST AND HIS SACRED PASSION

AND LIFE, AS ALSO THE GLORIOUS MOTHER OF GOD AND THE SAINTS. THE

BENEFITS GAINED BY SUCH A MEDITATION. THIS CHAPTER IS MOST PROFITABLE.

1. Sorrow for sin felt by souls in the Sixth Mansion. 2. How this

sorrow is felt. 3. St. Teresa's grief for her past sins. 4. Such souls,

centred in God, forget self-interest. 5. The remembrance of divine

benefits increases contrition. 6. Meditation on our Lord's Humanity. 7.

Warning against discontinuing it. 8. Christ and the saints our models.

9. Meditation of contemplatives. 10. Meditation during aridity. 11. We

must search for God when we do not feel His presence. 12. Reasoning and

mental prayer. 13. A form of meditation on our Lord's Life and Passion.

14. Simplicity of contemplatives' meditation. 15. Souls in every state

of prayer should think of the Passion. 16. Need of the example of

Christ and the saints. 17. Faith shows us our Lord as both God and Man.

18. St. Teresa's experience of meditation on the sacred Humanity. 19.

Evil of giving up such meditation.

1. IT may seem to you, sisters, that souls to whom God has communicated

Himself in such a special manner may feel so sure of enjoying Him for

ever as no longer to require to fear or to mourn over their past sins.

Those of you will be most apt to hold this opinion who have never

received the like favours; souls to whom God has granted these graces

will understand what I say. This is a great mistake, for sorrow for sin

increases in proportion to the divine grace received and I believe will

never quit us until we come to the land where nothing can grieve us any

more. Doubtless we feel this pain more at one time than at another and

it is of a different kind. A soul so advanced as that we speak of does

not think of the punishment threatening its offences but of its great

ingratitude towards Him to Whom it owes so much [329] and Who so

justly deserves that it should serve Him, for the sublime mysteries

revealed have taught it much about the greatness of God.

2. This soul wonders at its former temerity and weeps over its

irreverence; its foolishness in the past seems a madness which it never

ceases to lament as it remembers for what vile things it forsook so

great a Sovereign. The thoughts dwell on this more than on the favours

received, which, like those I am about to describe, are so powerful

that they seem to rush through the soul at times like a strong, swift

river. Yet the sins remain like the mire in the river bed and dwell

constantly in the memory, making a heavy cross to bear.

3. I know some one who, though she had ceased to wish for death in

order to see God, [330] yet desired it that she might be freed from

her continual regret for her past ingratitude towards Him to Whom she

owed, and always would owe, so much. She thought no one's guilt could

be compared to her own, for she felt there could be none with whom God

had borne so patiently nor on whom He had bestowed such graces.

4. Souls that have reached the state I speak of have ceased to fear

hell. At times, though very rarely, they grieve keenly over the

possibility of their losing God; their sole dread is lest He should

withdraw His hand, allowing them to offend Him, and so they might

return to their former miserable condition. They care nothing for their

own pain or glory; if they are anxious not to stay long in Purgatory,

it is more on account of its keeping them from the Presence of God than

because of its torments. Whatever favours God may have shown a soul, I

think it is dangerous for it to forget the unhappy state it was once

in; painful as the remembrance may be, it is most beneficial.

5. Perhaps I think so because I have been so wicked and that may be the

reason why I never forget my sins; people who have led good lives have

no cause for grief; yet we always fall at times whilst living in this

mortal body. This pain is not lessened by reflecting that our Lord has

already forgiven and forgotten our faults; our grief is rather

increased at seeing such kindness and favours bestowed on one who

deserves nothing but hell. I think St. Paul and the Magdalen must thus

have suffered a cruel martyrdom; [331] their love was intense, they

had received many mercies and realized the greatness and the majesty of

God and so must have found it very hard to bear the remembrance of

their sins, which they must have regretted with a most tender sorrow.

6. You may fancy that one who has enjoyed such high favours need not

meditate on the mysteries of the most sacred Humanity of our Lord Jesus

Christ but will be wholly absorbed in love. I have written fully about

this elsewhere. [332] I have been contradicted and told that I was

wrong and did not understand the matter; that our Lord guides souls in

such a way that after having made progress it is best to exercise

oneself in matters concerning the Godhead and to avoid what is

corporeal; yet nothing will make me admit that this latter is a good

way.

7. I may be mistaken; we may all really mean the same thing but I found

the devil was trying to lead me astray in this manner. Having been

warned by experience in this respell, I have decided to speak again

about it here although I have very often done so elsewhere. [333] Be

most cautious on the subject; attend to what I venture to say about it

and do not believe any one who tells you the contrary. I will endeavour

to explain myself more clearly than I did before. If the person who

undertook to write on the matter had treated it more explicitly he

would have done well, for it may do much harm to speak of it in general

terms to us women, who have scanty wits.

8. Some souls imagine they cannot meditate even on the Passion, still

less on the most blessed Virgin or on the saints, the memory of whose

lives greatly benefits and strengthens us. [334] I cannot think what

such persons are to meditate upon, for to withdraw the thoughts from

all corporeal things like the angelic spirits who are always inflamed

with love, is not possible for us while in this mortal flesh; we need

to study, to meditate upon and to imitate those who, mortals like

ourselves, performed such heroic deeds for God. How much less should we

wilfully endeavour to abstain from thinking of our only good and

remedy, the most sacred Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ? I cannot

believe that any one really does this; they misunderstand their own

minds and so harm both themselves and others. Of this at least I can

assure them: they will never thus enter the last two mansions of the

castle. If they lose their Guide, our good Jesus, they cannot find the

way and it will be much if they have stayed safely in the former

mansions. Our Lord Himself tells us that He is the Way'; He also says

that He is the Light'; that no man cometh to the Father but by Him; and

that He that seeth Me, seeth the Father also.' [335]

9. Such persons tell us that these words have some other meaning; I

know of no other meaning but this, which my soul has ever recognized as

the true one and which has always suited me right well. Some people

(many of whom have spoken to me on the subject) after our Lord has once

raised them to perfect contemplation, wish to enjoy it continually.

This is impossible; still, the grace of this state remains in their

souls in such a way that they cannot reason as before on the mysteries

of the Passion and the Life of Christ. I cannot account for it but it

is very usual for the mind thus to remain less apt for meditation. I

think it must be because, as the one end of meditation is to seek God,

after He has once been found and the soul is accustomed to seek Him

again by means of the will, it no longer wearies itself by searching

for Him with the intellect.

10. It also appears to me that as the will is already inflamed with

love, this generous faculty would, if it could, cease to make use of

the reason. This would be well, were it not impossible, especially

before the soul has reached the last two mansions. [336] Time spent

in prayer would thus be lost as the will often needs the use of the

understanding to rekindle its love. Notice this point, sisters, which

as it is important I will explain more fully. Such a soul desires to

spend all its time in loving God and wishes to do nothing else; but it

cannot succeed, for though the will is not dead yet the flame which

kindled it is dying out and the spark needs fanning into a glow. Ought

the soul to remain quiescent in this aridity, waiting like our father

Elias for fire to descend from heaven [337] to consume the sacrifice

which it makes of itself to God? Certainly not; it is not right to

expect miracles; God will work them for this soul when He chooses. As I

have told you already and shall do again, His Majesty wishes us to hold

ourselves unworthy of their being wrought on our account and desires us

to help ourselves to the best of our abilities.

11. In my opinion we ought during our whole life, to act in this

manner, however sublime our prayer may be. True, those whom our Lord

admits into the seventh mansion rarely or never need thus to help their

fervour, for the reason I will tell you of; if I recollect it when I

come to write of this room where, in a wonderful manner, souls are

constantly in the company of Christ our Lord both in His Humanity and

His Divinity. [338] Thus, when the fire in our hearts, of which I

spoke does not burn in the will, nor do we feel the presence of God, we

must search for Him as He would have us do, like the Bride in the

Canticles, [339] and must ask all creatures who it was that made

them;' as St. Augustine (either in his Soliloquies or his Confessions)

tells us that he did. [340] Thus we shall not stand like blockheads,

wasting our time in waiting for what we before enjoyed. At first, it

may be that our Lord will not renew His gift again for a year or even

for many years; His Majesty knows the reason which we should not try to

discover since there is no need for us to understand it.

12. As most certainly the way to please God is to keep the commandments

and counsels, let us do so diligently, while meditating on His life and

death and all we owe Him; then let the rest be as God chooses. Some may

answer that their mind refuses to dwell on these subjects; and for the

above causes, this to a certain extent is true. You know that it is one

thing to reason and another thing for the memory to bring certain

truths before the mind. Perhaps you may not understand me; possibly I

fail to express myself rightly but I will do my best. Using the

understanding much in this manner is what I call meditation.

13. Let us begin by considering the mercy God showed us by giving us

His only Son; let us not stop here but go on to reflect upon all the

mysteries of His glorious life; or let us first turn our thoughts to

His prayer in the garden, then allow them to continue the subject until

they reach the crucifixion. Or we may take some part of the Passion

such as Christ's apprehension and dwell on this mystery, considering in

detail the points to be pondered and thought over, such as the

treachery of Judas, the flight of the Apostles, and all that followed.

This is an admirable and very meritorious kind of prayer. [341]

14. Souls led by God in supernatural ways and raised to perfect

contemplation are right in declaring they cannot practise this kind of

meditation. As I said, I know not why, but as a rule they are unable to

do so. Yet they would be wrong in saying that they cannot dwell on

these mysteries nor frequently think about them, especially when these

events are being celebrated by the Catholic Church. Nor is it possible

for the soul which has received so much from God to forget these

precious proofs of His love which are living sparks to inflame the

heart with greater love for our Lord, nor can the mind fail to

understand them. Such a soul comprehends these mysteries, which are

brought before the mind and stamped on the memory in a more perfect way

than with other people, so that the mere sight of our Lord prostrate in

the garden, covered with His terrible sweat, suffices to engross the

thoughts not merely for an hour but for several days. The soul looks

with a simple gaze upon Who He is and how ungratefully we treat Him in

return for such terrible sufferings. Then the will, although perhaps

without sensible tenderness, desires to render Him some service for

such sublime mercies and longs to suffer something for Him Who bore so

much for us, employing itself in similar considerations in which the

memory and understanding also take their part.

15. I think this is why such souls cannot reason connectedly about the

Passion and fancy they are unable to mediate on it. Those who do not

meditate on this subject had better begin to do so; for I know that it

will not impede the most sublime prayer nor is it well to omit praising

this often. If God then sees fit to enrapture them, well and good; even

if they are reluctant, He will make them cease to meditate. I am

certain that this way of king is most helpful to the soul and not the

hindrance it would become were great efforts made to use the intellect.

This, as I said, I believe cannot be done when a higher state of prayer

is attained. It may be otherwise in some cases, for God leads souls in

many different ways. Let not those be blamed, however, who are unable

to discourse much in prayer, nor should they be judged incapable of

enjoying the great graces contained in the mysteries of Jesus Christ,

our only Good, which no one, however spiritual he may be, can persuade

me it is well to omit contemplating. 16. There are souls who, having

made a beginning, or advanced half-way, when they begin to experience

the prayer of quiet and to taste the sweetness and consolations God

gives, think it is a great thing to enjoy these spiritual pleasures

continually. Let them, as I advised elsewhere, cease to give themselves

up so much to this absorption. Life is long and full of crosses and we

have need to look on Christ our pattern, to see how He bore His trials,

and even to take example by His Apostles and saints if we would bear

our own trials perfectly. Our good Jesus and His most blessed Mother

are too good company to be left and He is well pleased if we grieve at

His pains, even though sometimes at the cost of our own consolations

and joys. [342] Besides, daughters, consolations are not so frequent

in prayer that we have no time for this as well. If any one should tell

me she continually enjoys them, and that she is one of those who can

never meditate on the divine mysteries, I should feel very doubtful

about her state. Be convinced of this; keep free from this deception

and to the utmost of your power stop yourselves from being constantly

immersed in this intoxication. If you cannot do so, tell the Prioress

so that she may employ you too busily for you to think of the matter;

thus you will be free from this danger which, if it does no more, when

it lasts long, greatly injures the health and brain. I have said enough

to prove to those who require it that, however spiritual their state,

it is an error so to avoid thinking of corporeal things as to imagine

that meditation on the most sacred Humanity can injure the soul.

17. People allege, in defence, that our Lord told His disciples that it

was expedient for them that He should go from them. [343] This I

cannot admit. He did not say so to His blessed Mother, for her faith

was firm. She knew He was both God and man; and although she loved Him

more dearly than did His disciples, it was in so perfect a way that His

bodily presence was a help to her. The faith of the Apostles must have

been weaker than it was later on, and than ours has reason to be. I

assure you, daughters, that I consider this a most dangerous idea

whereby the devil might end by robbing us of our devotion to the most

blessed Sacrament.

18. The mistake I formerly made [344] did not lead me as far as this,

but I did not care so much about meditating on our Lord Jesus Christ,

preferring to remain absorbed, awaiting spiritual consolations. I

recognized clearly that I was going wrong, for as I could not always

keep in this state, my thoughts wandered hither and thither and my soul

seemed like a bird, ever flying about and finding no place for rest.

Thus I lost much time and did not advance in virtue nor make progress

in prayer.

19. I did not understand the reason, and as I believed that I was

acting wisely I think I should never have learnt it but for the advice

of a servant of God whom I consulted about my mode of prayer. Then I

perceived plainly how mistaken I had been and I have never ceased

regretting that there was a time when I did not realize how difficult

it would be to gain by so great a loss. Even if I could, I would seek

for nothing save by Him through Whom comes all the good we possess. May

He be for ever praised! Amen.

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[329] Life, ch. vi. 7.

[330] Excl. vi. 4, 5. Supra, M. v. ch. ii, 5. Poems 2, 3, 4. Minor

Works.

[331] Life, ch. xxi, 9. All editions have Peter'. St. Teresa only wrote

'Po' but the parallel passage proves she meant Pablo, and not Pedro.

See also M. i. ch. i. 5.

[332] Life, ch. xxii. 9-11.

[333] Ibid. ch. xxii. i; xxiii. 18; xxiv. 2.

[334] 'Deliberate forgetfulness and rejection of all knowledge and of

form must never be extended to Christ and His sacred Humanity.

Sometimes, indeed, in the height of contemplation and pure intuition of

the Divinity the soul does not remember the Sacred Humanity, because

God raises the mind to this, as it were, confused and most supernatural

knowledge; but for all this, studiously to forget it is by no means

right, for the contemplation of the sacred Humanity and loving

meditation upon it will help us up to all good, and it is by it we

shall ascend most easily to the highest state of union. It is evident

at once that, while all visible and bodily things ought to be

forgotten, for they are a hindrance in our way, He, Who for our

salvation became man, is not to be accounted among them, for He is the

truth, the door, and the way, and our guide to all good.' (St. John of

the Cross Ascent of Mount Carmel, bk. iii. ch. i. 12-14.

