

I described when I was speaking of locutions.¹⁰ They are most easily recognised; and if a soul consents not to its own delusion, I do not think that Satan will be able to deceive it, provided it walks in humility and singleness of heart. He who shall have had the true vision, coming from God, detects the false visions at once; for, though they begin with a certain sweetness and joy, the soul rejects them of itself; and the joy which Satan ministers must be, I think, very different—it shows no traces of pure and holy love: Satan very quickly betrays himself.

16. Thus, then, as I believe, Satan can do no harm to any one who has had experience of these things; for it is the most impossible of all impossible things that all this may be the work of the imagination. There is no ground whatever for the supposition; for the very beauty and whiteness of one of our Lord's Hands¹¹ are beyond our imagination altogether. How is it that we see present before us, in a moment, what we do not remember, what we have never thought of, and, moreover, what, in a long space of time, the imagination could not compass, because, as I have just said,¹² it far transcends anything we can comprehend in this life? This, then, is not possible. Whether we have any power in the matter or not will appear by what I am now going to say.

17. If the vision were the work of a man's own understanding,—setting aside that such a vision would not accomplish the great results of the true one, nor, indeed, any at all,—it would be as the act of one who tries to go to sleep, and yet continues awake, because sleep has not come. He longs for it, because of some necessity or weakness in his head: and so he lulls himself to sleep, and makes efforts to procure it, and now and then thinks he has succeeded; but, if the sleep be not real, it will not support him, nor supply strength to his head: on the contrary, his

¹⁰ Ch. xxv. 8.

¹¹ See § 2.

¹² § 7, *supra*.

head will very often be the worse for it. So will it be here, in a measure; the soul will be dissipated, neither sustained nor strengthened; on the contrary, it will be wearied and disgusted. But, in the true vision, the riches which abide in the soul cannot be described; even the body receives health and comfort.

18. I urged this argument, among others, when they told me that my visions came from the evil one, and that I imagined them myself,—and it was very often,—and made use of certain illustrations, as well as I could, and as our Lord suggested to me. But all was to little purpose; for as there were most holy persons in the place,—in comparison with whom I was a mass of perdition,—whom God did not lead by this way, they were at once filled with fear; they thought it all came through my sins. And so my state was talked about, and came to the knowledge of many; though I had spoken of it to no one, except my confessor, or to those to whom he commanded¹³ me to speak of it.

19. I said to them once, If they who thus speak of my state were to tell me that a person with whom I had just conversed, and whom I knew well, was not that person, but that I was deluding myself, and that they knew it, I should certainly trust them rather than my own eyes. But if that person left with me certain jewels,—and if, possessing none previously, I held the jewels in my hand as pledges of a great love,—and if I were now rich, instead of poor as before,—I should not be able to believe this that they said, though I might wish it. These jewels I could now show them, for all who knew me saw clearly that my soul was changed,—and so my confessor said; for the difference was very great in every way—not a pretence, but such as all might most clearly observe. As I was formerly so wicked, I said, I could not believe that Satan, if he wished to deceive me and take me

¹³ See ch. xxiii. 14.

down to hell, would have recourse to means so adverse to his purpose as this of rooting out my faults, implanting virtues and spiritual strength; for I saw clearly that I had become at once another person through the instrumentality of these visions.

20. My confessor, who was, as I said before,¹⁴ one of the fathers of the Society of Jesus, and a really holy man, answered them in the same way,—so I learnt afterwards. He was a most discreet man, and of great humility; but this great humility of his brought me into serious trouble: for, though he was a man much given to prayer, and learned, he never trusted his own judgment, because our Lord was not leading him by this way. He had, therefore, much to suffer on my account, in many ways. I knew they used to say to him that he must be on his guard against me, lest Satan should delude him through a belief in anything I might say to him. They gave instances of others who were deluded.¹⁵ All this distressed me. I began to be afraid I should find no one to hear my confession,¹⁶ and that all would avoid me. I did nothing but weep.

21. It was a providence of God that he was willing to stand by me and hear my confession. But he was so great a servant of God, that he would have exposed himself to anything for His sake. So he told me that if I did not offend God, nor swerve from the instructions he gave me, there was no fear I should be deserted by him. He encouraged me always, and quieted me. He bade me never to conceal anything from him; and I never did.¹⁷ He used to say that, so long as I

¹⁴ Ch. xxiv. 5. Father Baltasar Alvarez, who had only just been ordained, and therefore with no previous experience except that of his own scruples, found himself called upon to direct a soul arrived at the summit of mysticism. He was, moreover, under the guidance of his own rector, F. Dionisio Vasquez, a man of notorious severity.

¹⁵ There were in Spain, and elsewhere, many women who were hypocrites, or deluded. Among others was the prioress of Lisbon, afterwards notorious, who deceived Luis of Granada (*De la Fuente*).

¹⁶ *Interior Castle*, M. vi. ch. i. 6.

¹⁷ Ch. xxvi. 5; *Interior Castle*, M. vi. ch. ix. 10.

did this, the devil, if it were the devil, could not hurt me ; on the contrary, out of that evil which Satan wished to do me, our Lord would bring forth good. He laboured with all his might to make me perfect. As I was very much afraid myself, I obeyed him in everything, though imperfectly. He had much to suffer on my account during three years of trouble and more, because he heard my confession all that time ; for in the great persecutions that fell upon me, and the many harsh judgments of me which our Lord permitted,—many of which I did not deserve,—everything was carried to him, and he was found fault with because of me,—he being all the while utterly blameless.

22. If he had not been so holy a man, and if our Lord had not been with him, it would have been impossible for him to bear so much ; for he had to answer those who regarded me as one going to destruction ; and they would not believe what he said to them. On the other hand, he had to quiet me, and relieve me of my fears ; when my fears increased, he had again to reassure me ; for, after every vision which was strange to me, our Lord permitted me to remain in great fear. All this was the result of my being then, and of having been, a sinner. He used to console me out of his great compassion ; and, if he had trusted to his own convictions, I should not have had so much to suffer ; for God revealed the whole truth to him. I believe that he received this light from the Blessed Sacrament.

23. Those servants of God who were not satisfied had many conversations with me.¹⁸ As I spoke to them carelessly, so they misunderstood my meaning in many things. I had a great regard for one of them ; for my soul owed him more than I can tell. He was a most holy man, and I felt it most acutely when I saw that he did not understand me. He had a great

¹⁸ See ch. xxv, 18.

desire for my improvement, and hoped our Lord would enlighten me. So, then, because I spoke, as I was saying, without careful consideration, they looked upon me as deficient in humility; and when they detected any of my faults—they might have detected many—they condemned me at once. They used to put certain questions to me, which I answered simply and carelessly. Then they concluded forthwith that I wished to teach them, and that I considered myself to be a learned woman. All this was carried to my confessor—for certainly they desired my amendment—and so he would reprimand me. This lasted some time, and I was distressed on many sides; but, with the graces which our Lord gave me, I bore it all.

24. I relate this in order that people may see what a great trial it is not to find any one who knows this way of the spirit by experience. If our Lord had not dealt so favourably with me, I know not what would have become of me. There were some things that were enough to take away my reason; and now and then I was reduced to such straits that I could do nothing but lift up my eyes to our Lord.¹⁹ The contradiction of good people, which a wretched woman, weak, wicked, and timid as I am, must bear with, seems to be nothing when thus described; but I, who in the course of my life passed through very great trials, found this one of the heaviest.²⁰

25. May our Lord grant that I may have pleased His Majesty a little herein; for I am sure that they pleased Him who condemned and rebuked me, and that it was all for my great good.

¹⁹ 2 Paralip. xx. 12: "Sed cum ignoremus quid agere debeamus, hoc solum habemus residui, ut oculos nostros dirigamus ad Te."

²⁰ See ch. xxx. 6.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OF VISIONS. THE GRACES OUR LORD BESTOWED ON THE SAINT. THE ANSWERS OUR LORD GAVE HER FOR THOSE WHO TRIED HER.

She continues, and tells of some great mercies God showed her, and what His Majesty said to her in order to reassure her, and taught her how to answer contradictors.

I. I HAVE wandered far from the subject ; for I undertook to give reasons why the vision was no work of the imagination. For how can we, by any efforts of ours, picture to ourselves the Humanity of Christ, and imagine His great beauty ? No little time is necessary, if our conception is in any way to resemble it. Certainly, the imagination may be able to picture it, and a person may for a time contemplate that picture,—the form and the brightness of it,—and gradually make it more perfect, and so lay up that image in his memory. Who can hinder this, seeing that it could be fashioned by the understanding ? But as to the vision of which I am speaking, there are no means of bringing it about ; only we must behold it when our Lord is pleased to present it before us, as He wills and what He wills ; and there is no possibility of taking anything away from it, or of adding anything to it ; nor is there there way of effecting it, whatever we may do, nor of seeing it when we like, nor of abstaining from seeing ; if we try to gaze upon it—part of the vision in particular—the vision of Christ is lost at once.

2. For two years and a half God granted me this grace very frequently ; but it is now more than three years since He has taken away from me its continual presence, through another of a higher nature, as I

shall perhaps explain hereafter.¹ And though I saw Him speaking to me, and though I was contemplating His great beauty, and the sweetness with which those words of His came forth from His divine mouth;—they were sometimes uttered with severity;—and though I was extremely desirous to behold the colour of His eyes, or His stature,² so that I might be able to describe them, yet I never attained to the sight of them, and I could do nothing for that end; on the contrary, I lost the vision altogether. And though I see that He looks upon me at times with great tenderness, yet so strong is His gaze, that my soul cannot endure it; I fall into a trance so deep, that I lose the beautiful vision, in order to have a greater fruition of it all.

3. Accordingly, willing or not willing, the vision has nothing to do with it. Our Lord clearly regards nothing but humility and confusion of face, the acceptance of what He wishes to give, and the praise of Himself, the Giver. This is true of all visions without exception: we can contribute nothing towards them—we cannot add to them, nor can we take from them; our own efforts can neither make nor unmake them. Our Lord would have us see most clearly that it is no work of ours, but of His Divine Majesty: we are therefore the less able to be proud of it: on the contrary, it makes us humble and afraid; for we see that, as our Lord can take from us the power of seeing what we would see, so also can He take from us these mercies and His grace, and we may be lost for ever. We must therefore walk in His fear while we are living in this our exile.

¹ Ch. xxxviii, 22, 23 and ch. xl. St. Teresa wrote this portion of her life about January 1565, or a little earlier, so that the cessation of visions must be placed in the second half of 1561.

² All the former editions say "or the form of them," but a close inspection of the MS. shows that the "form" refers, not to the eyes alone, but to the whole body of our Lord. The "two years and a half" during which visions were frequent would cover 1559 as well as 1560, and the end of 1558 and the beginning of 1561.

4. Our Lord showed Himself to me almost always as He is after His resurrection. It was the same in the Host ; only at those times when I was in trouble, and when it was His will to strengthen me, did He show His wounds. Sometimes I saw Him on the cross, in the Garden, crowned with thorns,—but that was rarely ; sometimes also carrying His cross because of my necessities,—I may say so,—or those of others ; but always in His glorified body. Many reproaches and many vexations have I borne while telling this—many suspicions and much persecution also. So certain were they to whom I spoke that I had an evil spirit, that some would have me exorcised. I did not care much for this ; but I felt it bitterly when I saw that my confessors were afraid to hear me, or when I knew that they were told of anything about me.

5. Notwithstanding all this, I never could be sorry that I had had these heavenly visions ; nor would I exchange even one of them for all the wealth and all the pleasures of the world. I always regarded them as a great mercy from our Lord ; and to me they were the very greatest treasure,—of this our Lord assured me often. I used to go to Him to complain of all these hardships ; and I came away from prayer consoled, and with renewed strength. I did not dare to contradict those who were trying me ; for I saw that it made matters worse, because they looked on my doing so as a failure in humility. I spoke of it to my confessor ; he always consoled me greatly when he saw me in distress.

6. As my visions grew in frequency, one of those who used to help me before—it was to him I confessed when the father-minister³ could not hear me—began to say that I was certainly under the influence of Satan. He bade me, now that I had no power of

³ Baltasar Alvarez was father-minister of the house of St. Giles, Avila, in whose absence she had recourse to another father of that house, namely, F. Fernando Alvarez del Aguila.

resisting, always to make the sign of the cross when I had a vision, to point my finger at it by way of scorn,⁴ and be firmly persuaded of its diabolic nature. If I did this, the vision would not recur. I was to be without fear on the point; God would watch over me, and take the vision away.⁵ This was a great hardship for me; for, as I could not believe that the vision did not come from God, it was a fearful thing for me to do; and I could not wish, as I said before, that the visions should be withheld. However, I did at last as I was bidden. I prayed much to our Lord that He would deliver me from delusions. I was always praying to that effect, and with many tears. I had recourse also to St. Peter and St. Paul; for our Lord had said to me—it was on their feast that He had appeared to me the first time⁶—that they would preserve me from delusion. I used to see them frequently most distinctly on my left hand; but that vision was not imaginary. These glorious Saints were my very good lords.

7. It was to me a most painful thing to make a show of contempt whenever I saw our Lord in a vision; for when I saw Him before me, if I were to be cut in pieces, I could not believe it was Satan. This was to me, therefore, a heavy kind of penance; and accordingly, that I might not be so continually crossing myself, I used to hold a crucifix in my hand. This I did almost always; but I did not always make

⁴ Y diese higas. "Higa es una manera de menosprecio que hacemos cerrando el puño, y mostrando el dedo pulgar por entre el dedo indice y el medio" (*Cobarruvias, in voce*). At the convent of Medina del Campo a small object is preserved which, it appears, was used by St. Teresa to make this "sign of scorn." It is like a little horn of flint, about an inch and a half in length, mounted in silver. Being approached to the temples it would represent one of the horns with the possession of which Satan is popularly credited, this gesture, addressed to the vision, meaning: "I know you are but Satan in disguise."

⁵ See *Book of the Foundations*, ch. viii. 3, where the Saint refers to this advice, and to the better advice given her later by F. Dominic Bañes, one of her confessors. See also *Interior Castle*, M. vi. ch. ix. 11.

⁶ See ch. xxvii. 3, and ch. xxviii. 4.

signs of contempt, because I felt that too much. It reminded me of the insults which the Jews heaped upon Him; and so I prayed Him to forgive me, seeing that I did so in obedience to him who stood in His stead, and not to lay the blame on me, seeing that he was one of those whom He had placed as His ministers in His Church. He said to me that I was not to distress myself—that I did well to obey; but He would make them see the truth of the matter. He seemed to me to be angry when they made me give up my prayer.⁷ He told me to say to them that this was tyranny. He gave me reasons for believing that the vision was not satanic; some of them I mean to repeat by and by.

8. On one occasion, when I was holding in my hand the cross of my rosary, He took it from me into His own hand. He returned it; but it was then four large stones incomparably more precious than diamonds; for nothing can be compared with what is supernatural. Diamonds seem counterfeits and imperfect when compared with these precious stones. The five wounds were delineated on them with most admirable art. He said to me that for the future that cross would appear so to me always; and so it did. I never saw the wood of which it was made, but only the precious stones. They were seen, however, by no one else,—only by myself.⁸

9. When they had begun to insist on my putting my visions to a test like this, and resisting them, the graces I received were multiplied more and more. I tried to distract myself; I never ceased to be in prayer: even during sleep my prayer seemed to be continual; for now my love grew, I made piteous

⁷ Ch. xxv. 18.

⁸ The cross was made of ebony. It is not known where that cross is now. The Saint gave it to her sister, Doña Juana de Ahumada, who begged it of her. Some say that the Carmelites of Madrid possess it; and others, those of Valladolid; the latter convent possesses three decades of St. Teresa's rosary, but nothing is known there of the cross,

complaints to our Lord, and told Him I could not bear it. Neither was it in my power—though I desired, and, more than that, even strove—to give up thinking of Him. Nevertheless, I obeyed to the utmost of my power; but my power was little or nothing in the matter; and our Lord never released me from that obedience; but though He bade me obey my confessor, He reassured me in another way, and taught me what I was to say. He has continued to do so until now; and He gave me reasons so sufficient, that I felt myself perfectly safe.

10. Not long afterwards His Majesty began, according to His promise, to make it clear that it was He Himself who appeared, by the growth in me of the love of God so strong, that I knew not who could have infused it; for it was most supernatural, and I had not attained to it by any efforts of my own. I saw myself dying with a desire to see God, and I knew not how to seek that life otherwise than by dying. Certain great impetuosities⁹ of love, though not so intolerable as those of which I have spoken before,¹⁰ nor yet of so great worth, overwhelmed me. I knew not what to do; for nothing gave me pleasure, and I had no control over myself. It seemed as if my soul were really torn away from myself. Oh, supreme artifice of our Lord! how tenderly didst Thou deal with Thy miserable slave! Thou didst hide Thyself from me, and didst yet constrain me with Thy love, with a death so sweet, that my soul would never wish it over.

11. It is not possible for any one to understand these impetuosities if he has not experienced them himself. They are not an upheaving of the breast, nor those devotional sensations, not uncommon, which seem on the point of causing suffocation, and are beyond control. That prayer is of a much lower order; and those agitations should be avoided by

⁹ See *Relation* i. 3.

¹⁰ Ch. xx. 11.

gently endeavouring to be recollected ; and the soul should be kept in quiet. This prayer is like the sobbing of little children, who seem on the point of choking, and whose disordered senses are soothed by giving them to drink. So here reason should draw in the reins, because nature itself may be contributing to it ; and we should consider with fear that all this may not be perfect, and that much sensuality may be involved in it. The infant soul should be soothed by the caresses of love, which shall draw forth its love in a gentle way, and not, as they say, by force of blows. This love should be inwardly under control, and not as a caldron, fiercely boiling because too much fuel has been applied to it, and out of which everything is lost. The source of the fire must be kept under control, and the flame must be quenched in sweet tears, and not with those painful tears which come out of these emotions, and which do so much harm.

12. In the beginning, I had tears of this kind. They left me with a disordered head and a wearied spirit, and for a day or two afterwards unable to resume my prayer. Great discretion, therefore, is necessary at first, in order that everything may proceed gently, and that the operations of the spirit may be within ; all outward manifestations should be carefully avoided.

13. These other impetuositities are very different. It is not we who apply the fuel ; the fire is already kindled, and we are thrown into it in a moment to be consumed. It is by no efforts of the soul that it sorrows over the wound which the absence of our Lord has inflicted on it ; it is far otherwise ; for an arrow is driven into the entrails to the very quick,¹¹ and into the heart at times, so that the soul knows not what is the matter with it, nor what it wishes for. It understands clearly enough that it wishes for

¹¹ *Interior Castle*, M. vi. ch. ii. per totum. St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle*, st. i. 22 sqq.

God, and that the arrow seems tempered with some herb which makes the soul hate itself for the love of our Lord, and willingly lose its life for Him. It is impossible to describe or explain the way in which God wounds the soul, or the very grievous pain inflicted, which deprives it of all self-consciousness; yet this pain is so sweet, that there is no joy in the world which gives greater delight. As I have just said,¹² the soul would wish to be always dying of this wound.

14. This pain and bliss together carried me out of myself, and I never could understand how it was. Oh, what a sight a wounded soul is!—a soul, I mean, so conscious of it as to be able to say of itself that it is wounded for so good a cause; and seeing distinctly that it never did anything whereby this love should come to it, and that it does come from that exceeding love which our Lord bears it. A spark seems to have fallen suddenly upon it, that has set it all on fire. Oh, how often do I remember, when in this state, those words of David: “*Quemadmodun desiderad çervus a fontes aguarun*”!¹³ They seem to me to be literally true of myself.

15. When these impetuosities are not very violent they seem to admit of a little mitigation—at least, the soul seeks some relief, because it knows not what to do—through certain penances; the painfulness of which, and even the shedding of its blood, are no more felt than if the body were dead. The soul seeks for ways and means to do something that may be felt, for the love of God; but the first pain is so great, that no bodily torture I know of can take it away. As relief is not to be had here, these medicines are too mean for so high a disease. Some slight mitigation

¹² § 10.

¹³ Psalm xli, 2: “As the longing of the hart for the fountains of waters, so is the longing of my soul for Thee, O my God.” St. Teresa’s spelling of Latin words is distinctly phonetic.

may be had, and the pain may pass away a little, by praying God to relieve its sufferings: but the soul sees no relief except in death, by which it thinks to attain completely to the fruition of its good. At other times, these impetuositities are so violent that the soul can do neither this nor anything else; the whole body is contracted, and neither hand nor foot can be moved: if the body be upright at the time, it falls down, as a thing that has no control over itself. It cannot even breathe; all it does is to moan—not loudly, because it cannot: its moaning, however, comes from a keen sense of pain.

16. Our Lord was pleased that I should have at times a vision of this kind: I saw an angel close by me, on my left side, in bodily form. This I am not accustomed to see, unless very rarely. Though I have visions of angels frequently, yet I see them only by an intellectual vision, such as I have spoken of before.¹⁴ It was our Lord's will that in this vision I should see the angel in this wise. He was not large, but small of stature, and most beautiful—his face burning, as if he were one of the highest angels, who seem to be all of fire: they must be those whom we call cherubim.¹⁵ Their names they never tell me; but I see very well that there is in heaven so great a difference between one angel and another, and between these and the others, that I cannot explain it.

17. I saw in his hand a long spear of gold, and at the iron's point there seemed to be a little fire. He appeared to me to be thrusting it at times into my heart,¹⁶ and to pierce my very entrails; when he drew it out, he seemed to draw them out also, and to leave me all on fire with a great love of God. The

¹⁴ Ch. xxvii. 3.

¹⁵ In the MS. of the Saint preserved in the Escorial, the word is "cherubines"; but Bañez wrote in the margin: "It seems rather those that are called seraphims," and all subsequent editors and translators until Bouix and Fuente adopted this latter term.

¹⁶ See *Relation* viii. 16.

pain was so great that it made me moan; and yet so surpassing was the sweetness of this excessive pain that I could not wish to be rid of it. The soul is satisfied now with nothing less than God. The pain is not bodily, but spiritual; though the body has its share in it, even a large one. It is a caressing of love so sweet which now takes place between the soul and God, that I pray God of His goodness to make him experience it who may think that I am lying.¹⁷

18. During the days that this lasted I went about as if beside myself. I wished to see or speak with no one, but only to cherish my pain, which was to me a greater bliss than all created things could give me.¹⁸

¹⁷ There is some uncertainty as to the date on which this phenomenon took place. It is generally assigned to the year 1559, the day being not further known except that it somewhat preceded the feast of St. Augustine (August 28). But the vision seems to have been repeated several times, for St. Teresa says *algunas veces*. The cell occupied by St. Teresa previous to her removal to the convent of St. Joseph has been converted into a large chapel of the Transverberation, on the gospel side of the conventual church, and an inscription on the floor reminds the visitor that he is treading sacred ground. But according to the tradition of the convent of the Incarnation the vision took place again during St. Teresa's priorship (1571-1574, after the completion of the Life), and the little oratory attached to the apartment of the prioress (on the first floor) is pointed out as the place where her heart was pierced by an angel. On one of the walls may be seen stains of blood, due either to her excessive mortifications or to the blood vomited by her after her heart had been wounded. The hymn which she composed on that occasion was discovered at Seville in 1700 ("En las internas entrañas"). The Saint's heart, severed from the body previous to the removal of the latter to Avila (October 25, 1585), is preserved at the convent of Carmelite nuns at Alba de Tormes, where the present writer had ample opportunity of examining it with the help of powerful magnesium light. It is of brown-greyish colour, of full natural length, but rather shrunk in width. The chief wound, distinctly visible, is horizontal, about an inch and a half in length; it looks as if it had been inflicted with a knife, but formerly distinct traces of burning could be seen. There are several minor wounds in different parts. Until some years ago there was a kind of growth in the reliquary resembling thorns, of which about twenty could be distinguished, the theory being that whenever the Church passed through some acute crisis a new thorn was formed; but the bishop of Salamanca, Don Tomás Camara, discovering that they consisted of remainders of the feather brush with which the reliquary (through some openings) used to be dusted, and round which small particles of the heart had gathered, caused them to be removed.

¹⁸ Brev. Rom. in festo S. Theresiæ, Oct. 15, Lect. v.: "Tanto autem divini amoris incendio cor ejus conflagravit, ut merito viderit Angelum ignito jaculo sibi præcordia transverberantem." The Carmelites keep the feast of this piercing of the Saint's heart on August 27.

19. I was in this state from time to time, whenever it was our Lord's pleasure to throw me into those deep trances, which I could not prevent even when I was in the company of others, and which, to my deep vexation, came to be publicly known. Since then I do not feel that pain so much, but only that which I spoke of before,—I do not remember the chapter,¹⁹—which is in many ways very different from it, and of greater worth. On the other hand, when this pain, of which I am now speaking, begins, our Lord seems to lay hold of the soul, and to throw it into a trance, so that there is no time for me to have any sense of pain or suffering, because fruition ensues at once. May He be blessed for ever, Who hath bestowed such great graces on one who has responded so ill to blessings so great!

CHAPTER XXX.

ST. PETER OF ALCANTARA COMFORTS THE SAINT. GREAT TEMPTATIONS AND INTERIOR TRIALS.

She continues the history of her life, and tells how God sent her a remedy for all her anxieties by calling the holy friar Fray Pedro de Alcantara, of the Order of the Glorious St. Francis, to the place where she lived. She mentions some great temptations and interior trials through which she sometimes had to pass.

I. WHEN I saw that I was able to do little or nothing towards avoiding these great impetuositities, I began also to be afraid of them, because I could not understand how this pain and joy could subsist together. I knew it was possible enough for bodily pain and spiritual joy to dwell together; but the co-existence

¹⁹ Ch. xx, 11.

of a spiritual pain so excessive as this, and of joy so deep, troubled my understanding. Still, I tried to continue my resistance; but I was so little able that I was now and then wearied. I used to take up the cross for protection, and try to defend myself against Him who, by the cross, is the Protector of us all. I saw that no one understood me. I saw it very clearly myself, but I did not dare to say so to any one except my confessor; for that would have been a real admission that I had no humility.

2. Our Lord was pleased to succour me in a great measure,—and, for the moment, altogether,—by bringing to the place where I was that blessed friar, Peter of Alcantara. Of him I spoke before, and said something of his penance.¹ Among other things, I have been assured that he wore continually, for twenty years, a girdle made of pointed wire. He is the author of certain little books, in Spanish,² on prayer, which are now in common use; for, as he was much exercised therein, his writings are very profitable to those who are given to prayer. He kept the first rule of the blessed St. Francis in all its rigour, and did those things besides of which I spoke before.

3. When that widow, the servant of God and my friend, of whom I have already spoken,³ knew that so great a man had come, she took her measures. She knew the straits I was in, for she was an eye-witness of my afflictions, and was a great comfort to me. Her faith was so strong that she could not

¹ Ch. xxvii. 17, 18, 19. The first interview took place in August, 1558.

² St. Peter of Alcantara wrote several treatises: namely, "Tratado de la Oración y Meditación" (an abridgment of Luis de Granada, translated into English by Giles Willoughby, and lately by George Seymour Hollings, quoted by St. Teresa in the *Interior Castle*, M. iv. ch. iii. 5); "Breve Introducción para los que comienzan á servir á Dios; Tres cosas que debe hacer el que desea salvarse; Oración devotísima, and Petición especial de Amor de Dios." They were published, together with a treatise of Savonarola on the religious vows, at Lisbon, between 1556 and 1560, and again at Medina del Campo, 1563, probably the edition known to St. Teresa.

³ Ch. xxiv. 5. Doña Guiomar de Ulloa, who was under the direction of St. Peter of Alcantara.

help believing that what others said was the work of the devil was really the work of the Spirit of God ; and as she is a person of great sense and great caution, and one to whom our Lord is very bountiful in prayer, it pleased His Majesty to let her see what learned men failed to discern. My confessors gave me leave to accept relief in some things from her, because in many ways she was able to afford it. Some of those graces which our Lord bestowed on me fell to her lot occasionally, together with instructions most profitable for her soul. So, then, when she knew that the blessed man was come, without saying a word to me, she obtained leave from the Provincial for me to stay eight days in her house, in order that I might the more easily confer with him. In that house, and in one church or another, I had many conversations with him the first time he came here ; for afterwards I had many communications with him at diverse times.

4. I gave him an account, as briefly as I could, of my life, and of my way of prayer, with the utmost clearness in my power. I have always held to this, to be perfectly frank and exact with those to whom I make known the state of my soul.⁴ Even my first impulses I wish them to know ; and as for doubtful and suspicious matters, I used to make the most of them by arguing against myself. Thus, then, without equivocation or concealment, I laid before him the state of my soul. I saw almost at once that he understood me, by reason of his own experience. That was all I required ; for at that time I did not know myself as I do now, so as to give an account of my state. It was at a later time that God enabled me to understand myself, and describe the graces which His Majesty bestows upon me. It was necessary, then, that he who would clearly understand and

⁴ Ch. xxvi. 5. The interviews between the two Saints took place chiefly in the chapel called Mosén Rubí and in the parish church of Santo Tomás.

explain my state should have had experience of it himself.

5. The light he threw on the matter was of the clearest; for as to these visions, at least, which were not imaginary, I could not understand how they could be. And it seemed that I could not understand, too, how those could be which I saw with the eyes of the soul; for, as I said before,⁵ those visions only seemed to me to be of consequence which were seen with the bodily eyes: and of these I had none. The holy man enlightened me on the whole question, explained it to me, and bade me not to be distressed, but to praise God, and to abide in the full conviction that this was the work of the Spirit of God; for, saving the faith, nothing could be more true, and there was nothing on which I could more firmly rely. He was greatly comforted in me, was most kind and serviceable, and ever afterwards took great care of me, and told me of his own affairs and labours; and when he saw that I had those very desires which in himself were fulfilled already,—for our Lord had given me very strong desires,—and also how great my resolution was, he delighted in conversing with me.

6. To a person whom our Lord has raised to this state there is no pleasure or comfort equal to that of meeting with another whom our Lord has begun to raise in the same way. At that time, however, it must have been only a beginning with me, as I believe; and God grant I may not have gone back now. He was extremely sorry for me. He told me that one of the greatest trials in this world was that which I had borne,—namely, the contradiction of good people,⁶—and that more was in reserve for me: I had need, therefore, of some one—and there was no one in this city—who understood me; but he would speak to my confessor, and to that married nobleman, already spoken of,⁷ who was one of those who tormented me

⁵ Ch. vii. 12.

⁶ See ch. xxviii. 24.

⁷ Ch. xxiii. 7.

most, and who, because of his great affection for me, was the cause of all these attacks. He was a holy but timid man, and could not feel safe about me, because he had seen how wicked I was, and that not long before. The holy man did so; he spoke to them both, explained the matter, and gave them reasons why they should reassure themselves, and disturb me no more. My confessor was easily satisfied,—not so the nobleman; for though they were not enough to keep him quiet, yet they kept him in some measure from frightening me so much as he used to do.

7. We made an agreement that I should write to him and tell him how it fared with me, for the future, and that we should pray much for each other. Such was his humility that he held to the prayers of a wretch like me. It made me very much ashamed of myself. He left me in the greatest consolation and joy, bidding me continue my prayer with confidence and without any doubt that it was the work of God. If I should have any doubts, for my greater security, I was to make them known to my confessor, and, having done so, be in peace. Nevertheless, I was not able at all to feel that confidence, for our Lord was leading me by the way of fear; and so, when they told me that the devil had power over me, I believed them. Thus, then, not one of them was able to inspire me with confidence on the one hand, or fear on the other, in such a way as to make me believe either of them, otherwise than as our Lord allowed me. Accordingly, though the holy friar consoled and calmed me, I did not rely so much on him as to be altogether without fear, particularly when our Lord forsook me in the afflictions of my soul, of which I will now speak. Nevertheless, as I have said, I was very much consoled.

8. I could not give thanks enough to God, and to my glorious father St. Joseph, who seemed to me

to have brought him here. He was the Commissary-General of the custody⁸ of St. Joseph, to whom, and to our Lady, I used to pray much.

9. I suffered at times—and even still, though not so often—the most grievous trials, together with bodily pains and afflictions arising from violent sicknesses; so much so that I could scarcely control myself. At other times my bodily sickness was more grievous; and as I had no spiritual pain, I bore it with great joy; but, when both pains came upon me together, my distress was so heavy that I was reduced to sore straits.

10. I forgot all the mercies our Lord had shown me, and remembered them only as a dream, to my great distress; for my understanding was so dull that I had a thousand doubts and suspicions whether I had ever understood matters aright, thinking that perhaps all was fancy, and that it was enough for me to have deceived myself, without also deceiving good men. I looked upon myself as so wicked as to have been the cause, by my sins, of all the evils and all the heresies that had sprung up. This is but a false humility, and Satan invented it for the purpose of disquieting me, and trying whether he could thereby drive my soul to despair. I have now had so much experience that I know this was his work⁹; so he, seeing that I understand him, does not torment me in the same way as much as he used to do. That it is his work is clear from the restlessness and discomfort with which it begins, and the trouble it causes in the soul while it lasts; from the obscurity and distress, the aridity and indisposition for prayer and for every good work, which it produces. It seems to stifle the soul and trammel the body, so as to make them good for nothing.

11. Now, though the soul acknowledges itself to

⁸ A "custody" is a division of the province, in the Order of St. Francis, comprising a certain number of convents.

⁹ *Rel.* i. 19.

be miserable, and though it is painful to us to see ourselves as we are, and though we have most deep convictions of our own wickedness,—deep as those spoken of just now,¹⁰ and really felt,—yet true humility is not attended with trouble; it does not disturb the soul; it causes neither obscurity nor aridity: on the contrary, it consoles. It is altogether different, bringing with it calm, sweetness, and light. It is no doubt painful; but, on the other hand, it is consoling, because we see how great is the mercy of our Lord in allowing the soul to have that pain, and how well the soul is occupied. On the one hand, the soul grieves over its offences against God; on the other, His compassion makes it glad. It has light, which makes it ashamed of itself; and it gives thanks to His Majesty, Who has borne with it so long. That other humility, which is the work of Satan, furnishes no light for any good work; it pictures God as bringing upon everything fire and sword; it dwells upon His justice; and the soul's faith in the mercy of God—for the power of the devil does not reach so far as to destroy faith—is of such a nature as to give me no consolation: on the contrary, the consideration of mercies so great helps to increase the pain, because I look upon myself as bound to render greater service.

12. This invention of Satan is one of the most painful, subtle, and crafty that I have known him to possess; I should therefore like to warn you, my father, of it, in order that, if Satan should tempt you herein, you may have some light, and be aware of his devices, if your understanding should be left at liberty: because you must not suppose that learning and knowledge are of any use here; for though I have none of them myself, yet now that I have escaped out of his hands I see clearly that this is folly. What I understood by it is this: that it is our Lord's pleasure

¹⁰ § 10.

to give him leave and license, as He gave him of old to tempt Job¹¹; though in my case, because of my wretchedness, the temptation is not so sharp.

13. It happened to me to be tempted once in this way; and I remember it was on the day before the vigil of Corpus Christi,—a feast to which I have great devotion, though not so great as I ought to have. The trial then lasted only till the day of the feast itself. But, on other occasions, it continued one, two, and even three weeks, and—I know not—perhaps longer. But I was specially liable to it during the Holy Weeks, when it was my habit to make prayer my joy. Then the devil seizes on my understanding in a moment; and occasionally, by means of things so trivial that I should laugh at them at any other time, he makes it stumble over anything he likes. The soul, laid in fetters, loses all control over itself, and all power of thinking of anything but the absurdities he puts before it, which, being more or less unsubstantial, inconsistent, and disconnected, serve only to stifle the soul, so that it has no power over itself; and accordingly—so it seems to me—the devils make a football of it, and the soul is unable to escape out of their hands. It is impossible to describe the sufferings of the soul in this state. It goes about in quest of relief, and God suffers it to find none. The light of reason, in the freedom of its will, remains, but it is not clear; it seems to me as if its eyes were covered with a veil. As a person who, having travelled often by a particular road, knows, though it be night and dark, by his past experience of it, where he may stumble, and where he ought to be on his guard against that risk, because he has seen the place by day, so the soul avoids offending God: it seems to go on by habit—that is, if we put out of sight the fact that our Lord holds it by the hand, which is the true explanation of the matter.

¹¹ Job i.

14. Faith is then as dead, and asleep, like all the other virtues ; not lost, however,—for the soul truly believes all that the Church holds ; but its profession of the faith is hardly more than an outward profession of the mouth. And, on the other hand, temptations seem to press it down, and make it dull, so that its knowledge of God becomes to it as that of something which it hears of far away. So tepid is its love that, when it hears God spoken of, it listens and believes that He is what He is, because the Church so teaches ; but it recollects nothing of its own former experience. Vocal prayer or solitude is only a greater affliction, because the interior suffering—whence it comes, it knows not—is unendurable, and, as it seems to me, in some measure a counterpart of hell. So it is, as our Lord showed me in a vision¹² ; for the soul itself is then burning in the fire, knowing not who has kindled it, nor whence it comes, nor how to escape it, nor how to put it out : if it seeks relief from the fire by spiritual reading, it cannot find any, just as if it could not read at all. On one occasion it occurred to me to read a life of a Saint, that I might forget myself, and be refreshed with the recital of what he had suffered. Four or five times I read as many lines ; and, though they were written in Spanish, I understood them less at the end than I did when I began : so I gave it up. It so happened to me on more occasions than one, but I have a more distinct recollection of this.

15. To converse with any one is worse, for the devil then sends so offensive a spirit of bad temper that I think I could eat people up ; nor can I help myself. I feel that I do something when I keep myself under control ; or rather our Lord does so, when He holds back with His hand any one in this state from saying or doing something that may be hurtful to his neighbours and offensive to God. Then,

¹² See ch. xxxii. 1, sqq.

as to going to our confessor, that is of no use ; for the certain result is—and very often has it happened to me—what I shall now describe. Though my confessors, with whom I had to do then, and have to do still, are so holy, they spoke to me and reprovèd me with such harshness that they were astonished at it afterwards when I told them of it. They said that they could not help themselves ; for, though they had resolved not to use such language, and though they pitied me also very much,—yea, even had scruples on the subject, because of my grievous trials of soul and body,—and were, moreover, determined to console me, they could not refrain. They did not use unbecoming words—I mean, words offensive to God ; yet their words were the most offensive that could be borne with in confession. They must have aimed at mortifying me. At other times I used to delight in this, and was prepared to bear it ; but it was then a torment altogether. I used to think, too, that I deceived them ; so I went to them, and cautioned them very earnestly to be on their guard against me, for it might be that I deceived them. I saw well enough that I would not do so advisedly, nor tell them an untruth ;¹³ but everything made me afraid. One of them, on one occasion, when he had heard me speak of this temptation, told me not to distress myself ; for, even if I wished to deceive him, he had sense enough not to be deceived. This gave me great comfort.

16. Sometimes, almost always,—at least, very frequently,—I used to find rest after Communion ; now and then, even, as I drew near to the most Holy Sacrament, all at once my soul and body would be so well, that I was amazed.¹⁴ It seemed to be nothing else but an instantaneous dispersion of the darkness that covered my soul : when the sun rose, I saw how silly I had been.

¹³ See ch. xxviii. 6.

¹⁴ See *Way of Perfection*, ch. xxxiv. 7.

17. On other occasions, if our Lord spoke to me but one word, saying only, "Be not distressed, have no fear,"—as I said before,¹⁵—I was made whole at once; or, if I saw a vision, I was as if I had never been amiss. I rejoiced in God, and made my complaint to Him, because He permitted me to undergo such afflictions; yet the recompense was great; for almost always, afterwards, His mercies descended upon me in great abundance. The soul seemed to come forth as gold out of the crucible, most refined, and made glorious to behold, our Lord dwelling within it. These trials afterwards are light, though they once seemed to be unendurable; and the soul longs to undergo them again, if that be more pleasing to our Lord. And though trials and persecutions increase, yet, if we bear them without offending our Lord, rejoicing in suffering for His sake, it will be all the greater gain: I, however, do not bear them as they ought to be borne, but rather in a most imperfect way. At other times, my trials came upon me—they come still—in another form; and then it seems to me as if the very possibility of thinking a good thought, or desiring the accomplishment of it, were utterly taken from me: both soul and body are altogether useless and a heavy burden. However, when I am in this state, I do not suffer from the other temptations and disquietudes, but only from a certain loathing of I know not what, and my soul finds pleasure in nothing.

18. I used to try exterior good works, in order to occupy myself partly by violence; and I know well how weak a soul is when grace is hiding itself. It did not distress me much, because the sight of my own meanness gave me some satisfaction. On other occasions I find myself unable to pray or to fix my thoughts with any distinctness upon God, or anything that is good, though I may be alone; but

¹⁵ Ch. xx. 21, ch. xxv. 22, ch. xxvi. 3.

I have a sense that I know Him. It is the understanding and the imagination, I believe, which hurt me here ; for it seems to me that I have a good will, disposed for all good ; but the understanding is so lost, that it seems to be nothing else but a raving lunatic, which nobody can restrain, and of which I am not mistress enough to keep it quiet for a minute.¹⁶

19. Sometimes I laugh at myself, and recognise my wretchedness : I watch my understanding, and leave it alone to see what it will do. Glory be to God, for a wonder, it never runs on what is wrong, but only on indifferent things, considering what is going on here, or there, or elsewhere. I see then, more and more, the exceeding great mercy of our Lord to me, when He keeps this lunatic bound in the chains of perfect contemplation. I wonder what would happen if those people who think I am good knew of my extravagance. I am very sorry when I see my soul in such bad company ; I long to see it delivered therefrom, and so I say to our Lord : When, O my God, shall I see my whole soul praising Thee, that it may have the fruition of Thee in all its faculties ? Let me be no longer, O Lord, thus torn to pieces, and every one of them, as it were, running in a different direction. This has been often the case with me, but I think that my scanty bodily health was now and then enough to bring it about.

20. I dwell much on the harm which original sin has done us ; that is, I believe, what has rendered us incapable of the fruition of so great a good. My sins, too, must be in fault ; for, if I had not committed so many, I should have been more perfect in goodness. Another great affliction which I suffered was this : all the books which I read on the subject of prayer I thought I understood thoroughly, and that I required them no longer, because our Lord had given me the gift of prayer. I therefore ceased

¹⁶ " Un Credo,"

to read those books, and applied myself to lives of Saints, thinking that this would improve me and give me courage; for I found myself very defective in every kind of service which the Saints rendered unto God. Then it struck me that I had very little humility, when I could think that I had attained to this degree of prayer; and so, when I could not come to any other conclusion, I was greatly distressed, until certain learned persons, and the blessed friar, Peter of Alcantara, told me not to trouble myself about the matter.

21. I see clearly enough that I have not yet begun to serve God, though He showers down upon me those very graces which He gives to many good people. I am a mass of imperfection, except in desire and in love; for herein I see well that our Lord has been gracious to me, in order that I may please Him in some measure. I really think that I love Him; but my conduct, and the many imperfections I discern in myself, make me sad.

22. My soul, also, is subject occasionally to a certain foolishness,—that is the right name to give it,—when I seem to be doing neither good nor evil, but following in the wake of others, as they say, without pain or pleasure, indifferent to life and death, pleasure and pain. I seem to have no feeling. The soul seems to me like a little ass, which feeds and thrives, because it accepts the food which is given it, and eats it without reflection. The soul in this state must be feeding on some great mercies of God, seeing that its miserable life is no burden to it, and that it bears it patiently; but it is conscious of no sensible movements or results, whereby it may ascertain the state it is in.

23. It seems to me now like sailing with a very gentle wind, when one makes much way without knowing how; for in the other states so great are the effects that the soul sees almost at once an improvement in itself, because the desires instantly are

on fire, and the soul is never satisfied. This comes from those great impetuositities of love, spoken of before,¹⁷ in those to whom God grants them. It is like those little wells I have seen flowing, wherein the upheaving of the sand never ceases. This illustration and comparison seem to me to be a true description of those souls who attain to this state; their love is ever active, thinking what it may do; it cannot contain itself, as the water remains not in the earth, but is continually welling upwards. So is the soul, in general; it is not at rest, nor can it contain itself, because of the love it has: it is so saturated therewith that it would have others drink of it, because there is more than enough for itself, in order that they might help it to praise God.

24. I call to remembrance—oh, how often!—that living water of which our Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman. That Gospel¹⁸ has a great attraction for me; and, indeed, so it had even when I was a little child, though I did not understand it then as I do now. I used to pray much to our Lord for that living water; and I had always a picture of it, representing our Lord at the well, with this inscription, “Domine, da miqui aquan.”¹⁹

25. This love is also like a great fire, which requires fuel continually, in order that it may not burn out. So those souls I am speaking of, however much it may cost them, will always bring fuel, in order that the fire may not be quenched. As for me, I should be glad, considering what I am, if I had but straw even to throw upon it. And so it is with me occasionally—and, indeed, very often. At one time, I laugh at myself; and at another, I am very much distressed.

¹⁷ Ch. xxix. 11.

¹⁸ St. John iv. 5—42: the Gospel of Friday after the Third Sunday in Lent, where the words are, “hanc aquam.”

¹⁹ “Lord, give me this water” (St. John iv. 15). See ch. i. 6; and *Way of Perfection*, ch. xix. 4. *Foundations*, xxxi. 42; *Interior Castle*, M. vi. ch. xi. 5. The well in the convent of St. Joseph at Avila still bears the name given it by St. Teresa: the fountain of the Samaritan woman.

The inward stirring of my love urges me to do something for the service of God; and I am not able to do more than adorn images with boughs and flowers, clean or arrange an oratory, or some such trifling acts, so that I am ashamed of myself. If I undertook any penitential practice, the whole was so slight, and was done in such a way, that if our Lord did not accept my good will, I saw it was all worthless, and so I laughed at myself. The failure of bodily strength, sufficient to do something for God, is no light affliction for those souls to whom He, in His goodness, has communicated this fire of His love in its fulness. It is a very good penance; for when souls are not strong enough to heap fuel on this fire, and die of fear that the fire may go out, it seems to me that they become fuel themselves, are reduced to ashes, or dissolved in tears, and burn away: and this is suffering enough, though it be sweet.²⁰

26. Let him, then, praise our Lord exceedingly, who has attained to this state; who has received the bodily strength requisite for penance; who has learning, ability, and power to preach, to hear confessions, and to draw souls unto God. Such a one neither knows nor comprehends the blessing he possesses, unless he knows by experience what it is to be powerless to serve God in anything, and at the same time to be receiving much from Him. May He be blessed for ever, and may the angels glorify Him! Amen.

27. I know not if I do well to write so much in detail. But as you, my father, bade me again not to be troubled by the minuteness of my account, nor to omit anything, I go on recounting clearly and truly all I can call to mind. But I must omit much; for if I did not, I should have to spend more time—and, as I said before,²¹ I have so little to spend, and perhaps, after all, nothing will be gained.

²⁰ Ch. xv. 11, xxxi. 25.

²¹ Ch. xiv. 12.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OF CERTAIN OUTWARD TEMPTATIONS AND APPEARANCES OF SATAN. OF THE SUFFERINGS THEREBY OCCASIONED. COUNSELS FOR THOSE WHO GO ON UNTO PERFECTION.

She speaks of some exterior temptations and apparitions of Satan, and how he ill-treated her. She mentions, moreover, some very good things by way of advice to persons who are walking on the way of perfection.

1. Now that I have described certain temptations and troubles, interior and secret, of which Satan was the cause, I will speak of others which he wrought almost in public, and in which his presence could not be ignored.¹

2. I was once in an oratory, when Satan, in an abominable shape, appeared on my left hand. I looked at his mouth in particular, because he spoke, and it was horrible. A huge flame seemed to issue out of his body, perfectly bright, without any shadow. He spoke in a fearful way, and said to me that, though I had escaped out of his hands, he would yet lay hold of me again. I was in great terror, made the sign of the cross as well as I could, and then the form vanished—but it reappeared instantly. This occurred twice. I did not know what to do; there was some holy water at hand; I took some, and threw it in the direction of the figure, and then Satan never returned.

3. On another occasion I was tortured for five hours with such terrible pains, such inward and outward sufferings, that it seemed to me as if I could not bear them. Those who were with me were frightened; they knew not what to do, and I could not

¹ 2 Cor. ii. 11: "Non enim ignoramus cogitationes ejus."

help myself. I am in the habit, when these pains and my bodily suffering are most unendurable, to make interior acts as well as I can, imploring our Lord, if it be His will, to give me patience, and then to let me suffer on, even to the end of the world. So, when I found myself suffering so cruelly, I relieved myself by making those acts and resolutions, in order that I might be able to endure the pain. It pleased our Lord to let me understand that it was the work of Satan; for I saw close beside me a most frightful little negro, gnashing his teeth in despair at losing what he attempted to seize. When I saw him, I laughed, and had no fear; for there were some then present who were helpless, and knew of no means whereby so great a pain could be relieved. My body, head, and arms were violently shaken; I could not help myself: but the worst of all was the interior pain, for I could find no ease in any way. Nor did I dare to ask for holy water, lest those who were with me should be afraid, and find out what the matter really was.

4. I know by frequent experience that there is nothing which puts the devils to flight like holy water. They run away before the sign of the cross also, but they return immediately: great, then, must be the power of holy water. As for me, my soul is conscious of a special and most distinct consolation whenever I take it. Indeed, I feel almost always a certain refreshing, which I cannot describe, together with an inward joy, which comforts my whole soul. This is no fancy, nor a thing which has occurred once only; for it has happened very often, and I have watched it very carefully. I may compare what I feel with that which happens to a person in great heat, and very thirsty, drinking a cup of cold water—his whole being is refreshed. I consider that everything ordained by the Church is very important; and I have a joy in reflecting that the words of the

Church are so mighty, that they endow water with power, so that there shall be so great a difference between holy water and water that has never been blessed. Then, as my pains did not cease, I told them, if they would not laugh, I would ask for some holy water. They brought me some, and sprinkled me with it; but I was no better. I then threw some myself in the direction of the negro, when he fled in a moment. All my sufferings ceased, just as if some one had taken them from me with his hand; only I was wearied, as if I had been beaten with many blows. It was of great service to me to learn that if, by our Lord's permission, Satan can do so much evil to a soul and body not in his power, he can do much more when he has them in his possession. It gave me a renewed desire to be delivered from a fellowship so dangerous.

5. Another time, and not long ago, the same thing happened to me, though it did not last so long, and I was alone at the moment. I asked for holy water; and they who came in after the devil had gone away,—they were two nuns, worthy of all credit, and would not tell a lie for anything,—perceived a most offensive smell, like that of brimstone. I smelt nothing myself; but the odour lasted long enough to become sensible to them.

6. On another occasion I was in choir when, in a moment, I became profoundly recollected. I went out in order that the sisters might know nothing of it; yet those who were near heard the sound of heavy blows where I was, and I heard voices myself, as of persons in consultation, but I did not hear what they said: I was so absorbed in prayer that I understood nothing, neither was I at all afraid. This took place almost always when our Lord was pleased that some soul or other, persuaded by me, advanced in the spiritual life. Certainly, what I am now about to describe happened to me once; there are witnesses

to testify to it, particularly my present confessor,² for he saw the account in a letter. I did not tell him from whom the letter came, but he knew perfectly who the person was.

7. There came to me a person who, for two years and a half, had been living in mortal sin of the most abominable nature I ever heard. During the whole of that time he neither confessed it nor ceased from it; and yet he said Mass. He confessed his other sins; but of this one he used to say, How can I confess so foul a sin? He wished to give it up, but he could not prevail on himself to do so. I was very sorry for him, and it was a great grief to me to see God offended in such a way. I promised him that I would pray to God for his amendment, and get others who were better than I to do the same. I wrote to one person, and the priest undertook to get the letter delivered. It came to pass that he made a full confession at the first opportunity; for our Lord was pleased, on account of the prayers of those most holy persons to whom I had recommended him, to have pity on this soul. I, too, wretched as I am, did all I could for the same end.

8. He wrote to me, and said that he was so far improved that he had not for some days repeated his sin; but he was so tormented by the temptation that it seemed to him as if he were in hell already, so great were his sufferings. He asked me to pray to God for him. I recommended him to my sisters, through whose prayers I must have obtained this mercy from our Lord; for they took the matter greatly to heart; and he was a person whom no one could find out. I implored His Majesty to put an end to these torments and temptations, and to let the evil spirits torment me instead, provided I did not offend our Lord. Thus it was that for one month

² Either Father Dominic Bañez or F. Garcia de Toledo, who were her confessors at St. Joseph's, Avila, between 1563 and 1565.

I was most grievously tormented; and then it was that these two assaults of Satan, of which I have just spoken, took place.

9. Our Lord was pleased to deliver him out of this temptation, so I was informed; for I told him what happened to myself that month. His soul gained strength, and he continued free; he could never give thanks enough to our Lord and to me as if I had been of any service—unless it be that the belief he had that our Lord granted me such graces was of some advantage to him. He said that, when he saw himself in great straits, he would read my letters, and then the temptation left him. He was very much astonished at my sufferings, and at the manner of his own deliverance: even I myself am astonished, and I would suffer as much for many years for the deliverance of that soul. May our Lord be praised for ever! for the prayers of those who serve Him can do great things; and I believe the sisters of this house do serve Him. The devils must have been more angry with me only because I asked them to pray, and because our Lord permitted it on account of my sins. At that time, too, I thought the evil spirits would have suffocated me one night, and when the sisters threw much holy water about I saw a great troop of them rush away as if tumbling over a precipice. These cursed spirits have tormented me so often, and I am now so little afraid of them,—because I see they cannot stir without our Lord's permission,—that I should weary both you, my father, and myself, if I were to speak of these things in detail.

10. May this I have written be of use to the true servant of God, who ought to despise these terrors, which Satan sends only to make him afraid! Let him understand that each time we despise these terrors, their force is lessened, and the soul gains power over them. There is always some great good

obtained ; but I will not speak of it, that I may not be too diffuse. I will speak, however, of what happened to me once on the night of All Souls. I was in an oratory, and, having said one Nocturn, was saying some very devotional prayers at the end of our Breviary, when Satan put himself on the book before me, to prevent my finishing my prayer. I made the sign of the cross, and he went away. I then returned to my prayer, and he, too, came back ; he did so, I believe, three times, and I was not able to finish the prayer without throwing holy water at him. I saw certain souls at that moment come forth out of purgatory—they must have been near their deliverance, and I thought that Satan might in this way have been trying to hinder their release. It is very rarely that I saw Satan assume a bodily form ; I know of his presence through the vision I have spoken of before,³ the vision wherein no form is seen.

†i. I wish also to relate what follows, for I was greatly alarmed at it : on Trinity Sunday, in the choir of a certain monastery, and in a trance, I saw a great fight between evil spirits and the angels. I could not make out what the vision meant. In less than a fortnight it was explained clearly enough by the dispute that took place between persons given to prayer and many who were not, which did great harm to that house ; for it was a dispute that lasted long and caused much trouble.⁴ On another occasion I saw a great multitude of evil spirits round about me, and, at the same time, a great light, in which I was enveloped, which kept them from coming near me. I understood it to mean that God was watching over me, that they might not approach me so as to make me offend Him. I knew the vision was real by what I saw occasionally in myself. The fact is, I know now how little power the evil spirits have, provided I am not out of the grace of God ; I have

³ Ch. xxvii. 4.

⁴ See ch. xxxii. 17.

scarcely any fear of them at all, for their strength is as nothing, if they do not find the souls they assail give up the contest and become cowards ; it is in this case that they show their power.

12. Now and then, during the temptations I am speaking of, it seemed to me as if all my vanity and weakness in times past had become alive again within me ; so I had reason enough to commit myself into the hands of God. Then I was tormented by the thought that, as these things came back to my memory, I must be utterly in the power of Satan, until my confessor consoled me ; for I imagined that even the first movement towards an evil thought ought not to have come near one who had received from our Lord such great graces as I had.

13. At other times I was much tormented—and even now I am tormented—when I saw people make much of me, particularly great people, and when they spake well of me. I have suffered, and still suffer, much in this way. I think at once of the life of Christ and of the Saints, and then my life seems the reverse of theirs, for they received nothing but contempt and ill-treatment. All this makes me afraid ; I dare not lift up my head, and I wish nobody saw me at all. It is not thus with me when I am persecuted ; then my soul is so conscious of strength, though the body suffers, and though I am in other ways afflicted, that I do not know how this can be ; but so it is,—and my soul seems then to be a queen in its kingdom, having everything under its feet.

14. I had such a thought now and then—and, indeed, for many days together. I regarded it as a sign of virtue and of humility ; but I see clearly now it was nothing else but a temptation. A Dominican friar, of great learning, showed it to me very plainly. When I considered that the graces which our Lord had bestowed upon me might come to the knowledge of the public, my sufferings became so excessive as

greatly to disturb my soul. They went so far that I made up my mind, while thinking of it, that I would rather be buried alive than have these things known. And so, when I began to be profoundly recollected, or to fall into a trance, which I could not resist even in public, I was so ashamed of myself that I would not appear where people might see me.

15. Once, when I was much distressed at this, our Lord said to me, What was I afraid of? one of two things must happen—people would either speak ill of me or give glory to Him. He made me understand by this that those who believed in the truth of what was going on in me would glorify Him; and that those who did not would condemn me without cause: in both ways I should be the gainer, and I was therefore not to distress myself.⁵ This made me quite calm, and it comforts me whenever I think of it.

16. This temptation became so excessive that I wished to leave the house, and take my dower to another monastery, where enclosure was more strictly observed than in that wherein I was at this time.⁶ I had heard great things of that other house, which was of the same Order as mine; it was also at a great distance, and it would have been a great consolation to me to live where I was not known; but my confessor would never let me go. These fears deprived me in a great measure of all liberty of spirit; and I understood afterwards that this was not true humility, because it disturbed me so much. And our Lord taught me this truth; if I was convinced, and certainly persuaded, that all that was good in me came wholly and only from God, and if it did not distress me to hear the praises of others,—yea,

⁵ See *Interior Castle*, M. vi, ch. iv, 21.

⁶ It is not known which convent of nuns the Saint thought of joining. Some (F. Frederic of St. Anthony, whose opinion the French Carmelites seem to share) thought of a convent in the Netherlands, or the one near Nantes, founded by Blessed Frances d'Amboise, but it may have been one of the Spanish convents.

rather, if I was pleased and comforted when I saw that God was working in them,—then neither should I be distressed if He showed forth His works in me.

17. I fell, too, into another extreme. I begged of God, and made it a particular subject of prayer, that it might please His Majesty, whenever any one saw any good in me, that such a one might also become acquainted with my sins, in order that he might see that His graces were bestowed on me without any merit on my part : and I always greatly desire this. My confessor told me not to do it. But almost to this day, if I saw that any one thought well of me, I used in a roundabout way, or any how, as I could, to contrive he should know of my sins⁷ : that seemed to relieve me. But they have made me very scrupulous on this point. This, it appears to me, was not an effect of humility, but oftentimes the result of temptation. It seemed to me that I was deceiving everybody—though, in truth, they deceived themselves, by thinking that there was any good in me.⁸ I did not wish to deceive them, nor did I ever attempt it, only our Lord permitted it for some end ; and so, even with my confessors, I never discussed any of these matters if I did not see the necessity of it, for that would have occasioned very considerable scruples.

18. All these little fears and distresses and semblance of humility I now see clearly were mere imperfections, and the result of my unmortified life ; for a soul left in the hands of God cares nothing about evil or good report, if it clearly comprehends, when our Lord is pleased to bestow upon it His grace, that it has nothing of its own. Let it trust the Giver ; it will know hereafter why He reveals His gifts, and prepare itself for persecution, which in these times is sure to come, when it is our Lord's will that it should be known of any one that He bestows upon him graces

⁷ *Way of Perfection*, ch. xxxvi. 8.

⁸ See ch. x. 10.

such as these ; for a thousand eyes are watching that soul, while a thousand souls of another order are observed of none. In truth, there was no little ground for fear, and that fear should have been mine : I was therefore not humble, but a coward ; for a soul which God permits to be thus seen of men may well prepare itself to be the world's martyr—because, if it will not die to the world voluntarily, that very world will kill it.

19. Certainly I see nothing in the world that seems to me good except this, that it tolerates no faults in good people, and helps them to perfection by dint of complaints against them. I mean, that it requires greater courage in one not yet perfect to walk in the way of perfection than to undergo an instant martyrdom ; for perfection is not attained to at once, unless our Lord grant that grace by a special privilege ; yet the world, when it sees any one beginning to travel on that road, insists on his becoming perfect at once, and a thousand leagues off detects in him a fault, which after all may be a virtue. He who finds fault is doing the very same thing,—but, in his own case, viciously,—and he pronounces it to be so wrong in the other. He who aims at perfection, then, must neither eat nor sleep,—nor, as they say, even breathe ; and the more men respect such a one, the more do they forget that he is still in the body ; and, though they may consider him perfect, he is living on the earth, subject to its miseries, however much he may tread them under his feet. And so, as I have just said, great courage is necessary here ; for, though the poor soul have not yet begun to walk, the world will have it fly ; and, though its passions be not wholly overcome, men will have it that they must be under restraint, even upon trying occasions, as those of the Saints are, of whom they read, after they are confirmed in grace.

20. All this is a reason for praising God, and also

for great sorrow of heart, because very many go backwards who, poor souls, know not how to help themselves; and I too, I believe, would have gone back also if our Lord had not so mercifully on His part done everything for me. And until He, of His goodness, had done all, nothing was done by me, as you, my father, may have seen already, beyond falling and rising again. I wish I knew how to explain it, because many souls, I believe, delude themselves in this matter; they would fly before God gives them wings.

21. I believe I have made this comparison on another occasion,⁹ but it is to the purpose here, for I see certain souls are very greatly afflicted on that ground. When these souls begin, with great fervour, courage, and desire, to advance in virtue,—some of them at least outwardly, giving up all for God,—when they see in others, more advanced than themselves, greater fruits of virtue given them by our Lord,—for we cannot acquire these of ourselves,—when they see in all the books written on prayer and on contemplation an account of what we have to do in order to attain thereto, but which they cannot accomplish themselves,—they lose heart. For instance, they read that we must not be troubled when men speak ill of us, that we are to be then more pleased than when they speak well of us; that we must despise our own good name, be detached from our kindred, avoid their company, which should be wearisome to us, unless they be given to prayer; with many other things of the same kind. The disposition to practise this must be, in my opinion, the gift of God; for it seems to me a supernatural good, contrary to our natural inclinations. Let them not distress themselves; let them trust in our Lord: what they now desire His Majesty will enable them to attain to by prayer, and by doing what they can

⁹ Ch. xiii. 3.

themselves; for it is very necessary for our weak nature that we should have great confidence, that we should not be faint-hearted, nor suppose that, if we do our best, we shall fail to obtain the victory at last. And as my experience here is large, I will say, by way of caution to you, my father, do not think—though it may seem so—that a virtue is acquired when we have not tested it by its opposing vice: we must always be suspicious of ourselves, and never negligent while we live; for much evil clings to us if, as I said before,¹⁰ grace be not given to us fully to understand what everything is: and in this life there is nothing without great risks.

22. I thought a few years ago, not only that I was detached from my kindred, but that they were a burden to me; and certainly it was so, for I could not endure their conversation. An affair of some importance had to be settled, and I had to remain with a sister of mine,¹¹ for whom I had always before had a great affection. The conversation we had together, though she is better than I am, did not please me; for it could not always be on subjects I preferred, owing to the difference of our conditions—she being married. I was therefore as much alone as I could; yet I felt that her troubles gave me more trouble than did those of my neighbours, and even some anxiety. In short, I found out that I was not so detached as I thought, and that it was necessary for me to flee from dangerous occasions, in order that the virtue which our Lord had begun to implant in me might grow; and so, by His help, I have striven to do from that time till now.

23. If our Lord bestows any virtue upon us, we must make much of it, and by no means run the risk of losing it; so it is in those things which concern

¹⁰ Ch. xx. 38.

¹¹ Probably Doña Juana de Ahumada, wife of Juan de Ovalle, with whom the Saint lived for some time previous to the foundation of St. Joseph's.

our good name, and many other matters. You, my father, must believe that we are not all of us detached, though we think we are ; it is necessary for us never to be careless on this point. If any one detects in himself any tenderness about his good name, and yet wishes to advance in the spiritual life, let him believe me and throw this embarrassment behind his back, for it is a chain which no file can sever ; only the help of God, obtained by prayer and much striving on his part, can do it.¹² It seems to me to be a hindrance on the road, and I am astonished at the harm it does. I see some persons so holy in their works, and they are so great as to fill people with wonder. O my God, why is their soul still on the earth ? Why has it not arrived at the summit of perfection ? What does it mean ? What keeps him back who does so much for God ? Oh, there it is !—self-respect ! and the worst of it is, that these persons will not admit that they have it, merely because Satan now and then convinces them that they are under an obligation to observe it.

24. Well, then, let them believe me : for the love of our Lord, let them give heed to the little ant, who speaks because it is His pleasure. If they take not this caterpillar away, though it does not hurt the whole tree, because some virtues remain, the worm will eat into every one of them. Not only is the tree not beautiful, but it also never thrives, neither does it suffer the others near it to thrive ; for the fruit of good example which it bears is not sound, and endures but a short time. I say it again and again, let our self-respect be ever so slight, it will have the same result as the missing of a note on the organ when it is played,—the whole music is out of tune. It is a thing which hurts the soul exceedingly in every way, but it is a pestilence in the way of prayer.

25. Are we striving after union with God ? and

¹² *Interior Castle*, M., i. ch. ii. 19.

do we wish to follow the counsels of Christ,—Who was loaded with reproaches and falsely accused,—and at the same time to keep our own reputation and credit untouched? We cannot succeed, for these things are inconsistent one with another. Our Lord comes to the soul when we do violence to ourselves, and strive to give up our rights in many things. Some will say, I have nothing that I can give up, nor have I any opportunity of doing so. I believe that our Lord will never suffer any one who has made so good a resolution as this to miss so great a blessing. His Majesty will make so many arrangements for him, whereby he may acquire this virtue,—more frequently, perhaps, than he will like. Let him put his hand to the work. I speak of the little nothings and trifles which I gave up when I began—or at least of some of them: the straws which I said¹³ I threw into the fire; for I am not able to do more. All this our Lord accepted: may He be blessed for evermore!

26. One of my faults was this: I had a very imperfect knowledge of my Breviary and of my duties in choir, simply because I was careless and given to vanities; and I knew the other novices could have taught me. But I never asked them, that they might not know how little I knew. It suggested itself to me at once that I ought to set a good example: this is very common. Now, however, that God has opened my eyes a little, even when I know a thing, but yet am very slightly in doubt about it, I ask the children. I have lost neither honour nor credit by it—on the contrary, I believe our Lord has been pleased to strengthen my memory. My singing of the Office was bad, and I felt it much if I had not learned the part entrusted to me,—not because I made mistakes before our Lord, which would have been a virtue, but because I made them before the many nuns who heard me. I was so full of my own

¹³ Ch. xv. 11; xxx. 25.

reputation that I was disturbed, and therefore did not sing what I had to sing even so well as I might have done. Afterwards I ventured, when I did not know it very well, to say so. At first I felt it very much; but afterwards I found pleasure in doing it. So, when I began to be indifferent about its being known that I could not sing well, it gave me no pain at all, and I sang much better. This miserable self-esteem took from me the power of doing that which I regarded as an honour, for every one regards as honourable that which he likes.

27. By trifles such as these, which are nothing,—and I am altogether nothing myself, seeing that this gave me pain,—by little and little, doing such actions, and by such slight performances,—they become of worth because done for God,—His Majesty helps us on towards greater things; and so it happened to me in the matter of humility. When I saw that all the nuns except myself were making great progress,—I was always myself good for nothing,—I used to fold up their mantles when they left the choir. I looked on myself as doing service to angels who had been there praising God. I did so till they—I know not how—found it out; and then I was not a little ashamed, because my virtue was not strong enough to bear that they should know of it. But the shame arose, not because I was humble, but because I was afraid they would laugh at me, the matter being so trifling.

28. O Lord, what a shame for me to lay bare so much wickedness, and to number these grains of sand, which yet I did not raise up from the ground in Thy service without mixing them with a thousand meannesses! The waters of Thy grace were not as yet flowing beneath them, so as to make them ascend upwards. O my Creator, oh, that I had anything worth recounting amid so many evil things, when I am recounting the great mercies I received at Thy

hands! So it is, O my Lord. I know not how my heart could have borne it, nor how any one who shall read this can help having me in abhorrence when he sees that mercies so great had been so ill-requited, and that I have not been ashamed to speak of these services. Ah! they are only mine, O my Lord; but I am ashamed I have nothing else to say of myself; and that it is that makes me speak of these wretched beginnings, in order that he who has begun more nobly may have hope that our Lord, who has made much of mine, will make more of his. May it please His Majesty to give me this grace, that I may not remain for ever at the beginning! Amen.

CHAPTER XXXII.

OUR LORD SHOWS ST. TERESA THE PLACE WHICH SHE HAD BY HER SINS DESERVED IN HELL. THE TORMENTS THERE. HOW THE MONASTERY OF ST. JOSEPH WAS FOUNDED.

She narrates how it pleased God to put her in spirit in that place of hell she had deserved by her sins. She tells a little [una cifra = a mere nothing] compared with what there was besides of what she saw there. She begins to speak of the manner and way of founding the convent of St. Joseph, where she now lives.

I. SOME considerable time after our Lord had bestowed upon me the graces I have been describing, and others also of a higher nature, I was one day in prayer when I found myself in a moment, without knowing how, plunged apparently into hell. I understood that it was our Lord's will I should see the place which the devils kept in readiness for me, and which

I had deserved by my sins.¹ It was but a moment, but it seems to me impossible I should ever forget it, even if I were to live many years.

2. The entrance seemed to be by a long narrow pass, like a furnace, very low, dark, and close. The ground seemed to be saturated with water, mere mud, exceedingly foul, sending forth pestilential odours, and covered with loathsome vermin. At the end was a hollow place in the wall, like a closet, and in that I saw myself confined. All this was even pleasant to behold in comparison with what I felt there. There is no exaggeration in what I am saying.

3. But as to what I then felt, I do not know where to begin, if I were to describe it; it is utterly inexplicable. I felt a fire in my soul. I cannot see how it is possible to describe it. My bodily sufferings were unendurable. I have undergone most painful sufferings in this life, and, as the physicians say, the greatest that can be borne, such as the contraction of my sinews when I was paralysed,² without speaking of others of different kinds, yea, even those of which I have also spoken,³ inflicted on me by Satan; yet all these were as nothing in comparison with what I felt then, especially when I saw that there would be no intermission, nor any end to them.

4. These sufferings were nothing in comparison with the anguish of my soul, a sense of oppression, of stifling, and of pain so keen, accompanied by so hopeless and cruel an infliction, that I know not how to speak of it. If I said that the soul is continually being torn from the body it would be nothing,—for that implies the destruction of life by the hands of another; but here it is the soul itself that is tearing

¹ *Way of Perfection*, ch. xiii. 2.—As Ribera remarks, it does not follow from this passage that St. Teresa had ever committed a mortal sin—and thereby deserved hell—as there is abundant evidence even from her own words that she never had such a misfortune, but only that she would have fallen into grievous sins if she had not mended her life.

² See ch. v. 14; ch. vi. 1.

³ Ch. xxxi. 3.

itself in pieces. I cannot describe that inward fire or that despair, surpassing all torments and all pain. I did not see who it was that tormented me, but I felt myself on fire, and torn to pieces, as it seemed to me; and, I repeat it, this inward fire and despair are the greatest torments of all.