[335] St. John viii. 12; xiv. 6, 9.

[336] Life, ch. xv. 20. St. John of the Cross treats the subject most

carefully. He shows how and when meditation becomes impossible: Ascent

of Mount Carmel, bk. ii. ch. xii. (circa finem) ch. xiii. (per totum).

Living Flame of Love, stanza iii. 35. Obscure Night, bk. i. ch. x. 8,

and bk. ii. ch. viii. That it should be procured whenever possible:

Ibid. bk. i. ch. x. (in fine); that it should be resumed; Ascent of

Mount Carmel; bk. ii, ch. xv.

[337] III Reg. xviii. 30-39.

[338] Continual sense of the presence of God: Life, ch. xxvii. 6. Rel.

xi. 3: The intellectual vision of the Three Persons and of the Sacred

Humanity seems ever present.' Castle, M. vii. ch. iv. 15.

[339] Cant, iii. 3; Num quem diligit anima mea, vidistis?'

[340] 'I asked the earth, and it answered me: I am not He'; and

whatsoever it contains confessed the same. I asked the sea and the

depths, and the living, creeping things, and they answered: We are not

thy God, seek above us.' I asked the heavens, I asked the moving air;

and the whole air with its inhabitants answered: 'Anaximenes was

deceived, I am not God.' I asked the heavens, sun, moon, stars. 'Nor,'

say they, are we the God Whom thou seekest.' And I replied unto all

things which encompass the door of my flesh: Ye have told me of my God,

that ye are not He; tell me something of Him.' And they cried out with

a loud voice: 'He made us.' By my thought of them I questioned them,

and their beauty gave their answer.' (St. Augustine's Confessions, bk.

x. ch. 6.) St. Teresa may have read this in St. Augustine's

Confessions, (see above, p. 78), or in the Soliloquies, a collection of

extracts from St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Anselm, etc., which was

printed in Latin at Venice in 1512, translated into Spanish and brought

out at Valladolid in 1515, and again at Medina del Campo in 15 53, and

at Toledo in 1565. The words quoted by St. Teresa occur in chapter

xxxi. See Life, ch. xl. 10.

[341] Life, ch. xiii. 17-23.

[342] Way of Perf. ch. xxv. 7.

[343] St. John xvi. 7: Expedit vobis ut ego vadam; si enim non abiero,

Paraclitus non veniet ad vos.' Life, ch. xxii. 1, 2 and note.

[344] Life, ch. xxii. 11. Although the Saint defends herself against

the charge of self-contradiction, there can be no doubt from this

avowal that she too was at one time mistaken on this point.

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CHAPTER VIII.

SPEAKS OF THE MANNER IN WHICH GOD COMMUNICATES WITH THE SOUL BY

INTELLECTUAL VISION AND GIVES ADVICE UPON THE SUBJECT. OF THE EFFECTS

PRODUCED BY THIS VISION WHEN GENUINE. SECRECY ABOUT THESE FAVOURS IS

ENJOINED.

1. Our Lord's presence accompanying the soul. 2. St. Teresa's

experience of this. 3. Confidence and graces resulting from this

vision. 4. Its effects . 5. It Produces humility. 6. And prepares the

soul for other graces. 7. Consciousness of the presence of the saints.

8. Obligations resulting from this grace. 9. Signs that this favour is

genuine. 10. A confessor should be consulted. 11. Our Lord will

enlighten our advisers. 12. Cautions about this vision.

1. To prove to you more clearly, sisters, the truth of what I have been

saying and to show that the more the soul advances, the closer does

this good Jesus bear it company, it would be well for me to tell you

how, when He so chooses, it cannot withdraw from His presence. This is

clearly shown by the manners and ways in which His Majesty communicates

Himself to us, manifesting His love by wonderful apparitions and

visions which, if He is pleased to aid me, I will describe to you so

that you may not be alarmed if any of these favours are granted you. We

ought, even if we do not receive them ourselves, to praise Him

fervently for thus communing with creatures, seeing how sovereign are

His majesty and power.

2. For example, a person who is in no way expecting such a favour nor

has ever imagined herself worthy of receiving it, is conscious that

Jesus Christ stands by her side although she sees Him neither with the

eyes of the body nor of the soul. [345] This is called an

intellectual vision; I cannot tell why. I knew a person to whom God

granted both this grace and others I shall describe later on. At first

it distressed her, for she could not understand it; she could see

nothing, yet so convinced did she feel that Jesus Christ was thus in

some way manifesting Himself that she could not doubt that it was some

kind of vision, whether it came from God or no. Its powerful effects

were a strong argument that it was from Him; still she was alarmed,

never having heard of an intellectual vision, nor was she aware that

such a thing could be. She however felt certain of our Lord's presence,

[346] and He spoke to her several times in the way that I described.

Before she had received this favour, she had heard words spoken but had

never known who uttered them.

3. She was frightened by this vision which, unlike an imaginary one,

does not pass away quickly but lasts for several days and even

sometimes for more than a year. She went, in a state of great anxiety,

to her confessor [347] who asked her how, if she saw nothing, she

knew that our Lord was near her, and bade her describe His appearance.

She said that she was unable to do so, nor could she see His face nor

tell more than she had already done, but that she was sure it was the

fact that it was He Who spoke to her and it was no trick of her

imagination. Although people constantly cautioned her against this

vision, as a rule she found it impossible to disbelieve in it,

especially when she heard the words: It is I, be not afraid' [348]

4. The effect of this speech was so powerful that for the time being

she could not doubt its truth. She felt much encouraged and rejoiced at

being in such good company, seeing that this favour greatly helped her

to a constant recollection of God and an extreme care not to displease

in any way Him Who seemed ever by her side, watching her. Whenever she

desired to speak to His Majesty in prayer, or even at other times, He

seemed so close that He could not fail to hear her though He did not

speak to her whenever she wished, but unexpectedly, when necessity

arose. She was conscious of His being at her right hand, although not

in the way we know an ordinary person to be beside us but in a more

subtle manner which cannot be described. Yet this presence is quite as

evident and certain, and indeed far more so, than the ordinary presence

of other people about which we may be deceived; not so in this, for it

brings with it graces and spiritual effects which could not come from

melancholia. Nor could the devil thus fill the soul with peace, with a

constant desire to please God, and such utter contempt of all that does

not lead to Him. As time went on, my friend recognized that this was no

work of the evil one, as our Lord showed her more and more clearly.

5. However, I know that she often felt great alarm and was at times

overcome with confusion, being unable to account for so high a favour

having been granted her. She and I were so very intimate [349] that I

knew all that passed in her soul, hence my account is thoroughly true

and reliable. This favour brings with it an overwhelming sense of

self-abasement and humility; the reverse would be the case, did it come

from Satan. [350] It is evidently divine; no human effort could

produce such feelings nor could any one suppose that such profit came

from herself, but must needs recognize it as a gift from the hand of

God.

6. Although I believe some of the former favours are more sublime, yet

this brings with it a special knowledge of God; a most tender love for

Him results from being constantly in His company, while the desires of

devoting one's whole being to His service are more fervent than any

hitherto described. The conscience is greatly purified by the knowledge

of His perpetual and near presence, for although we know that God sees

all we do, yet nature inclines us to grow careless and forgetful of it.

This is impossible here since our Lord makes the soul conscious that He

is close at hand, thus preparing it to receive the other graces

mentioned by constantly making acts of love to Him Whom it sees or

feels at its side. In short, the benefits caused by this grace prove

how great and how valuable it is. The soul thanks our Lord for

bestowing it on one unworthy of it, but who would refuse to exchange it

for any earthly riches or delight.

7. When our Lord chooses to withdraw His presence, the soul in its

loneliness makes every possible effort to induce Him to return. This

avails but little, for this grace comes at His will and not by our

endeavours. At times we may enjoy the company of some saint, [351]

which also brings us great profit. You will ask me, if we see no one,

how can we know whether it is Christ, or His most glorious Mother, or a

saint? Such a person cannot answer this question or know how she

distinguishes them, but the fact remains undoubted. It seems easy to

recognize our Lord when He speaks, but it is surprising how the soul

can, without hearing a word from him, recognize which saint has been

sent by God to be its companion and helper.

8. There are other spiritual matters which cannot be explained. Our

inability to grasp them should teach us how incapable is our nature of

understanding the sublime mysteries of God. Those on whom these favours

are bestowed should marvel at and praise God's mercy for them. As these

particular graces are not granted to everybody, any one who receives

them should esteem them highly and strive to serve God more zealously,

since He has given her such special aid. Therefore such a person does

not rate herself more highly on this account, but rather thinks she

serves Him less than any one else in the world; feeling herself to be

under greater obligations to Him than others, any fault she commits

pierces her to the heart, as indeed it ought under the circumstances.

9. When the effects described are felt, any of you whom our Lord leads

by this way may be certain that it is neither deception nor fancy in

her case. I believe it to be impossible for the devil to produce an

illusion lasting so long, neither could he benefit the soul so

remarkably nor cause such interior peace. It is not his custom, nor, if

he would, could such an evil creature bring about so much good; the

soul would soon be clouded by self-esteem and the idea that it was

better than others. The mind's continual keeping in the presence of God

[352] and the concentration of its thoughts on Him would so enrage

the fiend that, although he might try the experiment once, he would not

often repeat it. God is too faithful to permit him so much power over

one whose sole endeavour is to please His Majesty and to lay down her

life for His honour and glory; He would soon unmask the demon's

artifices.

10. I contend, as I always shall, that if the soul reaps the effects

described from these divine graces, although God may withdraw these

special favours, His Majesty will turn all things to its advantage;

even should He permit the devil to deceive it at any time, the evil

spirit will only reap his own confusion. Therefore, as I told you,

daughters, none of you who are led by this way need feel alarm. Fear is

good and we should be cautious and not overconfident, for if such

favours made you careless, it would prove they were not from God as

they did not leave the results I described. It would be well at first

to tell your case, under the seal of confession, to a thoroughly

qualified theologian (for that is the source whence we must obtain

light) or to some highly spiritual person. If your confessor is not

very spiritual, a good theologian would be preferable; [353] best of

all, one who unites both qualities. [354] Do not be disturbed if he

calls it mere fancy; if it is, it can neither harm nor benefit your

soul much. Recommend yourself to the divine Majesty and beg Him not to

allow you to be misled.

11. It would be worse should he tell you the devil is deceiving you,

although no learned man would say so if he sees in you the effects

described. Even should your adviser say this, I know that the same Lord

Who is beside you will comfort and reassure you and will go to your

counsellor and give him light that he may impart it to you. [355] If

the director, though given to prayer, has not been led by God in this

way, he will at once take fright and condemn it. Therefore I advise you

to choose a qualified theologian and, if possible, one who is also

spiritual. The Prioress ought to allow you this, for although she may

feel sure that you are safe from delusion because you lead a good life,

yet she is bound to permit you to consult some one for your mutual

security. When you have conferred with these persons, be at peace;

trouble yourself no more about the matter, for sometimes when there is

no cause for fear, the demon gives rise to such immoderate scruples

that the person cannot be satisfied with consulting her confessor only

once on the subject, especially if he is inexperienced and timid or if

he bids her consult him again.

12. Thus that which should have been kept strictly private becomes

public; [356] such a person is persecuted and tormented and finds

that what she believed to be her own secret has become public property.

Hence she suffers many troubles which may even devolve upon the Order

in such times as these. Consequently I warn all Prioresses that great

caution is required in such matters; also they must not think a nun

more virtuous than the rest because such favours are shown her. Our

Lord guides every one, in the way He knows to be best. This grace, if

made good use of, prepares one receiving it to become a great servant

of God, but sometimes our Lord bestows it on the weakest souls;

therefore in itself it is neither to be esteemed nor condemned. We must

look to the virtues; she who is most mortified, humble and

single-minded in serving God is the most holy. However, we can never

feel very certain about such matters until the true Judge rewards each

one according to his merits. Then we shall be surprised to find how

very different is His judgment from that of this world. May He be for

ever praised. Amen.

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[345] Life, ch. xxvii. 3, 5. Rel. vii. 26.

[346] Life, ch. xxvii. 7.

[347] Ibid. l.c. 4. Father Juan de Pradanos was then the Saint's

confessor.

[348] Life, ch. xxv. 22; XXX. 17. Supra, M. vi. ch. iii. 5. Rel. vii.

22. St. John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel, bk. ii. ch. xxxi. 1.

[349] In fact, one and the same person.

[350] Life, ch. xix. a; xx. 38. Way of Perf. ch. xxxvi. 10.

[351] Life, ch. xxix 6.

[352] Gen. xvii, 1: Ambula coram me et esto perfectus.'

[353] 'Magni doctores scholastici, si non sint spirituales, vel omni

rerum spiritualium experientia careant, non solent esse magistri

spirituales idonei--nam theologia scholastica est perfectio

intellectus; mystica, perfectio intellectus et voluntatis: unde bonus

theologus scholasticus potest esse malus theologus mysticus. In rebus

tamen difficilibus, dubiis, spiritualibus, pr�stat mediocriter

spiritualem theologum consulere quam spiritualem idiotam.' (Schram,

Theol. Myst. � 483.)

[354] Life, ch. v. 6.

[355] Ibid. ch. xxv. 18 sqq. Way of Perf. ch. iv. 11; v. 3.

[356] Life, ch. xxiii. 14-15. Rel. vii. 17.

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CHAPTER IX.

THIS CHAPTER SPEAKS OF THE MANNER IN WHICH GOD COMMUNICATES WITH THE

SOUL BY IMAGINARY VISIONS. STRONG REASONS ARE GIVEN FOR NOT DESIRING TO

BE LED IN THIS WAY; THIS IS VERY PROFITABLE READING.

1. The jewel in the locket. 2. The simile explained. 3. The apparition

explained. 4. Awe produced by this vision. 5. False and genuine

visions. 6. Illusive visions. 7. Effects of a genuine vision. 8.

Conviction left by a genuine vision. 9. Its effects upon the after

conduct. 10. A confessor should be consulted. 11. How to treat visions.

12. Effects of seeing the face of Christ. 13. Reasons why visions are

not to be sought. 14. The second reason. 15. Third reason. 16. Fourth

reason. 17. Fifth reason. 18. Sixth reason. 19. Additional reasons. 20.

The virtues more meritorious than consolations. 21. Fervent souls

desire to serve God for Himself alone.