5. Left in that pestilential place, and utterly without the power to hope for comfort, I could neither sit nor lie down: there was no room. I was placed as it were in a hole in the wall; and those walls, terrible to look on of themselves, hemmed me in on every side. I could not breathe. There was no light, but all was thick darkness. I do not understand how it is; though there was no light, yet everything that can give pain by being seen was visible.

6. Our Lord at that time would not let me see more of hell. Afterwards I had another most fearful vision, in which I saw the punishment of certain sins. They were most horrible to look at; but, because I felt none of the pain, my terror was not so great. In the former vision our Lord made me really feel those torments, and that anguish of spirit, just as if I had been suffering them in the body there. I know not how it was, but I understood distinctly that it was a great mercy that our Lord would have me see with mine own eyes the very place from which His compassion saved me. I have listened to people speaking of these things, and I have at other times dwelt on the various torments of hell, though not often, because my soul made no progress by the way of fear; and I have read of the diverse tortures, and how the devils tear the flesh with red-hot pincers. But all is as nothing before this; it is a wholly different matter. In short, the one is a reality, the other a picture; and all burning here in this life is as nothing in comparison with the fire that is there.

7. I was so terrified by that vision,—and that terror is on me even now while I am writing,—that

though it took place nearly six years ago,⁴ the natural warmth of my body is chilled by fear even now when I think of it. And so, amid all the pain and suffering which I may have had to bear, I remember no time in which I do not think that all we have to suffer in this world is as nothing. It seems to me that we complain without reason. I repeat it, this vision was one of the grandest mercies of our Lord. It has been to me of the greatest service, because it has destroyed my fear of trouble and of the contradiction of the world, and because it has made me strong enough to bear up against them, and to give thanks to our Lord, who has been my Deliverer, as it now seems to me, from such fearful and everlasting pains.

8. Ever since that time, as I was saying, everything seems endurable in comparison with one instant of suffering such as those I had then to bear in hell. I am filled with fear when I see that, after frequently reading books which describe in some manner the pains of hell, I was not afraid of them, nor made any account of them. Where was I? How could I possibly take any pleasure in those things which led me directly to so dreadful a place? Blessed for ever be Thou, O my God! and, oh, how manifest is it that Thou didst love me much more than I did love Thee! How often, O Lord, didst Thou save me from that fearful prison! and how I used to get back to it contrary to Thy will.

9. It was that vision that filled me with the very great distress which I feel at the sight of so many lost souls, especially of the Lutherans,—for they were once members of the Church by baptism,—and also gave me the most vehement desires for the salvation of souls; for certainly I believe that, to save even one from those overwhelming torments, I would most

⁴ Writing at the beginning of 1565, the vision must have taken place about 1559.

willingly endure many deaths. If here on earth we see one whom we specially love in great trouble or pain, our very nature seems to bid us compassionate him; and if those pains be great, we are troubled ourselves. What, then, must it be to see a soul in danger of pain, the most grievous of all pains, for ever? Who can endure it? It is a thought no heart can bear without great anguish. Here we know that pain ends with life at last, and that there are limits to it; yet the sight of it moves our compassion so greatly. That other pain has no ending; and I know not how we can be calm, when we see Satan carry so many souls daily away.

10. This also makes me wish that, in a matter which concerns us so much, we did not rest satisfied with doing less than we can do on our part,—that we left nothing undone. May our Lord vouchsafe to give us His grace for that end! When I consider that, notwithstanding my very great wickedness, I took some pains to please God, and abstained from certain things which I know the world makes light of,—that, in short, I suffered grievous infirmities, and with great patience, which our Lord gave me; that I was not inclined to murmur or to speak ill of anybody; that I could not—I believe so—wish harm to any one; that I was not, to the best of my recollection, either avaricious or envious, so as to be grievously offensive in the sight of God; and that I was free from many other faults,—for, though so wicked, I had lived constantly in the fear of God,—I had to look at the very place which the devils kept ready for me. It is true that, considering my faults, I had deserved a still heavier chastisement; but for all that, I repeat it, the torment was fearful, and we run a great risk whenever we please ourselves. No soul should take either rest or pleasure that is liable to fall every moment into mortal sin. Let us, then, for the love of God, avoid all occasions of sin, and

our Lord will help us, as He has helped me. May if please His Majesty never to let me out of His hands, lest I should turn back and fall, now that I have seen the place where I must dwell if I do. I entreat our Lord, for His Majesty's sake, never to permit it. Amen.

11. When I had seen this vision, and had learned other great and hidden things which our Lord, of His goodness, was pleased to show me,—namely, the joy of the blessed and the torment of the wicked,—I longed for the way and the means of doing penance for the great evil I had done, and of meriting in some degree, so that I might gain so great a good; and therefore I wished to avoid all society, and to withdraw myself utterly from the world. I was in spirit restless, yet my restlessness was not harassing, but rather pleasant. I saw clearly that it was the work of God, and that His Majesty had furnished my soul with fervour, so that I might be able to digest other and stronger food than I had been accustomed to eat. I tried to think what I could do for God, and thought that the first thing was to follow my vocation to a religious life, which His Majesty had given me, by keeping my rule in the greatest perfection possible.

12. Though in that house in which I then lived there were many servants of God, and God was greatly served therein, yet, because it was very poor, the nuns left it very often and went to other places, where, however, we could serve God in all honour and observances of religion. The rule also was kept, not in its original exactness, but according to the custom of the whole Order, authorised by the Bull of Mitigation.⁵ There were other inconveniences also: we had too many comforts, as it seemed to me; for the house was large and pleasant. But this inconvenience of going out, though it was I that took most advantage of it, was a very grievous one for me; for many

⁵ Bull of Eugenius IV., dated Feb. 15, 1432 (Bullar, Carmelit. i. 182).

persons, to whom my superiors could not say no, were glad to have me with them. My superiors, thus importuned, commanded me to visit these persons; and thus it was so arranged that I could not be long together in the monastery. Satan, too, must have had a share in this, in order that I might not be in the house, where I was of great service to those of my sisters to whom I continually communicated the instructions which I received from my confessors.

13. It occurred once to a person with whom I was speaking to say to me and the others that it was possible to find means for the foundation of a monastery, if we were prepared to become nuns like those of the Barefooted Orders.⁶ I, having this desire, began to discuss the matter with that widowed lady who was my companion,—I have spoken of her before,⁷—and she had the same wish that I had. She began to consider how to provide a revenue for the home. I see now that this was not the way,—only the wish we had to do so made us think it was; but I, on the other hand, seeing that I took the greatest delight in the house in which I was then living, because it was very pleasant to me, and, in my own cell, most convenient for my purpose, still held back. Nevertheless, we agreed to commit the matter with all earnestness to God.

14. One day, after Communion, our Lord commanded me to labour with all my might for this end. He made me great promises,—that the monastery would be certainly built; that He would take great delight therein; that it should be called St. Joseph's; that St. Joseph would keep guard at one door, and our Lady at the other; that Christ would be in the midst of us; that the monastery would be a star

⁶ This was said by Maria de Ocampo, niece of St. Teresa, then living in the monastery of the Incarnation as a pensioner; afterwards she became Prioress of the Carmelites at Valladolid under the name of Maria Bautista.

⁷ Ch. xxiv. 5. Doña Guiomar de Ulloa

shining in great splendour ; that, though the religious Orders were then relaxed, I was not to suppose that He was scantily served in them,—for what would become of the world, if there were no religious in it ?—I was to tell my confessor what He commanded me, and that He asked him not to oppose nor thwart me in the matter.

15. So efficacious was the vision, and such was the nature of the words our Lord spoke to me, that I could not possibly doubt that they came from Him. I suffered most keenly, because I saw in part the great anxieties and troubles that the work would cost me, and I was also very happy in the house I was in then ; and though I used to speak of this matter in past times, yet it was not with resolution nor with any confidence that the thing could ever be done. I saw that I was now in a great strait ; and when I saw that I was entering on a work of great anxiety, I hesitated ; but our Lord spoke of it so often to me, and set before me so many reasons and motives, which I saw could not be gainsaid,—I saw, too, that such was His will ; so I did not dare do otherwise than put the whole matter before my confessor, and give him an account in writing of all that took place.

16. My confessor did not venture definitely to bid me abandon my purpose ; but he saw that naturally there was no way of carrying it out ; because my friend, who was to do it, had very little or no means available for that end. He told me to lay the matter before my superior,⁸ and do what he might

⁸ This was not Fray Angel de Salazar, as all previous editors and biographers of the Saint have asserted, for at the General Chapter of May, 1564, he had not yet fulfilled his three years' tenure of office, as results from the Acts of the chapter. The Provincial who in 1560 first gave his consent to the foundation, and afterwards withdrew it, was his predecessor, Gregorio Fernandez. He appears as simple religious of Avila in 1531 and again in 1537, as prior of the same house in 1541, as conventual in 1547, vicar 1548, provincial 1551, 1552, and 1553, and again in 1559, 1560, and probably during the greater part of 1561. See note to ch. xxxviii. 34.

bid me do. I never spoke of my visions to my superior, but that lady who desired to found the monastery communicated with him. The Provincial was very much pleased, for he loves the whole Order, gave her every help that was necessary, and promised to acknowledge the house. Then there was a discussion about the revenues of the monastery, and for many reasons we never would allow more than thirteen sisters together.⁹ Before we began our arrangements we wrote to the holy friar, Peter of Alcantara, telling him all that was taking place; and he advised us not to abandon our work, and gave us his sanction on all points.

17. As soon as the affair began to be known here there fell upon us a violent persecution, which cannot be very easily described—sharp sayings and keen jests. People said it was folly in me, who was so well off in my convent; as to my friend, the persecution was so continuous that it wearied her. I did not know what to do, and I thought that people were partly in the right. When I was thus heavily afflicted, I commended myself to God, and His Majesty began to console and encourage me. He told me that I could then see what the Saints had to go through who founded the religious Orders: that I had much heavier persecutions to endure than I could imagine, but I was not to mind them. He told me also what I was to say to my friend; and what surprised me most

⁹ The Saint appears to have changed her mind several times about the number of sisters to be admitted into the convent. Here, as well as in ch. xxxvi. 19, they were to be thirteen, *i.e.* twelve sisters and the prioress, but in her letter to her brother, Don Lorenzo de Cepeda (December 30, 1561), she speaks of fifteen. The General John Baptiste Rubeo, in his patent of April 27, 1567, allowed twenty-five, but in letters of Oct. 19, 1569 and Jan. 17, 1570 St. Teresa says there should be not more than thirteen nuns in each convent; however, on Sept. 2, 1571, the apostolic visitor, Fr. Pedro Hernandez, Dominican, ruled that the number of choir sisters in unendowed convents should not go beyond thirteen or fourteen, in endowed houses twenty; and on July 16, 1574, St. Teresa expresses a wish that he should also make some rule about lay sisters. Their number was finally limited to three.

was that we were consoled at once as to the past, and resolved to withstand everybody courageously. And so it came to pass ; for among people of prayer, and indeed in the whole neighbourhood, there was hardly one who was not against us, and who did not think our work the greatest folly.

18. There was so much talking and confusion in the very convent wherein I was that the Provincial began to think it hard for him to set himself against everybody ; so he changed his mind, and would not acknowledge the new house. He said that the revenue was not certain, and too little, while the opposition was great. On the whole, it seemed that he was right ; he gave it up at last, and would have nothing to do with it. It was a very great pain to us,—for we seemed now to have received the first blow,—and in particular to me, to find the Provincial against us ; for when he approved of the plan I considered myself blameless before all. They would not give absolution to my friend if she did not abandon the project ; for they said she was bound to remove the scandal.

19. She went to a very learned man, and a very great servant of God, of the Order of St. Dominic,¹⁰ to whom she gave an account of all this matter. This was even before the Provincial had withdrawn his consent ; for in this place we had no one who would give us advice ; and so they said that it all proceeded solely from our obstinacy. That lady gave an account of everything, and told the holy man how much she received from the property of her husband. Having a great desire that he would help us,—for he was the most learned man here, and there are few in his Order more learned than he,—I told him myself all we intended to do, and some of my motives. I never said a word of any revelation whatever, speaking only of the natural reasons which influenced me ;

¹⁰ F. Pedro Ibañez.

for I would not have him give an opinion otherwise than on those grounds. He asked us to give him eight days before he answered, and also if we had made up our minds to abide by what he might say. I said we had ; but though I said so, and though I thought so, I never lost a certain confidence that the monastery would be founded. My friend had more faith than I ; nothing they could say could make her give it up. As for myself, though, as I said, it seemed to me impossible that the work should be finally abandoned, yet my belief in the truth of the revelation went no further than in so far as it was not against what is contained in the sacred writings, nor against the laws of the Church, which we are bound to keep. Though the revelation seemed to me to have come really from God, yet, if that learned man had told me that we could not go on without offending God and going against our conscience, I believe I should have given it up, and looked out for some other way ; but our Lord showed me no other way than this.

20. The servant of God told me afterwards that he had made up his mind to insist on the abandonment of our project, for he had already heard the popular cry : moreover, he, as everybody did, thought it folly ; and a certain nobleman also, as soon as he knew that we had gone to him, had sent him word to consider well what he was doing, and to give us no help ; that when he began to consider the answer he should make us, and to ponder on the matter, the object we had in view, our manner of life, and the Order, he became convinced that it was greatly for the service of God, and that we must not give it up. Accordingly, his answer was that we should make haste to settle the matter. He told us how and in what way it was to be done ; and if our means were scanty, we must trust somewhat in God. If any one made any objections, they were to go to him—he

would answer them; and in this way he always helped us, as I shall show by and by.¹¹

21. This answer was a great comfort to us; so also was the conduct of certain holy persons who were usually against us: they were now pacified, and some of them even helped us. One of them was the saintly nobleman¹¹ of whom I spoke before¹²; he looked on it—so, indeed, it was—as a means of great perfection, because the whole foundation was laid in prayer. He saw also very many difficulties before us, and no way out of them,—yet he gave up his own opinion, and admitted that the work might be of God. Our Lord Himself must have touched his heart, as He also did that of the doctor, the priest and servant of God, to whom, as I said before,¹⁴ I first spoke, who is an example to the whole city,—being one whom God maintains there for the relief and progress of many souls; he, too, came now to give us his assistance.

22. When matters had come to this state, and always with the help of many prayers, we purchased a house in a convenient spot; and though it was small, I cared not at all for that, for our Lord had told me to go into it as well as I could,—that I should see afterwards what He would do; and how well I have seen it! I saw, too, how scanty were our means; and yet I believed our Lord would order these things by other ways, and be gracious unto us.

¹¹ Ch. xxxiii. 8.

¹³ Ch. xxiii. 6.

¹² Don Francis de Salcedo.

¹⁴ Gaspar Daza. See ch. xxiii. 6.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE MONASTERY HINDERED.
OUR LORD CONSOLES THE SAINT.

She continues the subject of the foundation of the glorious St. Joseph. How she was commanded to have nothing further to do with it, how she abandoned it; also the troubles it brought her, and how God consoled her in all this.

1. WHEN the matter was in this state—so near its conclusion, that on the very next day the papers were to be signed—then it was that the Father Provincial changed his mind. I believe that the change was divinely ordered—so it appeared afterwards; for while so many prayers were made, our Lord was perfecting His work and arranging its execution in another way. When the Provincial refused us, my confessor bade me forthwith to think no more of it, notwithstanding the great trouble and distress which our Lord knows it cost me to bring it to this state. When the work was given up and abandoned, people were the more convinced that it was altogether the foolishness of women; and the complaints against me were multiplied, although I had until then this commandment of my Provincial to justify me.

2. I was now very much disliked throughout the whole convent, because I wished to found another with stricter enclosure. It was said I insulted my sisters; that I could serve God among them as well as elsewhere, for there were many among them much better than I; that I did not love the house, and that it would have been better if I had procured greater resources for it than for another. Some said I ought to be put in prison¹; others—but they were

¹ The prison of the convent of the Incarnation is still to be seen. It is a small cell on the top story.

not many—defended me in some degree. I saw well enough that they were for the most part right, and now and then I made excuses for myself; though, as I could not tell them the chief reason, which was the commandment of our Lord, I knew not what to do, and so was silent.

3. In other respects God was most merciful unto me, for all this caused me no uneasiness; and I gave up our design with much readiness and joy, as if it cost me nothing. No one could believe it, not even those men of prayer with whom I conversed; for they thought I was exceedingly pained and sorry; even my confessor himself could hardly believe it. I had done, as it seemed to me, all that was in my power. I thought myself obliged to do no more than I had done to fulfil our Lord's commandment, and so I remained in the house where I was, exceedingly happy and joyful; though, at the same time, I was never able to give up my conviction that the work would be done. I had now no means of doing it, nor did I know how or when it would be done; but I firmly believed in its accomplishment.

4. I was much distressed at one time by a letter which my confessor wrote to me, as if I had done anything in the matter contrary to his will. Our Lord also must have meant that suffering should not fail me there where I should feel it most; and so, amid the multitude of my persecutions, when, as it seemed to me, consolations should have come from my confessor, he told me that I ought to recognise in the result that all was a dream; that I ought to lead a new life by ceasing to have anything to do for the future with it, or even to speak of it any more, seeing the scandal it had occasioned. He made some further remarks, all of them very painful. This was a greater affliction to me than all the others together. I considered whether I had done anything myself, and whether I was to blame for anything that was

an offence unto God ; whether all my visions were illusions, all my prayers a delusion, and I, therefore, deeply deluded and lost. This pressed so heavily upon me that I was altogether disturbed and most grievously distressed. But our Lord, who never failed me in all the trials I speak of, so frequently consoled and strengthened me that I need not speak of it here. He told me then not to distress myself ; that I had pleased God greatly, and had not sinned against Him throughout the whole affair ; that I was to do what my confessors required of me, and be silent on the subject till the time came to resume it. I was so comforted and so happy that the persecution which had befallen me seemed to be as nothing at all.

5. Our Lord now showed me what an exceedingly great blessing it is to be tried and persecuted for His sake ; for the growth of the love of God in my soul, which I now discerned, as well as of many other virtues, was such as to fill me with wonder. It made me unable to abstain from desiring trials, and yet those about me thought I was exceedingly disheartened ; and I must have been so if our Lord in that extremity had not succoured me with His great compassion. Now was the beginning of those more violent impetuosities of the love of God of which I have spoken before,² as well as of those profounder trances. I kept silence, however, and never spoke of those graces to any one. The saintly Dominican³ was as confident as I was that the work would be done ; and as I would not speak of it, in order that nothing might take place contrary to the obedience I owed my confessor, he communicated with my companion, and they wrote letters to Rome and made their preparations.

6. Satan also contrived now that persons should hear one from another that I had had a revelation in

² Ch. xxi. 6 ; ch. xxix. 10, 11.

³ Pedro Ibañez. See ch. xxxviii. 15.

the matter ; and people came to me in great terror, saying that the times were dangerous, that something might be laid to my charge, and that I might be taken before the Inquisitors. I heard this with pleasure, and it made me laugh, because I never was afraid of them ; for I knew well enough that in matters of faith I would not break the least ceremony of the Church, that I would expose myself to die a thousand times rather than that any one should see me go against it or against any truth of Holy Writ. So I told them I was not afraid of that, for my soul must be in a very bad state if there was anything the matter with it of such a nature as to make me fear the Inquisition ; I would go myself and give myself up if I thought there was anything amiss ; and if I should be denounced, our Lord would deliver me, and I should gain much.

7. I had recourse to my Dominican father ; for I could rely upon him, because he was a learned man. I told him all about my visions, my way of prayer, the great graces our Lord had given me, as clearly as I could, and I begged him to consider the matter well, and tell me if there was anything therein at variance with the Holy Writings, and give me his opinion on the whole matter. He reassured me much, and, I think, profited himself ; for though he was exceedingly good, yet, from this time forth, he gave himself more and more to prayer, and retired to a monastery of his Order which was very lonely, that he might apply himself more effectually to prayer, where he remained more than two years. He was dragged out of his solitude by obedience, to his great sorrow : his superiors required his services ; for he was a man of great ability. I, too, on my part, felt his retirement very much, because it was a great loss to me, though I did not disturb him. But I knew it was a gain to him ; for when I was so much distressed at his departure, our Lord bade me be comforted,

not to take it to heart, for he was gone under good guidance.

8. So, when he came back, his soul had made such great progress, and he was so advanced in the ways of the spirit, that he told me on his return he would not have missed that journey for anything in the world. And I, too, could say the same thing; for where he reassured and consoled me formerly by his mere learning, he did so now through that spiritual experience he had gained of supernatural things. And God, too, brought him here in time; for He saw that His help would be required in the foundation of the monastery which His Majesty willed should be laid.

9. I remained quiet after this for five or six months, neither thinking nor speaking of the matter; nor did our Lord once speak to me about it. I know not why, but I could never rid myself of the thought that the monastery would be founded. At the end of that time the then Rector⁴ of the Society of Jesus having gone away, His Majesty brought into his place another⁵ of great spirituality, high courage, strong understanding, and profound learning, at the very time when I was in great straits. As he who then heard my confession had a superior over him—the fathers of the Society are extremely strict about the virtue of obedience, and never stir but in conformity with the will of their superiors,—so he would not dare,

⁴ Dionisio Vasquez. Of him the Bollandists say that he was very austere and harsh to his subjects, notwithstanding his great learning: "homini egregie docto ac rebus gestis claro, sed in subditos, ut ex historia Societatis Jesu liquet, valde immitti" (n. 309). He had joined the Society in 1550, and was for several years the companion and confessor of St. Francis Borja. At a later period he endeavoured to subtract the Spanish houses of the Jesuits from the authority of the General, but failed, and underwent punishment for his intrigues. He died a holy death at Toledo in 1589.

⁵ Gaspar Salazar, native of Toledo, entered the Society in 1552 at Alcalá. He remained only nine months at Avila, being relieved of his office on account of a quarrel with the bishop Don Alvaro de Mendoza, the friend and protector of St. Teresa. But he remained a faithful supporter of the latter, and at one time thought even of joining the Discalced Carmelites (letter of Feb. 10, 1578), not altogether to the delight of the Saint. He died at Alcalá Sept. 27, 1593, aged sixty-four.

though he perfectly understood my spirit, and desired the accomplishment of my purpose, to come to any resolution ; and he had many reasons to justify his conduct. I was at the same time subject to such great impetuositities of spirit that I felt my chains extremely heavy ; nevertheless, I never swerved from the commandment he gave me.

10. One day, when in great distress, because I thought my confessor did not trust me, our Lord said to me, Be not troubled ; this suffering will soon be over. I was very much delighted, thinking I should die shortly ; and I was very happy whenever I recalled those words to remembrance. Afterwards I saw clearly that they referred to the coming of the rector of whom I am speaking, for never again had I any reason to be distressed. The rector that came never interfered with the father-minister who was my confessor. On the contrary, he told him to console me,—that there was nothing to be afraid of,—and not to direct me along a road so narrow, but to leave the operations of the Spirit of God alone ; for now and then it seemed as if these great impetuositities of the spirit took away the very breath of the soul.

11. The rector came to see me, and my confessor bade me speak to him in all freedom and openness. I used to feel the very greatest repugnance to speak of this matter ; but so it was, when I went into the confessional, I felt in my soul something, I know not what. I do not remember to have felt so either before or after towards any one. I cannot tell what it was, nor do I know of anything with which I could compare it. It was a spiritual joy, and a conviction in my soul that his soul must understand mine, that it was in unison with it, and yet, as I have said, I knew not how. If I had ever spoken to him, or had heard great things of him, it would have been nothing out of the way that I should rejoice in the conviction that he would understand me ; but he had never

spoken to me before, nor I to him, and, indeed, he was a person of whom I had no previous knowledge whatever.

12. Afterwards I saw clearly that my spirit was not deceived; for my relations with him were in every way of the utmost service to me and my soul, because his method of direction is proper for those persons whom our Lord seems to have led far on the way, seeing that He makes them run, and not to crawl step by step. His plan is to render them thoroughly detached and mortified, and our Lord has endowed him with the highest gifts herein as well as in many other things beside. As soon as I began to have to do with him, I knew his method at once, and saw that he had a pure and holy soul, with a special grace of our Lord for the discernment of spirits. He gave me great consolation. Shortly after I had begun to speak to him our Lord began to constrain me to return to the affair of the monastery, and to lay before my confessor and the father-rector many reasons and considerations why they should not stand in my way. Some of these reasons made them afraid, for the father-rector never had a doubt of its being the work of the Spirit of God, because he regarded the fruits of it with great care and attention. At last, after much consideration, they did not dare to hinder me.⁶

13. My confessor gave me leave to prosecute the work with all my might. I saw well enough the trouble I exposed myself to, for I was utterly alone, and able to do so very little. We agreed that it should be carried on with the utmost secrecy; and so I contrived that one of my sisters,⁷ who lived out of the town, should buy a house, and prepare it as

⁶ St. Teresa was commanded by our Lord to ask Father Baltasar Alvarez to make a meditation on Psalm xci. 6: "Quam magnificata sunt opera Tua." The Saint obeyed, and the meditation was made. From that moment, as F. Alvarez afterwards told Father de Ribera (*Life of S. Teresa*, bk. i. ch. vii.), there was no further hesitation on the part of the Saint's confessor.

⁷ Doña Juana de Ahumada, wife of Juan de Ovalle.

if for herself, with money which our Lord provided for us.⁸ I made it a great point to do nothing against obedience ; but I knew that if I spoke of it to my superiors all was lost, as on the former occasion, and worse even might happen. In holding the money, in finding the house, in treating for it, in putting it in order, I had so much to suffer ; and, for the most part, I had to suffer alone, though my friend did what she could : she could do but little, and that was almost nothing. Beyond giving her name and her countenance, the whole of the trouble was mine ; and that fell upon me in so many ways that I am astonished now how I could have borne it.⁹ Sometimes, in my affliction, I used to say : O my Lord, how is it that Thou commandest me to do that which seems impossible ?—for, though I am a woman, yet, if I were free, it might be done ; but when I am tied in so many ways, without money, or the means of procuring it, either for the purpose of the Brief or for any other,—what, O Lord, can I do ?

14. Once when I was in one of my difficulties, not knowing what to do, unable to pay the workmen, St. Joseph, my true father and lord, appeared to me, and gave me to understand that money would not be wanting, and I must hire the workmen. So I did, though I was penniless ; and our Lord, in a way that filled those who heard of it with wonder, provided for me. The house offered me was too small,—so much so, that it seemed as if it could never be made into a monastery,—and I wished to buy another, but had not the means, and there was neither way nor

⁸ The money was a present from her brother, Don Lorenzo de Cepeda, at that time royal treasurer at Quito ; and the Saint acknowledges the receipt of it, and confesses the use made of it, in a letter to her brother, written in Avila, Dec. 30, 1561.

⁹ One day she went with her sister—she was staying in her house—to hear a sermon in the church of Santo Tomás. The zealous preacher denounced visions and revelations ; and his observations were so much to the point that there was no need of his saying that they were directed against St. Teresa, who was present. Her sister was greatly hurt, and persuaded the Saint to return to the monastery at once (*Reforma*, bk. i. ch. xlii. 1).

means to do so. I knew not what to do. There was another little house close to the one we had, which might have formed a small church. One day, after Communion, our Lord said to me, I have already bidden thee to go in anyhow. And then, as if exclaiming, said: Oh, covetousness of the human race, thinking that even the whole earth is too little for it! how often have I slept in the open air, because I had no place to shelter Me? ¹⁰ I was alarmed, and saw that He had good reasons to complain. I went to the little house, arranged the divisions of it, and found that it would make a sufficient, though small monastery. I did not care now to add to the site by purchase, and so I did nothing but contrive to have it prepared in such a way that it could be lived in. Everything was coarse, and nothing more was done to it than to render it not hurtful to health—and that must be done everywhere.

15. As I was going to Communion on her feast, St. Clare appeared to me in great beauty, and bade me take courage, and go on with what I had begun; she would help me. I began to have a great devotion to St. Clare; and she has so truly kept her word, that a monastery of nuns of her Order in our neighbourhood helped us to live; and, what is of more importance, by little and little she so perfectly fulfilled my desire that the poverty which the blessed Saint observes in her own house is observed in this, and we are living on alms. It cost me no small labour to have this matter settled by the plenary sanction and authority of the Holy Father,¹¹ so that it shall

¹⁰ St. Luke ix. 58: "Filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput reclinet."

¹¹ The first brief of Feb. 7, 1562 (*Bullar. Carmel.* ii. 120) said that the nuns were to have their revenues in common, for St. Teresa had not yet resolved upon absolute poverty. Animated by the advice of St. Peter of Alcantara, she applied once more to the Holy See, and obtained a rescript of the penitentiary, dated Dec. 5, 1562 (*ibid.* 123), granting the necessary authorisation. A final brief of July 17, 1565, confirmed the foundation of the convent of St. Joseph at Avila with Teresa of Jesus as "abbess, or, as she may be called, Mother" (*ibid.* 135).

never be otherwise, and we possess no revenues. Our Lord is doing more for us—perhaps we owe it to the prayers of this blessed Saint ; for, without our asking anybody, His Majesty supplies most abundantly all our wants. May He be blessed for ever ! Amen.

16. On one of these days—it was the Feast of the Assumption of our Lady—I was in the church of the monastery of the Order of the glorious St. Dominic, thinking of the events of my wretched life, and of the many sins which in times past I had confessed in that house. I fell into so profound a trance that I was, as it were, beside myself. I sat down, and it seemed as if I could neither see the Elevation nor hear Mass. This afterwards became a scruple to me. I thought then, when I was in that state, that I saw myself clothed with a garment of excessive whiteness and splendour. At first I did not see who was putting it on me. Afterwards I saw our Lady on my right hand, and my father St. Joseph on my left, clothing me with that garment. I was given to understand that I was then cleansed from my sins. When I had been thus clad—I was filled with the utmost delight and joy—our Lady seemed at once to take me by both hands. She said that I pleased her very much by being devout to the glorious St. Joseph ; that I might rely on it my desires about the monastery were accomplished, and that our Lord and they too would be greatly honoured in it ; that I was to be afraid of no failure whatever, though the obedience under which it would be placed might not be according to my mind, because they would watch over us, and because her Son had promised to be with us¹²—and, as a proof of this, she would give me that jewel. She then seemed to throw around my neck a most splendid necklace of gold, from which hung a cross of great value. The stones and gold were so different from any in this world that there is nothing wherewith to

¹² Ch. xxxii. 14.

compare them. The beauty of them is such as can be conceived by no imagination,—and no understanding can find out the materials of the robe, nor picture to itself the splendours which our Lord revealed, in comparison with which all the splendours of earth, so to say, are a daubing of soot. This beauty, which I saw in our Lady, was exceedingly grand, though I did not trace it in any particular feature, but rather in the whole form of her face. She was clothed in white, and her garments shone with excessive lustre, that was not dazzling but soft. I did not see St. Joseph so distinctly, though I saw clearly that he was there, as in the visions of which I spoke before,¹³ in which nothing is seen. Our Lady seemed to be very young.

17. When they had been with me for a while,—I, too, in the greatest delight and joy, greater than I had ever had before, as I think, and with which I wished never to part,—I saw them, so it seemed, ascend up to heaven, attended by a great multitude of angels. I was left in great loneliness, though so comforted and raised up, so recollected in prayer and softened, that I was for some time unable to move or speak—being, as it were, beside myself. I was now possessed by a strong desire to be consumed for the love of God, and by other affections of the same kind. Everything took place in such a way that I could never have a doubt—though I often tried—that the vision came from God. It left me in the greatest consolation and peace.

18. As to that which the Queen of the Angels spoke about obedience, it is this : it was painful to me not to subject the monastery to the Order, and our Lord had told me that it was inexpedient to do so. He told me the reasons why it was in no wise convenient that I should do it, but I must send to Rome in a certain way, which He also explained ; He would

¹³ See ch. xxvii. 7.

take care that I found help there : and so I did. I sent to Rome, as our Lord directed me,—for we should never have succeeded otherwise,—and most favourable was the result.

19. And as to subsequent events, it was very convenient to be under the Bishop,¹⁴ but at that time I did not know him, nor did I know what kind of a superior he might be. It pleased our Lord that he should be as good and favourable to this house as it was necessary he should be on account of the great opposition it met with at the beginning, as I shall show hereafter,¹⁵ and also for the sake of bringing it to the condition it is now in. Blessed be He Who has done it all ! Amen.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE SAINT LEAVES HER MONASTERY OF THE INCARNATION FOR A TIME, AT THE COMMAND OF HER SUPERIOR. CONSOLES AN AFFLICTED WIDOW.

She shows how at that time it happened that she absented herself from this place, and how her superior commanded her to go away at the request of a very noble lady who was in great affliction. She begins to tell what happened to her there, and the great grace God bestowed upon her, in determining, through her instrumentality, a person of distinction to serve Him truly ; and how that person found favour and help in her (St. Teresa). This is noteworthy.

i. Now, though I was very careful that no one should

¹⁴ Don Alvaro de Mendoza, Bishop of Avila, afterwards of Palencia, where he died, April 19, 1586. His greatest desire, to be buried near St. Teresa (for which purpose he had built a chapel in the conventual church of St. Joseph's, Avila), was not destined to be fulfilled, for St. Teresa's body rests at Alba de Tormes.

¹⁵ See ch. xxxvi. 15 ; *Way of Perfection*, ch. v. 4 ; *Foundations*, ch. xxxi. 1.

know what we were doing, all this work could not be carried on so secretly as not to come to the knowledge of divers persons; some believed in it, others did not. I was in great fear lest the Provincial should be spoken to about it when he came, and find himself compelled to order me to give it up; and if he did so, it would have been abandoned at once. Our Lord provided against it in this way. In a large city, more than twenty leagues distant, was a lady in great distress on account of her husband's death.¹ She was in such extreme affliction that fears were entertained about her life. She had heard of me, a poor sinner,—for our Lord had provided that,—and men spoke well to her of me, for the sake of other good works which resulted from it. This lady knew the Provincial² well; and as she was a person of some consideration, and knew that I lived in a monastery the nuns of which were permitted to go out, our Lord made her desire much to see me. She thought that my presence would be a consolation to her, and that she could not be comforted otherwise. She therefore strove by all the means in her power to get me into her house, sending messages to the Provincial, who was at a distance far away.

2. The Provincial sent me an order, charging me in virtue of my obedience to go immediately, with

¹ Doña Luisa de la Cerda, sister of the Duke of Medina-Coeli, was now the widow of Arias Pardo, Marshal of Castile, Lord of Malagon and Paracuellos. Don Arias was nephew of Cardinal Tabera, Archbishop of Toledo.

² The Provincial of whom St. Teresa henceforth speaks is not Gregorio Fernandez, whom she mentioned in ch. xxxii. 16 and 18, but Angel de Salazar, who, having made his profession at Sevilla, in the province of Andalucia, was transferred to that of Castile, and became prior of Toledo in 1555 and of Avila in 1559. His election to the provincialship must have taken place in 1561. In April 1563 he was sent by the Vicar-General (Rubeo) to Portugal on affairs of the Order. He assisted at the General Chapter, 1564, in Rome, during which he was promoted to the degree of Master in Divinity (June 10). His term of office was prolonged till after the General's canonical visitation in Castile (April, 1567), when he became Prior of Avila. He held the provincialship again from 1570 to 1576; in 1579 he was prior of Valladolid and Vicar-General from 1580 to 1583 Provincial; on April 26, 1586, he was nominated Vicar-General, and in 1592 he was again Provincial. The date and place of his death are not on record.

one companion. I knew of it on Christmas night.³ It caused me some trouble and much suffering to see that they sent for me because they thought there was some good in me; I, knowing myself to be so wicked, could not bear it. I commended myself earnestly to God, and during Matins, or the greater part of them, was lost in a profound trance. Our Lord told me I must go without fail, and give no heed to the opinions of people, for they were few who would not be rash in their counsel; and though I should have troubles, yet God would be served greatly: as to the convent, it was expedient I should be absent till the Brief came, because Satan had contrived a great plot against the coming of the Provincial; that I was to have no fear,—He would help me. I repeated this to the rector, and he told me that I must go by all means, though others were saying I ought not to go, that it was a trick of Satan to bring some evil upon me there, and that I ought to send word to the Provincial.