1. Now we come to treat of imaginary visions, whereby it is held that

the devil is more liable to deceive people than by the other visions I

have already described. This is probably true. Yet when imaginary

visions are divine, they seem, in a certain manner, more profitable for

us than the others, as being more suited to our nature--with the

exception of the visions sent by our Lord in the seventh mansion which

far surpass all others. The presence of our Lord described in the last

chapter may thus be symbolized. Let us suppose that we have in our

possession a gold locket containing a precious stone of the highest

value and powers, which, though we have not seen it, we are certain is

in the case, and its virtues benefit us when we wear the pendant.

Although we have never gazed on it we value it highly, knowing by

experience that it has cured us of maladies for which it is remedial.

However, we dare not look at it nor open the locket nor could we do so

even if we wished, for the owner of the jewel alone knows the secret of

unfastening its casket. Although he lent it us for our use, yet he kept

the key for himself; he will open the trinket when he chooses to show

us its contents and close it again when he sees fit to do so.

2. Our Lord treats us here in this way. Now, suppose the owner of this

locket suddenly opened it at times for the benefit of the person to

whom he has entrusted it; doubtless the latter would value the diamond

more highly through remembering its wonderful lustre. This may be

compared to what happens when our Lord is pleased to caress the soul.

He shows it in vision His most sacred Humanity under whatever form He

chooses; either as He was during His life on earth [357] or after His

resurrection. [358] The vision passes as quickly as a flash of

lightning, yet this most glorious picture makes an impression on the

imagination that I believe can never be effaced until the soul at last

sees Christ to enjoy Him for ever. Although I call it a picture,' you

must not imagine that it looks like a painting; Christ appears as a

living Person Who sometimes speaks and reveals deep mysteries. You must

understand that though the soul sees this for a certain space of time,

it is no more possible to continue looking at it than to gaze for a

very long time on the sun; therefore this vision passes very quickly,

although its brightness does not pain the interior sight in the same

way as the sun's glare injures our bodily eyes.

3. The image is seen by the interior sight alone; but of bodily

apparitions I can say nothing, for the person I know so intimately

never having experienced anything of the kind herself could not speak

about them with certainty. [359] The splendour of Him Who is revealed

in the vision resembles an infused light like that of the sun covered

with a veil as transparent as a diamond, if such a texture could be

woven, while His raiment looks like fine linen. The soul to whom God

grants this vision almost always falls into an ecstasy, nature being

too weak to bear so dread a sight. I say dread,' though this apparition

is more lovely and delightful than anything that could be imagined even

though any one should live a thousand years and spend all that time in

trying to picture it, for it far surpasses our limited imagination and

understanding; yet the presence of such surpassing majesty inspires the

soul with great fear.

4. There is no need to ask how the soul knew Who He was or who declared

with absolute certainty that He was the Lord of heaven and earth. This

is not so with earthly kings; unless we were told their names or saw

their attendant courtiers, they would attract little notice. O Lord,

how little do we Christians know Thee! What will that day be in which

Thou comest as our Judge, since now, when Thou comest as a Friend to

Thy spouse, the sight of Thee strikes us with such awe? O daughters!

what will it be when He says in wrath: Go, accursed of my Father?'

[360] Let this impression be the result of this favour granted by God

to the soul and we shall reap no little benefit from it, since St.

Jerome, saint as he was, ever kept the thought of the last judgment

before his eyes. [361] Thus we shall care nothing what sufferings we

endure from the austerities of our Rule, for long as they may last, the

time is but a moment compared to this eternity of pain. I sincerely

assure you that, wicked as I am, I have never feared the torments of

hell [362] for they have seemed to me as nothing when I remembered

that the lost would see the beautiful, meek and pitiful eyes of our

Lord turned on them in wrath. [363] I have thought all my life that

this would be more than my heart could bear.

5. How much more must any one fear this to whom our Lord so revealed

Himself in vision here as to overcome her feelings and produce

unconsciousness! This must be the reason that the soul remains in a

rapture: our Lord strengthens its weakness so as to unite it to His

greatness in this sublime communion with God. When any one can

contemplate this sight of our Lord for a long time, I do not believe it

is a vision but rather some overmastering idea which causes the

imagination to fancy it sees something; but this illusion is only like

a dead image in comparison with the living reality of the other case.

6. As not only three or four, but a large number of people have spoken

to me on the subject, I know by experience that there are souls which,

either because they possess vivid imaginations or active minds, or for

some other reason of which I am ignorant, are so absorbed in their own

ideas as to feel certain they see whatever their fancy imagines. If

they had ever beheld a genuine vision, they would recognize the

deception unmistakably. They themselves fabricate, piece by piece, what

they fancy they see: no after effects are produced on the mind, which

is less moved to devotion than by the sight of a sacred picture. It is

clear that no attention should be paid to such fancies, which pass more

quickly than dreams from the memory.

7. In the favour of which I speak, the case is very different. A person

is far from thinking of seeing anything, no idea of which has crossed

the mind, when suddenly the vision is revealed in its entirety, causing

within the powers and senses of the soul a fright and confusion soon

changed into a blissful peace. Thus, after St. Paul was thrown to the

ground, a great tempest and noise followed from heaven; [364] so, in

the interior world of the soul, there is a violent tumult followed

instantly, as I said, by perfect calm. Meanwhile certain sublime truths

have been so impressed on the mind that it needs no other master, for

with no effort of its own, Wisdom Himself has enlightened its former

ignorance.

8. The soul for some time afterwards possesses such certainty that this

grace comes from God that whatever people may say to the contrary it

cannot fear delusion. Later on, when her confessor suggests doubts to

her, God may allow such a person to waver in her belief for a time and

to feel misgivings lest, in punishment for her sins, she may possibly

have been left to go astray. However, she does not give way to these

apprehensions, but (as I said in speaking of other matters) [365]

they only affect her in the same way as the temptations of the devil

against faith, which may disturb the mind but do not shake the firmness

of belief. In fact, the more severe the assault, [366] the more

certain is she that the evil one could never have produced the great

benefits she is conscious of having received, because he exercises no

such power over the interior of the soul. He may present a false

apparition but it does not possess such truth, majesty, and efficacy.

9. As confessors cannot see these effects, which perhaps the person to

whom God has shown the vision is unable to explain, they are afraid of

deception, as indeed they have good reason to be. Therefore caution is

necessary and time should be allowed to see what effects follow. Day by

day, the progress of the soul in humility and in the virtues should be

watched: if the devil is concerned in the matter, he will soon show

signs of himself and will be detected in a thousand lies. If the

confessor is experienced and has received such favours himself, he will

not take long in discovering the truth. In fact, he will know

immediately, on being told of the vision, whether it is divine or comes

from the imagination or the demon: more especially if he has received

the gift of discerning spirits--then, if he is learned, he will

understand the matter at once even though he has not personally

experienced the like.

10. The great point is, sisters, that you should be perfectly candid

and straightforward with your confessor: I do not mean in declaring

your sins that is evident enough--but in giving him an account of your

prayer. [367] Unless you do this, I cannot assure you of your safety

nor that you are led by God. Our Lord desires that we should be as

truthful and open with those who stand in His place as we should with

Himself; that we should wish them to know not only our thoughts but

especially all relating to our actions, however insignificant. Then you

need feel no trouble nor anxiety [368] because even if your vision

were not from God, it could do you no harm if you are humble and

possess a good conscience, for His Majesty knows how to glean good from

evil. What the devil intended to injure you will benefit you instead:

believing that God has granted you such signal favours, you will strive

to please Him better and will keep His image ever before your memory.

11. A great theologian [369] once said that he should not trouble

himself though the devil, who is a clever painter, should present

before his eyes the living image of Christ, which would only kindle his

devotion and defeat the evil one with his own weapons. However wicked

an artist may be, we should reverence his picture if it represents Him

Who is our only good. This great scholar held that it was very wrong to

advise any one who saw a vision of our Lord to offer it signs of scorn,

[370] because we are bound to show respect to the portrait of our

King wherever we see it. I am sure that he was right, for even in the

world any one who was on friendly terms with a person would take it as

an offence were his portrait treated with contempt. How much more

should we always show respect to a crucifix or a picture of our

heavenly Sovereign wherever it meets our gaze! Although I have written

about this elsewhere, I am glad of the opportunity of saying it now for

I know some one who was deeply pained at being bidden to behave in this

way. I know not who can have invented such a torture for one who felt

bound to obey the counsel given by her confessor, for she would have

thought her soul was at stake had she disobeyed him. My advice is, if

you are given such an order, that humbly alleging the reasons I have

set before you to your confessor, you should not carry it out. I am

perfectly satisfied with the motives given for doing so by him who

counselled me on this subject.

12. One great advantage gained by the soul from this favour shown by

our Lord is that when thinking of Him or of His life and Passion, the

remembrance of His most meek and beautiful face brings with it the

greatest consolation. In the same way, we feel happier after having

seen a benefactor than if we had never known him personally. I can

assure you that the remembrance of the joy caused by this vision gives

us the greatest comfort and assistance.

13. Many other advantages result; but as I have written elsewhere [371]

at length about the effect these visions produce, and must do so

again later on, I will say no more now lest I weary us both. But I most

earnestly advise you, when you know or hear of God's bestowing these

graces on others, never to pray nor desire to be led by this way

yourself though it may appear to you to be very good; indeed, it ought

to be highly esteemed and reverenced, yet no one should seek to go by

it for several reasons. Firstly, as it is a want of humility to desire

what you have never deserved, I do not think any one who longs for

these graces can be really humble: a common labourer never dreams of

wishing to be made a king--the thing seems impossible and he is unfit

for it; a lowly mind has the same feeling about these divine favours. I

do not believe God will ever bestow these gifts on such a person, as

before doing so He always gives thorough self-knowledge. How can that

soul, while filled with such lofty aspirations, realize the truth that

He has shown it great mercy in not casting it into hell?

14. The second reason is that such a one is certain to be deceived or

at least is in great danger of delusion, for an entrance is thus left

open to the devil, who only needs to see the door left ajar to slip in

at once and play us a thousand tricks.

15. Thirdly: when people strongly desire a thing, the imagination makes

them fancy they see or hear it, just as when a man's mind is set upon a

subject all day he dreams of it at night.

16. Fourthly: it would be very presumptuous of me to choose a way for

myself without knowing what is good for me. [372] I should leave our

Lord, Who knows my soul, to guide me as is best for me so that His will

may be done in all things.

17. Fifthly: do you think people on whom our Lord bestows these favours

have little to suffer? No, indeed! their trials are most severe and of

many kinds. How can you tell whether you would be able to bear them?

18. Sixthly: perhaps what you think would be your gain might prove your

loss, as happened to Saul when he was made king. [373] In short,

sisters, there are other reasons besides these; believe me, it is safer

to wish only what God wishes, Who knows us better than we know

ourselves and Who loves us. Let us place ourselves entirely in His

hands so that His will may be done in us; we can never go astray if our

will is ever firmly fixed on this.

19. Know that for having received many favours of this kind, you will

not merit more glory but will be the more stringently obliged to serve,

since you have received more. God does not deprive us of anything by

which we merit more, for this remains in our own control. There are

many saints who never knew what it was to receive one such favour,

while others who have received them are not saints at all. Do not

imagine that these gifts are continually bestowed; indeed, for one that

is granted, the soul bears many a cross, so that instead of longing to

receive more favours, it only strives to use them better.

20. True, such a grace is a most powerful aid towards practising the

virtues in their highest perfection, but it is far more meritorious to

gain them at the cost of one's own toil. I was acquainted with some

one, [374] indeed with two people (of whom one was a man), on whom

our Lord had bestowed some of these gifts. They were both so desirous

of serving His Majesty at their own cost without these great

consolations and so longed to suffer for His sake, that they

remonstrated with Him for giving them these favours, and if it had been

possible would have refused to receive them. When I say consolations,'

I do not mean these visions which greatly benefit the soul and are

highly to be esteemed, but the delights given by God during

contemplation.

21. I believe that these desires are supernatural and proper to very

fervent souls who wish to prove to God that they do not serve Him for

pay; so as I said, such people do not urge themselves to work harder

for Him by the thought of the glory they will gain, but rather labour

to satisfy their love, of which the nature is to toil for the Beloved

in a thousand ways. Such souls would fain find a way to consume

themselves in Him, and were there need that, for the sake of God's

greater glory, they should be annihilated for ever, they would count it

great gain. May He be for ever praised Who, in abasing Himself to hold

converse with us miserable creatures, vouchsafes to manifest His

greatness! Amen.

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[357] Life, ch, vii, 11.

[358] Ibid. xxix, 4.

[359] Life, ch, vii. 11, 12.

[360] St. Matt. xxv. 41: Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem �ternum.'

[361] 'Whenever I ponder on the Day of Judgment I am overwhelmed by the

thought and tremble from head to foot.' (St. Jerome). The following

saying is by some attributed to St. Jerome, though not to be found in

his works: Whether I eat or drink, or whatever else I do, the dreadful

trumpet of the last day seems always sounding in my ears: Arise, ye

dead, and come to judgment.' (Alban Butler, Life of St. Jerome). The

Life of Christ by Ludolf of Saxony gives this quotation with the word

vox instead of tuba (part ii. ch. lxxxvii. 9).

[362] Life, ch. iii.

[363] Excl. xiii, 3.

[364] Acts ix. 3, 4.

[365] Castle, M. vi. ch. iii. 12.

[366] Way of Perf ch, xl. 4.

[367] Life, ch. xxvi. 5; xxviii. 21.

[368] Way of Perf. ch. xl. 3.

[369] This was Father Dominic Ba�ez. Found. ch. viii. 3. Life, ch.

xxix. 6, 7 and note.

[370] Letters of Blessed John of Avila (translated by the Benedictines

of Stanbrook), i. 5, p. 19.

[371] Life, ch. xxviii. 13, 4.

[372] St. Teresa, when led in this way, always asked to be delivered

from favours so dangerous as visions, etc. See Life, ch. xxv. 20;

xxvii. 3.

[373] I. Reg. xv. 26-28.

[374] Life, ch. xl. 27. She herself was one, and the other, no doubt,

was St. John of the Cross.

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CHAPTER X.

SPEAKS OF VARIOUS OTHER GRACES GOD BESTOWS ON THE SOUL IN DIFFERENT

WAYS, AND OF THE GREAT BENEFITS CONFERRED BY THEM.

1. Reasons for speaking of these supernatural favours. 2. An

intellectual vision. 3. God compared to a palace in which His creatures

dwell. 4. Forgive as we are forgiven. 5. The vision shows God to be

Truth itself. 6. We should imitate God by truthfulness. 7. Why God

reveals these truths.