3. I obeyed the rector, and went without fear, because of what I had understood in prayer, though in the greatest confusion when I thought of the reasons why they sent for me, and how very much they were deceived. It made me more and more importunate with our Lord that He would not abandon me. It was a great comfort that there was a house of the Society of Jesus there⁴ whither I was going, and so I thought I should be in some degree safe under the direction of those fathers, as I had been here.

4. It was the good pleasure of our Lord that the lady who sent for me should be so much consoled, that a visible improvement was the immediate result: she was comforted every day more and more. This

³ In the letter to her brother of Dec. 30, 1561, written from Avila, she makes no mention of the impending journey.

⁴ Founded in 1558, the rector being F. Pedro Domenech, who became a great friend of the Saint.

was very remarkable, because, as I said before, her suffering had reduced her to great straits. Our Lord must have done this in answer to the many prayers which the good people of my acquaintance made for me, that I might prosper in my work. She had a profound fear of God, and was so good that her great devotion supplied my deficiencies. She conceived a great affection for me—I, too, for her, because of her goodness; but all was as it were a cross for me; for the comforts of her house were a great torment, and her making so much of me made me afraid. I kept my soul continually recollected—I did not dare to be careless: nor was our Lord careless of me; for while I was there⁵ He bestowed the greatest graces upon me, and those graces made me so free, and filled me with such contempt for all I saw,—and the more I saw the greater my contempt,—that I never failed to treat those ladies, whom to serve would have been a great honour for me, with as much freedom as if I had been their equal.

5. I derived very great advantages from this, and I said so. I saw that she was a woman, and as much liable to passion and weakness as I was; that rank is of little worth, and the higher it is the greater the anxiety and trouble it brings. People must be careful of the dignity of their state, which will not suffer them to live at ease; they must eat at fixed hours and by rule, for everything must be according to their state, and not according to their constitutions; and they have frequently to take food fitted more for their state than for their liking.

6. So it was that I came to hate the very wish to be a great lady. God deliver me from this wicked, artificial life!—though I believe that this lady, notwithstanding that she was one of the chief personages of the realm, was a woman of great simplicity, and

⁵ The house of Doña Luisa de la Cerda ultimately became the convent of the Carmelite nuns, who still continue to inhabit it.

that few were more humble than she was. I was very sorry for her, for I saw how often she had to submit to much that was disagreeable to her because of the requirements of her rank. Then, as to servants, though this lady had very good servants, how slight is that little trust that may be put in them! One must not be conversed with more than another; otherwise he who is so favoured is envied by the rest. This of itself is a slavery, and one of the lies of the world is that it calls such persons masters, who, in my eyes, are nothing else but slaves in a thousand ways.

7. It was our Lord's pleasure that the household of that lady improved in the service of His Majesty during my stay there, though I was not exempted from some trials and some jealousies on the part of some of its members, because of the great affection their mistress had for me. They perhaps must have thought I had some personal interest to serve. Our Lord must have permitted such matters, and others of the same kind, to give me trouble, in order that I might not be absorbed in the comforts which otherwise I had there; and He was pleased to deliver me out of it all with great profit to my soul.

8. When I was there a religious person of great consideration, and with whom I had conversed occasionally some years ago,⁶ happened to arrive. When I was at Mass, in a monastery of his Order, near the house in which I was staying, I felt a longing to know the state of his soul,—for I wished him to be a great servant of God—and I rose up in order to go and speak to him. But as I was then recollected in prayer it seemed to me a waste of time—for what had I to do in that matter?—and so I returned to my place. Three times I think I did this, and at

⁶ Ribera, Yopez, and Bouix think this was F. Vicente Baron, of whom the Saint speaks in ch. vii. 26, but there is every reason to believe it was another Dominican, Fr. Garcia de Toledo.

last my good angel prevailed over the evil one, and I went and asked for him ; and he came to speak to me in one of the confessionals. We began by asking one another of our past lives, for we had not seen one another for many years. I told him that my life had been one in which my soul had had many trials. He insisted much on my telling him what those trials were. I said that they were not to be told, and that I was not to tell them. He replied that the Dominican father,⁷ of whom I have spoken, knew them, and that, as they were great friends, he could learn them from him, and so I had better tell them without hesitation.

9. The fact is, that it was not in his power not to insist, nor in mine, I believe, to refuse to speak ; for notwithstanding all the trouble and shame I used to feel formerly, I spoke of my state to him, and to the rector whom I have referred to before,⁸ without any difficulty whatever ; on the contrary, it was a great consolation to me ; and so I told him all in confession. He seemed to me then more prudent than ever ; though I had always looked upon him as a man of great understanding. I considered what high gifts and endowments for great services he had if he gave himself wholly unto God. I had this feeling now for many years, so that I never saw any one who pleased me much without wishing at once he were given wholly unto God ; and sometimes I feel this so keenly, that I can hardly contain myself. Though I long to see everybody serve God, yet my desire about those who please me is very vehement, and so I importune our Lord on their behalf.

10. So it happened with respect to this religious. He asked me to pray much for him to God. There was no necessity for his doing so, because I could not do anything else, and so I went back to my place where I was in the habit of praying alone, and began

⁷ Fr. Pedro Ibañez,

⁸ Ch. xxxiii. 11.

to pray to our Lord, being extremely recollected, in that my simple, silly way, when I speak without knowing very often what I am saying. It is love that speaks, and my soul is so beside itself that I do not regard the distance between it and God. That love which I know His Majesty has for it makes it forget itself, and think itself to be one with Him; and so, as being one with Him, and not divided from Him, the soul speaks foolishly. When I had prayed with many tears that the soul of this religious might serve Him truly,—for, though I considered it good, it was not enough for me; I would have it much better,—I remember I said, “O Lord, Thou must not refuse me this grace; behold him,—he is a fit person to be our friend.”

11. Oh, the great goodness and compassion of God! How He regards not the words, but the desire and the will with which they are spoken! How He suffered such a one as I am to speak so boldly before His Majesty! May He be blessed for evermore!

12. I remember that during those hours of prayer on that very night I was extremely distressed by the thought whether I was in the grace of God, and that I could never know whether I was so or not,—not that I wished to know it; I wished, however, to die, in order that I might not live a life in which I was not sure that I was not dead in sin, for there could be no death more dreadful for me than to think that I had sinned against God. I was in great straits at this thought. I implored Him not to suffer me to fall into sin, with great sweetness, dissolved in tears. Then I heard that I might console myself, and be sure⁹ that I was in a state of grace, because a love of God like mine, together with the graces and feelings with which His Majesty filled my soul, was of such a

⁹ All the old editors read “and trust” (*confiar*), but the MS. has clearly “be sure” (*estar cierta*). F. Bouix was the first to notice the difference, but even Fuente, in the letterpress to the autograph edition, writes thoughtlessly “*confiar*.”

nature as to be inconsistent with a state of mortal sin.

13. I was now confident that our Lord would grant my prayer as to that religious. He bade me repeat certain words to him. This I felt much, because I knew not how to speak to him; for this carrying messages to a third person, as I have said,¹⁰ is what I have always felt the most, especially when I did not know how that person would take them, nor whether he would not laugh at me. This placed me in great difficulties, but at last I was so convinced I ought to do it, that I believe I made a promise to God I would not neglect that message; and because of the great shame I felt, I wrote it out, and gave it in that way. The result showed clearly enough that it was a message from God, for that religious resolved with great earnestness to give himself to prayer, though he did not do so at once. Our Lord would have Him for Himself, so He sent me to tell him certain truths which, without my understanding them, were so much to the purpose that he was astonished. Our Lord must have prepared him to receive them as from His Majesty; and though I am but a miserable sinner myself, yet I made many supplications to our Lord to convert him thoroughly, and to make him hate the pleasures and the things of this life. And so he did—blessed be God!—for every time that he spoke to me I was in a manner beside myself; and if I had not seen it, I should never have believed that our Lord would have given him in so short a time graces so matured, and filled him so full of God, that he seemed to be alive to nothing on earth.

14. May His Majesty hold him in His hand! If he will go on—and I trust in our Lord he will do so, now that he is so well grounded in the knowledge of himself—he will be one of the most distinguished servants of God, to the great profit of many souls,

¹⁰ Ch. xxxiii. 12.

because he has in a short time had great experience in spiritual things: that is a gift of God, which He gives when He will and as He will, and it depends not on length of time nor extent of service. I do not mean that time and service are not great helps, but very often our Lord will not give to some in twenty years the grace of contemplation, while He gives it to others in one,—His Majesty knoweth why. We are under a delusion when we think that in the course of years we shall come to the knowledge of that which we can in no way attain to but by experience; and thus many are in error, as I have said,¹¹ when they would understand spirituality without being spiritual themselves. I do not mean that a man who is not spiritual, if he is learned, may not direct one that is spiritual; but it must be understood that in outward and inward things, in the order of nature, the direction must be an act of reason; and in supernatural things, according to the teaching of the sacred writings. In other matters, let him not distress himself, nor think that he can understand that which he understandeth not; neither let him quench the Spirit¹²; for now another Master, greater than he, is directing these souls, so that they are not left without authority over them.

15. He must not be astonished at this, nor think it impossible: all things are possible to our Lord¹³; he must strive rather to strengthen his faith, and humble himself, because in this matter our Lord imparts perhaps a deeper knowledge to some old woman than to him, though he may be a very learned man. Being thus humble, he will profit souls and himself more than if he affected to be a contemplative without being so; for, I repeat it, if he have no experience, if he have not a most profound humility,

¹¹ Ch. xiv. 10.

¹² 1 Thess. v. 19: " Spiritum nolite extinguere."

¹³ St. Matt. xix. 26: " Apud Deum autem omnia possibilia sunt."

whereby he may see that he does not understand, and that the thing is not for that reason impossible, he will do himself but little good, and still less to his penitent. But if he is humble, let him have no fear that our Lord will allow either the one or the other to fall into delusion.

16. Now as to this father I am speaking of, as our Lord has given him light in many things, so has he laboured to find out by study that which in this matter can be by study ascertained; for he is a very learned man, and that of which he has no experience himself he seeks to find out from those who have it, and our Lord helps him by increasing his faith, and so he has greatly benefited himself and some other souls, of whom mine is one. As our Lord knew the trials I had to undergo, His Majesty seems to have provided that, when He took away unto Himself some of those who directed me,¹⁴ others might remain, who helped me in my great afflictions, and rendered me great services.

17. Our Lord wrought a complete change in this father, so much so that he scarcely knew himself, so to speak. He has given him bodily health, so that he may do penance, such as he never had before; for he was sickly. He has given him courage to undertake good works, with other gifts, so that he seems to have received a most special vocation from our Lord. May He be blessed for ever!

18. All these blessings, I believe, came to him through the graces our Lord bestowed upon him in prayer; for they are real. It has been our Lord's pleasure already to try him in certain difficulties, out of which he has come forth like one who knows the true worth of that merit which is gained by suffering persecutions. I trust in the munificence of our Lord that great good will, by his means, accrue to

¹⁴ Probably an allusion to the death of St. Peter of Alcantara (Oct. 18, 1562) and F. Pedro Ibañez (Feb. 2, 1565).

some of his Order and to the Order itself. This is beginning to be understood. I have had great visions on the subject, and our Lord has told me wonderful things of him and of the Rector of the Society of Jesus, whom I am speaking of,¹⁵ and also of two other religious of the Order of St. Dominic, particularly of one who, to his own profit, has actually learned of our Lord certain things which I had formerly understood of him. But there were greater things made known of him to whom I am now referring: one of them I will now relate.

19. I was with him once in the parlour when in my soul and spirit I felt what great love burned within him, and became as it were lost in ecstasy by considering the greatness of God, who had raised that soul in so short a time to a state so high. It made me ashamed of myself when I saw him listen with so much humility to what I was saying about certain matters of prayer, when I had so little myself that I could speak on the subject to one like him. Our Lord must have borne with me in this on account of the great desire I had to see that religious making great progress. My interview with him did me great good,—it seems as if it left a new fire in my soul, burning with desire to serve our Lord as in the beginning. O my Jesus! what is a soul on fire with Thy love! How we ought to prize it, and implore our Lord to let it live long upon earth! He who has this love should follow after such souls, if it be possible.

20. It is a great thing for a person ill of this disease to find another struck down by it,—it comforts him much to see that he is not alone; they help one another greatly to suffer and to merit. They are strong with a double strength who are resolved to risk a thousand lives for God, and who long for an opportunity of losing them. They are like soldiers who, to acquire booty, and therewith enrich them-

¹⁵ F. Gaspar de Salazar.

selves, wish for war, knowing well that they cannot become rich without it. This is their work—to suffer. Oh, what a blessing it is when our Lord gives light to understand how great is the gain of suffering for Him! This is never understood till we have left all things; for if anybody is attached to any one thing, that is a proof that he sets some value upon it; and if he sets any value upon it, it is painful to be compelled to give it up. In that case, everything is imperfect and lost. The saying is to the purpose here,—he who follows what is lost, is lost himself; and what greater loss, what greater blindness, what greater calamity, can there be than making much of that which is nothing?

21. I now return to that which I had begun to speak of. I was in the greatest joy, beholding that soul. It seemed as if our Lord would have me see clearly the treasures He had laid up in it; and so, when I considered the favour our Lord had shown me, in that I should be the means of so great a good, I recognised my own unworthiness for such an end. I thought much of the graces our Lord had given him, and held myself as indebted for them more than if they had been given to myself. So I gave thanks to our Lord, when I saw that His Majesty had fulfilled my desires and heard my petition that He would raise up persons like him. And now my soul, no longer able to bear the joy that filled it, went forth out of itself, losing itself that it might gain the more. It lost sight of the reflections it was making; and the hearing of that divine language which the Holy Ghost seemed to speak threw me into a deep trance, which almost deprived me of all sense, though it did not last long. I saw Christ, in exceeding great majesty and glory, manifesting His joy at what was then passing. He told me as much, and it was His pleasure that I should clearly see that He was always present at similar interviews, and how much He was

pleased when people thus found their delight in speaking of Him.

22. On another occasion, when far away from this place,¹⁶ I saw him carried by angels in great glory. I understood by that vision that his soul was making great progress: so it was; for an evil report was spread abroad against him by one to whom he had rendered a great service, and whose reputation and whose soul he had saved. He bore it with much joy. He did also other things greatly to the honour of God, and underwent more persecutions. I do not think it expedient now to speak further on this point; if, however, you, my father, who know all, should hereafter think otherwise, more might be said to the glory of our Lord.

23. All the prophecies spoken of before,¹⁷ relating to this house, as well as others, of which I shall speak hereafter, relating to it and to other matters, have been accomplished. Some of them our Lord revealed to me three years before they became known, others earlier, and others later. But I always made them known to my confessor, and to the widow my friend; for I had leave to communicate with her, as I said before.¹⁸ She, I know, repeated them to others, and these know that I lie not. May God never permit me, in any matter whatever,—much more in things of this importance,—to say anything but the whole truth!

24. One of my brothers-in-law died¹⁹ suddenly; and as I was in great distress at this, because he had not cared to make his confession,²⁰ our Lord said to me in prayer that my sister also was to die in the same way; that I must go to her, and make her

¹⁶ Avila.

¹⁷ Ch, xxvi, 3.

¹⁸ Ch. xxx, 3. Doña Guiomar de Ulloa.

¹⁹ Don Martin de Guzman y Barrientos, husband of Doña Maria de Cepeda, the Saint's sister.

²⁰ Most of the older editors read "he had no opportunity of making his confession," but what St. Teresa really says is something quite different.

prepare herself for such an end. I told this to my confessor ; but as he would not let me go, I heard the same warning again ; and now, when he saw this, he told me I might go, and that I should lose nothing by going. My sister was living in the country ; and as I did not tell her why I came, I gave her what light I could in all things. I made her go frequently to confession, and look to her soul in everything. She was very good, and did as I asked her. Four or five years after she had begun this practice, and keeping a strict watch over her conscience, she died, with nobody near her, and without being able to go to confession. This was a blessing to her, for it was little more than a week since she had been to her accustomed confession. It was a great joy to me when I heard of her death. She was but a short time in purgatory.

25. I do not think it was quite eight days afterwards, when, after Communion, our Lord appeared to me, and was pleased that I should see Him receive my sister into glory. During all those years, after our Lord had spoken to me, until her death, what I then learnt with respect to her was never forgotten either by myself or by my friend, who, when my sister was thus dead, came to me in great amazement at the fulfilment of the prophecy. God be praised for ever, Who takes such care of souls that they may not be lost !

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE HOUSE OF ST. JOSEPH. THE OBSERVATION OF HOLY POVERTY THEREIN. HOW THE SAINT LEFT TOLEDO.

Continuation of the foundation of this house of our glorious father St. Joseph ; in what manner our Lord

ordained that holy poverty should be observed there ; the reason why she left the lady with whom she had been staying, and some other things that happened.

I. WHEN I was staying with this lady,¹ already spoken of, in whose house I remained more than six months, our Lord ordained that a holy woman² of our Order should hear of me, who was more than seventy leagues away from the place. She happened to travel this way, and went some leagues out of her road that she might see me. Our Lord had moved her in the same year, and in the same month of the year, that He had moved me, to found another monastery of the Order ; and as He had given her this desire, she sold all she possessed, and went to Rome to obtain the necessary faculties. She went on foot, and barefooted. She is a woman of great penance and prayer, and one to whom our Lord gave many graces ; and our Lady appeared to her, and commanded her to undertake this work. Her progress in the service of our Lord was so much greater than mine that I was ashamed to stand in her presence. She showed me Briefs she brought from Rome, and during the fortnight she

¹ Doña Luisa de la Cerda.

² Maria of Jesus, born in 1522, was the daughter of a Reporter of Causes in the Chancery of Granada ; but his name and that of his wife are not known. Maria married, but became a widow soon afterwards. She then became a novice in the Carmelite convent of the Incarnation in Granada, and during her noviciate had revelations, like those of St. Teresa, about a reform of the Order. Her confessor made light of these, and she then referred them to F. Gaspar de Salazar, a confessor of St. Teresa, who was then in Granada. He approved of them, and Maria left the Noviciate, and went to Rome with two holy women of the Order of St. Francis. The three made the journey on foot, and, moreover, barefooted. Pope Pius IV. heard her prayer, and, looking at her torn and bleeding feet, said to her, " Woman of strong courage, let it be as thou wilt." She returned to Granada, but both the Carmelites and the city refused her permission to found her house there, and some went so far as to threaten to have her publicly whipped. Doña Leonora de Mascareñas gave her a house in Alcalá de Henares, of which she took possession Sept. 11, 1562 ; but the convent, called de la Imagen, was formally constituted July 23, 1563, and subjected to the Bishop ten days after. Maria of Jesus died in the odour of sanctity at Alcalá in 1580. Fuente says that the Chronicler (*Reforma*, bk. i. ch. lix.) is in error when he asserts that this convent of Maria of Jesus was endowed.

remained with me we laid our plan for the founding of these monasteries.

2. Until I spoke to her, I never knew that our rule, before it was mitigated, required of us that we should possess nothing³; nor was I going to found a convent without revenue,⁴ for my intention was that we should be without anxiety about all that was necessary for us, and I did not think of the many anxieties which the possession of property brings in its train. This holy woman, taught of our Lord, perfectly understood—though she could not read—what I was ignorant of, notwithstanding my having read the Constitutions⁵ so often; and when she told me of it, I thought it right, though I feared they would never consent to this, but would tell me I was committing follies, and that I ought not to do anything whereby I might bring suffering upon others. If this concerned only myself, nothing should have kept me back,—on the contrary, it would have been my great joy to think that I was observing the counsels of Christ our Lord; for His Majesty had already given me great longings for poverty.⁶

3. As for myself, I never doubted that this was the better part; for I had now for some time wished it were possible in my state to go about begging, for the love of God—to have no house of my own, nor anything else. But I was afraid that others—if our Lord did not give them the same desire—might live in discontent. Moreover, I feared that it might be the cause of some distraction: for I knew some poor monasteries not very recollected, and I

³ The sixth chapter of the rule is: "Nullus fratrum sibi aliquid proprium esse dicat, sed sint vobis omnia communia." Gregory IX., by a Bull of April 6, 1229, forbade the possession of land, houses, or revenues (*Bull. Carmel.* i. 4).

⁴ See ch. xxxii. 13.

⁵ The Constitutions in vigour in the convent of the Incarnation and elsewhere were those published by Blessed John Soreth, General (1451–1471) after the Chapter of 1462, in which no provision is made for convents of nuns, and consequently nothing is said on the subject of endowment.

⁶ See *Relation* i. 10.

did not consider that their not being recollected was the cause of their poverty, and that their poverty was not the cause of their distraction: distraction never makes people richer, and God never fails those who serve Him. In short, I was weak in faith; but not so this servant of God.

4. As I took the advice of many in everything, I found scarcely any one of this opinion—neither my confessor, nor the learned men to whom I spoke of it. They gave me so many reasons the other way, that I did not know what to do. But when I saw what the rule required, and that poverty was the more perfect way, I could not persuade myself to allow an endowment. And though they did persuade me now and then that they were right, yet, when I returned to my prayer, and saw Christ on the Cross, so poor and destitute, I could not bear to be rich, and I implored Him with tears so to order matters that I might be poor as He was.

5. I found that so many inconveniences resulted from an endowment, and saw that it was the cause of so much trouble, and even distraction, that I did nothing but dispute with the learned. I wrote to that Dominican friar⁷ who was helping us, and he sent back two sheets by way of reply, full of objections and theology against my plan, telling me that he had thought much on the subject. I answered that, in order to escape from my vocation, the vow of poverty I had made, and the perfect observance of the counsels of Christ, I did not want any theology to help me, and in this case I should not thank him for his learning. If I found any one who would help me, it pleased me much. The lady in whose house I was staying was a great help to me in this matter. Some at first told me that they agreed with me; afterwards, when they had considered the matter longer, they found in it so

⁷ F. Pedro Ibañez, who was then living in the "lonely monastery" of which the Saint speaks in ch. xxxiii. 7.

many inconveniences, that they insisted on my giving it up. I told them that, though they changed their opinion so quickly, I would abide by the first.

6. At this time, because of my entreaties,—for the lady had never seen the holy friar, Peter of Alcantara,—it pleased our Lord to bring him to her house. As he was a great lover of poverty, and had lived in it for so many years, he knew well the treasures it contains, and so he was a great help to me; he charged me on no account whatever to give up my purpose.⁸ Now, having this opinion and sanction,—no one was better able to give it, because he knew what it was by long experience,—I made up my mind to seek no further advice.

7. One day, when I was very earnestly commending the matter to God, our Lord told me that I must by no means give up my purpose of founding the monastery in poverty; it was His will, and the will of His Father: He would help me. I was in a trance; and the effects were such, that I could have no doubt it came from God. On another occasion, He said to me that endowments bred confusion, with other things in praise of poverty; and assured me that whosoever served Him would never be in want of the necessary means of living: and this want, as I have said,⁹ I never feared myself. Our Lord changed the dispositions also of the licentiate,—I am speaking of the Dominican friar,¹⁰—who, as I said, wrote to me that I should not found the monastery without an endowment. Now, as I was in the greatest joy at hearing this, and having these opinions in my favour, it seemed to me nothing less than the possession of

⁸ He also wrote a letter to St. Teresa on the same subject, dated Avila, April 14, 1562.

⁹ Ch. xi. 3.

¹⁰ F. Pedro Ibañez. St. Teresa calls him Presentado, not licentiate, a title given to those who had been chosen by the General or Provincial chapters for the degrees, as distinct from those who obtained them at the expense of their friends.

all the wealth of the world, when I had resolved to live in poverty for the love of God.

8. At this time, my Provincial withdrew the order and the obedience, in virtue of which I was staying in that house.¹¹ He left it to me to do as I liked : if I wished to return, I might do so ; if I wished to remain I might also do so for a certain time. But during that time the elections in my convent¹² would take place, and I was told that many of the nuns wished to lay on me the burden of superiorship. The very thought of this alone was a great torment to me ; for though I was resolved readily to undergo any kind of martyrdom for God, I could not persuade myself at all to accept this ; for, putting aside the great trouble it involved,—because the nuns were so many,—and other reasons, such as that I never wished for it, nor for any other office,—on the contrary, had always refused them,—it seemed to me that my conscience would be in great danger ; and so I praised God that I was not then in my convent. I wrote to my friends and asked them not to vote for me.

9. When I was rejoicing that I was not in that trouble, our Lord said to me that I was on no account to keep away ; that as I longed for a cross, there was one ready for me, and that a heavy one : that I was not to throw it away, but go on with resolution ; He would help me, and I must go at once. I was very much distressed, and did nothing but weep, because I thought that my cross was to be the office of prioress ; and, as I have just said, I could not persuade myself that it would be at all good for my soul—nor could I see any means by which it would be. I told my confessor¹³ of it, and he commanded me to return at once : that to do so was clearly the

¹¹ The house of Doña Luisa de la Cerda, in Toledo.

¹² The convent of the Incarnation, Avila.

¹³ F. Pedro Domenech, Superior of the Jesuits at Toledo.

most perfect way ; and that, because the heat was very great,—it would be enough if I arrived before the election,—I might wait a few days, in order that my journey might do me no harm.

10. But our Lord had ordered it otherwise. I had to go at once, because the uneasiness I felt was very great ; and I was unable to pray, and thought I was failing in obedience to the commandments of our Lord, and that, as I was happy and contented where I was, I would not go to meet trouble. All my service of God there was lip-service : why did I, having the opportunity of living in greater perfection, neglect it ? If I died on the road, let me die. Besides, my soul was in great straits, and our Lord had taken from me all sweetness in prayer. In short, I was in such a state of torment, that I begged the lady to let me go ; for my confessor, when he saw the plight I was in, had already told me to go, God having moved him as He had moved me. The lady felt my departure very much, and that was another pain to bear ; for it had cost her much trouble, and diverse importunities of the Provincial, to have me in her house.

11. I considered it a very great thing for her to have given her consent, when she felt it so much ; but, as she was a person who feared God exceedingly,—and as I told her, among many other reasons, that my going away tended greatly to His service, and held out the hope that I might possibly return,—she gave way, but with much sorrow. I was now not sorry myself at coming away, for I knew that it was an act of greater perfection, and for the service of God. So the pleasure I had in pleasing God took away the pain of quitting that lady,—whom I saw suffering so keenly,—and others to whom I owed much, particularly my confessor of the Society of Jesus, in whom I found all I needed. But the greater the consolations I lost for our Lord's sake, the greater was

my joy in losing them. I could not understand it, for I had a clear consciousness of these two contrary feelings—pleasure, consolation, and joy in that which weighed down my soul with sadness. I was joyful and tranquil, and had opportunities of spending many hours in prayer; and I saw that I was going to throw myself into a fire; for our Lord had already told me that I was going to carry a heavy cross,—though I never thought it would be so heavy as I afterwards found it to be,—yet I went forth rejoicing. I was distressed because I had not already begun the fight, since it was our Lord's will that I should be in it. Thus His Majesty gave me strength, and established it in my weakness.¹⁴

12. As I have just said, I could not understand how this could be. I thought of this illustration: if I were possessed of a jewel, or any other thing which gave me great pleasure, and it came to my knowledge that a person whom I loved more than myself, and whose satisfaction I preferred to my own, wished to have it, it would give me great pleasure to deprive myself of it, because I would give all I possessed to please that person. Now, as the pleasure of giving pleasure to that person surpasses any pleasure I have in that jewel myself, I should not be distressed in giving away that or anything else I loved, nor at the loss of that pleasure which the possession of it gave me. So now, though I wished to feel some distress when I saw that those whom I was leaving felt my going so much, yet, notwithstanding my naturally grateful disposition,—which, under other circumstances, would have been enough to have caused me great pain,—at this time, though I wished to feel it, I could feel none.

13. The delay of another day was so serious a matter in the affairs of this holy house, that I know not how they would have been settled if I had waited.

¹⁴ 2 Cor. xii. 9: "Virtus in infirmitate perficitur."

Oh, God is great ! I am often lost in wonder when I consider and see the special help which His Majesty gave me towards the establishment of this little cell of God,—for such I believe it to be,—the lodging wherein His Majesty delights ; for once, when I was in prayer, He told me that this house was the paradise of His delight.¹⁵ It seems, then, that His Majesty has chosen those whom He has drawn hither, among whom I am living very much ashamed of myself.¹⁶ I could not have even wished for souls such as they are for the purpose of this house, where enclosure, poverty, and prayer are so strictly observed ; they submit with so much joy and contentment, that every one of them thinks herself unworthy of the grace of being received into it,—some of them particularly ; for our Lord has called them out of the vanity and dissipation of the world, in which, according to its laws, they might have lived contented. Our Lord has multiplied their joy, so that they see clearly how He has given them a hundredfold for the one thing they have left,¹⁷ and for which they cannot thank His Majesty enough. Others He has advanced from well to better. To the young He gives courage and knowledge, so that they may desire nothing else, and also to understand that to live away from all things in this life is to live in greater peace even here below. To those who are no longer young, and whose health is weak, He gives—and has given—the strength to undergo the same austerities and penance with all the others.

14. O my Lord ! how Thou dost show Thy power ! There is no need to seek reasons for Thy will ; for with Thee, against all natural reason, all things are possible : so That thou teachest clearly there is no

¹⁵ See *Way of Perfection*, ch. xiii. 5.

¹⁶ See *Foundations*, ch. i. 1.

¹⁷ St. Matt. xix. 29 : " Et omnis qui reliquerit domum . . . propter nomen Meum, centuplum accipiet, et vitam æternam possidebit."

need of anything but of loving Thee¹⁸ in earnest, and really giving up everything for Thee, in order that Thou, O my Lord, mightest make everything easy. It is well said that Thou feignest to make Thy law difficult¹⁹: I do not see it, nor do I feel that the way that leadeth unto Thee is narrow. I see it as a royal road, and not a pathway; a road upon which whosoever really enters, travels most securely. No mountain passes and no cliffs are near it: these are the occasions of sin. I call that a pass,—a dangerous pass,—and a narrow road, which has on one side a deep hollow, into which one stumbles, and on the other a precipice, over which they who are careless fall, and are dashed to pieces. He who loves Thee, O my God, travels safely by the open and royal road, far away from the precipice: he has scarcely stumbled at all, when Thou stretchest forth Thy hand to save him. One fall—yea, many falls—if he does but love Thee, and not the things of the world, are not enough to make him perish; he travels in the valley of humility. I cannot understand what it is that makes men afraid of the way of perfection.

15. May our Lord of His mercy make us see what a poor security we have in the midst of dangers so manifest, when we live like the rest of the world; and that true security consists in striving to advance

¹⁸ When the workmen were busy with the building, a nephew of the Saint, the child of her sister and Don Juan de Ovalle, was struck by some falling stones and killed. The workmen took the child to his mother; and the Saint, then in the house of Doña Guiomar de Ulloa, was sent for. Doña Guiomar took the dead boy into her arms, gave him to the Saint, saying that it was a grievous blow to the father and mother, and that she must obtain his life from God. The Saint took the body, and, laying it in her lap, ordered those around her to cease their lamentations, of whom her sister was naturally the loudest, and be silent. Then, covering her face and her body with her veil, she prayed to God, and God gave the child his life again. The little boy soon after ran up to his aunt and thanked her for what she had done. In after-years the child used to say to the Saint that, as she had deprived him of the bliss of heaven by bringing him back to life, she was bound to see that he did not suffer loss. Don Gonzalo died three years after St. Teresa, when he was twenty-eight years of age (*Reforma*, bk. i. ch. xlii. 2).

¹⁹ Psalm xciii. 20: "Qui fingis laborem in præcepto."

in the way of God! Let us fix our eyes upon Him, and have no fear that the Sun of Justice will ever set, or suffer us to travel to our ruin by night, unless we first look away from Him. People are not afraid of living in the midst of lions, every one of whom seems eager to tear them: I am speaking of honours, pleasures, and the like joys, as the world calls them: and herein the devil seems to make us afraid of ghosts. I am astonished a thousand times, and ten thousand times would I relieve myself by weeping, and proclaim aloud my own great blindness and wickedness, if, perchance, it might help in some measure to open their eyes. May He, who is almighty, of His goodness open their eyes, and never suffer mine to be blind again!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE MONASTERY OF ST. JOSEPH.
PERSECUTION AND TEMPTATIONS. GREAT INTERIOR
TRIAL OF THE SAINT, AND HER DELIVERANCE.

She continues the same subject, and shows how the foundation of this convent of the glorious St. Joseph was finally accomplished, and the great contradictions and persecutions she had to endure after the religious had taken the habit, and the great trials and temptations through which she passed, and how God led her forth victorious to His own glory and praise.

I. HAVING now left that city,¹ I travelled in great joy, resolved to suffer most willingly whatever our Lord might be pleased to lay upon me. On the night of my arrival here,² came also from Rome the commission and the Brief for the erection of the mon-

¹ Toledo.

² Avila. Probably in July 1562.

astery.³ I was astonished myself, and so were those who knew how our Lord hastened my coming, when they saw how necessary it was, and in what a moment our Lord had brought me back.⁴ I found here the Bishop⁵ and the holy friar, Peter of Alcantara, and that nobleman,⁶ the great servant of God, in whose house the holy man was staying; for he was a man who was in the habit of receiving the servants of God in his house. These two prevailed on the Bishop to accept the convent, which was no small thing, because it was founded in poverty; but he was so great a lover of those whom he saw determined to serve our Lord, that he was immediately drawn to give them his protection. It was the approbation of the holy old man,⁷ and the great trouble he took to make now this one, now that one, help us, that did the whole work. If I had not come at the moment, as I have just said, I do not see how it could have been done; for the holy man was here but a short time,—I think not quite eight days,—during which he was also ill; and almost immediately afterwards our Lord took him to Himself.⁸ It seems as if His Majesty reserved him till this affair was ended, because now for some time—I think for more than two years—he had been very ill.

2. Everything was done in the utmost secrecy; and if it had not been so, I do not see how anything could have been done at all; for the people of the city were against us, as it appeared afterwards. Our

³ See ch. xxxiv. 2. The Brief is dated Feb. 7, 1562, the third year of Pius IV.

⁴ The Brief was addressed to Doña Aldonza de Guzman, and to Doña Guiomar de Ulloa, her daughter.

⁵ Don Alvaro de Mendoza.

⁶ Don Francisco de Salcedo.

⁷ St. Peter of Alcantara. "Truly this is the house of St. Joseph," were the Saint's words when he saw the rising monastery; "for I see it is the little hospice of Bethlehem." His letter to the Bishop of Avila is still treasured at the convent of St. Joseph.

⁸ In less than three months, perhaps; for St. Peter died in the sixty-third year of his age, Oct. 18, 1562, and in less than eight weeks after the foundation of the monastery of St. Joseph.

Lord ordained that one of my brothers-in-law⁹ should be ill, and his wife away, and himself in such straits that my superiors gave me leave to remain with him. Nothing, therefore, was found out, though some persons had their suspicions; still, they did not believe. It was very wonderful, for his illness lasted only no longer than was necessary for our affair; and when it was necessary he should recover his health, that I might be disengaged, and he leave the house empty, our Lord restored him; and he was astonished at it himself.¹⁰

3. I had much trouble in persuading this person and that to allow the foundation; I had to nurse the sick man, and obtain from the workman the hasty preparation of the house, so that it might have the form of a monastery; but much remained still to be done. My friend was not here,¹¹ for we thought it best she should be away, in order the better to hide our purpose. I saw that everything depended on haste, for many reasons, one of which was that I was afraid I might be ordered back to my monastery at any moment. I was troubled by so many things, that I suspected my cross had been sent me, though it seemed but a light one in comparison with that which I understood our Lord meant me to carry.

4. When everything was settled, our Lord was pleased that some of us should take the habit on St. Bartholomew's Day. The most Holy Sacrament began to dwell in the house at the same time.¹² With full sanction and authority, then, our monastery of our most glorious father St. Joseph was founded in the

⁹ Don Juan de Ovalle.

¹⁰ When he saw that the Saint had made all her arrangements he knew the meaning of his illness, and said to her, "It is not necessary I should be ill any longer" (*Ribera*, bk. i. ch. viii.).

¹¹ Doña Guiomar de Ulloa was now in her native place, Ciudad Toro.

¹² The Mass was said by Gaspar Daza. See *infra*, 18; *Reforma*, bk. i. ch. xlvi. 3.

year 1562.¹³ I was there myself to give the habit, with two nuns¹⁴ of the house to which we belonged, who happened then to be absent from it. As the house which thus became a monastery was that of my brother-in-law—I said before¹⁵ that he had bought it, for the purpose of concealing our plan—I was there myself with the permission of my superiors; and I did nothing without the advice of learned men, in order that I might not break, in a single point, my vow of obedience. As these persons considered what I was doing to be most advantageous for the whole Order, on many accounts, they told me—though I was acting secretly, and taking care my superiors should know nothing—that I might go on. If they had told me that there was the slightest imperfection in the whole matter, I would have given up the founding of a thousand monasteries,—how much more, then, this one? I am certain of this; for though I

¹³ The bell which the Saint had provided for the convent weighed less than three pounds, and remained in the monastery for a hundred years, till it was sent by order of the General to the monastery of Pastrana, where the general chapters were held. There the friars assembled at the sound of the bell, which rang for the first Mass of the Carmelite Reform (*Reforma*, bk. i. ch. xlvi. 1). It is now once more at the convent of St. Joseph.

¹⁴ They were Doña Ines and Doña Ana de Tapia, cousins of the Saint. There were present also Don Gonzalo de Aranda, Don Francisco Salcedo, Julian of Avila, priest; Doña Juana de Ahumada, the Saint's sister, with her husband, Juan de Ovalle. The Saint herself retained her own habit, making no change, because she had not the permission of her superiors (*Reforma*, bk. i. ch. xlvi. 2).

Doña Ines de Tapia, cousin of St. Teresa, both on her father's and her mother's side, was placed at the convent of the Incarnation under the personal care of her holy kinswoman, with whom she became very intimate. Although present at the inauguration of the convent of St. Joseph, she only joined it in 1567, and soon after accompanied the Saint to Medina del Campo, of which convent she became superioress for ten years, under the name of Agnes of Jesus. She renounced the mitigated rule in 1571. Having shared St. Teresa's labours in several foundations, notably that of Palencia, she returned ultimately to Medina del Campo, where she died on April 22, 1601. Doña Ana de Tapia, sister of the preceding, exchanged with her the convent of the Incarnation for that of St. Joseph, and took part in the foundation of Medina del Campo, of which convent she became sub-prioress. She afterwards was the first prioress of Salamanca, where she remained fourteen years in the midst of great trials. Called back to Medina as prioress, she ultimately returned to Salamanca, where she died on the same day as her sister. Her name in the Reformed Order was Anne of the Incarnation.

¹⁵ Ch. xxxiii. 13.

longed to withdraw from everything more and more, and to follow my rule and vocation in the greatest perfection and seclusion, yet I wished to do so only conditionally: for if I should have learnt that it would be for the greater honour of our Lord to abandon it, I would have done so, as I did before on one occasion,¹⁶ in all peace and contentment.

5. I felt as if I were in bliss, when I saw the most Holy Sacrament reserved, with four poor orphans,¹⁷—for they were received without a dowry,—and great servants of God, established in the house. It was our aim from the beginning to receive only those who, by their example, might be the foundation on which we could build up what we had in view—great perfection and prayer—and effect a work which I believed to be for the service of our Lord, and to the honour of the habit of His glorious Mother. This was my anxiety. It was also a great consolation to me that I had done that which our Lord had so often commanded me to do, and that there was one church

¹⁶ Ch. xxxiii. 3.

¹⁷ The first of these was Antonia of the Holy Ghost, whose real name was Antonia de Henao, daughter of Felipe de Arevalo and Elvira Dies de Henao, of Avila, a penitent of St. Peter of Alcantara. She wished to enter a convent far away from Avila, but St. Peter advised her to join St. Teresa. She brought to the convent a small sum of money, 17,000 maravedis, equivalent to about ten pounds sterling. She made her profession on October 21, 1564. Later on she accompanied St. Teresa (of whom she was a distant relative) on various journeys; she became sub-prioress at Valladolid, and, after having spent some more years at Avila, she was elected for the foundations of Granada and Malaga. She died at the last-named convent, July 7, 1595.—The second, Maria de la Paz, of Ledesma, near Salamanca, was a servant of Doña Guiomar de Ulloa; she took the name of Maria de la Cruz, and made her profession April 22, 1565. Three years later she was sent to Valladolid, where she died, February 23, 1588.—The third was Ursula de los Santos, daughter of Martin de Revilla and Maria Alvarez de Arevalo, of Avila. Gaspar Daza, under whose direction she had been living, recommended her to the Saint. She brought an alms of 300 ducats. During the time St. Teresa was detained at the convent of the Incarnation, August 24, 1562, till mid-Lent of the following year, Ursula of the Saints, though only a novice, presided over St. Joseph's convent and guided it safely through a thousand difficulties. She died February 19, 1574.—The fourth was Maria, daughter of Christobal Davila (or de Avila) and Ana de Santo Domingo, and sister of Don Julian, chaplain of the convent of St. Joseph. She took the name Maria de San José, and made her profession on July 2, 1566, being then in her forty-first year. She died July 14, 1604.

more in this city dedicated to my glorious father St. Joseph. Not that I thought I had done anything myself, for I have never thought so, and do not think so even now; I always looked upon it as the work of our Lord. My part in it was so full of imperfections, that I look upon myself rather as a person in fault than as one to whom any thanks are due. But it was a great joy to me when I saw His Majesty make use of me, who am so worthless, as His instrument in so grand a work. I was therefore in great joy,—so much so, that I was, as it were, beside myself, lost in prayer.

6. When all was done—it might have been about three or four hours afterwards—Satan returned to the spiritual fight against me, as I shall now relate. He suggested to me that perhaps I had been wrong in what I had done; perhaps I had failed in my obedience, in having brought it about without the commandment of the Provincial. I did certainly think that the Provincial would be displeased because I had placed the monastery under the jurisdiction of the Bishop¹⁸ without telling him of it beforehand; though, as he would not acknowledge the monastery himself, and as I had not changed mine, it seemed to me that perhaps he would not care much about the matter. Satan also suggested whether the nuns would be contented to live in so strict a house, whether they could always find food, whether I had not done a silly thing, and what had I to do with it, when I was already in a monastery? All our Lord had said to me, all the opinions I had heard, and all the prayers which had been almost uninterrupted for more than two years, were completely blotted out of my memory, just as if they had never been. The only thing I remembered was my own opinion; and every virtue, with faith itself, was then suspended within me, so that I was without strength to practise any one of them, or to defend myself against so many blows.

¹⁸ See *Foundations*, ch. ii. 1, and ch. xxxi. 1.

7. The devil also would have me ask myself how I could think of shutting myself up in so strict a house, when I was subject to so many infirmities; how could I bear so penitential a life, and leave a house large and pleasant, where I had been always so happy, and where I had so many friends?—perhaps I might not like those of the new monastery; I had taken on myself a heavy obligation, and might possibly end in despair. He also suggested that perhaps it was he himself who had contrived it, in order to rob me of my peace and rest, so that, being unable to pray, I might be disquieted, and so lose my soul. Thoughts of this kind he put before me; and they were so many, that I could think of nothing else; and with them came such distress, obscurity, and darkness of soul as I can never describe. When I found myself in this state, I went and placed myself before the most Holy Sacrament, though I could not pray to Him; so great was my anguish that I was like one in the agony of death. I could not make the matter known to any one, because no confessor had as yet been appointed.

8. O my God, how wretched is this life! No joy is lasting; everything is liable to change. Only a moment ago, I do not think I would have exchanged my joy with any man upon earth; and the very grounds of that joy so tormented me now, that I knew not what to do with myself. Oh, if we did but consider carefully the events of our life, every one of us would learn from experience how little we ought to make either of its pleasures or of its pains! Certainly this was, I believe, one of the most distressing moments I ever passed in all my life; my spirit seemed to forecast the great sufferings in store for me, though they never were so heavy as this was, if it had continued. But our Lord would not let His poor servant suffer, for in all my troubles He never failed to succour me; so it was now. He gave me a little light, so

that I might see it was the work of the devil, and might understand the truth, namely, that it was nothing else but an attempt on his part to frighten me with his lies. So I began to call to mind my great resolutions to serve our Lord, and my desire to suffer for His sake ; and I thought that if I carried them out, I must not seek to be at rest ; that if I had my trials, they would be meritorious ; and that if I had troubles, and endured them in order to please God, it would serve me for purgatory. What was I, then, afraid of ? If I longed for tribulations, I had them now ; and my gain lay in the greatest opposition. Why, then, did I fail in courage to serve One to whom I owed so much ?

9. After making these and other reflections, and doing great violence to myself, I promised before the most Holy Sacrament to do all in my power to obtain permission to enter this house, and, if I could do it with a good conscience, to make a vow of enclosure. When I had done this, the devil fled in a moment, and left me calm and peaceful, and I have continued so ever since ; and the enclosures, penances, and other rules of this house are to me, in their observance, so singularly sweet and light, the joy I have is so exceedingly great, that I am now and then thinking what on earth I could have chosen which should be more delightful. I know not whether this may not be the cause of my being in better health than I was ever before, or whether it be that our Lord, because it is needful and reasonable that I should do as all the others do, gives me this comfort of keeping the whole rule, though with some difficulty. However, all who know my infirmities, are astonished at my strength. Blessed be He Who giveth it all, and in Whose strength I am strong !

10. Such a contest left me greatly fatigued, and laughing at Satan ; for I saw clearly it was he. As I have never known what it is to be discontented

because I am a nun—no, not for an instant—during more than twenty-eight years of religion, I believe that our Lord suffered me to be thus tempted, that I might understand how great a mercy He had shown me herein, and from what torment He had delivered me, and that if I saw any one in like trouble, I might not be alarmed at it, but have pity on her, and be able to console her.

11. Then, when this was over, I wished to rest myself a little after our dinner ; for during the whole of that night I had scarcely rested at all, and for some nights previously I had had much trouble and anxiety, while every day was full of toil ; for the news of what we had done had reached my convent, and was spread through the city. There arose a great outcry, for the reasons I mentioned before,¹⁹ and there was some apparent ground for it. The prioress²⁰ sent for me to come to her immediately. When I received the order, I went at once, leaving the nuns in great distress. I saw clearly enough that there were troubles before me ; but as the work was really done, I did not care much for that. I prayed and implored our Lord to help me, and my father St. Joseph to bring me back to his house. I offered up to him all I was to suffer, rejoicing greatly that I had the opportunity of suffering for his honour and of doing him service. I went persuaded that I should be put in prison at once ; but this would have been a great comfort, because I should have nobody to speak to, and might have some rest and solitude, of which I was in great need ; for so much intercourse with people had worn me out.²¹

12. When I came and told the prioress what I had done, she was softened a little. They all sent for the Provincial, and the matter was reserved for

¹⁹ Ch. xxxiii. 1, 2.

²⁰ Of the Incarnation.

²¹ According to the tradition of the convent of the Incarnation she actually passed a short time in the prison of the convent, which, however, was not very formidable.

him. When he came, I was summoned to judgment, rejoicing greatly at seeing that I had something to offer for our Lord. I did not think I had offended against His Majesty, or against my Order, in anything I had done; on the contrary, I was striving with all my might to exalt my Order, for which I would willingly have died,—for my whole desire was that its rule might be observed in all perfection. I thought of Christ receiving sentence, and I saw how this of mine would be less than nothing. I confessed my fault, as if I had been very much to blame; and so I seemed to every one who did not know all the reasons. After the Provincial had rebuked me sharply—though not with the severity which my fault deserved, nor according to the representations made to him—I would not defend myself, for I was determined to bear it all; on the contrary, I prayed him to forgive and punish, and be no longer angry with me.

13. I saw well enough that they condemned me on some charges of which I was innocent, for they said I had founded the monastery that I might be thought much of, and to make myself a name, and for other reasons of that kind. But on other points I understood clearly that they were speaking the truth, as when they said that I was more wicked than the other nuns. They asked, how could I, who had not kept the rule in that house, think of keeping it in another of stricter observance? They said I was giving scandal in the city, and setting up novelties. All this neither troubled nor distressed me in the least, though I did seem to feel it, lest I should appear to make light of what they were saying.

14. At last the Provincial commanded me to explain my conduct before the nuns, and I had to do it. As I was perfectly calm, and our Lord helped me, I explained everything in such a way that neither the Provincial nor those who were present found any reason to condemn me. Afterwards I spoke more

plainly to the Provincial alone; he was very much satisfied, and promised, if the new monastery prospered, and the city became quiet, to give me leave to live in it. Now the outcry in the city was very great, as I am going to tell. Two or three days after this, the governor, certain members of the council of the city and of the Chapter, came together, and resolved that the new monastery should not be allowed to exist, that it was a visible wrong to the State, that the most Holy Sacrament should be removed, and that they would not suffer us to go on with our work.

15. They assembled all the Orders—that is, two learned men from each—to give their opinion. Some were silent, others condemned; in the end, they resolved that the monastery should be broken up. Only one²²—he was of the Order of St. Dominic, and objected, not to the convent itself, but to the foundation of it in poverty—said that there was no reason why it should be thus dissolved, that the matter ought to be well considered, that there was time enough, that it was the affair of the Bishop, with other things of that kind. This was of great service to us, for they were angry enough to proceed to its destruction at once, and it was fortunate they did not. In short, the monastery must exist; our Lord was pleased to have it, and all of them could do nothing against His will. They gave their reasons, and showed

²² F. Domingo Bañes, the great commentator on St. Thomas. On the margin of the MS. Bañes has with his own hand written: "This was at the end of August 1562. I was present, and gave this opinion. I am writing this in May" (the day of the month is not legible) "1575, and the mother has now founded nine monasteries *en gran religion*." At this time Bañes did not know, and had never seen, the Saint; he undertook her defence simply because he saw that her intentions were good, and the means she made use of for founding the monastery lawful, seeing that she had received the commandment to do so from the Pope. Bañes testifies thus in the depositions made in Salamanca in 1591, in the Saint's process. Born at Medina del Campo, Feb. 29, 1528, he entered the Order at the age of nineteen, taught philosophy at Salamanca, whence he was sent to the larger convent of Santo Tomás at Avila. Here he made the acquaintance of the Saint. He left his mark on scholastic theology. He died in his native town, Oct. 22, 1604.

their zeal for good, and thus, without offending God, made me suffer together with all those who were in favour of the monastery; they were not many, but they suffered much persecution. The inhabitants were so excited that they talked of nothing else; every one condemned me, and hurried to the Provincial and to my convent.

16. I was no more distressed by what they said of me than if they had said nothing; but I was afraid the monastery would be destroyed: that was painful; so also was it to see those persons who helped me lose their credit and suffer so much annoyance. But as to what was said of myself I was rather glad, and if I had had any faith I should not have been troubled at all; but a slight failing in one virtue is enough to put all the others to sleep. I was therefore extremely distressed during the two days on which those assemblies of which I have spoken were held. In the extremity of my trouble, our Lord said to me: "Knowest thou not that I am the Almighty? what art thou afraid of?" He made me feel assured that the monastery would not be broken up, and I was exceedingly comforted. The informations taken were sent up to the king's council, and an order came back for a report on the whole matter.

17. Here was the beginning of a grand lawsuit: the city sent delegates to the court, and some must be sent also to defend the monastery: but I had no money, nor did I know what to do. Our Lord provided for us; for the Father Provincial never ordered me not to meddle in the matter. He is so great a lover of all that is good that, though he did not help us, he would not be against our work. Neither did he authorise me to enter the house till he saw how it would end. Those servants of God who were in it were left alone, and did more by their prayers than I did with all my negotiations, though the affair needed the utmost attention. Now and then everything

seemed to fail; particularly one day, before the Provincial came, when the prioress ordered me to meddle no more with it, and to give it up altogether. I betook myself to God, and said, "O Lord, this house is not mine; it was founded for Thee; and now that there is no one to take up the cause, do Thou protect it." I now felt myself in peace, and as free from anxiety as if the whole world were on my side in the matter; and at once I looked upon it as safe.²³

18. A very great servant of God, and a lover of all perfection, a priest,²⁴ who had helped me always, went to the court on this business, and took great pains. That holy nobleman²⁵ of whom I have often spoken laboured much on our behalf, and helped us in every way. He had much trouble and persecution to endure, and I always found a father in him, and do so still. All those who helped us, our Lord filled with such fervour as made them consider our affair as their own, as if their own life and reputation were at stake; and yet it was nothing to them, except in so far as it regarded the service of our Lord. His Majesty visibly helped the priest I have spoken of before,²⁶ who was also one of those who gave us great help when the Bishop sent him as his representative to one of the great meetings. There he stood alone against all; at last he pacified them by means of certain propositions, which obtained us a little respite. But that was not enough; for they were ready to spend their lives if they could but destroy the monastery. This servant of God was he who gave the habit and reserved the most Holy Sacrament, and he was the object of much persecution. This attack lasted about six months: to relate in detail the heavy trials we passed through would be too tedious.

19. I wondered at what Satan did against a few poor women, and also how all people thought that

²³ See ch. xxxix. 25.

²⁵ Don Francisco de Salcedo,

²⁴ Don Gonzalo de Aranda.

²⁶ Ch. xxiii. 6; Gaspar Daza.

merely twelve women, with a prioress, could be so hurtful to the city,—for they were not to be more,—I say this to those who opposed us,—and living such austere lives ; for if any harm or error came of it, it would all fall upon them. Harm to the city there could not be in any way ; and yet the people thought there was so much in it, that they opposed us with a good conscience. At last they resolved they would tolerate us if we were endowed, and in consideration of that would suffer us to remain. I was so distressed at the trouble of all those who were on our side—more than at my own—that I thought it would not be amiss, till the people were pacified, to accept an endowment, but afterwards to resign it. At other times, too, wicked and imperfect as I am, I thought that perhaps our Lord wished it to be so, seeing that, without accepting it, we could not succeed ; and so I consented to the compromise.

20. The night before the settlement was to be made, I was in prayer,—the discussion of the terms of it had already begun,—when our Lord said to me that I must do nothing of the kind ; for if we began with an endowment, they would never allow us to resign it. He said some other things also. The same night, the holy friar, Peter of Alcantara, appeared to me. He was then dead.²⁷ But he had written to me before his death—for he knew the great opposition and persecution we had to bear—that he was glad the foundation was so much spoken against ; it was a sign that our Lord would be exceedingly honoured in the monastery, seeing that Satan was so earnest against it ; and that I was by no means to consent to an endowment. He urged this upon me twice or thrice in that letter, and said that if I persisted in this everything would succeed according to my wish.

21. At this time I had already seen him twice

²⁷ He died Oct. 18, 1562. The letter referred to was written only four or five days before his death.

since his death, and the great glory he was in, and so I was not afraid,—on the contrary, I was very glad ; for he always appeared as a glorified body in great happiness, and the vision made me very happy too. I remember that he told me, the first time I saw him, among other things, when speaking of the greatness of his joy, that the penance he had done was a blessed thing for him, in that it had obtained so great a reward. But, as I think I have spoken of this before,²⁸ I will now say no more than that he showed himself severe on this occasion : he merely said that I was on no account to accept an endowment, and asked why it was I did not take his advice. He then disappeared. I remained in astonishment, and the next day told the nobleman—for I went to him in all my troubles, as to one who did more than others for us in the matter—what had taken place, and charged him not to consent to the endowment, but to let the lawsuit go on. He was more firm on this point than I was, and was therefore greatly pleased ; he told me afterwards how much he disliked the compromise.

22. After this, another personage—a great servant of God, and with good intentions—came forward, who, now that the matter was in good train, advised us to put it in the hands of learned men. This brought on trouble enough ; for some of those who helped me agreed to do so ; and this plot of Satan was one of the most difficult of all to unravel. Our Lord was my helper throughout. Writing thus briefly, it is impossible for me to explain what took place during the two years that passed between the beginning and the completion of the monastery : the last six months and the first six months were the most painful.

23. When at last the city was somewhat calm, the licentiate father, the Dominican friar²⁹ who helped us, exerted himself most skilfully on our behalf. Though not here at the time, our Lord brought him

²⁸ Ch. xxvii. 21.

²⁹ F, Pedro Ibañez, See ch, xxxiii. 7.

here at a most convenient moment for our service, and it seems that His Majesty brought him for that purpose only. He told me afterwards that he had no reasons for coming, and that he heard of our affair as if by chance. He remained here as long as we wanted him: and on going away he prevailed, by some means, on the Father Provincial to permit me to enter this house, and to take with me some of the nuns³⁰—such a permission seemed impossible in so short a time—for the performance of the Divine Office, and the training of those who were in this house: the day of our coming was a most joyful day for me.³¹

24. While praying in the church, before I went

³⁰ In the absence of a written permission the exact date cannot be ascertained, but must have been somewhere about the beginning of March, 1563. St. Teresa was accompanied by four professed nuns of the convent of the Incarnation, and a novice. The former were: (1) Anne of St. John (De Avila), related to the Marquis de Velada. As St. Teresa had refused the priorship, this sister acted as superioress until the Bishop of Avila, at the entreaties of the nuns, compelled the Saint to accept the dignity. Anne of St. John seems to have remained only a short time at the convent of St. Joseph, for her name is not to be found in the Patent given by the Provincial August 22, 1563, which is preserved at Avila. (2) Maria Ordoñez, daughter of Diego Ordoñez and Ana Gomez, who took the name Mary Isabelle. After some years she, too, left the Reform and returned to the Incarnation. (3) Ana Gomez, known as Anne of the Angels, sister of the preceding, was the first sub-prioress of St. Joseph's convent; she accompanied St. Teresa to Medina del Campo, Alcalá and Malagón, where she became prioress; afterwards she filled the same office at Toledo, where she renounced the mitigated Rule, February 9, 1572; in 1585 she founded the convent of Cuerva, where she died, October 2, 1605. (4) Doña Maria de Cepeda, cousin of the Saint, was obliged by ill health to return to the convent of the Incarnation, where she passed many years in the infirmary, being quite paralysed. Yet she lingered on, and even lived to witness St. Teresa's beatification in 1614. A fifth nun, Doña Isabel de la Peña, daughter of Francisco de Cepeda and Maria de Ocampo, of Torijos, was only a novice at the time, and therefore required no permission to go from the Incarnation to St. Joseph's; she there took the name Isabelle of St. Paul, and made her profession October 21, 1564. She brought, with her habit, 200 ducats. She accompanied St. Teresa on several journeys, and assisted her in the foundations of Toledo, Pastrana and Segovia, and died at Avila, February 4, 1584, aged thirty-eight.

³¹ Mid-Lent of 1563. According to tradition, St. Teresa, on her way from the convent of the Incarnation to that of St. Joseph, entered the basilica of San Vicente, where she discaled herself and exchanged her name (Doña Teresa de Ahumada) for that of Teresa de Jesús. The former appears still on the Patent of August 22, 1563, but all her own writings bear the latter. The adoption of a name of a saint in lieu of a surname was made obligatory by the General John Baptist Rubeo (1567).

into the house, and being as it were in a trance, I saw Christ; Who, as it seemed to me, received me with great affection, placed a crown on my head, and thanked me for what I had done for His Mother. On another occasion, when all of us remained in the choir in prayer after Compline, I saw our Lady in exceeding glory, in a white mantle, with which she seemed to cover us all. I understood by that the high degree of glory to which our Lord would raise the religious of this house.

25. When we had begun to sing the Office, the people began to have a great devotion to the monastery; more nuns were received,³² and our Lord began to stir up those who had been our greatest persecutors to become great benefactors, and give alms to us. In this way they came to approve of what they had condemned; and so, by degrees, they withdrew from the lawsuit, and would say that they now felt it to be a work of God, since His Majesty had been pleased

³² These were: (1) Maria Bautista, niece of St. Teresa, whose real name was Doña Maria de Ocampo, daughter of Diego de Cepeda and Beatriz de la Cruz, of Toledo. She brought 300 ducats. Born in 1543, she lived for a time at the convent of the Incarnation as a pensioner, and as such was present at the memorable meeting which led to the establishment of the convent of St. Joseph (see ch. xxxii. 13). She joined the convent as soon as St. Teresa was established there, and made her profession October 21, 1564. Later on she became prioress of Valladolid, where she died, August 10, 1603. (2) Mary of St. Jerome, Doña Maria Davila, daughter of Alonso Alvarez Davila and Doña Mencia de Salazar. She entered the convent September 30, 1563, and brought an alms of 250 ducats, and founded the chaplaincy of the convent, which was held for many years by Don Julian. At her profession, April 22, 1565, she was twenty-four years old. After the departure of St. Teresa, with whom she was distantly related, she became superioress of the convent, under the title of sub-prioress, St. Teresa, as foundress, retaining nominally the priorship. Later on Mary of St. Jerome became prioress of Madrid, foundress of Ocaña, and finally once more prioress of St. Joseph's, Avila, where she died April 6, 1602. (3) Isabelle of St. Dominic, whose real name was Isabel de Ortega, daughter of Juan de Ortega and Maria de Vergas, of Cardenosa. Having lost her parents at an early date she suffered great hardships, in which she was consoled and strengthened by St. Peter of Alcantara, who first told her of St. Teresa, whom she joined, October 4, 1563. She brought 600 ducats to the convent and made her profession October 21, 1565. She was the first nun of the Reform who was made prioress, viz. at Toledo, and afterwards at Pastrana and Segovia. Later on she founded the convent of Saragossa, became prioress of Ocaña, again of Segovia, and finally of Avila, where she died, June 13, 1623, at the age of eighty-four. Other nuns of this convent do not belong to this period of the life of St. Teresa.

to carry it on in the face of so much opposition. And now there is not one who thinks that it would have been right not to have founded the monastery: so they make a point of furnishing us with alms; for without any asking on our part, without begging of any one, our Lord moves them to succour us; and so we always have what is necessary for us, and I trust in our Lord it will always be so.³³ As the sisters are few in number, if they do their duty as our Lord at present by His grace enables them to do, I am confident that they will always have it, and that they need not be a burden nor troublesome to anybody; for our Lord will care for them, as He has hitherto done.

26. It is the greatest consolation to me to find myself among those who are so detached. Their occupation is to learn how they may advance in the service of God. Solitude is their delight; and the thought of being visited by any one, even of their nearest kindred, is a trial, unless it helps them to kindle more and more their love of the Bridegroom. Accordingly, none come to this house who do not aim at this; otherwise they neither give nor receive any pleasure from their visits. Their conversation is of God only; and so he whose conversation is different does not understand them, and they do not understand him.

27. We keep the rule of our Lady of Carmel, not the rule of the Mitigation, but as it was settled by Fr. Hugo, Cardinal of Santa Sabina, and given in the year 1248, in the fifth year of the pontificate of Innocent IV., Pope. All the trouble we had to go through, as it seems to me, will have been endured to good purpose.

28. And now, though the rule be somewhat severe, —for we never eat flesh except in cases of necessity, fast eight months in the year, and practise some other

³³ See *Way of Perfection*, ch. ii.

austerities besides, according to the primitive rule,³⁴—yet the sisters think it light on many points, and so they have other observances, which we have thought necessary for the more perfect keeping of it. And I trust in our Lord that what we have begun will prosper more and more, according to the promise of His Majesty.

29. The other house, which the holy woman of whom I spoke before³⁵ laboured to establish, has been also blessed of our Lord, and is founded in Alcalá: it did not escape serious opposition, nor fail to endure many trials. I know that all duties of religion are observed in it, according to our primitive rule. Our Lord grant that all may be to the praise and glory of Himself and of the glorious Virgin Mary, whose habit we wear. Amen.

30. I think you must be wearied, my father, by the tedious history of this monastery; and yet it is most concise, if you compare it with our labours, and the wonders which our Lord has wrought here. There are many who can bear witness to this on oath. I therefore beg of your reverence, for the love of God, should you think fit to destroy the rest of this my writing, to preserve that part of it which relates to this monastery, and give it, when I am dead, to the sisters who may then be living in it. It will encourage them greatly, who shall come here both to serve God

³⁴ "Jejunium singulis diebus, exceptis Dominicis, observetis a Festo Exaltationis Sanctæ Crucis usque ad diem Dominicæ Resurrectionis, nisi infirmitas vel debilitas corporis, aut alia justa causa, jejunium solvi suadeat; quia necessitas non habet legem. Ab esu carnum abstinenceis, nisi pro infirmitatis aut debilitatis remedio sumantur." This is the tenth section of the rule. The Carmelite rule, originally written by St. Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, about A.D. 1209, was revised by Cardinal Hugh of St. Cher, and approved by Pope Innocent IV. in 1247, not 1248, as stated in the text.

³⁵ See ch. xxxv. 1. Maria of Jesus had founded her house in Alcalá de Henares; but the austerities practised in it, and the want of experience on the part of the foundress, brought the convent in a short time to the verge of ruin. Maria of Jesus begged Doña Leonora de Mascareñas to persuade St. Teresa to come to Alcalá. The Saint went there (June 1569), and was received with joy, and even entreated to take the house under her own government.

and to labour, that what has been thus begun may not fall to decay, but ever grow and thrive, when they see how much our Lord has done through one so mean and vile as I. As our Lord has been so particularly gracious to us in the foundation of this house, it seems to me that she will do very wrong, and that she will be heavily chastised of God, who shall be the first to relax the perfect observance of the rule, which our Lord has here begun and countenanced, so that it may be kept with so much sweetness: it is most evident that the observance of it is easy, and that it can be kept with ease, by the arrangement made for those who long to be alone with their Bridegroom Christ, in order to live for ever in Him.

31. This is to be the perpetual aim of those who are here, to be alone with Him alone. They are not to be more in number than thirteen: I know this number to be the best, for I have had many opinions about it; and I have seen in my own experience, that to preserve our spirit, living on alms, without asking of any one, a larger number would be inexpedient. May they always believe one who with much labour and by the prayers of many people, accomplished that which must be for the best! That this is most expedient for us will be seen from the joy and cheerfulness, and the few troubles, we have all had in the years we have lived in this house, as well as from the better health than usual of us all. If any one thinks the rule hard, let her lay the fault on her want of the true spirit, and not on the rule of the house, seeing that delicate persons, and those not saints,—because they have the true spirit,—can bear it all with so much sweetness. Let others go to another monastery, where they may save their souls in the way of their own spirit.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE EFFECTS OF THE DIVINE GRACES IN THE SOUL. THE INESTIMABLE GREATNESS OF ONE DEGREE OF GLORY.

Of the effects which remained when God granted her some favour ; together with other very good doctrine. She shows how one ought to strive after and prize every increase in heavenly glory, and that for no trouble whatever one should neglect a good that is to be perpetual.

1. It is painful to me to recount more of the graces which our Lord gave me than these already spoken of ; and they are so many, that nobody can believe they were ever given to one so wicked : but in obedience to our Lord, who has commanded me to do it,¹ and you, my fathers, I will speak of some of them to His glory. May it please His Majesty it may be to the profit of some soul ! For if our Lord has been thus gracious to so miserable a thing as myself, what will He be to those who shall serve Him truly ? Let all people resolve to please His Majesty, seeing that He gives such pledges as these even in this life.²

2. In the first place, it must be understood that, in those graces which God bestows on the soul, there are diverse degrees of joy : for in some visions the joy and sweetness and comfort of them so far exceed those of others, that I am amazed at the different degrees of fruition even in this life ; for it happens that the joy and consolation which God gives in a vision or a trance are so different, that it seems impossible for the soul to be able to desire anything more in this world : and so, in fact, the soul does

¹ The Saint, having interrupted her account of her interior life in order to give the history of the foundation of the monastery of St. Joseph, Avila,—the first house of the Reformed Carmelites,—here resumes that account broken off at the end of § 10 of ch. xxxii.

² Ephes. i. 14 : " Pignus hæreditatis nostræ."

not desire, nor would it ask for, a greater joy. Still, since our Lord has made me understand how great a difference there is in heaven itself between the fruition of one and that of another, I see clearly enough that here also, when our Lord wills, He gives not by measure³; and so I wish that I myself observed no measure in serving His Majesty, and in using my whole life and strength and health therein; and I would not have any fault of mine rob me of the slightest degree of fruition.

3. And so I say that if I were asked which I preferred, to endure all the trials of the world until the end of it, and then receive one slight degree of glory additional, or without any suffering of any kind to enter into glory of a slightly lower degree, I would accept—oh, how willingly!—all those trials for one slight degree of fruition in the contemplation of the greatness of God; for I know that he who understands Him best, loves Him and praises Him best. I do not mean that I should not be satisfied, and consider myself to be most blessed, to be in heaven, even if I should be in the lowest place; for as I am one who had that place in hell, it would be a great mercy of our Lord to admit me at all; and may it please His Majesty to bring me thither,⁴ and take away His eyes from beholding my grievous sins. What I mean is this,—if it were in my power, even if it cost me everything, and our Lord gave me the grace to endure much affliction, I would not through any fault of mine lose one degree of glory. Ah, wretched that I am, who by so many faults had forfeited all!

4. It is also to be observed that, in every vision or revelation which our Lord in His mercy sent me, a great gain accrued to my soul, and that in some of the visions this gain was very great.⁵ The vision of

³ St. John iii. 34: "Non enim ad mensuram dat Deus spiritum." "Causa diligendi Deum Deus est, modus sine modo diligere." (St. Bernard, *De Dilig. Deo*, i. 1.)

⁴ *Rel.* ii. 16.

⁵ Ch. vii. 11.

Christ left behind an impression of His exceeding beauty, and it remains with me to this day. One vision alone of Him is enough to effect this; what, then, must all those visions have done, which our Lord in His mercy sent me? One exceedingly great blessing has resulted therefrom, and it is this,—I had one very grievous fault, which was the source of much evil; namely, whenever I found anybody well disposed towards myself, and I liked him, I used to have such an affection for him as compelled me always to remember and think of him, though I had no intention of offending God: however, I was pleased to see him, to think of him and of his good qualities. All this was so hurtful, that it brought my soul to the very verge of destruction.

5. But ever since I saw the great beauty⁶ of our Lord, I never saw any one who in comparison with Him seemed even endurable, or that could occupy my thoughts. For if I but turn mine eyes inwardly for a moment to the contemplation of the image which I have within me, I find myself so free, that from that instant everything I see is loathsome in comparison with the excellences and graces of which I had a vision in our Lord. Neither is there any sweetness, nor any kind of pleasure, which I can make any account of, compared with that which comes from hearing but one word from His divine mouth. What, then, must it be when I hear so many? I look upon it as impossible—unless our Lord, for my sins, should permit the loss of this remembrance—that I should have the power to occupy myself with anything in such a way as that I should not instantly recover my liberty by thinking of our Lord.

6. This has happened to me with some of my confessors, for I always have a great affection for those who have the direction of my soul. As I really saw in them only the representatives of God, I thought

⁶ Ch. xxviii, 1-5.

my will was always there where it is most occupied ; and as I felt very safe in the matter, I always showed myself glad to see them.⁷ They, on the other hand, servants of God, and fearing Him, were afraid that I was attaching and binding myself too much to them, though in a holy way, and treated me with rudeness. This took place after I had become so ready to obey them ; for before that time I had no affection whatever for them. I used to laugh to myself, when I saw how much they were deceived.⁸ Though I was not always putting before them how little I was attached to anybody, as clearly as I was convinced of it myself, yet I did assure them of it ; and they, in their further relations with me, acknowledged how much I owed to our Lord in the matter. These suspicions of me always arose in the beginning.