1. OUR Lord communicates with the soul by means of these apparitions on

many occasions--sometimes when it is afflicted, at other times when it

is about to receive some heavy cross, and again for the sake of the

mutual delight of Himself and His beloved. There is no need for me to

specify each different case nor do I intend to do so. I only wish to

teach you (as far as I am acquainted with them myself) what are the

different favours God shows a soul in this state so that you may

understand their characteristics and the effects they produce. Thus you

will not mistake every idle fancy for a vision and if you really see

one, knowing that such a thing is possible, you will not be disturbed

nor unhappy. The devil, who gains greatly by it, is delighted to see a

soul troubled and distressed, knowing how this hinders it from

employing itself wholly in loving and serving God.

2. His Majesty has far higher ways of communicating Himself to the

soul; they are less dangerous for I do not think the evil spirit can

imitate them. They are more difficult to explain, being more abstruse;

therefore imaginary visions are easier to describe. God is sometimes

pleased, while a person is engaged in prayer and in perfect possession

of her senses, to suspend them and to discover sublime mysteries to her

which she appears to see within God Himself. This is no vision of the

most sacred Humanity nor can I rightly say the soul sees,' for it sees

nothing; this is no imaginary vision but a highly intellectual one,

wherein is manifested how all things are beheld in God and how He

contains them within Himself. [375] It is of great value, for

although passing in an instant, it remains deeply engraved in the

memory, producing a feeling of great shame in the mind which perceives

more clearly the malice of offences against God, since these most

heinous sins are committed within His very being since we dwell within

Him. I will try to explain this truth to you by a comparison, for

although it is obvious and has been often told us, we either never

reflect upon it or do not wish to understand it. If we realized it, we

could not possibly behave with such audacity.

3. Let us compare God to a very spacious and magnificent mansion or

palace and remember that this edifice is God Himself. Can the sinner

withdraw from it in order to carry out his crimes? No, certainly not,

for within this very palace, that is, within God Himself, are

perpetrated all the abominations, impurities and evil deeds that

sinners commit. Oh awful thought, well worthy to be pondered over! What

profit it would bring to us, who know so little and understand these

truths but partially or how could we possibly be so reckless in our

daring? Let us, sisters, meditate on the infinite mercy and patience of

God in not casting us down to hell at once and let us render Him hearty

thanks. Surely we should be ashamed of resenting anything done or said

against us--we who are the scum of the earth--when we see what outrages

are offered to God our Creator within His very being, by us His

creatures; yet we are wounded whenever we hear of an unkind word having

been spoken of us in our absence, although perhaps with no evil

intention.

4. Oh misery of mankind! When, daughters, shall we imitate Almighty God

in any way? Oh, let us not think we are doing great things if we suffer

injuries patiently: rather let us bear them with alacrity; let us love

our enemies, since this great God has not ceased to love us in spite of

our many sins! This is indeed the chief reason that all should forgive

any harm done them. I assure you, daughters, that though this vision

passes very quickly, our Lord has bestowed signal grace on her to whom

He grants it, if she seeks to profit by keeping it constantly in mind.

5. Short as the time lasts, yet, in a manner impossible to describe,

God also manifests that in Him there is a verity which makes all truth

in creatures seem obscure. He convinces the soul that He alone is that

Truth which cannot lie, thus demonstrating the meaning of David's words

in the psalm: Every man is a liar,' [376] which could never be thus

realized by any other means, however often we might hear that God is

truth infallible. As I recall Pilate and how he besought our Lord in

His Passion to answer his question: What is truth?' [377] I realize

how little mortals know of that sublime veracity.

6. I wish I could explain this better but am unable to do so. Let us

learn from it, sisters, that if we would bear any resemblance to our

God and our Spouse, we must strive to walk ever in the truth. I do not

merely mean that we should not tell falsehoods thank God, I see that in

these convents you are most careful never to do so on any account--but

I desire that as far as possible we should at with perfect truth before

God and man and above all that we should not wish to be thought better

than we are; that in all our deeds we should ascribe to God what is His

and attribute what is ours to ourselves, and that we should seek for

verity in all things. Thus we shall care little for this world, which

is but deception and falsehood, and therefore cannot last. Once, while

I was wondering why our Lord so dearly loves the virtue of humility,

the thought suddenly struck me, without previous reflection, that it is

because God is the supreme Truth and humility is the truth, for it is

most true that we have nothing good of ourselves but only misery and

nothingness: whoever ignores this, lives a life of falsehood. They that

realize this fact most deeply are the most pleasing to God, the supreme

Truth, for they walk in the truth. God grant, sisters, that we may have

the grace never to lose this self-knowledge! Amen.

7. Our Lord shows the soul these favours because she is now indeed His

bride, resolute to do His will in all things; therefore He wishes to

give her some idea how to accomplish it and to manifest to her some of

His divine attributes. I need say no more about it, but I believe the

two points above mentioned will prove very useful. These favours should

cause no fear but lead us to praise God for bestowing these graces. I

think neither the devil nor our own imaginations can have much to do

with them, therefore the soul may rest in perfect peace.

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[375] Life, ch. xl. 13-16.

[376] Ps. cxv. 11. Omnis homo mendax.'

[377] St. John xviii. 38: Quid est veritas?

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CHAPTER XI.

TREATS OF HOW GOD INSPIRES THE SOUL WITH SUCH VEHEMENT AND IMPETUOUS

DESIRES OF SEEING HIM AS TO ENDANGER LIFE. THE BENEFITS RESULTING FROM

THIS DIVINE GRACE.

1. Favours increase the soul's desire for God. 2. The dart of love. 3.

Spiritual sufferings produced. 4. Its physical effects. S. Torture of

the desire for God. 6. These sufferings are a purgatory. 7. The

torments of hell. 8. St. Teresa's painful desire after God. 9. This

suffering irresistible. 10. Effects of the dart of love. 11. Two

spiritual dangers to life. 12. Courage needed here and given by our

Lord.

1. WILL all these graces bestowed by the Spouse upon the soul suffice

to content this little dove or butterfly (you see I have not forgotten

her after all!) so that she may settle down and rest in the place where

she is to die? No indeed: her state is far worse than ever; although

she has been receiving these favours for many years past, she still

sighs and weeps because each grace augments her pain. She sees herself

still far away from God, yet with her increased knowledge of His

attributes her longing and her love for Him grow ever stronger as she

learns more fully how this great God and Sovereign deserves to be

loved. As, year by year her yearning after Him gradually becomes

keener, she experiences the bitter suffering I am about to describe. I

speak of years' because relating what happened to the person I

mentioned, though I know well that with God time has no limits and in a

single moment He can raise a soul to the most sublime state I have

described. His Majesty has the power to do all He wishes and He wishes

to do much for us. These longings, tears, sighs, and violent and

impetuous desires and strong feelings, which seem to proceed from our

vehement love, are yet as nothing compared with what I am about to

describe and seem but a smouldering fire, the heat of which, though

painful, is yet tolerable.

2. While the soul is thus inflamed with love, it often happens that,

from a passing thought or spoken word of how death delays its coming,

the heart receives, it knows not how or whence, a blow as from a fiery

dart. [378] I do not say that this actually is a dart,' but, whatever

it may be, decidedly it does not come from any part of our being. [379]

Neither is it really a blow' though I call it one, but it wounds us

severely--not, I think, in that part of our nature subject to physical

pain but in the very depths and centre of the soul, where this,

thunderbolt, in its rapid course, reduces all the earthly part of our

nature to powder. At the time we cannot even remember our own

existence, for in an instant, the faculties of the soul are so fettered

as to be incapable of any action except the power they retain of

increasing our torture. Do not think I am exaggerating; indeed I fall

short of explaining what happens which cannot be described.

3. This is a trance of the senses and faculties except as regards what

helps to make the agony more intense. The understanding realizes

acutely what cause there is for grief in separation from God and His

Majesty now augments this sorrow by a vivid manifestation of Himself.

This increases the anguish to such a degree that the sufferer gives

vent to loud cries which she cannot stifle, however patient and

accustomed to pain she may be, because this torture is not corporal but

attacks the innermost recesses of the soul. The person I speak of

learnt from this how much more acutely the spirit is capable of

suffering than the body; she understood that this resembled the pains

of purgatory, where the absence of the flesh does not prevent the

torture's being far worse than any we can feel in this world.

4. I saw some one in this condition who I really thought would have

died, nor would it have been surprising, for there is great danger of

death in this state. Short as is the time it lasts, it leaves the limbs

all disjointed and the pulse as feeble as if the soul were on the point

of departure, which is indeed the case, for the natural heat fails,

while that which is supernatural so burns the frame that were it

increased ever so little God would satisfy the soul's desire for death.

Not that any pain is felt by the body at the moment, although, as I

said, all the joints are dislocated so that for two or three days

afterwards the suffering is too severe for the person to have even the

strength to hold a pen; [380] indeed I believe that the health

becomes permanently enfeebled in consequence. At the time this is not

felt, probably because the spiritual torments are so much more keen

that the bodily ones remain unnoticed; just as when there is very

severe pain in one part, slighter aches elsewhere are hardly perceived,

as I know by experience. During this favour there is no physical

suffering either great or small, nor do I think the person would feel

it were she torn to pieces.

5. Perhaps you will say this is an imperfection, and you may ask why

she does not conform herself to the will of God since she has so

completely surrendered herself to it. Hitherto she has been able to do

so and she consecrated her life to it; but now she cannot because her

reason is reduced to such a state that she is no longer mistress of

herself; nor can she think of anything but what tends to increase her

torment--for why should she seek to live apart from her only Good? She

feels a strange loneliness, finding no companionship in any earthly

creature; nor could she, I believe, among those who dwell in heaven,

since they are not her Beloved: meanwhile all society is a torture to

her. She is like one suspended in mid-air, who can neither touch the

earth nor mount to heaven; she is unable to reach the water while

parched with thirst and this is not a thirst that can be borne, but one

which nothing will quench nor would she have it quenched save with that

water of which our Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman, but this is not

given to her. [381]

6. Alas, O Lord, to what a state dost Thou bring those who love Thee!

Yet these sufferings are as nothing compared with the reward Thou wilt

give for them. It is right that great riches should be dearly bought.

Moreover, her pains purify her soul so that it may enter the seventh

mansion, as purgatory cleanses spirits which are to enter heaven: [382]

then indeed these trials will appear like a drop of water compared to

the sea. Though this torment and grief could not, I think, be surpassed

by any earthly cross (so at least this person said and she had endured

much both in body and mind), yet they appeared to her as nothing in

comparison with their recompense. The soul realizes that it has not

merited anguish which is of such measureless value. This conviction,

although bringing no relief; enables the sufferer to bear her trials

willingly--for her entire lifetime, if God so wills,--although instead

of dying once for all, this would be but a living death, for truly it

is nothing else.

7. Let us remember, sisters, how those who are in hell lack this

submission to the divine will and the resignation and consolation God

gives such a soul and the solace of knowing that their pains benefit

them, for the damned will continually suffer more and more; (more and

more, I mean in regard to accidental pains [383] ). The soul feels far

more keenly than the body and the torments I have just described are

incomparably less severe than those endured by the lost, who also know

that their anguish will last for ever: what, then, will become of these

miserable souls? What can we do or suffer during our short lives which

is worth reckoning if it will free us from such terrible and endless

torments? I assure you that, unless you have learned by experience, it

would be impossible to make you realize how acute are spiritual pangs

and how different from physical pain. Our Lord wishes us to understand

this, so that we may realize what gratitude we owe Him for having

called us to a state where we may hope, by His mercy, to be freed from

and forgiven our sins.

8. Let us return to the soul we left in such cruel torment. This agony

does not continue for long in its full violence--never, I believe,

longer than three or four hours; were it prolonged, the weakness of our

nature could not endure it except by a miracle. In one case, where it

lasted only a quarter of an hour, the sufferer was left utterly

exhausted; indeed, so violent was the attack that she completely lost

consciousness. This occurred when she unexpectedly heard some verses to

the effete that life seemed unending; she was engaged in conversation

at the time, which was on the last day of Easter. All Eastertide she

had suffered such aridity as hardly to realize what mystery was being

celebrated. [384]

9. It is as impossible to resist this suffering as it would be to

prevent the flame's having heat enough to burn us if we were thrown

into a fire. These feelings cannot be concealed: all who are present

recognize the dangerous condition of such a person although they are

unable to see what is passing within her. True, she knows her friends

are near, but they and all earthly things seem to her but shadows. To

show you that, should you ever be in this state, it is possible for

your weakness and human nature to be of help to you, I may tell you

that at times, when a person seems dying from her desire for death

[385] which so oppresses her soul with grief that it appears on the

point of leaving her body, yet her mind, terrified at the thought,

tries to still its pain so as to keep death at bay. Evidently this fear

arises from human infirmity, for the soul's longings for death do not

abate meanwhile nor can its sorrows be stilled or allayed until God

brings it comfort. [386] This He usually does by a deep trance or by

some vision whereby the true Comforter consoles and strengthens the

heart, which thus becomes resigned to live as long as He wills. [387]

10. This favour entails great suffering but leaves most precious graces

within the soul, which loses all fear of any crosses it may henceforth

meet with, for in comparison with the acute anguish it has gone through

all else seems nothing. Seeing what she has gained, the sufferer would

gladly endure frequently the same pains [388] but can do nothing to

help herself in the matter. There are no means of reaching that state

again until God chooses to decree it, when neither resistance nor

escape is possible. The mind feels far deeper contempt for the world

than before, realizing that nothing earthly can succour it in its

torture; it is also much more detached from creatures, having learnt

that no one but its Creator can bring it consolation and strength. It

is more anxious and careful not to offend God, seeing that He can

torment as well as comfort. [389]

11. Two things in this spiritual state seem to me to endanger

life,--one is that of which I have just spoken which is a real peril

and no small one; the other an excessive gladness and a delight so

extreme that the soul appears to swoon away and seems on the point of

leaving the body, which indeed would bring it no small joy.

12. Now you see. sisters, whether I had not reason to tell you that

courage was needed for these favours and that when any one asks for

them from our Lord He may well reply, as He did to the sons of Zebedee:

Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink?' [390] I believe,

sisters, we should all answer 'Yes'--and we should be perfectly right

for His Majesty gives strength when He sees it needed: He ever defends

such souls and answers for them when they are persecuted and slandered

as He did for the Magdalen--if not in words, at least in deeds. [391]

At last, ah, at last! before they die He repays them for all they have

suffered, as you shall now learn. May He be for ever blessed and may

all creatures praise Him! Amen.

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[378] Life, ch. xxix. 17. (Transverberation.)