7. My love of, and trust in, our Lord, after I had seen Him in a vision, began to grow, for my converse with Him was so continual. I saw that, though He was God, He was man also ; that He is not surprised at the frailties of men, that He understands our miserable nature, liable to fall continually, because of the first sin, for the reparation of which He had come. I could speak to Him as to a friend, though He is my Lord, because I do not consider Him as one of our earthly Lords, who affect a power they do not possess, who give audience at fixed hours, and to whom only certain persons may speak. If a poor man have any business with these, it will cost him many goings and comings, and currying favour with others, together with much pain and labour before he can speak to them. Ah, if such a one has business with a king ! Poor people, not of gentle blood, cannot approach him, for they must apply to those who are his friends, and certainly these are not persons who tread the world under their feet ; for they who do this speak the truth, fear nothing, and ought to fear nothing ;

⁷ See ch. xl. 24 ; *Way of Perfection*, ch. iv. 9.

⁸ Ch. v. 9.

they are not courtiers, because it is not the custom of a court, where they must be silent about those things they dislike, must not even dare to think about them, lest they should fall into disgrace.

8. O King of glory, and Lord of all kings! oh, how Thy kingly dignity is not hedged about by trifles of this kind! Thy kingdom is for ever. We do not require chamberlains to introduce us into Thy presence. The very vision of Thy person shows us at once that Thou alone art to be called Lord. Thy Majesty is so manifest, that there is no need of a retinue or guard to make us confess that Thou art king. An earthly king without attendants would be hardly acknowledged; and though he might wish ever so much to be recognised, people will not own him when he appears as others; it is necessary that his dignity should be visible, if people are to believe in it. This is reason enough why kings should affect so much state; for if they had none, no one would respect them; this their semblance of power is not in themselves, and their authority must come to them from others.

9. O my Lord! O my King! who can describe Thy Majesty? It is impossible not to see that Thou art Thyself the great Ruler of all, that the beholding of Thy Majesty fills men with awe. But I am filled with greater awe, O my Lord, when I consider Thy humility, and the love Thou hast for such as I am. We can converse and speak with Thee about everything whenever we will; and when we lose our first fear and awe at the vision of Thy Majesty, we have a greater dread of offending Thee,—not arising out of the fear of punishment, O my Lord, for that is as nothing in comparison with the loss of Thee!

10. Thus far of the blessings of this vision, without speaking of others, which abide in the soul when it is past. If it be from God, the fruits thereof show it,

when the soul receives light ; for, as I have often said : ⁹ the will of our Lord is that the soul should be in darkness, and not see this light. It is, therefore, nothing to be wondered at that I, knowing myself to be so wicked as I am, should be afraid.

11. It is only just now it happened to me to be for eight days in a state wherein it seemed that I did not, and could not, confess my obligations to God, or remember His mercies ; but my soul was so stupefied and occupied with I know not what nor how : not that I had any bad thoughts ; only I was so incapable of good thoughts, that I was laughing at myself, and even rejoicing to see how mean a soul can be if God is not always working in it.¹⁰ The soul sees clearly that God is not away from it in this state, and that it is not in those great tribulations which I have spoken of as being occasionally mine. Though it heaps up fuel, and does the little it can do of itself, it cannot make the fire of the love of God burn : it is a great mercy that even the smoke is visible, showing that it is not altogether quenched. Our Lord will return and kindle it ; and until then the soul—though it may lose its breath in blowing and arranging the fuel—seems to be doing nothing but putting it out more and more.

12. I believe that now the best course is to be absolutely resigned, confessing that we can do nothing, and so apply ourselves—as I said before ¹¹—to something else which is meritorious. Our Lord, it may be, takes away from the soul the power of praying, that it may betake itself to something else, and learn by experience how little it can do in its own strength.

13. It is true I have this day been rejoicing in our Lord, and have dared to complain of His Majesty. I said unto Him : How is it, O my God, that it is not enough for Thee to detain me in this wretched life,

⁹ See ch. xx, 14.

¹⁰ See ch. xxx, 19.

¹¹ See ch. xxx, 18, 25.

and that I should have to bear with it for the love of Thee, and be willing to live where everything hinders the fruition of Thee ; where, besides, I must eat and sleep, transact business, and converse with every one, and all for Thy love ? how is it, then—for Thou well knowest, O my Lord, all this to be the greatest torment unto me,—that, in the rare moments when I am with Thee, Thou hidest Thyself from me ? How is this consistent with Thy compassion ? How can that love Thou hast for me endure this ? I believe, O Lord, if it were possible for me to hide myself from Thee, as Thou hidest Thyself from me—I think and believe so—such is Thy love, that Thou wouldst not endure it at my hands. But Thou art with me, and seest me always. O my Lord, I beseech Thee look to this ; it must not be ; a wrong is done to one who loves Thee so much.

14. I happened to utter these words, and others of the same kind, when I should have been thinking rather how my place in hell was pleasant in comparison with the place I deserved. But now and then my love makes me foolish, so that I lose my senses ; only it is with all the sense I have that I make these complaints, and our Lord bears it all. Blessed be so good a King !

15. Can we be thus bold with the kings of this world ? And yet I am not surprised that we dare not thus speak to a king, for it is only reasonable that men should be afraid of him, or even to the great lords who are his representatives. The world is now come to such a state, that men's lives ought to be longer than they are, if we are to learn all the new customs and ceremonies of good breeding, and yet spend any time in the service of God. I bless myself at the sight of what is going on. The fact is, I did not know how I was to live when I came into this house. Any negligence in being much more ceremonious with people than they deserve is not taken

as a jest ; on the contrary, they look upon it as an insult deliberately offered ; so that it becomes necessary for you to satisfy them of your good intentions, if there happens, as I have said, to have been any negligence ; and even then, God grant they may believe you.

16. I repeat it,—I certainly did not know how to live ; for my poor soul was worn out. It is told to employ all its thoughts always on God, and that it is necessary to do so if it would avoid many dangers. On the other hand, it finds it will not do to fail in any one point of the world's law, under the penalty of affronting those who look upon these things as touching their honour. I was worn out in unceasingly giving satisfaction to people ; for, though I tried my utmost, I could not help failing in many ways in matters which, as I have said, are not slightly thought of in the world.

17. Is it true that in religious houses no explanations are necessary, for it is only reasonable we should be excused these observances ? Well, that is not so ; for there are people who say that monasteries ought to be courts in politeness and instruction. I certainly cannot understand it. I thought that perhaps some saint may have said that they ought to be courts to teach those who wish to be the courtiers of heaven, and that these people misunderstood their meaning ; for if a man be careful to please God continually, and to hate the world, as he ought to do, I do not see how he can be equally careful to please those who live in the world in these matters which are continually changing. If they could be learnt once for all, it might be borne with : but as to the way of addressing letters, there ought to be a professor's chair founded, from which lectures should be given, so to speak, teaching us how to do it ; for the paper should on one occasion be left blank in one corner, and on another in another corner ; and a

man must not be addressed as the illustrious who was hitherto addressed as the magnificent.

18. I know not where this will stop: I am not yet fifty, and yet I have seen so many changes during my life, that I do not know how to live. What will they do who are only just born, and who may live many years? Certainly I am sorry for those spiritual people who, for certain holy purposes, are obliged to live in the world; the cross they have to carry is a dreadful one. If they could all agree together, and make themselves ignorant, and be willing to be considered so in these sciences, they would set themselves free from much trouble. But what folly am I about! from speaking of the greatness of God I am come to speak of the meanness of the world! Since our Lord has given me the grace to quit it, I wish to leave it altogether. Let them settle these matters who maintain these follies with so much labour. God grant that in the next life, where there is no changing, we may not have to pay for them! Amen.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CERTAIN HEAVENLY SECRETS, VISIONS, AND REVELATIONS. THE EFFECTS OF THEM IN HER SOUL.

She treats of some great mercies God showed her, even making known to her heavenly secrets by means of visions and revelations His Majesty vouchsafed to grant her. She speaks of the effects they caused, and the great improvement resulting in her soul.

I. ONE night I was so unwell that I thought I might be excused making my prayer; so I took my rosary, that I might employ myself in vocal prayer, trying not to be recollected in my understanding, though

outwardly I was recollected, being in my oratory. These little precautions are of no use when our Lord will have it otherwise. I remained there but a few moments thus, when I was rapt in spirit with such violence that I could make no resistance whatever. It seemed to me that I was taken up to heaven; and the first persons I saw there were my father and my mother. I saw other things also; but the time was no longer than that in which the *Ave Maria* might be said, and I was amazed at it, looking on it all as too great a grace for me. But as to the shortness of the time, it might have been longer, only it was all done in a very short space.

2. I was afraid it might be an illusion; but as I did not think so, I knew not what to do, because I was very much ashamed to go to my confessor about it. It was not, as it seemed to me, because I was humble, but because I thought he would laugh at me, and say: Oh, what a St. Paul!—she sees the things of heaven; or a St. Jerome. And because these glorious Saints had had such visions, I was so much the more afraid, and did nothing but cry; for I did not think it possible for me to see what they saw. At last, though I felt it exceedingly, I went to my confessor; for I never dared to keep secret anything of this kind, however much it distressed me to speak of them, owing to the great fear I had of being deceived. When my confessor saw how much I was suffering, he consoled me greatly, and gave me plenty of good reasons why I should have no fear.

3. It happened, also, as time went on, and it happens now from time to time, that our Lord showed me still greater secrets. The soul, even if it would, has neither the means nor the power to see more than what He shows it; and so, each time, I saw nothing more than what our Lord was pleased to let me see. But such was the vision, that the least part of it was enough to make my soul amazed, and to raise it so

high that it esteems and counts as nothing all the things of this life. I wish I could describe, in some measure, the smallest portion of what I saw; but when I think of doing it, I find it impossible; for the mere difference alone between the light we have here below, and that which is seen in a vision,—both being light,—is so great, that there is no comparison between them; the brightness of the sun itself seems to be something exceedingly loathsome. In a word, the imagination, however strong it may be, can neither conceive nor picture to itself this light, nor any one of the things which our Lord showed me in a joy so supreme that it cannot be described; for then all the senses exult so deeply and so sweetly, that no description is possible; and so it is better to say nothing more.

4. I was in this state once for more than an hour, our Lord showing me wonderful things. He seemed as if He would not leave me. He said to me: "See, My daughter, what they lose who are against Me; do not fail to tell them of it." Ah, my Lord, how little good my words will do them, who are made blind by their own conduct, if Thy Majesty will not give them light! Some, to whom Thou hast given it, there are, who have profited by the knowledge of Thy greatness¹; but as they see it revealed to one so wicked and base as I am, I look upon it as a great thing if there should be any found to believe me. Blessed be Thy name, and blessed be Thy compassion; for I can trace, at least in my own soul, a visible improvement. Afterwards I wished I had continued in that trance for ever, and that I had not returned to consciousness, because of an abiding sense of contempt for everything here below; all seemed to be filth; and I see how meanly we employ ourselves who are detained on earth.

5. When I was staying with that lady of whom I have been speaking,² it happened to me once when I

¹ Ch. xiii. 12.

² Ch. xxxiv. Doña Luisa de la Cerda, at Toledo.

was suffering from my heart,—for, as I have said,³ I suffered greatly at one time, though not so much now,—that she, being a person of great charity, brought out her jewels set in gold, and precious stones of great price, and particularly a diamond, which she valued very much. She thought this might amuse me; but I laughed to myself, and was very sorry to see what men made much of; for I thought of what our Lord had laid up for us, and considered how impossible it was for me, even if I made the effort, to have any appreciation whatever of such things, provided our Lord did not permit me to forget what He was keeping for us.

6. A soul in this state attains to a certain freedom, which is so complete that none can understand it who does not possess it. It is a real and true detachment, independent of our efforts; God effects it all Himself; for His Majesty reveals the truth in such a way, that it remains so deeply impressed on our souls as to make it clear that we of ourselves could not thus acquire it in so short a time.

7. The fear of death, also, was now very slight in me, who had always been in great dread of it; now it seems to me that death is a very light thing for one who serves God, because the soul is in a moment delivered thereby out of its prison, and at rest. This elevation of the spirit, and the vision of things so high in these trances, seem to me to have a great likeness to the flight of the soul from the body, in that it finds itself in a moment in the possession of these good things. We put aside the agonies of its dissolution, of which no great account is to be made; for they who love God in truth, and are utterly detached from the things of this life, must die with the greater sweetness.

8. It seems to me, also, that the rapture was a great help to recognise our true home, and to see that

³ Ch. iv. 6.

we are pilgrims here⁴ ; it is a great thing to see what is going on there, and to know where we have to live ; for if a person has to go and settle in another country, it is a great help to him, in undergoing the fatigues of his journey, that he has discovered it to be a country where he may live in the most perfect peace. Moreover, it makes it easy for us to think of the things of heaven, and to have our conversation there.⁵ It is a great gain, because the mere looking up to heaven makes the soul recollected ; for as our Lord has been pleased to reveal heaven in some degree, my soul dwells upon it in thought ; and it happens occasionally that they who are about me, and with whom I find consolation, are those whom I know to be living in heaven, and that I look upon them only as really alive ; while those who are on earth are so dead, that the whole world seems unable to furnish me with companions, particularly when these impetuosities of love are upon me. Everything seems a dream, and what I see with the bodily eyes an illusion. What I have seen with the eyes of the soul is that which my soul desires ; and as it finds itself far away from those things, that is death.

9. In a word, it is a very great mercy which our Lord gives to that soul to which He grants the like visions, for they help it in much, and also in carrying a heavy cross, since nothing satisfies it, and everything is against it ; and if our Lord did not now and then suffer these visions to be forgotten, though they recur again and again to the memory, I know not how life could be borne. May He be blessed and praised for ever and ever ! I implore His Majesty by that Blood which His Son shed for me, now that, of His good pleasure, I know something of these great blessings, and begin to have the fruition of them, that it may not be with me as it was with Lucifer, who by his

⁴ 1 St. Peter ii. 11 : " Advenas et peregrinos."

⁵ Philipp. iii. 20 : " Nostra autem conversatio in cœlis est."

own fault forfeited it all. I beseech Thee, for Thine own sake, not to suffer this; for I am at times in great fear, though at others, and most frequently, the mercy of God reassures me, for He who has delivered me from so many sins will not withdraw His hand from under me, and let me be lost. I pray you, my father, to beg this grace for me always.

10. The mercies, then, hitherto described are not, in my opinion, so great as those which I am now going to speak of, on many accounts, because of the great blessings they have brought with them, and because of the great fortitude which my soul derived from them; and yet every one separately considered is so great, that there is nothing to be compared with them.

11. One day—it was the eve of Pentecost—I went after Mass to a very lonely spot, where I used to pray very often, and began to read about the feast in the book of a Carthusian⁶; and reading of the marks by which beginners, proficients, and the perfect may know that they have the Holy Ghost, it seemed to me, when I had read of these three states, that by the goodness of God, so far as I could understand, the Holy Ghost was with me. I praised God for it; and calling to mind how on another occasion, when I read this, I was very deficient,—for I saw most distinctly at that time how deficient I was then from what I saw I was now,—I recognized herein the great mercy of our Lord to me and so began to consider the place which my sins had earned for me in hell, and praised God exceedingly, because it seemed as if I did not know my own soul again, so great a change had come over it.

12. While thinking of these things, my soul was

⁶ The *Life of Christ*, by Ludolf of Saxony, translated by the Franciscan Ambrosio de Montesino, and published in four folio vols. at Alcalá de Henares (1520-3), and Sevilla (1537-43). St. Teresa knew probably the latter edition. The passage in question occurs bk. ii. ch. lxxxiv.; in the modern editions, bk. iii. ch. xiv. See also *Rel.* x. Speaking in her Constitutions of the books to be provided in each convent, she mentions in the first place "buenos libros Cartujanos."

carried away with extreme violence, and I knew not why. It seemed as if it would have gone forth out of the body, for it could not contain itself, nor was it able to hope for so great a good. The impetuosity was so excessive that I had no power left, and, as I think, different from what I had been used to. I knew not what ailed my soul, nor what it desired, for it was so changed. I leaned for support, for I could not sit, because my natural strength had utterly failed.

13. Then I saw over my head a dove, very different from those we usually see, for it had not the same plumage, but wings formed of small shells shining brightly. It was larger than an ordinary dove; I thought I heard the rustling of its wings. It hovered above me during the space of an *Ave Maria*. But such was the state of my soul, that in losing itself it lost also the sight of the dove. My spirit grew calm with such a guest; and yet, as I think, a grace so wonderful might have disturbed and frightened it; and as it began to rejoice in the vision, it was delivered from all fear, and with the joy came peace, my soul continuing entranced. The joy of this rapture was exceedingly great; and for the rest of that festal time I was so amazed and bewildered that I did not know what I was doing, nor how I could have received so great a grace. I neither heard nor saw anything, so to speak, because of my great inward joy. From that day forth I perceived in myself a very great progress in the highest love of God, together with a great increase in the strength of my virtues. May He be blessed and praised for ever! Amen.

14. On another occasion I saw that very dove above the head of one of the Dominican fathers; but it seemed to me that the rays and brightness of the wings were far greater. I understood by this that he was to draw souls unto God.

15. At another time I saw our Lady putting a

cope of exceeding whiteness on that Licentiate of the same Order, of whom I have made mention more than once.⁷ She told me that she gave him that cope in consideration of the service he had rendered her by helping to found this house,⁸ that it was a sign that she would preserve his soul pure for the future, and that he should not fall into mortal sin. I hold it for certain that so it came to pass, for he died within a few years; his death and the rest of his life were so penitential, his whole life and death so holy, that, so far as anything can be known, there cannot be a doubt on the subject. One of the friars present at his death told me that, before he breathed his last, he said to him that St. Thomas was with him.⁹ He died in great joy, longing to depart out of this land of exile.

16. Since then he has appeared to me more than once in exceedingly great glory, and told me certain things. He was so given to prayer, that when he was dying, and would have interrupted it if he could because of his great weakness, he was not able to do so; for he was often in a trance. He wrote to me not long before he died, and asked me what he was to do; for as soon as he had said Mass he fell into a trance, which lasted a long time, and which he could not hinder. At last God gave him the reward of the many services of his whole life.

17. I had certain visions, too, of the great graces which our Lord bestowed upon that rector of the Society of Jesus, of whom I have spoken already more than once¹⁰; but I will not say anything of them now, lest I should be too tedious. It was his lot once

⁷ F. Pedro Ibañez. See ch. xxxiii. 5, ch. xxxvi. 23. "This father died Prior of Trianos (Feb. 2, 1565)," is written on the margin of the MS. by F. Bañes.

⁸ St. Joseph, Avila, where St. Teresa was living at this time.

⁹ See below, § 41.

¹⁰ F. Gaspar de Salazar: see ch. xxxiii. 9, ch. xxxiv. 2. It appears from a letter of Feb. 10, 1578, that F. Salazar was reported to his Provincial, F. Juan Suarez, as having a desire to quit the Society for the Carmelite Order.

to be in great trouble, to suffer great persecution and distress. One day, when I was hearing Mass, I saw Christ on the Cross at the elevation of the Host. He spoke certain words to me, which I was to repeat to that father for his comfort, together with others, which were to warn him beforehand of what was coming, and to remind him of what He had suffered on his behalf, and that he must prepare for suffering. This gave him great consolation and courage; and everything came to pass afterwards as our Lord had told me.

18. I have seen great things of members of the Order to which this father belongs, which is the Society of Jesus, and of the whole Order itself; I have occasionally seen them in heaven with white banners in their hands, and I have had other most wonderful visions, as I am saying, about them, and therefore have a great veneration for this Order; for I have had a great deal to do with those who are of it, and I see that their lives are conformed to that which our Lord gave me to understand about them.

19. One night, when I was in prayer, our Lord spoke to me certain words, whereby He made me remember the great wickedness of my past life. They filled me with shame and distress; for though they were not spoken with severity, they caused a feeling and a painfulness which were too much for me: and we feel that we make greater progress in the knowledge of ourselves when we hear one of these words, than we can make by a meditation of many days on our own misery, because these words impress the truth upon us at the same time in such a way that we cannot resist it. He set before me the former inclinations of my will to vanities, and told me to make much of the desire I now had that my will, which had been so ill employed, should be fixed on Him, and that He would accept it.

20. On other occasions He told me to remember

how I used to think it an honourable thing to go against His honour; and again, to remember my debt to Him, for when I was most rebellious He was bestowing His graces upon me. If I am doing anything wrong—and my wrong-doings are many—His Majesty makes me see it in such a way that I am utterly confounded; and as I do so often, that happens often also. I have been found fault with by my confessors occasionally; and on betaking myself to prayer for consolation, have received a real reprimand.

21. To return to what I was speaking of. When our Lord made me remember my wicked life, I wept; for as I considered that I had then never done any good, I thought He might be about to bestow upon me some special grace; because most frequently, when I receive any particular mercy from our Lord, it is when I have been previously greatly humiliated, in order that I may the more clearly see how far I am from deserving it. I think our Lord must do it for that end.

22. Almost immediately after this I was so raised up in spirit that I thought myself to be, as it were, out of the body; at least, I did not know that I was living in it.¹¹ I had a vision of the most Sacred Humanity in exceeding glory, greater than I had ever seen It in before. I beheld It in a wonderful and clear way in the bosom of the Father. I cannot tell how it was, for I saw myself, without seeing, as it seemed to me, in the presence of God. My amazement was such that I remained, as I believe, some days before I could recover myself. I had continually before me, as present, the Majesty of the Son of God, though not so distinctly as in the vision. I understood this well enough; but the vision remained so impressed on my imagination, that I could not get rid of it for some time, though it had lasted but a moment; it is a great comfort to me, and also a great blessing.

¹¹ 2 Cor. xii. 2: "Sive in corpore nescio, sive extra corpus nescio."

23. I have had this vision on three other occasions, and it is, I think, the highest of all the visions which our Lord in His mercy showed me.¹² The fruits of it are the very greatest, for it seems to purify the soul in a wonderful way, and destroy, as it were utterly, altogether the strength of our sensual nature. It is a grand flame of fire, which seems to burn up and annihilate all the desires of this life. For though now—glory be to God!—I had no desires after vanities, I saw clearly in the vision how all things are vanity and how hollow are all the dignities of earth; it was a great lesson, teaching me to raise up my desires to the Truth alone. It impresses on the soul a sense of the presence of God such as I cannot in any way describe, only it is very different from that which it is in our own power to acquire on earth. It fills the soul with profound astonishment at its own daring, and at any one else being able to dare to offend His most awful Majesty.

24. I must have spoken now and then of the effects of visions,¹³ and of other matters of the same kind, and I have already said that the blessings they bring with them are of various degrees; but those of this vision are the highest of all. When I went to Communion once I called to mind the exceeding great majesty of Him I had seen, and considered that it was He who is present in the most Holy Sacrament, and very often our Lord was pleased to show Himself to me in the Host; the very hairs on my head stood,¹⁴ and I thought I should come to nothing.

25. O my Lord! ah, if Thou didst not throw a veil over Thy greatness, who would dare, being so foul and miserable, to come in contact with Thy great Majesty? Blessed be Thou, O Lord; may the angels and all creation praise Thee, Who orderest all things according to the measure of our weakness, so

¹² Ch. xxix. 2.

¹³ See ch. xxviii.

¹⁴ Job. iv. 15: "Inhorruerunt pili carnis meæ."

that, when we have the fruition of Thy sovereign mercies, Thy great power may not terrify us, so that we dare not, being a frail and miserable race, persevere in that fruition!

26. It might happen to us as it did to the labourer—I know it to be a certain fact—who found a treasure beyond his expectations, which were mean. When he saw himself in possession of it, he was seized with melancholy, which by degrees brought him to his grave through simple distress and anxiety of mind, because he did not know what to do with his treasure. If he had not found it all at once, and if others had given him portions of it by degrees, maintaining him thereby, he might have been more happy than he had been in his poverty, nor would it have cost him his life.

27. O Thou Treasure of the poor! how marvelously Thou sustainest souls, showing to them, not all at once, but by little and little, the abundance of Thy riches! When I behold Thy great Majesty hidden beneath that which is so slight as the Host is, I am filled with wonder, ever since that vision, at Thy great wisdom; and I know not how it is that our Lord gives me the strength and courage necessary to draw near to Him, were it not that He who has had such compassion on me, and still has, gives me strength, nor would it be possible for me to be silent, or refrain from making known marvels so great.

28. What must be the thoughts of a wretched person such as I am, full of abominations, and who has spent her life with so little fear of God, when she draws near to our Lord's great Majesty, at the moment He is pleased to show Himself to my soul? How can I open my mouth, that has uttered so many words against Him, to receive that most glorious Body, purity and compassion itself? The love that is visible in His most beautiful Face, sweet and tender, pains and distresses the soul, because it has not served Him,

more than all the terrors of His Majesty. What should have been my thoughts, then, on those two occasions when I saw what I have described? Truly, O my Lord and my joy, I am going to say that in some way, in these great afflictions of my soul, I have done something in Thy service. Ah! I know not what I am saying, for I am writing this as if the words were not mine,¹⁵ because I am troubled, and in some measure beside myself, when I call these things to remembrance. If these thoughts were really mine, I might well say that I had done something for Thee, O my Lord; but as I can have no good thought if Thou givest it not, no thanks are due to me; I am the debtor, O Lord, and it is Thou who art the offended One.

29. Once, when I was going to Communion, I saw with the eyes of the soul, more distinctly than with those of the body, two devils of most hideous shape; their horns seemed to encompass the throat of the poor priest; and I beheld my Lord, in that great majesty of which I have spoken,¹⁶ held in the hands of that priest, in the Host he was about to give me. It was plain that those hands were those of a sinner, and I felt that the soul of that priest was in mortal sin. What must it be, O my Lord, to look upon Thy beauty amid shapes so hideous? The two devils were so frightened and cowed in Thy presence, that they seemed as if they would have willingly run away, hadst Thou but given them leave. So troubled was I by the vision, that I knew not how I could go to Communion. I was also in great fear, for I thought, if the vision was from God, that His Majesty would not have allowed me to see the evil state of that soul.¹⁷

30. Our Lord Himself told me to pray for that priest; that He had allowed this in order that I might

¹⁵ The biographers of the Saint say that she often found, on returning from an ecstasy, certain passages written, but not by herself; this seems to be alluded to here. There is, however, no difference in the handwriting.

¹⁶ § 22.

¹⁷ St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, bk. ii, ch. xxvi.

understand the power of the words of consecration, and how God failed not to be present,¹⁸ however wicked the priest might be who uttered them; and that I might see His great goodness in that He left Himself in the very hands of His enemy, for my good and for the good of all. I understood clearly how the priests are under greater obligations to be holy than other persons; and what a horrible thing it is to receive this most Holy Sacrament unworthily, and how great is the devil's dominion over a soul in mortal sin. It did me a great service, and made me fully understand what I owe to God. May He be blessed for evermore!

31. At another time I had a vision of a different kind, which frightened me very much. I was in a place where a certain person died, who as I understood had led a very bad life, and that for many years. But he had been ill for two years, and in some respects seemed to have reformed. He died without confession; nevertheless, I did not think he would be damned. When the body had been wrapped in the winding-sheet, I saw it laid hold of by a multitude of devils, who seemed to toss it to and fro, and also to treat it with great cruelty. I was terrified at the sight, for they dragged it about with great hooks. But when I saw it carried to the grave with all the respect and ceremoniousness common to all, I began to think of the goodness of God, who would not allow that person to be dishonoured, but would have the fact of his being His enemy concealed.

32. I was almost out of my senses at the sight. During the whole of the funeral service, I did not see one of the evil spirits. Afterwards, when the body was about to be laid in the grave, so great a multitude of them was therein waiting to receive it, that I was beside myself at the sight, and it required no slight courage on my part not to betray my distress. I

¹⁸ *Rel.* ix. 20.

thought of the treatment which that soul would receive, when the devils had such power over the wretched body. Would to God that all who live in mortal sin might see what I then saw,—it was a fearful sight ; it would go, I believe, a great way towards making them lead better lives.

33. All this made me know more of what I owe to God, and of the evils from which He has delivered me. I was in great terror. I spoke of it to my confessor, and I thought it might be an illusion of Satan, in order to take away my good opinion of that person, who yet was not accounted a very good Christian. The truth is, that, whether it was an illusion or not, it makes me afraid whenever I think of it.

34. Now that I have begun to speak of the visions I had concerning the dead, I will mention some matters which our Lord was pleased to reveal to me in relation to certain souls. I will confine myself to a few for the sake of brevity, and because they are not necessary ; I mean that they are not for our profit. They told me that one who had been our Provincial¹⁹—he was then of another province—was dead. He was a man

¹⁹ The first editors of the Life of St. Teresa, for whom it would have been easy to ascertain the name of this Provincial, having unfortunately failed to do so, the present state of the Archives of the Order renders the solution of the question uncommonly difficult. Fuente says the passage cannot refer to Angel de Salazar, which is obvious, seeing that he outlived the Saint by more than ten years. The Spanish text says, more clearly than the English translation, that this ex-Provincial of Castile, who had been superior for twenty years, and had had many dealings with St. Teresa, to whom he had shown great kindness, died while Provincial of some other province far away. Our list of Provincials of the other Spanish provinces being defective, we can only judge from what we know of the Provincials of Castile, assuming the lists of these to be sufficiently complete. And here there are two to whom the few characteristics might apply, the first being Juan de Altamiras, whose name occurs in 1525 and 1528 as conventual at Avila, in 1539 as Prior of the same convent, in 1543 as conventual, from 1545 to 1548 as Provincial of Castile, 1555 Prior, 1556 Vicar, and 1557 Prior of Avila. The other, to whom, in the opinion of the present writer, the balance of probabilities seems to point, is Gregorio Fernandez, mentioned in note 8 to ch. xxxii. But we do not know whether the one or the other became Provincial of some other province, nor do we know the date and place of their death, so that the question must remain open.

of great virtue, with whom I had had a great deal to do, and to whom I was under many obligations for certain kindnesses shown me. When I heard that he was dead, I was exceedingly troubled, because I trembled for his salvation, seeing that he had been superior for twenty years. That is what I dread very much; for the cure of souls seems to me to be full of danger. I went to an oratory in great distress, and gave up to him all the good I had ever done in my whole life,—it was little enough,—and prayed our Lord that His merits might fill up what was wanting, in order that this soul might be delivered up from purgatory.

35. While I was thus praying to our Lord as well as I could, he seemed to me to rise up from the depths of the earth on my right hand, and I saw him ascend to heaven in exceeding great joy. He was a very old man then, but I saw him as if he were only thirty years old, and I thought even younger, and there was a brightness in his face. This vision passed away very quickly; but I was so exceedingly comforted by it, that I could never again mourn his death, although many persons were distressed at it, for he was very much beloved. So greatly comforted was my soul, that nothing disturbed it, neither could I doubt the truth of the vision; I mean that it was no illusion.

36. I had this vision about a fortnight after he was dead; nevertheless, I did not omit to obtain prayers for him, and I prayed myself, only I could not pray with the same earnestness that I should have done if I had not seen that vision. For when our Lord showed him thus to me, it seemed to me afterwards, when I prayed for him to His Majesty,—and I could not help it,—that I was like one who gave alms to a rich man. Later on I heard an account of the death he died in our Lord—he was far away from here; it was one of such great edification, that

he left all wondering to see how recollected, how penitent, and how humble he was when he died.

37. A nun, who was a great servant of God, died in this house. On the next day one of the sisters was reciting the lesson in the Office of the Dead, which was said in choir for that nun's soul, and I was standing myself to assist her in singing the versicle, when, in the middle of the lesson, I saw the departed nun, as I believe, in a vision; her soul seemed to rise on my right hand like the soul of the Provincial, and ascend to heaven. This vision was not imaginary, like the preceding, but like those others of which I have spoken before²⁰; it is not less certain, however, than the other visions I had.

38. Another nun died in this same house of mine: she was about eighteen or twenty years of age, and had always been sickly. She was a great servant of God, attentive in choir, and a person of great virtue. I certainly thought that she would not go to purgatory, on account of her exceeding merits, because the infirmities under which she had laboured were many. While I was saying the Office, before she was buried,—she had been dead about four hours,—I saw her rise in the same place and ascend to heaven.

39. I was once in one of the colleges of the Society of Jesus, and in one of those great sufferings which, as I have said,²¹ I occasionally had, and still have, both in soul and body, and then so grievously that I was not able, as it seemed to me, to have even one good thought. The night before, one of the brothers of that house had died in it; and I, as well as I could, was commending his soul to God, and hearing the Mass which another father of that Society was saying for him, when I became recollected at once, and saw him go up to heaven in great glory, and our Lord with him. I understood that His Majesty went with him by way of special grace.

²⁰ See ch. xxvii.

²¹ Ch. xxx. 9.

40. Another brother of our Order, a good friar,²³ was very ill; and when I was at Mass, I became recollected, and saw him dead, entering into heaven without going through purgatory. He died, as I afterwards learned, at the very time of my vision. I was amazed that he had not gone to purgatory. I understood that, having become a friar and carefully kept the rule, the Bulls of the Order had been of use to him, so that he did not pass into purgatory. I do not know why I came to have this revealed to me; I think it must be because I was to learn that it is not enough for a man to be a friar in his habit—I mean, to wear the habit—to attain to that state of high perfection which that of a friar is.

41. I will speak no more of these things, because, as I have said just,²³ there is no necessity for it, though our Lord has been so gracious to me as to show me much. But in all the visions I had, I saw no souls escape purgatory except this Carmelite father, the holy friar Peter of Alcantara, and that Dominican father of whom I spoke before.²⁴ It pleased our Lord to let me see the degree of glory to which some souls have been raised, showing them to me in the places they occupy. There is a great difference between one place and another.

²³ Fray Diego de San Matia, who had been confessor to the nuns of the Incarnation. This is not, as some writers have thought, an allusion to the so-called Sabbatine Indulgence (which is quite a different matter), but to the Bulls of Honorius III. of January 30, 1226, and Innocent IV. of June 8, 1245 confirming the Carmelite Rule and enjoining its observance "in remissionem peccatorum" (*Bullar. Carmelit. I.*, 1 and 6).

²³ § 34.

²⁴ § 15. Fr. Pedro Ibañez.

CHAPTER XXXIX

OTHER GRACES BESTOWED ON THE SAINT. THE PROMISES OF OUR LORD TO HER. DIVINE LOCUTIONS AND VISIONS.

She continues the same subject, mentioning great graces granted her by God. How He promised to hear her requests on behalf of persons for whom she should pray. Some remarkable instances in which His Majesty thus favoured her.

I. I WAS once importuning our Lord exceedingly to restore the sight of a person who had claims upon me, and who was almost wholly blind. I was very sorry for him, and afraid our Lord would not hear me because of my sins. He appeared to me as at other times, and began to show the wound in His left hand ; with the other He drew out the great nail that was in it, and it seemed to me that, in drawing the nail, He tore the flesh. The greatness of the pain was manifest, and I was very much distressed thereat. He said to me, that He who had borne that for my sake would still more readily grant what I asked Him, and that I was not to have any doubts about it. He promised me there was nothing I should ask that He would not grant ; that He knew I should ask nothing that was not for His glory, and that He would grant me what I was now praying for. Even during the time when I did not serve Him, I should find, if I considered it, I had asked nothing that He had not granted in an ampler manner than I had known how to ask ; how much more amply still would He grant what I asked for, now that He knew I loved Him ! I was not to doubt. I do not think that eight days passed before our Lord restored that person to sight. My confessor knew it forthwith. It might be that it

was not owing to my prayer ; but, as I had had the vision, I have a certain conviction that it was a grace accorded to me. I gave thanks to His Majesty.