[379] Ibid. ch. xxix. 13, 14. Rel. viii. 16-19.

[380] St. John of the Cross, Obscure Night, bk. ii. ch. i. (in fine);

Spiritual Canticle, stanza xiii; xiv-xv. (in fine). When this happened

to St. Teresa she was unable to write for twelve days. Ribera, Acta SS.

p. 555 (in fine). Rel. viii. 13. Life, ch. xx. 16.

[381] St. John iv. 15. Life, ch. xxx. 24. Way of Perf. ch. xix. 4 sqq.

Concept. ch. vii. 7, 8. Found. ch. xxxi. 42. See note, Life, ch. i. 6.

[382] St. John of the Cross, Obscure Night, bk. ii. ch. xii.

[383] Marginal note in the Saint's handwriting. The substantial' pain

of hell consists in the irrevocable loss of God, our last end and

supreme Good; this is incurred from the first moment in its fullest

intensity and therefore cannot increase. The physical pain with which

the bodies will be afflicted when united to the souls after the general

resurrection may vary, but will neither increase nor abate. The

accidental' pain of the damned arises from various causes, for instance

from the ever-increasing effects of evil actions, and therefore

increases in the same proportion. Thus a heresiarch will suffer keener

accidental pain as more and more souls are lost through his false

teaching.

[384] Rel. iv. 1. Concept. ch. vii. 2. Isabel of Jesus, in her

deposition in the Acts of Canonisation (Fuente, Obras, vol. vi. 316)

declares that she was the singer. The words were:

V�ante mis ojos,

Dulce Jes�s bueno:

V�ante mis ojos,

Y mu�rame yo lu�go.

Fuente, l.c. vol. v. 143, note 1. OEuvres, ii. 231. (Poem 36, English

version.) There is a slight difference in the two relations of this

occurrence. In Rel. iv. St. Teresa seems to imply that it happened on

Easter Sunday evening, but here she says distinctly: Pascua de

Resurreccion, el postrer dia,' that is, on Easter Tuesday, April 17,

1571, at Salamanca.

[385] Compare the words 'Que muero porque no muero' in the Glosa of St.

Teresa. Way of Perf. ch. xlii . 2. Castle, M. vii. ch. iii. 14.

[386] Way of Perf. ch. xix. 10. Excl. vi.; xii. a.; xiv.

[387] See the two versions of the poems written by the Saint on her

recovery from the trance into which she was thrown, beginning Vivir sin

vivir in me' and the poem, 'Cuan triste es, Dios mio' (Poems 2, 3, and

4, English version). See also St. Teresa's poem, Ya toda me entregu� y

d�.' (Poem 7, English version).

Struck by the gentle Hunter

And overthrown,

Within the arms of Love

My soul lay prone.

Raised to new life at last,

This contract 'tween us passed,

That the Beloved should be mine own,

I His alone.

[388] Rel. viii. 17.

[389] Acta SS. p. 64, n. 229.

[390] St. Matt. xx. 22: Potestis bibere calicem quem ego bibiturus

sum?'

[391] St. Matt. xxvi. to: St. Mark xiv. 6; St. John xii. 7. Way of

Perf. ch. xvi. 7; xvii. 4. Excl. v. 2-4.

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THE SEVENTH MANSIONS

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CHAPTER I.

TREATS OF THE SUBLIME FAVOURS GOD BESTOWS ON SOULS WHICH HAVE ENTERED

THE SEVENTH MANSIONS. THE AUTHOR SHOWS THE DIFFERENCE SHE BELIEVES TO

EXIST BETWEEN SOUL AND SPIRIT ALTHOUGH THEY ARE BOTH ONE. THIS CHAPTER

CONTAINS SOME NOTEWORTHY THINGS.

1. Sublime mysteries of these mansions. 2. St. Teresa abashed at

treating such subjects. 3. Our Lord introduces His bride into His

presence chamber. 4. Darkness of a soul in mortal sin. 5. Intercession

for sinners. 6. The soul an interior world. 7. The spiritual nuptials.

8. Former favours differ from spiritual nuptials. 9. The Blessed

Trinity revealed to the soul. 10. Permanence of Its presence in the

soul. 11. The effects. 12. This presence is not always equally

realized. 13. It is beyond the soul's control. 14. The centre of the

soul remains calm. 15. The soul and the spirit distinct though united.

16. The soul and its faculties not identical.

1. You may think, sisters, that so much has been said of this spiritual

journey that nothing remains to be added. That would be a great

mistake: God's immensity has no limits, neither have His works;

therefore, who can recount His mercies and His greatness? [392] It is

impossible, so do not be amazed at what I write about them which is but

a cipher of what remains untold concerning God. He has shown great

mercy in communicating these mysteries to one who could recount them to

us, for as we learn more of His intercourse with creatures, we ought to

praise Him more fervently and to esteem more highly the soul in which

He so delights. Each of us possesses a soul but we do not realize its

value as made in the image of God, therefore we fail to understand the

important secrets it contains. May His Majesty be pleased to guide my

pen and to teach me to say somewhat of the much there is to tell of His

revelations to the souls He leads into this mansion. I have begged Him

earnestly to help me, since He sees that my object is to reveal His

mercies for the praise and glory of His name. I hope He will grant this

favour, if not for my own sake, at least for yours, sisters--so that

you may discover how vital it is for you to put no obstacle in the way

of the Spiritual Marriage of the Bridegroom with your soul which

brings, as you will learn, such signal blessings with it.

2. O great God! surely such a miserable creature as myself should

tremble at the thought of speaking on such a subject so far beyond

anything I deserve to understand. Indeed I felt abashed and doubted

whether it would not be better to finish writing about this Mansion in

a few words, lest people might imagine that I am recounting my personal

experience. I was overwhelmed with shame for, knowing what I am, it is

a terrible undertaking. On the other hand, this fear seemed but a

temptation and weakness: even if I should be misjudged, so long as God

is but a little better praised and known, let all the world revile me.

Besides, I may be dead before this book is seen. May He Who lives and

shall live to all eternity be praised! Amen.

3. When our Lord is pleased to take pity on the sufferings, both past

and present, endured through her longing for Him by this soul which He

has spiritually taken for His bride, He, before consummating the

celestial marriage, brings her into this His mansion or presence

chamber. This is the seventh Mansion, for as He has a dwelling-place in

heaven, so has He in the soul, where none but He may abide and which

may be termed a second heaven.

4. It is important, sisters, that we should not fancy the soul to be in

darkness. As we are accustomed to believe there is no light but that

which is exterior, we imagine that the soul is wrapt in obscurity. This

is indeed the case with a soul out of the state of grace, [393] not,

however, through any defer in the Sun of Justice which remains within

it and gives it being, but the soul itself is incapable of receiving

the light, as I think I said in speaking of the first Mansion. [394]

A certain person was given to understand that such unfortunate souls

are, as it were, imprisoned in a gloomy dungeon, chained hand and foot

and unable to perform any meritorious action: they are also both blind

and dumb. Well may we pity them when we reflect that we ourselves were

once in the same state and that God may show them mercy also.

5. Let us, then, sisters, be most zealous in interceding for them and

never neglect it. To pray for a soul in mortal sin is a far more

profitable form of almsgiving than it would be to help a Christian whom

we saw with hands strongly fettered behind his back, tied to a post and

dying of hunger--not for want of food, because plenty of the choicest

delicacies lay near him, but because he was unable to put them into his

mouth, although he was extremely exhausted and on the point of dying,

and that not a temporal death, but an eternal one. Would it not be

extremely cruel of us to stand looking at him, and give him nothing to

eat? What if by your prayers you could loose his bonds? Now you

understand.

6. For the love of God I implore you constantly to remember in your

prayers souls in a like case. We are not speaking now of them but of

others who, by the mercy of God, have done penance for their sins and

are in a state of grace. You must not think of the soul as

insignificant and petty but as an interior world containing the number

of beautiful mansions you have seen; as indeed it should, since in the

centre of the soul there is a mansion reserved for God Himself.

7. When His Majesty deigns to bestow on the soul the grace of these

divine nuptials, He brings it into His presence chamber and does not

treat it as before, when He put it into a trance. I believe He then

united it to Himself, as also during the prayer of union; but then only

the superior part was affected and the soul did not feel called to

enter its own centre as it does in this mansion. Here it matters little

whether it is in the one way or the other.

8. In the former favours our Lord unites the spirit to Himself and

makes it both blind and dumb like St. Paul after his conversion, [395]

thus preventing its knowing whence or how it enjoys this grace, for

the supreme delight of the spirit is to realize its nearness to God.

During the actual moment of divine union the soul feels nothing, all

its powers being entirely lost. But now He acts differently: our

pitiful God removes the scales from its eyes [396] letting it see and

understand somewhat of the grace received in a strange and wonderful

manner in this mansion by means of intellectual vision.

9. By some mysterious manifestation of the truth, the three Persons of

the most Blessed Trinity reveal themselves, preceded by an illumination

which shines on the spirit like a most dazzling cloud of light. [397]

The three Persons are distinct from one another; a sublime knowledge is

infused into the soul, imbuing it with a certainty of the truth that

the Three are of one substance, power, and knowledge and are one God.

Thus that which we hold as a doctrine of faith, the soul now, so to

speak, understands by sight, though it beholds the Blessed Trinity

neither by the eyes of the body nor of the soul, this being no

imaginary vision. All the Three Persons here communicate Themselves to

the soul, speak to it and make it understand the words of our Lord in

the Gospel that He and the Father and the Holy Ghost will come and make

their abode with the soul which loves Him and keeps His commandments.

[398]

10. O my God, how different from merely hearing and believing these

words is it to realize their truth in this way! Day by day a growing

astonishment takes possession of this soul, for the three Persons of

the Blessed Trinity seem never to depart; it sees with certainty, in

the way I have described, that They dwell far within its own centre and

depths; though for want of learning it cannot describe how, it is

conscious of the indwelling of these divine Companions.

11. You may fancy that such a person is beside herself and that her

mind is too inebriated to care for anything else. On the contrary, she

is far more active than before in all that concerns God's service, and

when at leisure she enjoys this blessed companionship. Unless she first

deserts God, I believe He will never cease to make her clearly sensible

of His presence: she feels confident, as indeed she may, that He will

never so fail her as to allow her to lose this favour after once

bestowing it; at the same time, she is more careful than before to

avoid offending Him in any way.

12. This presence is not always so entirely realized, that is, so

distinctly manifest, as at first, or as it is at times when God renews

this favour, otherwise the recipient could not possibly attend to

anything else nor live in society. Although not always seen by so clear

a light, yet whenever she reflects on it she feels the companionship of

the Blessed Trinity. This is as if, when we were with other people in a

very well lighted room, some one were to darken it by closing the

shutters; we should feel certain that the others were still there,

though we were unable to see them. [399]

13. You may ask: Could she not bring back the light and see them

again?' [400] This is not in her power; when our Lord chooses, He

will open the shutters of the understanding: He shows her great mercy

in never quitting her and in making her realize it so clearly. His

divine Majesty seems to be preparing His bride for greater things by

this divine companionship which clearly helps perfection in every way

and makes her lose the fear she sometimes felt when other graces were

granted her.

14. A certain person so favoured found she had improved in all virtues:

whatever were her trials or labours, the centre of her soul seemed

never moved from its resting-place. Thus in a manner her soul appeared

divided: a short time after God had done her this favour, while

undergoing great sufferings, she complained of her soul as Martha did

of Mary, [401] reproaching it with enjoying solitary peace while

leaving her so full of troubles and occupations that she could not keep

it company.

15. This may seem extravagant to you, daughters, yet though the soul is

known to be undivided, it is fact and no fancy and often happens.

Interior effects show for certain that there is a positive difference

between the soul and the spirit, although they are one with each other.

[402] There is an extremely subtle distinction between them, so that

sometimes they seem to at in a different manner from one another, as

does the knowledge given to them by God.

16. It also appears to me that the soul and its faculties are not

identical. There are so many and such transcendental mysteries within

us, that it would be presumption for me to attempt to explain them. If

by God's mercy we enter heaven we shall understand these secrets.

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[392] Ps. cxliv. 3: Magnitudinis ejus non est finis.'

[393] See the Saint's description of a soul in the state of sin, Rel,

iii. 13. (towards the end).

[394] Supra, M. i, ch. ii. 1.

[395] Acts ix. 8: Surrexit autem Saulus de terra, apertisque oculis

nihil videbat.' There is, however, nothing to imply that he was dumb as

well as blind.

[396] Acts ix. 18: Et confestim ceciderunt ab oculis ejus tamquam

squam�, et visum recepit.' Way of Perf.. ch. xxviii. 11.

[397] Rel. iii. 6; v. 6-8; viii. 20, 21; ix. 12, 17, 19. Deposition by

Fr. Giles Gonzalez, S.J., Provincial of Old Castile, afterwards

Assistant--General in Rome: While the holy Mother lived at the convent

of the Incarnation of Avila [as prioress], I often spoke with her, and

once I remember she asked me: "What am I to do, Father? Whenever I

recollect myself I realize that already in this life the Three Persons

of the Blessed Trinity may be seen, and that They accompany me and

assist me in the management of my affairs."' (Fuente, Obras, vol. vi.

p. 280.) 'Do�a Maria Enriquez, Duchess of Alva, said that St. Teresa

made known to her many revelations she had received from our Lord, and

that she (the duchess) held in her possession three paintings of the

Blessed Trinity made according to the description of the holy Mother,

who, while they were being done, effaced with her own hand those

portions which the painter failed to design conformably to the vision

she had had.' (Fuente, l.c. p. 297.)

[398] St. John xiv. 23: Si quis diligit me, sermonem meum servabit, et

Pater meus diliget eum, et ad eum veniemus, et mansionem apud eum

faciemus.'

[399] One of the Saint's favourite comparisons. See Life, ch. xxvii. 7.

Castle, M. vi. ch. viii. 3. Rel. vii. 26.

[400] 'Though the soul be always in the high estate of marriage since

God has placed it there, nevertheless, actual union in all its powers

is not continuous, though the substantial union is. In this substantial

union the powers of the soul are most frequently in union, and drink of

His cellar, the understanding by knowledge, the will by love, etc. We

are not therefore to suppose that the soul, when saying it went out,

has ceased from its substantial or essential union with God, but only

from the union of its faculties, which is not, and cannot be, permanent

in this life.' (St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle, stanza xxvi.

9. On the words: In the inner cellar of my Beloved have I drunk, and

when I went forth').

[401] St. Luke x. 40. Excl. v. 2, 3. Way of Perf. ch. xv. 4; xxxi. 4.

Rel. viii. 6. Concept. ch. vii. 4.