2. Again, a person was exceedingly ill of a most painful disease ; but, as I do not know what it was, I do not describe it by its name here. What he had gone through for two months was beyond all endurance ; and his pain was so great that he tore his own flesh. My confessor, the rector of whom I have spoken,¹ went to see him ; he was very sorry for him, and told me that I must anyhow go myself and visit him ; he was one whom I might visit, for he was my kinsman. I went, and was moved to such a tender compassion for him that I began, with the utmost importunity, to ask our Lord to restore him to health. Herein I saw clearly how gracious our Lord was to me, so far as I could judge ; for immediately, the next day, he was completely rid of that pain.

3. I was once in the deepest distress, because I knew that a person to whom I was under great obligations was about to commit an act highly offensive to God and dishonourable to himself. He was determined upon it. I was so much harassed by this that I did not know what to do in order to change his purpose ; and it seemed to me as if nothing could be done. I implored God, from the bottom of my heart, to find a way to hinder it ; but till I found it I could find no relief for the pain I felt. In my distress, I went to a very lonely hermitage,—one of those belonging to this monastery,—in which there is a picture of Christ bound to the pillar ; and there, as I was imploring our Lord to grant me this grace, I heard a voice of exceeding gentleness, speaking, as it were, in a whisper.²

¹ Ch. xxxiii. 10. F. Gaspar de Salazar.

² 3 Kings xix. 12 : "Sibilus auræ tenuis." The hermitage is in the garden of the convent of St. Joseph's, Avila. The Saint charged a painter with making a picture of our Lord at the pillar, which is still there. It is said to have been miraculously completed ; a replica of it is in the sacristy of the convent.

My whole body trembled, for it made me afraid. I wished to understand what was said, but I could not, for it all passed away in a moment.

4. When my fears had subsided, and that was immediately, I became conscious of an inward calmness, a joy and delight, which made me marvel how the mere hearing a voice,—I heard it with my bodily ears,—without understanding a word, could have such an effect on the soul. I saw by this that my prayer was granted; and so it was; and I was freed from my anxieties about a matter not yet accomplished, as it afterwards was, as completely as if I saw it done. I told my confessors of it, for I had two at this time, both of them learned men, and great servants of God.³

5. I knew of a person who had resolved to serve God in all earnestness,⁴ and had for some days given himself to prayer, in which he had received many graces from our Lord, but who had abandoned his good resolutions because of certain occasions of sin in which he was involved, and which he would not avoid; they were extremely perilous. This caused me the utmost distress, because the person was one for whom I had a great affection, and one to whom I owed much. For more than a month I believe I did nothing else but pray to God for his conversion. One day, when I was in prayer, I saw a devil close by in a great rage, tearing to pieces some paper which he had in his hands. That sight consoled me greatly, because it seemed that my prayer had been heard. So it was, as I learnt afterwards; for that person had made his confession with great contrition, and returned to God so sincerely, that I trust in His Majesty he will always advance further and further. May He be blessed for ever! Amen.

6. In answer to my prayers, our Lord has very often rescued souls from mortal sins, and led others

³ Fr. Dominic Bañez and Fr. Garcia de Toledo, both Dominicans.

⁴ *Rel.* i. 22.

on to greater perfection. But as to the delivering of souls out of purgatory, and other remarkable acts, so many are the mercies of our Lord herein, that were I to speak of them I should only weary myself and my reader. But He has done more by me for the salvation of souls than for the health of the body. This is very well known, and there are many to bear witness to it.

7. At first it made me scrupulous, because I could not help thinking that our Lord did these things in answer to my prayer; I say nothing of the chief reason of all—His pure compassion. But now these graces are so many, and so well known to others, that it gives me no pain to think so. I bless His Majesty, and abase myself, because I am still more deeply in His debt; and I believe that He makes my desire to serve Him grow, and my love revive.

8. But what amazes me most is this: however much I may wish to pray for those graces which our Lord sees not to be expedient, I cannot do it; and if I try, I do so with little earnestness, force, and spirit: it is impossible to do more, even if I would. But it is not so as to those which His Majesty intends to grant. These I can pray for constantly, and with great importunity; though I do not carry them in my memory, they seem to present themselves to me at once.⁵

9. There is a great difference between these two ways of praying, and I know not how to explain it. As to the first, when I pray for those graces which our Lord does not mean to grant,—even though they concern me very nearly,—I am like one whose tongue is tied; who, though he would speak, yet cannot; or, if he speaks, sees that people do not listen to him. And yet I do not fail to force myself to pray, though not conscious of that fervour which I have when praying for those graces which our Lord intends to

⁵ See St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, bk. iii, ch. i.

give. In the second case, I am like one who speaks clearly and intelligibly to another, whom he sees to be a willing listener.

10. The prayer that is not to be heard is, so to speak, like vocal prayer; the other is a prayer of contemplation so high that our Lord shows Himself in such a way as to make us feel He hears us, and that He delights in our prayer, and that He is about to grant our petition. Blessed be He for ever who gives me so much, and to whom I give so little! For what is he worth, O my Lord, who does not utterly abase himself to nothing for Thee? How much, how much, how much,—I might say so a thousand times,—I fall short of this! It is on this account that I do not wish to live,—though there be other reasons also,—because I do not live according to the obligations which bind me to Thee. What imperfections I trace in myself! what remissness in Thy service! Certainly, I could wish occasionally I had no sense, that I might be unconscious of the great evil that is in me. May He who can do all things help me!

11. When I was staying in the house of that lady of whom I have spoken before,⁶ it was necessary for me to be very watchful over myself, and keep continually in mind the intrinsic vanity of all the things of this life, because of the great esteem I was held in; and of the praises bestowed on me. There was much there to which I might have become attached, if I had looked only to myself; but I looked to Him who sees things as they really are, not to let me go out of His hand. Now that I speak of seeing things as they really are, I remember how great a trial it is for those to whom God has granted a true insight into the things of earth to have to discuss them with others. They wear so many disguises, as our Lord once told me,—and much of what I am saying of them is not from myself, but rather what my Heavenly Master

⁶ Ch, xxxiv, 1,

has taught me ; and therefore, in speaking of them, when I say distinctly I understood this, or our Lord told me this, I am very scrupulous neither to add nor to take away one single syllable ; so, when I do not clearly remember everything exactly, that must be taken as coming from myself, and some things, perhaps, are so altogether. I do not call mine that which is good, for I know there is no other good in me but only that which our Lord gave me when I was so far from deserving it : I call that mine which I speak without having had it made known to me by revelation.

12. But, O my God, how is it that we too often judge even spiritual things, as we do those of the world, by our own understanding, wresting them grievously from their true meaning ? We think we may measure our progress by the years which we have given to the exercise of prayer ; we even think we can prescribe limits to Him who bestows His gifts not by measure⁷ when He wills, and who in six months can give to one more than to another in many years. This is a fact which I have so frequently observed in many persons, that I am surprised how any of us can deny it.

13. I am certainly convinced that he will not remain under this delusion who possesses the gift of discerning spirits, and to whom our Lord has given real humility ; for such a one will judge of them by the fruits, by the good resolutions and love,—and our Lord gives him light to understand the matter ; and herein He regards the progress and advancement of souls, not the years they may have spent in prayer ; for one person may make greater progress in six months than another in twenty years, because, as I said before, our Lord gives to whom He will, particularly to him who is best disposed.

⁷ Ch. xxxiv. 14. St. John iii. 34 : " Non enim ad mensuram dat Deus spiritum."

14. I see this in certain persons of tender years who have come to this monastery,—God touches their hearts, and gives them a little light and love.⁸ I speak of that brief interval in which He gives them sweetness in prayer, and then they wait for nothing further, and make light of every difficulty, forgetting the necessity even of food; for they shut themselves up for ever in a house that is unendowed, as persons who make no account of their life, for His sake, Who, they know, loves them. They give up everything, even their own will; and it never enters into their mind that they might be discontented in so small a house, and where enclosure is so strictly observed. They offer themselves wholly in sacrifice to God.

15. Oh, how willingly do I admit that they are better than I am! and how I ought to be ashamed of myself before God! What His Majesty has not been able to accomplish in me in so many years,—it is long ago since I began to pray, and He to bestow His graces upon me,—He accomplished in them in three months, and in some of them even in three days, though He gives them much fewer graces than He gave to me: and yet His Majesty rewards them well; most assuredly they are not sorry for what they have done for Him.

16. I wish, therefore, we reminded ourselves of those long years which have gone by since we made our religious profession. I say this to those persons

⁸ In writing this passage St. Teresa was probably thinking of Mary of St. Joseph (Davila, see ch. xxxvi., note 17) and Doña Maria de Ocampo, daughter of Diego de Cepeda and Beatriz de la Cruz, born in 1543, who made her profession on October 21, 1564, under the name of Maria Bautista; she brought 300 ducats. St. Teresa took her to the new foundation of Valladolid, where she spent almost her whole life, and died August 10, 1603. And also of Isabel de Ortega, daughter of Juan de Ortega and Maria de Vergas, born in 1537. At first she intended entering the royal convent of Franciscan nuns at Madrid, but on the advice of St. Peter of Alcantara she joined St. Teresa, took the name of Isabel of St. Dominic, and made her profession, October 21, 1565; she brought 600 ducats. St. Teresa relied greatly on her judgment and put her in charge of the foundations of Toledo, Pastrana, and Segovia; at a later period she was occupied in those of Saragossa and Ocaña, but finally returned to Avila, where she died June 13, 1623.

also, who have given themselves long ago to prayer, but not for the purpose of distressing those who in a short time have made greater progress than we have made, by making them retrace their steps, so that they may proceed only as we do ourselves. We must not desire those who, because of the graces God has given them, are flying like eagles, to become like chickens whose feet are tied. Let us rather look at His Majesty, and give these souls the reins, if we see that they are humble; for our Lord, who has had such compassion upon them, will not let them fall into the abyss.

17. These souls trust themselves in the hands of God, for the truth, which they learn by faith, helps them to do it; and shall not we also trust them to Him, without seeking to measure them by our measure, which is that of our meanness of spirit? We must not do it; for if we cannot ascend to the heights of their great love and courage,—without experience none can comprehend them,—let us humble ourselves, and not condemn them; for, by this seeming regard to their progress, we hinder our own, and miss the opportunity our Lord gives us to humble ourselves, to ascertain our own shortcomings, and learn how much more detached and more near to God these souls must be than we are, seeing that His Majesty draws so near to them Himself.

18. I have no other intention here, and I wish to have no other, than to express my preference for the prayer that in a short time results in these great effects, which show themselves at once; for it is impossible they should enable us to leave all things only to please God, if they were not accompanied with a vehement love. I would rather have that prayer than that which lasted many years, but which at the end of the time, as well as at the beginning, never issued in a resolution to do anything for God, with the exception of some trifling services, like a grain of

salt, without weight or bulk, and which a bird might carry away in its mouth. Is it not a serious and mortifying thought that we are making much of certain services which we render our Lord, but which are too pitiable to be considered, even if they were many in number? This is my case, and I am forgetting every moment the mercies of our Lord. I do not mean that His Majesty will not make much of them Himself, for He is good; but I wish I made no account of them myself, or even perceived that I did them, for they are nothing worth.

19. But O, my Lord, do Thou forgive me, and blame me not, if I try to console myself a little with the little I do, seeing that I do not serve Thee at all; for if I rendered Thee any great services, I should not think of these trifles. Blessed are they who serve Thee in great deeds; if envying these, and desiring to do what they do, were of any help to me, I should not be so far behind them as I am in pleasing Thee; but I am nothing worth, O my Lord; do Thou make me of some worth, Thou Who lovest me so much.

20. During one of those days, when this monastery, which seems to have cost me some labour, was fully founded by the arrival of the Brief from Rome, which empowered us to live without an endowment⁹; and I was comforting myself at seeing the whole affair concluded, and thinking of all the trouble I had had, and giving thanks to our Lord for having been pleased to make some use of me,—it happened that I began to consider all that we had gone through. Well, so it was; in every one of my actions, which I thought were of some service, I traced so many faults and imperfections, now and then but little courage, very frequently a want of faith; for until this moment, when I see everything accomplished, I never absolutely believed; neither, however, on the other hand, could I doubt what our Lord said to me about the

⁹ The one of December 5, 1562. See ch. xxxiii. 15.

foundation of this house. I cannot tell how it was; very often the matter seemed to me, on the one hand, impossible; and, on the other hand, I could not be in doubt; I mean, I could not believe that it would not be accomplished. In short, I find that our Lord Himself, on His part, did all the good that was done, while I did all the evil. I therefore ceased to think of the matter, and wished never to be reminded of it again, lest I should do myself some harm by dwelling on my many faults. Blessed be He Who, when He pleases, draws good out of all my failings! Amen.

21. I say, then, there is danger in counting the years we have given to prayer; for, granting that there is nothing in it against humility, it seems to me to imply something like an appearance of thinking that we have merited, in some degree, by the service rendered. I do not mean that there is no merit in it at all, nor that it will not be well rewarded¹⁰; yet if any spiritual person thinks, because he has given himself to prayer for many years, that he deserves any spiritual consolations, I am sure he will never attain to spiritual perfection. Is it not enough that a man has merited the protection of God, which keeps Him from committing those sins into which he fell before he began to pray, but he must also, as they say, sue God for His own money?

22. This does not seem to me to be deep humility, and yet it may be that it is; however, I look on it as great boldness, for I, who have very little humility, have never ventured upon it. It may be that I never asked for it, because I had never served Him; perhaps, if I had served Him, I should have been more importunate than all others with our Lord for my reward.

23. I do not mean that the soul makes no progress

¹⁰ *Imitation of Christ*, bk. i. ch. xv. 5 and ch. xxiii. 2. The *Imitation* was published in Spanish as early as 1490, but the edition known to St. Teresa under the title of *Contemptus Mundi* was that of Luis de Granada, printed at Sevilla in 1536 and again at Lisbon in 1542 and Alcalá in 1548. St. Teresa ordered each convent to have copies of it (*Constitutions*, 7).

in time, or that God will not reward it, if its prayer has been humble; but I do mean that we should forget the number of years we have been praying, because all that we can do is utterly worthless in comparison with one drop of blood out of those which our Lord shed for us. And if the more we serve Him, the more we become His debtors, what is it, then, we are asking for? for, if we pay one farthing of the debt, He gives us back a thousand ducats. For the love of God, let us leave these questions alone, for they belong to Him. Comparisons are always bad, even in earthly things; what, then, must they be in that, the knowledge of which God has reserved to Himself? His Majesty showed this clearly enough, when those who came late and those who came early to His vineyard received the same wages.¹¹

24. I have sat down so often to write, and have been so many days writing these three leaves,—for, as I have said,¹² I had, and have still, but few opportunities,—that I forgot what I had begun with, namely, the following vision.¹³

25. I was in prayer, and saw myself on a wide plain all alone. Round about me stood a great multitude of all kinds of people, who hemmed me in on every side; all of them seemed to have weapons of war in their hands, to hurt me; some had spears, others swords; some had daggers, and others very long rapiers. In short, I could not move away in any direction without exposing myself to the hazard of death, and I was alone, without any one to take my part. In this distress of mind, not knowing what to do, I lifted up my eyes to heaven, and saw Christ, not in heaven, but high above me in the air, holding out His hand to me, and there protecting me in such

¹¹ St. Matt. xx. 9-14: "Volo autem et huic novissimo dare sicut et tibi."

¹² Ch. xiv. 12.

¹³ The Saint had this vision when she was in the house of Doña Luisa de la Cerda in Toledo, and it was fulfilled in the opposition she met with in the foundation of St. Joseph of Avila. See ch. xxxvi. 18.

a way that I was no longer afraid of all that multitude, neither could they, though they wished it, do me any harm.

26. At first the vision seemed to have no results ; but it has been of the greatest help to me, since I understood what it meant. Not long afterwards, I saw myself, as it were, exposed to the like assault, and I saw that the vision represented the world, because everything in it takes up arms against the poor soul. We need not speak of those who are not great servants of our Lord, nor of honours, possessions, and pleasures, with other things of the same nature ; for it is clear that the soul, if it be not watchful, will find itself caught in a net,—at least, all these things labour to ensnare it ; more than this, so also do friends and relatives, and—what frightens me most— even good people. I found myself afterwards so beset on all sides, good people thinking they were doing good, and I knowing not how to defend myself, nor what to do.

27. O my God, if I were to say in what way, and in how many ways, I was tried at that time, even after that trial of which I have just spoken, what a warning I should be giving to men to hate the whole world utterly ! It was the greatest of all the persecutions I had to undergo. I saw myself occasionally so hemmed in on every side, that I could do nothing else but lift up my eyes to heaven, and cry unto God.¹⁴ I recollected well what I had seen in the vision, and it helped me greatly not to trust much in any one, for there is no one that can be relied on except God. In all my great trials, our Lord—He showed it to me—sent always some one on His part to hold out his hand to help me, as it was shown to me in the vision, so that I might attach myself to nothing, but only please our Lord ; and this has been enough to sustain the little

¹⁴ 2 Paralip. xx. 12 : "Hoc solum habemus residui, ut oculos nostros dirigamus ad Te."

virtue I have in desiring to serve Thee: be Thou blessed for evermore!

28. On one occasion I was exceedingly disquieted and troubled, unable to recollect myself, fighting and struggling with my thoughts, running upon matters which did not relate to perfection; and, moreover, I did not think I was so detached from all things as I used to be. When I found myself in this wretched state, I was afraid that the graces I had received from our Lord were illusions, and the end was that a great darkness covered my soul. In this my distress our Lord began to speak to me: He bade me not to harass myself, but learn, from the consideration of my misery, what it would be if He withdrew Himself from me, and that we were never safe while living in the flesh. It was given me to understand how this fighting and struggling are profitable to us, because of the reward, and it seemed to me as if our Lord were sorry for us who live in the world. Moreover, He bade me not to suppose that He had forgotten me; He would never abandon me, but it was necessary I should do all that I could myself.

29. Our Lord said all this with great tenderness and sweetness; He also spoke other most gracious words, which I need not repeat. His Majesty, further showing His great love for me, said to me very often: "Thou art Mine, and I am thine." I am in the habit of saying myself, and I believe in all sincerity: "What do I care for myself?—I only care for Thee, O my Lord."

30. These words of our Lord, and the consolation He gives me, fill me with the utmost shame, when I remember what I am. I have said it before, I think,¹⁵ and I still say now and then to my confessor, that it requires greater courage to receive these graces than to endure the heaviest trials. When they are come, I forget, as it were, all I have done, and there is nothing

¹⁵ Ch. xx. 4.

before me but a picture of my wretchedness, and my understanding can make no reflections; this, also, seems to me at times to be supernatural.

31. Sometimes I have such a vehement longing for Communion; I do not think it can be expressed. One morning it happened to rain so much as to make it seem impossible to leave the house.¹⁶ When I had gone out, I was so beside myself with that longing, that if spears had been pointed at my heart, I should have rushed upon them; the rain was nothing. When I entered the church I fell into a deep trance, and saw heaven open—not a door only, as I used to see at other times. I beheld the throne which, as I have told you, my father, I saw at other times, with another throne above it, whereon, though I saw not, I understood by a certain inexplicable knowledge that the Godhead dwelt.

32. The throne seemed to me to be supported by certain animals; I believe I saw the form of them: I thought they might be the Evangelists. But now the throne was arrayed, and Him who sat on it I did not see, but only an exceedingly great multitude of angels, who seemed to me more beautiful, beyond all comparison, than those I had seen in heaven. I thought they were, perhaps, the seraphim or cherubim, for they were very different in their glory, and seemingly all on fire. The difference is great, as I said before¹⁷; and the joy I then felt cannot be described, either in writing or by word of mouth; it is inconceivable to any one who has not had experience of it. I felt that everything man can desire was all there together, and I saw nothing; they told me, but I know not who, that all I could do there was to understand that I could understand nothing, and see how everything was nothing in comparison with that. So it was; my soul afterwards was vexed to see that it could rest

¹⁶ This happened probably while she, as nun of the Incarnation, was staying with some relations of hers.

¹⁷ Ch. xxix. 16.

on any created thing : how much more, then, if it had any affection thereto ; for everything seemed to me but an ant-hill. I communicated, and remained during Mass. I know not how it was : I thought I had been but a few minutes, and was amazed when the clock struck ; I had been two hours in that trance and joy.

33. I was afterwards amazed at this fire, which seems to spring forth out of the true love of God ; for though I might long for it, labour for it, and annihilate myself in the effort to obtain it, I can do nothing towards procuring a single spark of it myself, because it all comes of the good pleasure of His Majesty, as I said on another occasion.¹⁸ It seems to burn up the old man, with his faults, his lukewarmness, and misery ; so that it is like the phoenix of which I have read that it comes forth, after being burnt, out of its own ashes into a new life. Thus it is with the soul : it is changed into another, whose desires are different, and whose strength is great. It seems to be no longer what it was before, and begins to walk renewed in purity in the ways of our Lord. When I was praying to Him that thus it might be with me, and that I might begin His service anew, He said to me : “ The comparison thou hast made is good ; take care never to forget it, that thou mayest always labour to advance.”

34. Once, when I was doubting, as I said just now,¹⁹ whether these visions came from God or not, our Lord appeared, and, with some severity, said to me : “ O children of men, how long will you remain hard of heart ? ” I was to examine myself carefully on one subject,—whether I had given myself up wholly to Him, or not. If I had,—and it was so,—I was to believe that He would not suffer me to perish. I was very much afflicted when He spoke thus, but He turned to me with great tenderness and sweetness,

¹⁸ Ch. xxix. 13.

¹⁹ § 28.

and bade me not to distress myself, for He knew already that, so far as it lay in my power, I would not fail in anything that was for His service; that He Himself would do what I wished,—and so He did grant what I was then praying for; that I was to consider my love for Him, which was daily growing in me, for I should see by this that these visions did not come from Satan; that I must not imagine that God would ever allow the devil to have so much power over the souls of His servants as to give them such clearness of understanding and such peace as I had.

35. He gave me also to understand that, when such and so many persons had told me the visions were from God, I should do wrong if I did not believe them.²⁰

36. Once, when I was reciting the psalm *Quicumque vult*,²¹ I was given to understand the mystery of One God and Three Persons with so much clearness, that I was greatly astonished and consoled at the same time. This was of the greatest help to me, for it enabled me to know more of the greatness and marvels of God; and when I think of the most Holy Trinity, or hear It spoken of, I seem to understand the mystery, and a great joy it is.

37. One day—it was the feast of the Assumption of the Queen of the Angels, and our Lady—our Lord was pleased to grant me this grace. In a trance He made me behold her going up to heaven, the joy and solemnity of her reception there, as well as the place where she now sits. To describe it is more than I can do; the joy that filled my soul at the sight of such great glory was excessive. The effects of the vision were great; it made me long to endure still greater trials; and I had a vehement desire to serve our Lady, because of her great merits.

38. Once, in one of the Colleges of the Society of

²⁰ See ch. xxviii. 19, 20.

²¹ Commonly called the Creed of St. Athanasius.

Jesus, when the brothers of the house were communicating, I saw an exceedingly rich canopy above their heads. I saw this twice; but I never saw it when others were receiving Communion.

CHAPTER XL.

VISIONS, REVELATIONS, AND LOCUTIONS.

Continuation of the same subject of great mercies God has shown her. From some of these very good doctrines may be gathered, and this, as she declares, was, besides compliance, with obedience, her principal motive (in writing this book), namely, to enumerate such of these mercies as would be instructive to souls. This chapter brings the history of her life, written by herself, to an end. May it be for the glory of God. Amen.

I. ONE day, in prayer, the sweetness of which was so great that, knowing how unworthy I was of so great a blessing, I began to think how much I had deserved to be in that place which I had seen prepared for me in hell,—for, as I said before,¹ I never forget the way I saw myself there,—as I was thinking of this, my soul began to be more and more on fire, and I was carried away in spirit in a way I cannot describe. It seemed to me as if I had been absorbed in, and filled with, that grandeur of God which, on another occasion, I had felt.² In that majesty it was given me to understand one truth, which is the fulness of all truth, but I cannot tell how, for I saw nothing. It was said to me, I saw not by whom, but I knew well enough it was the Truth Itself: “This I am doing to thee is

¹ Ch. xxxii. 1.

² Ch. xxviii. 14.

not a slight matter ; it is one of those things for which thou owest Me much ; for all the evil in the world comes from ignorance of the truths of the holy writings in their clear simplicity, of which not one iota shall pass away.”³ I thought that I had always believed this, and that all the faithful also believed it. Then He said: “ Ah, My daughter, they are few who love Me in truth ; for if men loved Me, I should not hide My secrets from them. Knowest thou what it is to love Me in truth ? It is to admit everything to be a lie which is not pleasing unto Me. Now thou dost not understand it, but thou shalt understand it clearly hereafter, in the profit it will be to thy soul.”

2. Our Lord be praised, so I found it ; for after this vision I look upon everything which does not tend to the service of God as vanity and lies. I cannot tell how much I am convinced of this, nor how sorry I am for those whom I see living in darkness, not knowing the truth. I derived other great blessings also from this, some of which I will here speak of, others I cannot describe.

3. Our Lord at the same time uttered a special word of most exceeding graciousness. I know not how it was done, for I saw nothing ; but I was filled, in a way which also I cannot describe, with exceeding strength and earnestness of purpose to observe with all my might everything contained in the divine writings. I thought that I could rise above every possible hindrance put in my way.

4. Of this divine truth, which was put before me I know not how, there remains imprinted within me a truth—I cannot give it a name—which fills me with a new reverence for God ; it gives me a notion of His Majesty and power in a way which I cannot explain. I can understand that it is something very high. I had a very great desire never to speak of anything but of those deep truths which far surpass all that is

³ St. Matt. v. 18 : “ Iota unum aut unus apex non præteribit a lege.”

spoken of here in the world,—and so the living in it began to be painful to me.

5. The vision left me in great tenderness, joy, and humility. It seemed to me, though I knew not how, that our Lord now gave me great things; and I had no suspicion whatever of any illusion. I saw nothing; but I understood how great a blessing it is to make no account of anything which does not lead us nearer unto God. I also understood what it is for a soul to be walking in the truth, in the presence of the Truth itself. What I understood is this: that our Lord gave me to understand that He is Himself the very Truth.

6. All this I am speaking of I learnt at times by means of words uttered; at other times I learnt some things without the help of words, and that more clearly than those other things which were told me in words. I understood exceedingly deep truths concerning the Truth, more than I could have done through the teaching of many learned men. It seems to me that learned men never could have thus impressed upon me, nor so clearly explained to me, the vanity of this world.

7. The Truth of which I am speaking, and which I was given to see, is Truth Itself, in Itself. It has neither beginning nor end. All other truths depend on this Truth, as all other loves depend on this Love, and all other grandeurs on this Grandeur. I understood it all, notwithstanding that my words are obscure in comparison with that distinctness with which it pleased our Lord to show it to me. What think you must be the power of His Majesty, seeing that in so short a time it leaves so great a blessing and such an impression on the soul? O Grandeur! Majesty of mine! what is it Thou art doing, O my Lord Almighty! Consider who it is to whom Thou givest blessings so great! Dost Thou not remember that this my soul has been an abyss of lies and a sea of vanities, and

all my fault? Though Thou hadst given me a natural hatred of lying, yet I did involve myself in many lying ways. How is this, O my God? how can it be that mercies and graces so great should fall to the lot of one who has so ill deserved them at Thy hands?

8. Once, when I was with the whole community reciting the Office, my soul became suddenly recollected, and seemed to me all bright as a mirror, clear behind, sideways, upwards, and downwards; and in the centre of it I saw Christ our Lord, as I usually see Him. It seemed to me that I saw Him distinctly in every part of my soul, as in a mirror, and at the same time the mirror was all sculptured—I cannot explain it—in our Lord Himself by a most loving communication which I can never describe. I know that this vision was a great blessing to me, and is still whenever I remember it, particularly after Communion.

9. I understood by it, that, when a soul is in mortal sin, this mirror becomes clouded with a thick vapour, and utterly obscured, so that our Lord is neither visible nor present, though He is always present in the conservation of its being. In heretics, the mirror is, as it were, broken in pieces, and that is worse than being dimmed. There is a very great difference between seeing this and describing it, for it can hardly be explained. But it has done me great good; it has also made me very sorry on account of those times when I dimmed the lustre of my soul by my sins, so that I could not see our Lord.

10. This vision seems to me very profitable to recollected persons, to teach them to look upon our Lord as being in the innermost part of their soul. It is a method of looking upon Him which penetrates us more thoroughly, and is much more fruitful than that of looking upon Him as external to us, as I have said elsewhere,⁴ and as it is laid down in books on prayer, where they speak of where we are to seek

⁴ Ch. iv. 10.

God. The glorious St. Augustine,⁵ in particular, says so, when he says that neither in the streets of the city, nor in pleasures, nor in any place whatever where he sought Him, did he find Him as he found Him within himself. This is clearly the best way ; we need not go up to heaven, nor any further than our own selves, for that would only distress the spirit and distract the soul, and bring but little fruit.

11. I should like to point out one result of a deep trance : it may be that some are aware of it. When the time is over during which the soul was in union, wherein all its powers were wholly absorbed,—it lasts, as I have said,⁶ but a moment,—the soul continues still to be recollected, unable to recover itself even in outward things ; for the two powers—the memory and the understanding—are, as it were, in a frenzy, extremely disordered. This, I say, happens occasionally, particularly in the beginnings. I am thinking whether it does not result from this : that our natural weakness cannot endure the vehemence of the spirit, which is so great, and that the imagination is enfeebled. I know it to be so with some. I think it best for these to force themselves to give up prayer at that time, and resume it afterwards, when they may recover what they have lost, and not do everything at once, for in that case much harm might come of it. I know this by experience, as well as the necessity of considering what our health can bear.

12. Experience is necessary throughout, so also is a spiritual director ; for when the soul has reached this point, there are many matters which must be referred

⁵ This passage, which is also quoted in *The Way of Perfection*, ch. xxviii., and in the *Interior Castle*, M. iv. ch. iii. 3, is not from the genuine *Soliloquia* of St. Augustine, but from a medieval ascetical writing bearing the same title and wrongly attributed to the great Doctor of the Church. Printed in Latin at Venice in 1512, it was translated into Spanish and appeared at Valladolid in 1515, and again at Medina del Campo in 1553, and at Toledo in 1565 ; other editions followed. The words quoted by St. Teresa occur in ch. xxxi. St. John of the Cross quotes another passage of the same work in the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, bk. i. ch. v.

⁶ Ch. xx. 26.

to the director. If, after seeking such a one, the soul cannot find him, our Lord will not fail that soul, seeing that He has not failed me, who am what I am. They are not many, I believe, who know by experience so many things, and without experience it is useless to treat a soul at all, for nothing will come of it, save only trouble and distress. But our Lord will take this also into account, and for that reason it is always best to refer the matter to the director. I have already more than once said this,⁷ and even all I am saying now, only I do not distinctly remember it; but I do see that it is of great importance, particularly to women, that they should go to their confessor, and that he should be a man of experience herein. There are many more women than men to whom our Lord gives these graces; I have heard the holy friar Peter of Alcantara say so, and, indeed, I know it myself. He used to say that women made greater progress in this way than men did: and he gave excellent reasons for his opinion, all in favour of women; but there is no necessity for repeating them here.

13. Once, when in prayer, I had a vision, for a moment,—I saw nothing distinctly, but the vision was most clear,—how all things are seen in God and how all things are comprehended in Him. I cannot in any way explain it, but the vision remains most deeply impressed on my soul, and is one of those grand graces which our Lord wrought in me, and one of those which put me to the greatest shame and confusion whenever I call my sins to remembrance. I believe, if it had pleased our Lord that I had seen this at an earlier time, or if they saw it who sin against Him, we should have neither the heart nor the daring to do so. I had the vision, I repeat it, but I cannot say that I saw anything; however, I must have seen something, seeing that I explain it by an illustra-

⁷ Ch. xxv. 18, ch. xxvi. 4. See St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, bk. ii, ch. xxii.

tion, only it must have been in a way so subtle and delicate that the understanding is unable to reach it, or I am so ignorant in all that relates to these visions, which seem to be not imaginary. In some of these visions there must be something imaginary, only, as the powers of the soul are then in a trance, they are not able afterwards to retain the forms, as our Lord showed them to it then, and as He would have it rejoice in them.

14. Let us suppose the Godhead to be a most brilliant diamond, much larger than the whole world, or a mirror like that to which I compared the soul in a former vision,⁸ only in a way so high that I cannot possibly describe it; and that all our actions are seen in that diamond, which is of such dimensions as to include everything, because nothing can be beyond it. It was a fearful thing for me to see, in so short a time, so many things together in that brilliant diamond, and a most piteous thing too, whenever I think of it, to see such foul things as my sins present in the pure brilliancy of that light.

15. So it is, whenever I remember it, I do not know how to bear it, and I was then so ashamed of myself that I knew not where to hide myself. Oh, that some one could make this plain to those who commit most foul and filthy sins, that they may remember their sins are not secret, and that God most justly resents them, seeing that they are wrought in the very presence of His Majesty, and that we are demeaning ourselves so irreverently before Him! I saw, too, how completely hell is deserved for only one mortal sin, and how impossible it is to understand the exceeding great wickedness of committing it in the sight of majesty so great, and how abhorrent to His nature such actions are. In this we see more and more of His mercifulness, who, though we all know His hatred of sin, yet suffers us to live.

⁸ § 8. See also *Interior Castle*, M. i. ch. i. 2.

16. The vision made me also reflect, that if one such vision as this fills the souls with such awe, what will it be in the Day of Judgment, when His Majesty will appear distinctly, and when we too shall look on the sins we have committed! O my God, I have been, oh, how blind! I have often been amazed at what I have written; and you, my father, be you not amazed at anything, but that I am still living,—I, who see such things, and know myself to be what I am. Blessed for ever be He Who has borne with me so long!

17. Once, in prayer, with much recollection, sweetness, and repose, I saw myself, as it seemed to me, surrounded by angels, and was close unto God. I began to intercede with His Majesty on behalf of the Church. I was given to understand the great services which a particular Order would render in the latter days, and the courage with which its members would maintain the faith.

18. I was praying before the most Holy Sacrament one day; I had a vision of a Saint, whose Order was in some degree fallen. In his hands he held a large book, which he opened, and then told me to read certain words, written in large and very legible letters; they were to this effect: "In times to come this Order will flourish; it will have many martyrs."

19. On another occasion, when I was at Matins in choir, six or seven persons, who seemed to me to be

⁹ Yopez says that the Order here spoken of is the Carmelite, and Ribera understands the Saint to refer to that of St. Dominic. The Bollandists, n. 1638-46, on the whole prefer the authority of Ribera to that of Yopez, and give good reasons for their preference, setting aside as insufficient the testimony of Fray Luis of the Assumption, who says he heard himself from the Venerable Anne of St. Bartholomew that the Order in question is the Order of our Lady of Mount Carmel. Don Vicente, the Spanish editor, rejects the opinion of Ribera, on the ground that it could not have been truly said of the Dominicans in the sixteenth century that the Order was in "some degree fallen," for it was in a most flourishing state. He therefore was inclined to believe that the Saint referred to the Augustinians or to the Franciscans. But, after he had printed this part of his book, he discovered among the MSS. in the National Library of Madrid a letter of Ven. Anne of St. Bartholomew, addressed to Fray Luis of the Assumption, in which the saintly companion of St. Teresa says that the "Order was ours." (Fuente, vol. vi. 122.)

of this Order, appeared and stood before me with swords in their hands. The meaning of that, as I think, is that they are to be defenders of the faith; for at another time, when I was in prayer, I fell into a trance, and stood in spirit on a wide plain, where many persons were fighting; and the members of this Order were fighting with great zeal. Their faces were beautiful, and as it were on fire. Many they laid low on the ground defeated, others they killed. It seemed to me to be a battle with heretics.