[402] Life, ch. xviii. 4. The distinction between soul and spirit, to

be found in the Epistle to the Hebrews, iv. 12, according to Cornelius

a Lapide (ad loc.) consists in this, that the term soul comprises the

faculties, senses, and passions, whereas the term spirit denotes the

substance of the soul independently of its powers. In the inferior

degrees of the Mystical life God operates through the faculties, while

in the Mystical marriage He acts directly on the substance of the soul.

St. Teresa is not quite consistent in the use of these terms, which is

not surprising, as she owns that she does not quite understand this

subtle distinction.

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CHAPTER II.

TREATS OF THE SAME SUBJECT: EXPLAINS, BY SOME DELICATELY DRAWN

COMPARISONS, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPIRITUAL UNION AND SPIRITUAL

MARRIAGE.

1. The spiritual nuptials introduced by an imaginary vision. 2.

Spiritual betrothal and marriage differ. 3. Spiritual marriage lasting.

4. Not so spiritual betrothal. 5. Spiritual marriage permanent. 6. St.

Paul and spiritual marriage. 7. The soul's joy in union. 8. Its

conviction of God's indwelling. 9. Its peace. 10. Christ's prayer for

the divine union of the soul. 11. Its fulfilment. 12. Unalterable peace

of the soul in the seventh Mansion. 13. Unless it offends God. 14.

Struggles outside the seventh Mansion. 15. Comparisons explaining this.

1. WE now come to speak of divine and spiritual nuptials, although this

sublime favour cannot be received in all its perfection during our

present life, for by forsaking God this great good would be lost. The

first time God bestows this grace, He, by an imaginary vision of His

most sacred Humanity, reveals Himself to the soul so that it may

understand and realize the sovereign gift it is receiving. He may

manifest Himself in a different way to other people; the person I

mentioned, after having received Holy Communion beheld our Lord, full

of splendour, beauty, and majesty, as He was after His resurrection.

[403] He told her that henceforth she was to care for His affairs as

though they were her own and He would care for hers: He spoke other

words which she understood better than she can repeat them. This may

seem nothing new, for our Lord had thus revealed Himself to her at

other times; [404] yet this was so different that it left her

bewildered and amazed, both on account of the vividness of what she saw

and of the words heard at the time, also because it took place in the

interior of the soul where, with the exception of the one last

mentioned, no other vision had been seen.

2. You must understand that between the visions seen in this and in the

former mansions there is a vast difference; there is the same

distinction between spiritual espousals and spiritual marriage as

between people who are only betrothed and others who are united for

ever in holy matrimony. I have told you [405] that though I make this

comparison because there is none more suitable, yet this betrothal is

no more related to our corporal condition than if the soul were a

disembodied spirit. This is even more true of the spiritual marriage,

for this secret union takes place in the innermost centre of the soul

where God Himself must dwell: I believe that no door is required to

enter it. I say, no door is required,' for all I have hitherto

described seems to come through the senses and faculties as must the

representation of our Lord's Humanity, but what passes in the union of

the spiritual nuptials is very different. Here God appears in the

soul's centre, not by an imaginary but by an intellectual vision far

more mystic than those seen before, just as He appeared to the Apostles

without having entered through the door when He said: Pax vobis.' [406]

3. So mysterious is the secret and so sublime the favour that God thus

bestows instantaneously on the soul, that it feels a supreme delight,

only to be described by saying that our Lord vouchsafes for the moment

to reveal to it His own heavenly glory in a far more subtle way than by

any vision or spiritual delight. As far as can be understood, the soul,

I mean the spirit of this soul, is made one with God [407] Who is

Himself a spirit, and Who has been pleased to show certain persons how

far His love for us extends in order that we may praise His greatness.

He has thus deigned to unite Himself to His creature: He has bound

Himself to her as firmly as two human beings are joined in wedlock and

will never separate Himself from her.

4. Spiritual betrothal is different and like the grace of union is

often dissolved; for though two things are made one by union,

separation is still possible and each part then remains a thing by

itself. This favour generally passes quickly, and afterwards the soul,

as far as it is aware, remains without His company.

5. This is not so in the spiritual marriage with our Lord, where the

soul always remains in its centre with its God. Union may be symbolized

by two wax candles, the tips of which touch each other so closely that

there is but one light; or again, the wick, the wax, and the light

become one, but the one candle can again be separated from the other

and the two candles remain distinct; or the wick may be withdrawn from

the wax. But spiritual marriage is like rain falling from heaven into a

river or stream, becoming one and the same liquid, so that the river

and rain water cannot be divided; or it resembles a streamlet flowing

into the ocean, which cannot afterwards be disunited from it. This

marriage may also be likened to a room into which a bright light enters

through two windows--though divided when it enters, the light becomes

one and the same.

6. Perhaps when St. Paul said, He who is joined to the Lord is one

spirit,' [408] he meant this sovereign marriage, which presupposes

His Majesty's having been joined to the soul by union. The same Apostle

says: To me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.' [409] This, I

think, might here be uttered by the soul, for now the little butterfly

of which I spoke dies with supreme joy, for Christ is her life.

7. This becomes more manifest by its effects as time goes on, for the

soul learns that it is God Who gives it life,' by certain secret

intuitions too strong to be misunderstood, and keenly felt, although

impossible to describe. These produce such over-mastering feelings that

the person experiencing them cannot refrain from amorous exclamations,

such as: O Life of my life, and Power which doth uphold me!' with other

aspirations of the same kind. [410] For from the bosom of the

Divinity, where God seems ever to hold this soul fast clasped, issue

streams of milk, which solace the servants of the castle. I think He

wishes them to share, in some way, the riches the soul enjoys;

therefore from the flowing river in which the little streamlet is

swallowed up, some drops of water flow every now and then to sustain

the bodily powers, the servants of the bride and Bridegroom.

8. A person who was unexpectedly plunged into water could not fail to

be aware of it; here the case is the same, but even more evident. A

quantity of water could not fall on us unless it came from some

source--so the soul feels certain there must be some one within it who

lances forth these darts and vivifies its own life, and that there is a

Sun whence this brilliant light streams forth from the interior of the

spirit to its faculties.

9. The soul itself, as I said, never moves from this centre, nor loses

the peace He can give Who gave it to the Apostles when they were

assembled together. [411] I think this salutation of our Lord

contains far deeper meaning than the words convey, as also His bidding

the glorious Magdalen to go in peace.' [412] Our Lord's words act

within us, [413] and in these cases they must have wrought their

effect in the souls already disposed to banish from within themselves

all that is corporal and to retain only what is spiritual, in order to

be joined in this celestial union with the uncreated Spirit. Without

doubt, if we empty ourselves of all that belongs to the creature,

depriving ourselves of it for the love of God, that same Lord will fill

us with Himself.

10. Our Lord Jesus Christ, praying for His Apostles, (I cannot remember

the reference),asked that they might be made one with the Father and

with Himself; as Jesus Christ our Lord is in the Father and the Father

in Him! [414] I do not know how love could be greater than this! Let

none draw back from entering here, for His Majesty also said: Not only

for them do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall

believe in Me'; [415] and He declared: I am in them.' [416]

11. God help me! how true these words are, and how clearly are they

understood by the soul which in this state of prayer finds them

fulfilled in itself! So should we all but for our own fault, for the

words of Jesus Christ, our King and our Lord, cannot fail. It is we who

fail by not disposing ourselves fitly, nor removing all that can

obstruct this light,so that we do not behold ourselves in this mirror

wherein our image is engraved. [417]

12. To return to what I was saying. God places the soul in His own

mansion which is in the very centre of the soul itself. They say the

empyreal heavens, in which our Lord dwells, do not revolve with the

rest: so the accustomed movements of the faculties and imagination do

not appear to take place in any way that can injure the soul or disturb

its peace.

13. Do I seem to imply that after God has brought the soul thus far it

is certain to be saved and cannot fall into sin again? [418] I do not

mean this: whenever I say that the soul seems in security, I must be

understood to imply for as long as His Majesty thus holds it in His

care and it does not offend Him. At any rate I know for certain that

though such a person realizes the high state she is in and has remained

in it for several years, she does not consider herself safe, but is

more careful than ever to avoid committing the least offence against

God. As I shall explain later on, she is most anxious to serve Him and

feels a constant pain and confusion at seeing how little she can do for

Him compared with all she ought.' This is no light cross but a severe

mortification, for the harder the penances she can perform, the better

is she pleased. Her greatest penance is to be deprived by God of health

and strength to perform any. I told you elsewhere what keen pain this

caused her, but now it grieves her far more. This must be because she

is like a tree grafted on a stock growing near a stream which makes it

greener and more fruitful. [419] Why marvel at the longings of this

soul whose spirit has truly become one with the celestial water I

described?

14. To return to what I wrote about. It is not intended that the

powers, senses and passions should continually enjoy this peace. The

soul does so, indeed, but in the other mansions there are still times

of struggle, suffering, and fatigue, though as a general rule, peace is

not lost by them. This centre of the soul' or spirit' is so hard to

describe or even to believe in, that I think, sisters, my inability to

explain my meaning saves your being tempted to disbelieve me; it is

difficult to understand how there can be crosses and sufferings and yet

peace in the soul.

15. Let me give you one or two comparisons--God grant they may be of

use; if not, I know that what I say is true. A king resides in his

palace; many wars and disasters take place in his kingdom but he

remains on his throne. In the same way, though tumults and wild beasts

rage with great uproar in the other mansions, yet nothing of this

enters the seventh mansions, nor drives the soul from it. Although the

mind regrets these troubles, they do not disturb it nor rob it of its

peace, for the passions are too subdued to dare to enter here where

they would only suffer still further defeat. Though the whole body is

in pain, yet the head, if it be sound, does not suffer with it. I smile

at these comparisons--they do not please me--but I can find no others.

Think what you will about it--I have told you the truth.

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[403] Rel. iii. 20; ix. 8 and 25.

[404] Life, ch. xxxix. 29.

[405] Castle, M. v. ch. iv. 1.

[406] St. John xx. 19.

[407] Rel. xi. 1. sqq.

[408] 1 Cor. vi. 17: Qui adh�ret Domino unus spiritus est.'

[409] Philip. i. 21: Mihi vivere Christus est, et mori lucrum.'

[410] Such exclamations, in considerable number, form the Book of

Exclamations published by Fray Luis de Leon. De Fuente thinks it was

written in 1569, but as St. Teresa's spiritual betrothal took place on

November 18, 1572, it seems, at least in parts, of a later date. The

spiritual nuptials must be placed between the aforementioned year and

May 1575, but it is not possible to ascertain the exact date. (For the

Exclamations, see Minor Works).

[411] St. John xx. 19.

[412] St. Luke vii. 50.

[413] Supra, M. vi. ch. iii. 6. Life, ch. xxv. 5.

[414] St. John xvii. 2 I: Ut omnes unum sint, sicut tu Pater in me, et

ego in te, ut et ipsi in nobis unum sint.'

[415] St. John xvii. 20: Non pro eis autem rogo tantum, sed et pro eis,

qui credituri sunt per verbum eorum in me.'

[416] St. John xvii. 2 3: Ego in eis.'

[417] This idea is expressed in St. Teresa's poem: Alma, buscarte has

en Mi' (Poem 10, Minor Works).

Such is the power of love, O soul,

To paint thee in my heart

No craftsman with such art

Whate'er his skill might be, could there

Thine image thus impart!

'Twas love that gave thee life--

Then, fair one, if thou be

Lost to thyself, thou'lt see

Thy portrait in my bosom stamped--

Soul, seek thyself in Me.

[418] In a letter dated May 1581, addressed to Don Alonso Velasquez,

then bishop of Osma, St. Teresa writes as follows: 'She [herself] has

received such an assurance of coming one day to the fruition of God

that she almost imagines she has already come into possession of Him,

without, however, the joy that will accompany it. She is in the same

position as one who by legal contract has received a splendid property

which will become his, and whose fruit he will enjoy at a given date.

Until then he only holds the title-deeds, without being able to take

possession of the property. Nevertheless my soul would not like to come

immediately into the possession of God, for it does not believe that it

has deserved such a grace. It only desires to continue in His service,

even at the cost of terrible sufferings. It would not mind thus serving

Him to the end of the world, after having received such a pledge.' St.

John of the Cross, in treating of this subject (Spir. Cant. stanza

xxii. 3) says: I believe that no soul ever attains to this state

without being confirmed in grace in it.' See also Ribera, in the Acta

Ss. p. 554, circa finem.

[419] Ps. i. 3: Et erit tamquam lignum quod plantatum est secus

decursus aquarum, quod fructum suum dabit in tempore suo.'

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CHAPTER III.

THE GREAT FRUITS PRODUCED BY THE ABOVE-MENTIONED PRAYER. THE WONDERFUL

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE EFFECTS AND THOSE FORMERLY DESCRIBED SHOULD BE

CAREFULLY STUDIED AND REMEMBERED.

1. Effects of the graces last received. 2. The soul only cares for

God's honour. 3. But still performs its duties. 4. Other fruits of

these favours. 5. The soul's fervent desire to serve God. 6. Christ

dwells within this soul. 7. And recalls it to fervour if negligent. 8.

God's constant care of such souls. 9. Their peace and silence. 10. Few

ecstasies in the Seventh Mansions. 11. Probable reasons for this. 12.

Allusions in Holy Scripture to this state. 13. Watchfulness of such

souls. 14. Crosses suffered in this state.

1. THE little butterfly has died with the greatest joy at having found

rest at last, and now Christ lives in her. [420] Let us see the

difference between her present and her former life, for the effects

will prove whether what I told you was true. As far as can be

ascertained they are these: first, a self-forgetfulness so complete

that she really appears not to exist, as I said, [421] for such a

transformation has been worked in her that she no longer recognizes

herself; nor does she remember that heaven, or life, or glory are to be

hers, but seems entirely occupied in seeking God's interests.

Apparently the words spoken by His Majesty have done their work: 'that

she was to care for His affairs, and He would care for hers.' [422]

2. Thus she recks nothing, whatever happens, but lives in such strange

oblivion that, as I stated, she seems no longer to exist, nor does she

wish to be of any account in anything--anything! unless she sees that

she can advance, however little, the honour and glory of God, for which

she would most willingly die.

3. Do not fancy I mean, daughters, that she neglects to eat and drink,

though it brings no small torment to her, or to perform the duties of

her state. I am speaking of her interior; as regards her exterior

actions there is little to say, for her chief suffering is to see that

she has hardly strength to do anything. For nothing in the world would

she omit doing all she can which she knows would honour our Lord.

4. The second fruit is a strong desire for suffering, though it does

not disturb her peace as before because the fervent wish of such souls

for the fulfilment of God's will in them makes them acquiesce in all He

does. If He would have her suffer, she is content; if not, she does not

torment herself to death about it as she used to do. She feels a great

interior joy when persecuted, and is far more peaceful than in the

former state under such circumstances: she bears no grudge against her

enemies, nor wishes them any ill. Indeed she has a special love for

them, is deeply grieved at seeing them in trouble, and does all she can

to relieve them, [423] earnestly interceding with God on their

behalf. She would be glad to forfeit the favours His Majesty shows her,

if they might be given to her enemies instead, to prevent their

offending our Lord. 5. The most surprising thing to me is that the

sorrow and distress which such souls felt because they could not die

and enjoy our Lord's presence [424] are now exchanged for as fervent

a desire of serving Him, of causing Him to be praised, and of helping

others to the utmost of their power. Not only have they ceased to long

for death, but they wish for a long life and most heavy crosses, if

such would bring ever so little honour to our Lord. Thus, if they knew

for certain that immediately on quitting their bodies their souls would

enjoy God, it would make no difference to them, nor do they think of

the glory enjoyed by the saints, and long to share it. Such souls hold

that their glory consists in helping, in any way, Him Who was

crucified, especially as they see how men offend against Him, and how

few, detached from all else, care for His honour alone. True, people in

this state forget this at times, and are seized with tender longings to

enjoy God and to leave this land of exile, especially as they see how

little they serve Him. Then, returning to themselves and reflecting how

they possess Him continually in their souls, they are satisfied,

offering to His Majesty their willingness to live as the most costly

oblation they can make. [425]

They fear death no more than they would a delicious trance.

[6. The fact is, that He Who gave them these torturing desires of death

has exchanged them for the others. May He be for ever blessed and

praised! Amen. In fact, such persons no longer wish for consolations

nor delights, since they bear God Himself within them, and it is He Who

lives in them. It is evident that His life was one continual torment:

so would He have ours to be, at least in desire, for as to the rest He

leads us mercifully as our weakness requires, though when He sees the

need He imparts to us His strength.]

7. Such a soul, thoroughly detached from all things, wishes to be

either always alone or occupied on what benefits the souls of others:

she feels neither aridity nor any interior troubles, but a constant

tender recollection of our Lord Whom she wishes to praise unceasingly.

When she grows negligent, the same Lord arouses her in the way that I

told you, and it is easy to see that this impulse (I know not what term

to use for it) comes from the interior of the soul, like the former

impetuous desires. [426] It is now felt very sweetly, but is neither

produced by the intellect nor the memory, nor is there reason to

believe the soul itself has any share in it. This is so usual and so

frequent that whoever has been in this state must have noticed it.

However large a fire may be, the flame never burns downwards, but

upwards, and so this movement is seen to come from the centre of the

soul whose powers it excites. Indeed, were nothing else gained by this

way of prayer but the knowledge of the special care God takes to

communicate Himself to us and how He entreats us to abide with Him (for

indeed I can describe it in no other way) I think that for the sake of

these sweet and penetrating touches of His love all our past pains

would be well spent.

8. You will have learnt this by experience, sisters, for I think that

when our Lord has brought us to the prayer of union, He watches over us

in this way unless we neglect to keep His commandments. When these

impulses are given you, remember that they come from the innermost

mansion, where God dwells in our souls. Praise Him fervently, for it is

He Who sends you this message, or love letter, so tenderly written, and

in a cipher that only you can understand and know what He asks. By no

means neglect to answer His Majesty, even though you may be occupied

exteriorly and engaged in conversation. Our Lord may often be pleased

to show you this secret favour in public; but it is very easy, as the

reply should be entirely interior, to respond by an at of love or to

ask with Saint Paul: 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" [427]

Jesus will show you in many ways how to please Him. It is a propitious

moment, for He seems to be listening to us and the soul is nearly

always disposed by this delicate touch to respond with a generous

determination. [428] As I told you, this mansion differs from the

rest in that, as I said, [429] the dryness and disturbance felt in

all the rest at times hardly ever enter here, where the soul is nearly

always calm. It does not fear that this sublime favour can be

counterfeited by the devil, but feels a settled conviction that it is

of divine origin because, as above stated, nothing is here perceived by

the senses or faculties but His Majesty reveals Himself to the spirit,

which He takes to be with Himself in a place where I doubt not the

devil dares not enter, nor would our Lord ever permit him.

9. All the graces here divinely bestowed on the soul come, as I said,

through no a Lion of its own except its total abandonment of itself to

God. They are given in peace and silence, like the building of

Solomon's Temple where no sound was heard. [430] It is thus with this

temple of God, this mansion of His where He and the soul rejoice in

each other alone in profound silence. The mind need not act nor search

for anything, as the Lord Who created it wishes it to be at rest and

only to watch through a little chink, what passes within. Though at

times it cannot see this, yet such intervals are very short, I believe

because the powers are not here lost but only cease to work, being, as

it were, dazed with astonishment.

10. I, too, am astonished at seeing that when the soul arrives at this

state it does not go into ecstasies except perhaps on rare

occasions--even then they are not like the former trances and the

flight of the spirit and seldom take place in public as they did

before. [431] They are no longer produced by any special calls to

devotion, such as by the sight of a religious picture, by hearing a

sermon (were it only the first few words), or by sacred music;

formerly, like the poor little butterfly, the soul was so anxious that

anything used to alarm it and make it take flight. This may be either

because the spirit has at last found repose, or that it has seen such

wonders in this mansion that nothing can frighten it, or perhaps

because it no longer feels solitary since it rejoices in such Company.

11. In short, sisters, I cannot tell the reason, but as soon as God

shows the soul what this mansion contains, bringing it to dwell within

the precincts, the infirmity formerly so troublesome to the mind and

impossible to get over, disappears at once. Probably this is because

our Lord has now strengthened, dilated, and developed the soul, or it

may be that He wished to make public (for some end known only to

Himself) what He was doing in secret within such souls, for His

judgments are beyond our comprehension in this life.

12. These effects, with all the other good fruits I have mentioned of

the different degrees of prayer, are given by God to the soul when it

draws near Him to receive that kiss of His mouth' for which the bride

asked, [432] and I believe her petition is now granted. Here the

overflowing waters are given to the wounded hart: here she delights in

the tabernacles of God [433] : here the dove sent out by Noe to see

whether the flood had subsided, has plucked the olive branch, showing

that she has found firm land amongst the floods and tempests of this

world. [434] O Jesus! Who knows how much in Holy Scripture refers to

this peace of soul? Since, O my God, Thou dost see of what grave import

is this peace to us, do Thou incite Christians to strive to gain it! In

Thy mercy do not deprive those of it on whom Thou hast bestowed it, for

until Thou hast given them true peace and brought them to where it is

unending, they must ever live in fear.

13. I do not mean that peace is unreal on earth because I say true

peace,' but that such souls might have to begin all their struggles

over again if they forsook God. What must these people feel at the

thought that it is possible to lose so great a good? Their dread makes

them more careful; they try to gather strength from their weakness

lest, through their own fault, they should miss any opportunity of

pleasing God better. The greater the favours they have received from

His Majesty, the more diffident and mistrustful are they of themselves;

the marvels they have witnessed having revealed more clearly to them

their own miseries and the heinousness of their sins, so that often,

like the publican, they dare not so much as lift up their eyes. [435]

14. Sometimes they long to die and be in safety, but then their love at

once makes them wish to live in order to serve God, as I told you;

therefore they commit all that concerns them to His mercy. [436] At

times they are more crushed than ever by the thought of the many graces

they have received lest, like an overladen ship, they sink beneath the

burden. I assure you, sisters, such souls have their cross to bear, yet

it does not trouble them nor rob them of their peace, but is quickly

gone like a wave or a storm which is followed by a calm, for God's

presence within them soon makes them forget all else. May He be for

ever blessed and praised by all His creatures! Amen,

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[420] Gal. ii. 20.

[421] Castle, M. vii. ch. i. 11 and 15.

[422] Castle, M. vii. ch. ii. 1. Compare the references there given.

[423] Don Alvaro de Mendoza, Bishop of Avila, used to say that the best

means of obtaining St. Teresa's friendship was to injure or insult her,

Acta Ss. n, 1233. Rel. vii. 20.

[424] Rel. viii. 15.

[425] Compare with the Saint's poem on self-oblation: Vuestro soy, para

Vos naci' (Poem i. Minor Works).

Long life bestow, or straightway let me die;

Let health be mine, or pain and sickness send;

Honour or foul dishonour--be my path

Beset by war or peaceful till the end.

My strength or weakness be as Thou dost choose,

Since naught Thou askest shall I e'er refuse.

Say, Lord, what is it Thou dost will for me?

[426] Castle, M. vi. ch. vi. 6.

[427] Acts ix. 6: Domine, quid me vis facere?''

[428] The words from know what He asks' to as I told you' are not in

the original manuscript, but must have been written on a separate slip,

as is proved by a marginal note in the handwriting of the Saint: Quando

dice aqui: os pide, l�ase luego este papel.' This paper is now lost,

but the passage it contained is preserved in the early manuscript

copies of Toledo, Cordova and Salamanca, as well as in the first

printed edition, and, through this, in the old translations; hence both

Woodhead and Dalton have it in its proper place. It is, of course, not

to be found in the autograph published in 1882, nor in Fuente's Spanish

editions nor in translations based upon these, The Spanish text will be

found in OEuvres vi, 297 note.

[429] Supra �� i and 2.

[430] III Reg. vi. 7.

[431] 'That is, so as to lose the senses' (marginal note in the Saints'

handwriting). Rel. iii. 5.

[432] Cant. i. I.

[433] Ps. xli, 2, 5.

[434] Gen. viii. 10, 11.

[435] St. Luke. xviii. 13.

[436] Rel. ix. 19.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE CONCLUSION SETS FORTH WHAT APPEARS TO BE OUR LORD'S PRINCIPAL

INTENTION IN CONFERRING THESE SUBLIME FAVOURS ON SOULS, AND EXPLAINS

HOW NECESSARY IT IS FOR MARY AND MARTHA TO GO TOGETHER. THIS CHAPTER IS

VERY PROFITABLE.

1. Vicissitudes of the Seventh Mansion. 2. Humility produced by them.

3. Such souls free from mortal and from wilful venial sins. 4. The fate

of Solomon. 5. Holy fear. 6. These favours strengthen souls to suffer.

7. Crosses borne by the saints. 8. Effect of vision of our Lord on St.

Peter. 9. Fruits of these favours. 10. Why the spiritual marriage takes

place. 11. Love for Christ proved by our deeds. 12. True spirituality.

13. Humility and the virtues must combine with prayer. 14. Zeal of

advanced souls. 15. Strengthened by the divine Presence within them.

16. Examples of the saints. 17. Both Martha and Mary must serve our

Lord. 18. Christ's food. 19. Mary's mortification. 20. Her grief at the

Passion. 21. Can we lead souls to God? 22. How to do so. 23. Love gives

value to our deeds. 24. Conclusion.

1. You must not suppose, sisters, that the effects I mentioned always

exist in the same degree in these souls, for as far as I remember, I

told you that in most cases our Lord occasionally leaves such persons

to the weakness of their nature. The venomous creatures from the moat

round the castle and the other mansions at once unite to revenge

themselves for the time when they were deprived of their power.

2. True, this lasts but a short time--a day perhaps or a little

longer--but during this disturbance, which generally arises from some

passing event, these persons learn what benefits they derive from the

holy Company they are in. Our Lord gives them such great fortitude that

they never desert His service nor the good resolutions they have made,

which only seem to gather strength by trial, nor do their hearts ever

turn from them, even by a slight movement of the will. This trouble

rarely happens; our Lord wishes the soul to keep in mind its natural

condition so that it may be humble and may better understand how much

it owes Him, and how great a grace it has received, and so may praise

Him.

3. Do not fancy that in spite of the strong desire and determination of

these souls that they do not commit imperfections and even fall into

many sins: that is, not wilfully; for such people are given special

grace from God on this point: I mean venial sins. As far as they are

aware, they are free from mortal sins, although they do not feel

certain they may not be guilty of some of which they are ignorant.

4. This grieves their hearts sorely, as does the sight of the souls

perishing around them; although on the one hand they have strong hopes

of not being themselves among the number of the lost, yet remembering

what we are told in Holy Scripture of the fate of men who, like

Solomon, seemed the special favourites of God [437] and conversed so

familiarly with His Majesty, they cannot help fearing for themselves.

5. Let that one among you who feels most confidence on this point fear

the most, for: Blessed is the man who feareth the Lord,' as David said.

[438] May His Majesty ever protect us. Let us beg Him never to permit

us to offend Him: therein lies our greatest safety. May He be for ever

praised. Amen.

6. It would be well to tell you, sisters, the reason why God bestows

such favours on souls in this world, although you must have learned

this by the effects produced if you have considered the matter. I

return to the matter in order that none of you may think it is only for

the sake of the pleasure such persons feel, which would be a great

mistake on your part, for His Majesty can bestow no greater favour on

us than to give us a life such as was led by His beloved Son.

Therefore, as I have often told you, I feel certain that these graces

are sent to strengthen our weakness so that we may imitate Him by

suffering much.

7. We always find that those nearest to Christ our Lord bear the

heaviest cross: think of what His glorious Mother and the Apostles

bore. How do you think St. Paul went through such immense labours?

[439] We learn from his conduct the fruits of genuine visions and

contemplation which come from our Lord and not from our own

imagination, or the devil's fraud. Do you suppose that St. Paul hid

himself to enjoy these spiritual consolations at leisure and did

nothing else? You know that he never took a day's rest so far as we can

learn, nor could he have slept much since he worked all night to get

his living. [440]

8. I am delighted with St. Peter, who when fleeing from prison was met

by our Lord, Who told him He was going to Rome to be crucified again. I

never recite the Office in which this is commemorated without feeling a

special joy. [441] What effect did this vision have on St. Peter, and

what did he do? He went at once to meet his death--and our Lord did him

no small favour in finding him an executioner!

9. Oh, my sisters, how forgetful of her ease, how unmindful of honours,

and how far from seeking men's esteem should she be whose soul God thus

chooses for His special dwelling-place! For if her mind is fixed on

Him, as it ought to be, she must needs forget herself: all her thoughts

are bent on how to please Him better and when and how she can show the

love she bears Him.

10. This is the end and aim of prayer, my daughters; this is the reason

of the spiritual marriage whose children are always good works. Works

are the unmistakable sign which shows these favours come from God, as I

told you. It will do me little good to be deeply recollected when

alone, making acts of the virtues, planning and promising to do wonders

in God's service, if afterwards, when occasion offers, I do just the

opposite. I did wrong in saying, It will do me little good,' for all

the time we spend with God does us great good. Though afterwards we may

weakly fail to perform our good intentions, yet some time or other His

Majesty will find a way for us to practise them although perhaps much

to our regret. Thus when He sees a soul very cowardly, He often sends

it some great affliction, much against its will, and brings it through

this trial with profit to itself, When the soul has learnt this, it is

less timid in offering itself to Him.

11. I ought to have said, will do us little good' in comparison with

the far greater good we can gain when our works fulfil our aspirations

and our promises. She that cannot do all this at once should do it

little by little, gradually dominating her will, if she wishes to gain

fruit from prayer. Even in this little nook she will find many a chance

to praise this. Remember, this is of far more importance than I know

how to express. Fix your eyes on the Crucified One, and all will seem

easy. If His Majesty proved His love for us by such stupendous labours

and sufferings, how can you seek to please Him by words alone?

12. Do you know what it is to be truly spiritual? It is for men to make

themselves the slaves of God--branded with His mark, which is the

cross. Since they have given Him their freedom, He can sell them as

slaves to the whole world, as He was, which would be doing them no

wrong but the greatest favour. Unless you make up your minds to this,

never expect to make much progress, [442] for as I said humility is

the foundation of the whole building and unless you are truly humble,

our Lord, for your own sake, will never permit you to rear it very high

lest it should fall to the ground.

13. Therefore, sisters, take care to lay a firm foundation by seeking

to be the least of all and the slave of others, watching how you can

please and help them, for it will benefit you more than them. Built on

such strong rocks, your castle can never go to ruin. I insist again:

your foundation must not consist of prayer and contemplation alone:

unless you acquire the virtues and praise them, you will always be

dwarfs; and please God no worse may befall you than making no progress,

for you know that to stop is to go back--if you love, you will never be

content to come to a standstill.

14. Perhaps you think I am speaking of beginners and that one may rest

later on, but, as I told you, the rest such souls feel is within them:

they have less outwardly nor do they wish for it. Why, do you think,

does the soul send from its centre these inspirations, or rather

aspirations, (the messages of which I spoke), to the dwellers in the

precincts of the castle and to the surrounding mansions? To send them

to sleep? No, no, no! The soul wages a fiercer war from thence to keep

the powers, senses and the whole body from being idle, than ever it did

when it suffered in their company. Formerly it did not understand the

immense benefit its afflictions brought, though indeed they may have

been the means God used to advance it to this state.

15. Besides, the company it enjoys gives it far greater strength than

ever before. If, as David says: With the holy thou shalt be holy,'

[443] doubtless by its becoming one with the Almighty, by this

sovereign union of spirit with spirit, the soul must gather strength,

as we know the saints did, to suffer and to die. Beyond doubt, with the

force thus gained, the soul succours all within the castle and even the

very body itself, which often seems to have no feeling left in it. The

vigour the soul derives from the wine' drunk in the cellar' [444]

(into which the Bridegroom brought her and would not let her go)

overflows into the feeble body, just as the food we eat nourishes both

the head and the whole frame.

16. Indeed the body suffers much while alive, for whatever work it

does, the soul has energy for far greater tasks and goads it on to

more, for all it can perform appears as nothing. This must be the

reason of the severe penances performed by many of the saints,

especially the glorious Magdalen, who had always spent her life in

luxury. [445] This caused the zeal felt by our Father Elias for the

honour of God, [446] and the desires of St. Dominic, [447] and St.

Francis [448] to draw souls to praise the Almighty. I assure you

that, forgetful of themselves, they must have passed through no small

trials.

17. This, my sisters, is what I would have us strive for--to offer our

petitions and to practise prayer, not for our own enjoyment but to gain

strength to serve God. Let us seek no fresh path; we should lose

ourselves in ways of ease. It would be a strange thing to fancy we

should gain these graces by any other road than that by which Jesus and

all His saints have gone before. Let us not dream of such a thing:

believe me, both Martha and Mary must entertain our Lord and keep Him

as their Guest, nor must they be so inhospitable as to offer Him no

food. How can Mary do this while she sits at His feet, if her sister

does not help her? [449]

18. His food is that in every possible way we should draw souls to Him

so that they may be saved and may praise Him for ever. You may offer

two objections--first, that I said that Mary had chosen the better

part, [450] for she had already done Martha's work by waiting on our

Lord, by washing His feet and by wiping them with her hair.

19. Do you think it was a small mortification for a woman of rank, as

she was, to go through the street, perhaps by herself, for in her zeal

she never thought of how she went? Then she entered a house where she

was a stranger and had to bear the railing of the Pharisee and many

other trials. [451] It was strange to see such a woman as she had

been thus publicly change her life. With a wicked nation like the Jews,

the sight of her love for our Lord Whom they hated so bitterly was

enough to make them cast in her face her former life and taunt her with

wanting to become a saint. Doubtless she must have changed her rich

robes and all the rest. Considering how men talk now of people far less

known than she was, what must have been said of her?

20. I assure you, sisters, she won the better part after many crosses

and mortifications. Must not the mere sight of men's hatred of her

Master have been an intolerable trial? Then, think of what she endured

afterwards at our Lord's death! I believe, myself, that she did not

suffer martyrdom because she was already a martyr by grief at

witnessing the crucifixion. [452] Then what terrible pain His absence

must have caused her [453] during the long years afterwards! You see,

she was not always enjoying contemplation at the feet of our Saviour!

21. Secondly, you may say that you have neither the power nor the means

to lead souls to God; though you would willingly do so, you do not know

how, as you can neither teach nor preach as did the Apostles. I have

often written an answer to this objection though I cannot tell whether

I have done so in connection with the Castle. However, as the

difficulty probably often crosses your minds on account of the desires

our Lord gives you of serving Him, I will now speak of it again. [454]

I told you elsewhere how the devil frequently fills our thoughts with

great schemes, so that instead of putting our hands to what work we can

do to serve our Lord, we may rest satisfied with wishing to perform

impossibilities.

22. You can do much by prayer; and then, do not try to help the whole

world, but principally your companions; this work will be all the

better because you are the more bound to it. Do you think it is a

trifling matter that your humility and mortification, your readiness to

serve your sisters, your fervent charity towards them, and your love of

God, should be as a fire to enkindle their zeal, and that you should

constantly incite them to practise the other virtues? This would be a

great work and one most pleasing to our Lord: by thus doing all that is

in your power, you would prove to His Majesty your willingness to do

still more and He would reward you as if you had won Him many souls. Do

you answer: 'This would not be converting my sisters, for they are very

good already?' What business is that of yours? If they were still

better, the praise they render God would please Him more and their

prayers would be more helpful to their neighbours. [455]

23. In short, my sisters, I will conclude with this advice; do not

build towers without a foundation, for our Lord does not care so much

for the importance of our works as for the love with which they are

done. When we do all we can, His Majesty will enable us to do more

every day. If we do not grow weary, but during the brief time this life

lasts (and perhaps it will be shorter than any of you think) we give

our Lord every sacrifice we can, both interior and exterior, His

Majesty will unite them with that He offered to His Father for us on

the Cross so that they may be worth the value given them by our love,

however mean the works themselves may be.

24. May it please His Majesty, my sisters and my daughters, that we may

all meet together where we may praise Him for ever, and may He give me

grace to practice something of what I have taught you, by the merits of

His Son, Who liveth and reigneth for ever! Amen. I assure you that I am

filled with confusion at myself and I beg you, for the sake of the same

Lord, not to forget this poor sinner in your prayers.

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[437] III. Reg. xi.

[438] Ps. cxi. 1. Beatus vir qui timet Dominum.'

[439] Though thou shouldst have been rapt up to the third heaven with

Saint Paul, thou art not thereby secured that thou shalt suffer no

adversity. I,' said Jesus, will shew him how great things he must

suffer for My name's sake' (Acts. ix. 16). To suffer, therefore, is

what waits for thee, if thou wilt love Jesus and constantly serve Him

For our merit and the advancement of our state consist not in having

many sweetnesses and consolations, but rather in bearing great

afflictions and tribulations' (Imitation, bk. ii. ch. xii. 12).

[440] i Thess. ii. 9.

[441] The Antiphon of the Magnificat at first Vespers of the Feast of

Saints Peter and Paul, June 29, in the Carmelite Breviary used by St.

Teresa is: Beatus Petrus Apostolus vidit sibi Christum occurrere.

Adorans eum ait: "Domine, quo vadis?"--"Venio Romam iterum crucifigi."

The Blessed Apostle Peter saw Christ come to meet him. Adoring Him, he

asked "Lord, where art Thou going?"--"I go to Rome to be crucified

anew." The saint at once returned to Rome and was taken by the soldiers

and crucified. See Letter of Jan. 17. 1577, note 4. Vol. II.

[442] "If thou wilt stand upon self and wilt not offer thyself freely

to My will, thine offering is not perfect, nor will there be entire

union between us.' (Imitation, bk. iv. ch. viii. 2.)

[443] Ps. xvii. 26: Cum sancto sanctus eris.'

[444] Cant. ii. 4.

[445] 'St. Mary Magdalen gave herself up to penance and contemplation

in a deep excavation of the rocks at La Baume, near Marseilles. In this

wild spot there was neither bread, water, nor even herbage. Thus she

lived for more than thirty-two years without any kind of nourishment

but that which was celestial, performing meanwhile most severe

penances.' (St. Vincent Ferrer.)

[446] III Reg. xix. 10.

[447] 'There was one sentiment within him to which may almost be given

the name of passion: it was his ceaseless burning thirst for the

salvation of souls. As his Divine Master had come into the world to

save sinners and loved them even unto death, so he, too, gave up all

that was most dear to him in his life to win souls to Christ. He was

always giving himself: it was the very key-note of his existence. He

would have sold himself as a slave, he would have been cut to pieces by

the heretics, he would spare himself neither by day nor by night, if by

any means he might save some.' (From the History of St. Dominic, by

Augusta Theodosia Drane. London, 1891, p. 256).

[448] 'St. Francis of Assisi, at the very beginning of his Order, when

he had only seven followers, said to them: "Consider, my brethren, what

is our vocation. It is not only for our own salvation that the mercy of

God has called us, but for the salvation of many other souls. It is

that we may go forth and exhort all men rather by our example than by

our words, to do penance and keep the divine commands."' (The Life of

St. Francis of Assisi, by a religious of the Order of Poor Clares,

London, 1861, p. 32).

[449] St. Luke x. 39, 40. Life, ch. xvii. 6. Rel. viii. 6. Way of Perf.

ch. xxxi. 4. Concep. ch. vii. 4.

[450] Ibid. x. 42: Maria optimam partem elegit.'

[451] Ibid. vii. 37.

[452] Marginal note in the Saint's handwriting.

[453] Life, ch. xxi. 9.

[454] Way of Perf. ch, i. 1. Found, ch. i, 6, 7. Supra, M. vi ch. vi,

2.

[455] Way of Perf. ch. vii. 7.

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IHS

ALTHOUGH, as I told you, I felt reluctant to begin this work, yet now

it is finished I am very glad to have written it, and I think my

trouble has been well spent, though I confess it has cost me but

little. Considering your strict enclosure, the little recreation you

have, my sisters, and how many conveniences are wanting in some of your

convents, I think it may console you to enjoy yourselves in this

interior castle which you can enter, and walk about at will, at any

hour you please, without asking leave of your superiors. It is true you

cannot enter all the mansions by your own power, however great it may

appear to you, unless the Lord of the castle Himself admits you.

Therefore I advise you to use no violence if you meet with any

obstacle, for that would displease Him so much that He would never give

you admission to them. He dearly loves humility: [456] if you think

yourselves unworthy to enter the third mansion, He will grant you all

the sooner the favour of entering the fifth. Then, if you serve Him

well there and often repair to it, He will draw you into the mansion

where He dwells Himself, whence you need never depart unless called

away by the Prioress, whose commands this sovereign Master wishes you

to obey as if they were His own. If by her orders, you are often absent

from His presence chamber, whenever you return He will hold the door

open for you. When once you have learnt how to enjoy this castle, you

will always find rest, however painful your trials may be, in the hope

of returning to your Lord, which no one can prevent. Although I have

only mentioned seven mansions, yet each one contains many more rooms,

above, below, and around it, with fair gardens, fountains, and

labyrinths, besides other things so delightful that you will wish to

consume yourself in praising in return the great God Who has created

the soul to His own image and likeness. If you find anything in the

plan of this treatise which helps you to know Him better, be certain

that it is sent by His Majesty to encourage you, and that whatever you

find amiss in it is my own. In return for my strong desire to aid you

in serving Him, my God and my Lord, I implore you, whenever you read

this, to praise His Majesty fervently in my name and to beg Him to

prosper His Church, to give light to the Lutherans, to pardon my sins

and to free me from purgatory, where perhaps I shall be, by the mercy

of God, when you see this book (if it is given to you after having been

examined by theologians). If these writings contain any error, it is

through my ignorance; I submit in all things to the teachings of the

holy Catholic Roman Church, of which I am now a member, as I protest

and promise I will be both in life and death. May our Lord God be for

ever praised and blessed! Amen, Amen.

I finished writing this book in the convent of St. Joseph of Avila,

1577, on the Vigil of St. Andrew, for the glory of God, Who liveth and

reigneth for ever and ever! Amen.

HERE ENDS THE INTERIOR CASTLE

OR THE MANSIONS

TRANSLATED AND PRINTED BY THE

BENEDICTINES OF STANBROOK

A.D. MCMXXI

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[456] Way of Perf. ch. xvi. 1.

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368. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.ii-Page\_275

369. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.ii-Page\_276

370. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.ii-Page\_277

371. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iii-Page\_278

372. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iii-Page\_279

373. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iii-Page\_280

374. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iii-Page\_281

375. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iii-Page\_282

376. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iii-Page\_283

377. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iii-Page\_284

378. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iii-Page\_285

379. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iii-Page\_286

380. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iv-Page\_287

381. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iv-Page\_288

382. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iv-Page\_289

383. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iv-Page\_290

384. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iv-Page\_291

385. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iv-Page\_292

386. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iv-Page\_293

387. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iv-Page\_294

388. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iv-Page\_295

389. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iv-Page\_296

390. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xi.iv-Page\_297

391. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xii-Page\_298

392. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xii-Page\_299

393. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xii-Page\_300

394. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xiii-Page\_301

395. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xiii-Page\_302

396. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xiii-Page\_303

397. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xiii-Page\_304

398. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xiii-Page\_305

399. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xiii-Page\_306

400. file://localhost/ccel/t/teresa/castle2/cache/castle2.html3#xiii-Page\_307