20. I have seen this glorious Saint occasionally, and he has told me certain things, and thanked me for praying for his Order, and he has promised to pray for me to our Lord. I do not say which Orders these are,—our Lord, if it so pleased Him, could make them known,—lest the others should be aggrieved. Let every Order, or every member of them by himself, labour, that by his means our Lord would so bless his own Order that it may serve Him in the present grave necessities of His Church. Blessed are they whose lives are so spent.

21. I was once asked by a person to pray God to let him know whether his acceptance of a bishopric would be for the service of God. After Communion our Lord said to me: "When he shall have clearly and really understood that true dominion consists in possessing nothing, he may then accept it." I understood by this that he who is to be in dignity must be very far from wishing or desiring it, or at least he must not seek it.

22. These and many other graces our Lord has given, and is giving continually, to me a sinner. I do not think it necessary to speak of them, because the state of my soul can be ascertained from what I have written; so also can the spirit which our Lord has given me. May He be blessed for ever, who has been so mindful of me!

23. Our Lord said to me once, consoling me, that

I was not to distress myself,—this He said most lovingly,—because in this life we could not continue in the same state.¹⁰ At one time I should be fervent, at another not; now disquieted, and again at peace, and tempted; but I must hope in Him, and fear not.

24. I was one day thinking whether it was a want of detachment in me to take pleasure in the company of those who had the care of my soul, and to have an affection for them, and to comfort myself with those whom I see to be very great servants of God.¹¹ Our Lord said to me: “It is not a virtue in a sick man to abstain from thanking and loving the physician who seems to restore him to health when he is in danger of death. What should I have done without these persons? The conversation of good people was never hurtful; my words should always be weighed, and holy; and I was not to cease my relations with them, for they would do me good rather than harm.”

25. This was a great comfort to me, because, now and then, I wished to abstain from converse with all people; for it seemed to me that I was attached to them. Always, in all things, did our Lord console me, even to the showing me how I was to treat those who were weak, and some other people also. Never did He cease to take care of me. I am sometimes distressed to see how little I do in His service, and how I am forced to spend time in taking care of a body so weak and worthless as mine is, more than I wish.

26. I was in prayer one night, when it was time to go to sleep. I was in very great pain, and my usual sickness was coming on.¹² I saw myself so great a slave to myself, and, on the other hand, the spirit asked for time for itself. I was so much distressed that I began to weep exceedingly, and to be very sorry. This has happened to me not once only, but,

¹⁰ Job xiv. 2: “Nunquam in eodem statu permanet.”

¹¹ See ch. xxxvii. 4, 6.

¹² See ch. vii. 18.

as I am saying, very often; and it seems to make me weary of myself, so that at the time I hold myself literally in abhorrence. Habitually, however, I know that I do not hate myself, and I never fail to take that which I see to be necessary for me. May our Lord grant that I do not take more than is necessary!—I am afraid I do.

27. When I was thus distressed, our Lord appeared unto me. He comforted me greatly, and told me I must do this for His love, and bear it; my life was necessary now. And so, I believe, I have never known real pain since I resolved to serve my Lord and my Consoler with all my strength; for though He would leave me to suffer a little, yet He would console me in such a way that I am doing nothing when I long for troubles. And it seems to me there is nothing worth living for but this, and suffering is what I most heartily pray to God for. I say to Him sometimes, with my whole heart: "O Lord, either to die or to suffer!"¹³ I ask of Thee nothing else for myself." It is a comfort to me to hear the clock strike, because I seem to have come a little nearer to the vision of God, in that another hour of my life has passed away.

28. At other times I am in such a state that I do not feel that I am living, nor yet do I desire to die; but I am lukewarm, and darkness surrounds me on every side, as I said before;¹⁴ for I am very often in great trouble. It pleased our Lord that the graces He wrought in me should be published abroad,¹⁵ as He told me some years ago they should be. It was a great pain to me, and I have borne much on that account even to this day, as you, my father, know, because every man explains them in his own sense. But my comfort herein is that it is not my fault that

¹³ This is the genuine wording of what is known as the motto of St. Teresa, "To suffer or to die." This latter form never occurs in her writings, but the former is also to be found in an undated letter to a Carmelite nun (c. 1578).

¹⁴ Ch. xxx. 10.

¹⁵ Ch. xxxi. 16, 17.

they are become known, for I was extremely cautious never to speak of them but to my confessors, or to persons who I knew had heard of them from them. I was silent, however, not out of humility, but because, as I said before,¹⁶ it gave me great pain to speak of them even to my confessors.

29. Now, however,—to God be the glory!—though many speak against me, but out of a zeal for goodness, and though some are afraid to speak to me, and even to hear my confession, and though others have much to say about me, because I see that our Lord willed by this means to provide help for many souls,—and also because I see clearly and keep in mind how much He would suffer, if only for the gaining of one,—I do not care about it at all.

30. I know not why it is so, but perhaps the reason may in some measure be that His Majesty has placed me in this corner out of the way, where the enclosure is so strict, and where I am as one that is dead. I thought that no one would remember me, but I am not so much forgotten as I wish I was, for I am forced to speak to some people. But as I am in a house where none may see me, it seems as if our Lord had been pleased to bring me to a haven, which I trust in His Majesty will be secure. Now that I am out of the world, with companions holy and few in number, I look down on the world as from a great height, and care very little what people say or know about me. I think much more of one soul's advancement, even if it were but slight, than of all that people may say of me; and since I am settled here it has pleased our Lord that all my desires tend to this.

31. He has made my life to me now a kind of sleep; for almost always what I see seems to me to be seen as in a dream, nor have I any great sense either of pleasure or of pain. If matters occur which may occasion either, the sense of it passes away so quickly

¹⁶ Ch. xxviii. 6.

that it astonishes me, and leaves an impression as if I had been dreaming,—and this is the simple truth; for if I wished afterwards to delight in that pleasure, or be sorry over that pain, it is not in my power to do so: just as a sensible person feels neither pain nor pleasure in the memory of a dream that is past; for now our Lord has roused my soul out of that state which, because I was not mortified nor dead to the things of this world, made me feel as I did, and His Majesty does not wish me to become blind again.

32. This is the way I live now, my lord and father¹⁷; do you, my father, pray to God that He would take me to Himself, or enable me to serve Him. May it please His Majesty that what I have written may be of some use to you, my father! I have so little time,¹⁸ and therefore my trouble has been great in writing; but it will be a blessed trouble if I have succeeded in saying anything that will cause one single act of praise to our Lord. If that were the case, I should look upon myself as sufficiently rewarded, even if you, my father, burnt at once what I have written. I would rather it were not burnt before those three saw it, whom you, my father, know of, because they are, and have been, my confessors; for if it be bad, it is right they should lose the good opinion they have of me; and if it be good, they are good and learned men, and I know they will recognise its source, and give praise to Him who hath spoken through me.

33. May His Majesty ever be your protector and make you so great a saint that your spirit and light may show the way to me a miserable creature, so wanting in humility and so bold as to have ventured to write on subjects so high! May our Lord grant I have not fallen into any errors in the matter, for I had the intention and the desire to be accurate and obedient, and also that through me He might, in some

¹⁷ Probably F. Garcia de Toledo. See also ch. xx. 25.

¹⁸ See ch. xiv. 12.

measure, have glory,—because that is what I have been praying for these many years, and as my good works are inefficient for that end, I have ventured to put in order this my disordered life. Still, I have not wasted more time, nor given it more attention, than was necessary for writing it ; yet I have put down all that has happened to me with all the simplicity and sincerity possible.

34. May our Lord, Who is all-powerful, grant—and He can if He will—that I may attain to the doing of His will in all things ! May He never suffer this soul to be lost, which He so often, in so many ways, and by so many means, has rescued from hell and drawn unto Himself ! Amen.

I.H.S.

The Holy Spirit be ever with you, my father.¹⁹ Amen. It would not be anything improper if I were to magnify my labour in writing this, to oblige you to be very careful to recommend me to our Lord ; for indeed I may well do so, considering what I have gone through in giving this account of myself, and in retracing my manifold wretchedness. But, still, I can say with truth that I felt it more difficult to speak of the graces which I have received from our Lord than to speak of my offences against His Majesty. You, my father, commanded me to write at length ; that is what I have done, on condition that you will do what you promised, namely, destroy everything in it that has the appearance of being wrong. I had not yet read it through after I had written it, when your reverence sent for it. Some things in it may not be very clearly explained, and there may be some repetitions ; for the time I could give to it was so

¹⁹ This letter, which seems to have accompanied the "Life," is printed among the other letters of the Saint ; it was probably addressed to Fray García de Toledo. See Introduction.

short, that I could not stop to see what I was writing. I entreat your reverence to correct it and have it copied, if it is to be sent on to the Father-Master, Avila,²⁰ for perhaps some one may recognise the handwriting. I wish very much you would order it so that he might see it, for I began to write it with a view to that. I shall be greatly comforted if he shall think that I am on a safe road, now that, so far as it concerns me, there is nothing more to be done.

Your reverence will do in all things that which to you shall seem good, and you will look upon yourself as under an obligation to take care of one who trusts her soul to your keeping. I will pray for the soul of your reverence to our Lord, so long as I live. You will, therefore, be diligent in His service, in order that you may be able to help me; for your reverence will see by what I have written how profitable it is to give oneself, as your reverence has begun to do, wholly unto Him who gives Himself to us so utterly without measure.

Blessed be His Majesty for ever! I hope of His mercy we shall see one another one day, when we, your reverence and myself, shall see more clearly the great mercies He has shown us, and when we shall praise Him for ever and ever. Amen.

This book was finished in June, 1562.

“This date refers to the first account which the holy Mother Teresa of Jesus wrote of her life; it was not then divided into chapters. Afterwards she made this copy, and inserted in it many things which had taken place subsequent to this date, such as the foundation of the monastery of St. Joseph of Avila, as in p. 169.²¹—FRAY D° BAÑES.”

²⁰ Ven. Juan de Avila, commonly called the Apostle of Andalusia.

²¹ *I.e.* of the MS. See p. 303 *sqq.* of this translation.

THE
RELATIONS OR MANIFESTATIONS
OF HER
SPIRITUAL STATE
WHICH
ST. TERESA SUBMITTED TO HER CONFESSORS.

THE RELATIONS

RELATION I.

SENT TO ST. PETER OF ALCANTARA IN 1560 FROM THE
MONASTERY OF THE INCARNATION, AVILA.¹

¹ Antonius a Sancto Joseph, in his notes on this Relation, says it was written for St. Peter of Alcantara when he came to Avila in 1560, at the time when the Saint was so severely tried by her confessors and the others who examined her spirit, and were convinced that her prayer was a delusion of Satan : see the *Life*, ch. xxv. 18. The following notes were discovered among the papers of the Saint in the monastery of the Incarnation, and are supposed to refer to this Relation. The Chronicler of the Order, Francis a Sancta Maria, is inclined to the belief that they were written by St. Peter of Alcantara, to whom the Relation is addressed, and the more so because Ribera does not claim them for any member of the Society, notwithstanding the reference to them in §§ 22, 28.

" 1. The end God has in view is the drawing a soul to Himself ; that of the devil is the withdrawing it from God. Our Lord never does anything whereby any one may be separated from Him, and the devil does nothing whereby any one may be made to draw near unto God. All the visions and the other operations in the soul of this person draw her nearer unto God, and make her more humble and obedient.

" 2. It is the teaching of St. Thomas that an angel of light may be recognised by the peace and quietness he leaves in the soul. She is never visited in this way, but she afterwards abides in peace and joy ; so much so, that all the pleasures of earth together are not comparable to one of these visitations.

" 3. She never commits a fault, nor falls into an imperfection, without being instantly rebuked by Him who speaks interiorly to her.

" 4. She has never prayed for nor wished for them ; all she wishes for is to do the will of God our Lord in all things.

" 5. Everything herein is consistent with the Scriptures and the teaching of the Church, and most true, according to the most rigorous principles of scholastic theology.

" 6. This soul is most pure and sincere, with the most fervent desires of being pleasing unto God, and of trampling on every earthly thing.

" 7. She has been told that whatever she shall ask of God, being good, she shall have. She has asked much, and things not convenient to put on paper lest it should be wearisome ; all of which our Lord has granted,

I. THE method of prayer I observe at present is this : when I am in prayer, it is very rarely that I can use the understanding, because the soul becomes at once

" 8. When these operations are from God, they are always directed to the good of the recipient, to that of the community, or of some other. That she has profited by them she knows by experience, and she knows it, too, of other persons also.

" 9. No one converses with her, if he be not in evil dispositions, who is not moved thereby to devotion, even though she says nothing about it.

" 10. She is growing daily in the perfection of virtues, and learns by these things the way of a higher perfection. And thus, during the whole time in which she had visions, she was making progress, according to the doctrine of St. Thomas.

" 11. The spirit that speaks to her soul never tells her anything in the way of news, or of what is unbecoming, but only that which tends to edification.

" 12. She has been told of some persons that they were full of devils ; but this was for the purpose of enabling her to understand the state of a soul which has sinned mortally against our Lord.

" 13. The devil's method is, when he attempts to deceive a soul, to advise that soul never to speak of what he says to it ; but the spirit that speaks to this soul warns her to be open with learned men, servants of our Lord, and that the devil may deceive her if she should conceal anything through shame.

" 14. So great is the progress of her soul in this way, and the edification she ministers in the good example given, that more than forty nuns in her monastery practise great recollection.

" 15. These supernatural things occur after long praying, when she is absorbed in God, on fire with His love, or at Communion.

" 16. They kindle in her a most earnest desire to be on the right road, and to escape the delusions of Satan.

" 17. They are in her the cause of the deepest humility ; she understands that what she receives comes to her from the hand of our Lord, and how little worth she is herself.

" 18. When they are withheld, anything that occurs is wont to pain and distress her ; but when she is in this state, she remembers nothing ; all she is conscious of is a great longing for suffering, and so great is it that she is amazed at it.

" 19. They are to her sources of joy and consolation in her troubles, when people speak ill of her, and in her infirmities,—and she has fearful pains about the heart, sicknesses, and many other afflictions, all of which leave her when she has these visions.

" 20. With all this, she undergoes great penances, fasting, the discipline, and mortifications.

" 21. All that on earth may give her any pleasure, and her trials, which are many, she bears with equal tranquillity of mind, without losing the peace and quiet of her soul.

" 22. Her resolution never to offend our Lord is so earnest that she has made a vow never to leave undone what she knows herself, or is told by those who understand the matter better, to be the more perfect. And though she holds the members of the Society to be saints, and believes that our Lord made use of them to bestow on her graces so great, she told me that, if she knew it would be more perfect to have nothing more to do with them, she would never speak to them again, nor see them, notwithstanding the fact that it was through them that her mind had been quieted and directed in these things.

recollected, remains in repose, or falls into a trance, so that I cannot in any way have the use of the faculties and the senses,—so much so, that the hearing alone is left ; but then it does not help me to understand anything.

2. It often happens, when I am not even thinking of the things of God, but engaged in other matters, and when prayer seems to be beyond my power, whatever efforts I might make, because of the great aridity I am in, bodily pains contributing thereto, that this recollection or elevation of spirit comes upon me so suddenly that I cannot withstand it, and the fruits and blessings it brings with it are in a moment

“ 23. The sweetness she commonly receives, her sense of God, her languishing with love, are certainly marvellous, and through these she is wont to be enraptured the whole day long.

“ 24. She frequently falls into a trance when she hears God spoken of with devotion and earnestness, and cannot resist the rapture, do what she can ; and in that state her appearance is such that she excites very great devotion.

“ 25. She cannot bear to be directed by any one who will not tell her of her faults, and rebuke her ; all that she accepts with great humility.

“ 26. Moreover, she cannot endure people who are in a state of perfection, if they do not labour to become perfect, according to the spirit of their rule.

“ 27. She is most detached from her kindred, has no desire to converse with people, and loves solitude. She has a great devotion to the saints, and on their feasts, and on the days on which the Church celebrates the mysteries of the faith, is filled with most fervent affections for our Lord.

“ 28. If all the members of the Society, and all the servants of God upon earth, tell her that her state is an effect of the operations of Satan, or were to say so, she is in fear and trembling before the visions occur ; but as soon as she is in prayer, and recollected, she cannot be persuaded, were they to tear her into a thousand pieces, that it is any other than God who is working in her and speaking to her.

“ 29. God has given her a most wonderfully strong and valiant spirit : she was once timid ; now she tramples on all the evil spirits. She has put far away from herself all the littleness and silliness of women ; she is singularly free from scruples, and most sincere.

“ 30. Besides, our Lord has given her the gift of most sweet tears, great compassion for her neighbours, the knowledge of her own faults, a great reverence for good people, and self-abasement ; and I am certain that she has done good to many, of whom I am one.

“ 31. She is continually reminding herself of God, and has a sense of His presence. All the locutions have been verified, and every one of them accomplished ; and this is a very great test.

“ 32. Her visions are a source of great clearness in her understanding, and an admirable illumination in the things of God.

“ 33. It was said to her that she should lead those who were trying her spirit to look into the Scriptures, and that they would not find that any soul desirous of pleasing God had been so long deceived.”

mine : and this, without my having had a vision, or heard anything, or knowing where I am, except that when the soul seems to be lost ² I see it make great progress, which I could not have made if I had laboured for a whole year, so great is my gain.

3. At other times certain excessive impetuositities occur, accompanied with a certain fainting away of the soul for God, so that I have no control over myself ³ ; my life seems to have come to an end, and so it makes me cry out and call upon God ; and this comes upon me with great vehemence. Sometimes I cannot remain sitting, so great is the oppression of the heart ; and this pain comes on without my doing anything to cause it, and the nature of it is such that my soul would be glad never to be without it while I live. And the longings I have are longings not to live ; and they come on because it seems as if I must live on without being able to find any relief, for relief comes from the vision of God, which comes by death, and death is what I cannot take ; and with all this my soul thinks that all except itself are filled with consolations, and that all find help in their troubles, but not itself. The distress thus occasioned is so intense that, if our Lord did not relieve it by throwing it into a trance, whereby all is made calm, and the soul rests in great quiet and is satisfied, now by seeing something of that which it deserves, now by hearing other things, it would seem to be impossible for it to be delivered from this pain.

4. At other times there come upon me certain desires to serve God, with a vehemence so great that I cannot describe it, and accompanied with a certain pain at seeing how unprofitable I am. It seems to me then that there is nothing in the world, neither death, nor martyrdom, that I could not easily endure. This conviction, too, is not the result of any reflection,

² That is, so absorbed as to lose the use of its faculties.

³ See *Life*, ch. xxix. 9-13.

but comes in a moment. I am wholly changed, and I know not whence cometh such great courage. I think I should live to raise my voice, and publish to all the world how important it is for men not to be satisfied with the common way, and how great the good is that God will give us if we prepare ourselves to receive it. I say it again, these desires are such that I am melted away in myself, for I seem to desire what I cannot have. The body seems to me to hold me in prison, through its inability to serve God and my state⁴ in anything; for if it were not for the body, I might do very great things, so far as my strength would allow; and thus, because I see myself without any power whatever to serve God, I feel this pain in a way wholly indescribable; the issue is delight, recollection, and the consolation of God.

5. Again, it has happened, when these longings to serve Him come upon me, that I wish to do penance, but I am not able. It would be a great relief to me, and it does relieve and cheer me, though what I do is almost nothing, because of my bodily weakness; and yet, if I were to give way to these my longings, I believe I should observe no moderation.

6. Sometimes, if I have to speak to any one, I am greatly distressed, and I suffer so much that it makes me weep abundantly; for my whole desire is to be alone, and solitude comforts me, though at times I neither pray nor read, and conversation—particularly of kindred and connections—seems oppressive, and myself to be as a slave, except when I speak to those whose conversation is of prayer and matters of the soul,—in these I find comfort and joy⁵; yet these occasionally are too much for me, and I would rather not see them, but go where I might be alone: though this is not often the case, for those especially who direct my conscience always console me.

⁴ Fuente thinks she means the religious state. See *Foundations*, i. 6.

⁵ See *Life*, ch. xxiv. 8, and ch. xxxi. 22.

7. At other times it gives me much pain that I must eat and sleep, and that I see I cannot forgo these things, being less able to do so than any one. I submit that I may serve God, and thus I offer up those actions to Him. Time seems to me too short, and that I have not enough for my prayer, for I should never be tired of being alone. I am always wishing I had time for reading, for I have been always fond of reading. I read very little, for when I take up a book I become recollected through the pleasure it gives me, and thus my reading is turned into prayer : and it is but rarely, for I have many occupations ; and though they are good, they do not give me the pleasure which reading would give. And thus I am always wishing for more time, and everything becomes disagreeable, so I believe, because I see I cannot do what I wish and desire.

8. All these desires, with an increase in virtue, have been given me by our Lord since He raised me to this prayer of quiet, and sent these raptures. I find myself so improved that I look on myself as being a mass of perdition before this. These raptures and visions leave me in possession of the blessings I shall now speak of ; and I maintain that if there be any good in me, they are the occasions of it.

9. I have made a very strong resolution never to offend God, not even venially. I would rather die a thousand deaths than do anything of the kind knowingly. I am resolved never to leave undone anything I may consider to be the more perfect, or more for the honour of our Lord, if he who has the care of my soul and directs me tells me I may do it. Cost me what pain it might, I would not leave such an act undone for all the treasures of the world. If I were to do so, I do not think I could have the face to ask anything of God our Lord, or to make my prayer ; and yet, for all this, I have many faults and imperfections. I am

obedient to my confessor,⁶ though imperfectly; but if I know that he wishes or commands anything, I would not leave that undone, so far as I understand it; if I did so, I should think myself under a grievous delusion.

10. I have a longing for poverty, though not free from imperfection; however, I believe, if I had wealth, I would not reserve any revenue, nor hoard money for myself, nor do I care for it; I wish to have only what is necessary. Nevertheless, I feel that I am very defective in this virtue; for, though I desire nothing for myself, I should like to have something to give away: still, I desire no revenue, nor anything for myself.⁷

11. In almost all the visions I have had, I have found good, if it be not a delusion of Satan; herein I submit myself to the judgment of my confessors.

12. As to fine and beautiful things, such as water, fields, perfume, music, etc., I think I would rather not have them, so great is the difference between them and what I am in the habit of seeing, and so all pleasure in them is gone from me.⁸ Hence it is that I care not for them, unless it be at the first sight: they never make any further impression; to me they seem but dirt.

13. If I speak or converse with people in the world—for I cannot help it—even about prayer, and if the conversation be long, though to pass away the time, I am under great restraint if it be not necessary, for it gives me much pain.

14. Amusements, of which I used to be fond, and worldly things, are all disagreeable to me now, and I cannot look at them.

15. The longings, which I said I have,⁹ of loving and serving and seeing God, are not helped by any

⁶ At that time Balthasar Alvarez. See *Life*, ch. xxiii. 19.

⁷ See *Life*, ch. xxxv. 2.

⁸ See *Life*, ch. ix. 6, and ch. xiv. 7.

⁹ See § 3 above.

reflections, as formerly, when I thought I was very devout, and shed many tears; but they flow out of a certain fire and heat so excessive that, I repeat it, if God did not relieve them by throwing me into a trance, wherein the soul seems to find itself satisfied, I believe my life would come to an end at once.

16. When I see persons making great progress, and thus resolved, detached, and courageous, I love them much; and I should like to have my conversation with such persons, and I think they help me on. People who are afraid, and seemingly cautious in those things, the doing of which is perfectly reasonable here, seem to vex me, and drive me to pray to God and the saints to make them undertake such things as these which now frighten us. Not that I am good for anything myself, but because I believe that God helps those who, for His sake, apply themselves to great things, and that He never abandons any one who puts his trust in Him only. And I should like to find any one who would help me to believe so, and to be without thought about food and raiment, but leave it all in the hands of God.¹⁰

17. This leaving in the hands of God the supply of all I need is not to be understood as excluding all labour on my part, but merely solicitude—I mean, the solicitude of care.¹¹ And since I have attained to this liberty, it goes well with me, and I labour to forget myself as much as I can. I do not think it is a year ago since our Lord gave me this liberty.

18. Vainglory¹²—glory be to God!—so far as I know, there is no reason why I should have any; for I see plainly that in these things which God sends me I have no part myself; on the contrary, God makes me conscious of my own wretchedness; for whatever reflections I might be able to make, I could never come

¹⁰ St. Matt. vi. 31: "Nolite ergo solliciti esse, dicentes: Quid manducabimus . . . aut quo operiemur?"

¹¹ Ribera says that these words were afterwards added by St. Teresa.

¹² See *Life*, ch. vii. 2.

to the knowledge of such deep truths as I attain to in a single rapture.

19. When I speak of these things a few days after, they seem to me as if they had happened to another person. Previously, I thought it a wrong to me that they should be known to others; but I see now that I am not therefore any the better, but rather worse, seeing that I make so little progress after receiving mercies so great. And certainly, in every way, it seems to me that there was not in the world anybody worse than myself¹⁸; and so the virtues of others seem to me much more meritorious than mine, and that I do nothing myself but receive graces, and that God must give to others at once all that He is now giving unto me; and I pray Him not to reward me in this life; and so I believe that God has led me along this way because I am weak and wicked.

20. When I am in prayer, and even almost always when I am able to reflect at all, I cannot, even if I tried, pray to God for rest, or desire it; for I see that His life was one of suffering, and that I ask Him to send me, giving me first the grace to bear it.

21. Everything of this kind, and of the highest perfection, seems to make so deep an impression on me in prayer, that I am amazed at the sight of truths so great and so clear that the things of the world seem to be folly; and so it is necessary for me to take pains to reflect on the way I demeaned myself formerly in the things of the world, for it seems to me folly to feel for deaths and the troubles of the world,—at least, that sorrow for, or love of, kindred and friends should last long. I say I have to take pains when I am considering what I was, and what I used to feel.

22. If I see people do anything which clearly seems to be sin, I cannot make up my mind that they have offended God; and if I dwell upon this at all,—which happens rarely or never,—I never can make up my

¹⁸ See *Life*, ch. xxx, 10, 11.

mind, though I see it plainly enough. It seems to me that everybody is as anxious to serve God as I am. And herein God has been very gracious to me, for I never dwell on an evil deed, to remember it afterwards; and if I do remember it, I see some virtue or other in that person. In this way these things never weary me, except generally: but heresies do; they distress me very often, and almost always when I think of them they seem to me to be the only trouble which should be felt. And also I feel, when I see people who used to give themselves to prayer fall away; this gives me pain, but not much, because I strive not to dwell upon it.¹⁴

23. I find also, that I am improved in the matter of that excessive neatness which I was wont to observe,¹⁵ though not wholly delivered from it. I do not discern that I am always mortified in this; sometimes, however, I do.

24. All this I have described, together with a very constant dwelling in thought on God, is the ordinary state of my soul, so far as I can understand it. And if I must be busy about something else, without my seeking it, as I said before,¹⁶ I know not who makes me awake,—and this not always, only when I am busy with things of importance; and such—glory be to God!—only at intervals demand my attention, and do not occupy me at all times.

25. For some days—they are not many, however—for three, or four, or five, all my good and fervent thoughts, and my visions, seem to be withdrawn, yea, even forgotten, so that, if I were to seek for it, I know of no good that can ever have been in me. It seems to have been all a dream or, at least, I can call nothing to mind. Bodily pains at the same time distress me. My understanding is troubled, so that I cannot think at all about God, neither do I know under what law

¹⁴ See *Life*, ch. xxxix. 4.

¹⁶ § 2 above.

¹⁵ See *Life*, ch. ii. 2.

I live. If I read anything, I do not understand it ; I seem to be full of faults, and without any resolution whatever to practise virtue ; and the great resolution I used to have is come to this, that I seem to be unable to resist the least temptation or slander of the world. It suggests itself to me then that I am good for nothing, if any one would have me undertake more than the common duties. I give way to sadness, thinking I have deceived all those who trusted me at all. I should like to hide myself where nobody could see me ; but my desire for solitude arises from want of courage, not from love of virtue. It seems to me that I should like to dispute with all who contradict me ; I am under the influence of these impressions, only God has been so gracious unto me, that I do not offend more frequently than I was wont to do, nor do I ask Him to deliver me from them, but only, if it be His will I should always suffer thus, to keep me from offending Him ; and I submit myself to His will with my whole heart, and I see that it is a very great grace bestowed upon me that He does not keep me constantly in this state.

26. One thing astonishes me : it is that, while I am in this state, through a single word of those I am in the habit of hearing, or a single vision, or a little self-recollection, lasting but an *Ave Maria*, or through my drawing near to communicate, I find my soul and body so calm, so sound, the understanding so clear, and myself possessing all the strength and all the good desires I usually have. And this I have had experience of very often—at least when I go to Communion ; it is more than six months ago that I felt a clear improvement in my bodily health,¹⁷ and that occasionally brought about through raptures, and I find it last sometimes more than three hours, at other times I am much stronger for a whole day ; and I do not think it is fancy, for I have considered the

¹⁷ See *Life*, ch. xx. 29.

matter, and reflected on it. Accordingly, when I am thus recollected, I fear no illness. The truth is, that when I pray, as I was accustomed to do before, I feel no improvement.

27. All these things of which I am speaking make me believe that it comes from God; for when I see what once I was, that I was in the way of being lost, and that soon, my soul certainly is astonished at these things, without knowing whence these virtues came to me; I did not know myself, and saw that all was a gift, and not the fruit of my labours. I understand in all truthfulness and sincerity, and see that I am not deluded, that it has been not only the means of drawing me to God in His service, but of saving me also from hell. This my confessors know, who have heard my general confession.

28. Also, when I see any one who knows anything about me, I wish to let him know my whole life,¹⁸ because my honour seems to me to consist in the honour of our Lord, and I care for nothing else. This He knows well, or I am very blind¹⁹; for neither honour, nor life, nor praise, nor good either of body or of soul can interest me, nor do I seek or desire any advantage, only His glory. I cannot believe that Satan has sought so many means of making my soul advance, in order to lose it after all. I do not hold him to be so foolish. Nor can I believe it of God, though I have deserved to fall into delusions because of my sins, that He has left unheeded so many prayers of so many good people for two years, and I do nothing else but ask everybody to pray to our Lord that He would show me if this be for His glory, or lead me by another way.²⁰ I do not believe that these things would have been permitted by His Majesty to be

¹⁸ See *Life*, ch. xxxi. 17.

¹⁹ Ribera and the earlier editors have, instead of "or I am very blind," "and of this I am quite certain." It all depends whether the Saint wrote "ciega" (blind) or "cierta" (certain).

²⁰ See *Life*, ch. xxv. 20.

always going on if they were not His work. These considerations, and the reasons of so many saintly men, give me courage when I am under the pressure of fear that they are not from God, I being so wicked myself. But when I am in prayer, and during those days when I am in repose, and my thoughts fixed on God, if all the learned and holy men in the world came together and put me to all conceivable tortures, and I, too, desirous of agreeing with them, they could not make me believe that this is the work of Satan, for I cannot. And when they would have had me believe it, I was afraid, seeing who it was that said so; and I thought that they must be saying what was true, and that I, being what I was, must have been deluded. But all they had said to me was destroyed by the first word, or recollection, or vision that came, and I was able to resist no longer, and believed it was from God.²¹

29. However, I can think that Satan now and then may intermeddle here, and so it is, as I have seen and said; but he produces different results, nor can he, as it seems to me, deceive any one possessed of any experience. Nevertheless, I say that, though I do certainly believe this to be from God, I would never do anything, for any consideration whatever, that is not judged by him who has the charge of my soul to be for the better service of our Lord, and I never had any intention but to obey without concealing anything, for that is my duty. I am very often rebuked for my faults, and that in such a way as to pierce me to the very quick; and I am warned when there is, or when there may be, any danger in what I am doing. These rebukes and warnings have done me much good, in often reminding me of my former sins, which made me exceedingly sorry.

30. I have been very long, but this is the truth,—that, when I rise from my prayer, I see that I have

²¹ See *Life*, ch. xxv. 18, 22.

received blessings which seem too briefly described. Afterwards I fall into many imperfections, and am unprofitable and very wicked. And perhaps I have no perception of what is good, but am deluded; still, the difference in my life is notorious, and compels me to think over all I have said—I mean, that which I verily believe I have felt. These are the perfections which I feel our Lord has wrought in me who am so wicked and so imperfect. I refer it all to your judgment, my father, for you know the whole state of my soul.

RELATION II.

TO ONE OF HER CONFESSORS, FROM THE HOUSE OF DOÑA LUISA DE LA CERDA, IN 1562.¹

JESUS.

I THINK it is more than a year since this was written; God has all this time protected me with His hand, so that I have not become worse; on the contrary, I see a great change for the better in all I have to say: may He be praised for it all!

1. The visions and revelations have not ceased, but they are of a much higher kind. Our Lord has taught me a way of prayer, wherein I find myself far more advanced, more detached from the things of this life, more courageous, and more free.² I fall into a trance more frequently, for these ecstasies at times come upon me with great violence, and in such a way as to be outwardly visible, I having no power to resist them; and even when I am with others—for they come in such a way as admits of no disguising them, unless it be by letting people suppose that, as I am subject to disease of the heart, they are fainting-

¹ Addressed, it is believed, to her confessor, Fr. Pedro Ibañez. This Relation corresponds with ch. xxxiv. of the *Life*.

² See *Life*, ch. xxvii.

fits ; I take great pains, however, to resist them when they are coming on—sometimes I cannot do it.

2. As to poverty, God seems to have wrought great things in me ; for I would willingly be without even what is necessary, unless given me as an alms ; and therefore my longing is extreme that I may be in such a state as to depend on alms alone for my food.³ It seems to me that to live, when I am certain of food and raiment without fail, is not so complete an observance of my vow or of the counsel of Christ as it would be to live where no revenue is possessed, and I should be in want at times ; and as to the blessings that come with true poverty, they seem to me to be great, and I would not miss them. Many times do I find myself with such great faith, that I do not think God will ever fail those who serve Him, and without any doubt whatever that there is, or can be, any time in which His words are not fulfilled : I cannot persuade myself to the contrary, nor can I have any fear ; and so, when they advise me to accept an endowment, I feel it keenly, and betake myself unto God.

3. I think I am much more compassionate towards the poor than I used to be, having a great pity for them and a desire to help them ; for if I regarded only my good will, I should give them even the habit I wear. I am not fastidious with respect to them, even if I had to do with them or touched them with my hands,—and this I now see is a gift of God ; for though I used to give alms for His love, I had no natural compassion. I am conscious of a distinct improvement herein.

4. As to the evil speaking directed against me,—which is considerable, and highly injurious to me, and done by many,—I find myself herein also very much the better. I think that what they say makes scarcely any more impression upon me than it would

³ See *Life*, ch. xxxv. 2, how the Saint came to found her convent in strict poverty.

upon an idiot. I think at times, and nearly always, that it is just. I feel it so little that I see nothing in it that I might offer to God, as I learn by experience that my soul gains greatly thereby; on the contrary, the evil speaking seems to be a favour. And thus, the moment I go to prayer, I have no ill-feeling against them; the first time I hear it, it creates in me a little resistance, but it neither disturbs nor moves me; on the contrary, when I see others occasionally disturbed, I am sorry for them.⁴ So it is, I put myself out of the question; for all the wrongs of this life seem to me so light that it is not possible to feel them, because I imagine myself to be dreaming, and see that all this will be nothing when I awake.

5. God is giving me more earnest desires, a greater love of solitude, a much greater detachment, as I said, with the visions; by these He has made me know what all that is, even if I gave up all the friends I have, both men and women and kindred. This is the least part of it: my kindred are rather a very great weariness to me; I leave them in all freedom and joy, provided it be to render the least service unto God; and thus on every side I find peace.

6. Certain things, about which I have been warned in prayer, have been perfectly verified. Thus, considering the graces received from God, I find myself very much better; but, considering my service to Him in return, I am exceedingly worthless, for I have received greater consolation than I have given, though sometimes that gives me grievous pain. My penance is very scanty, the respect shown me great, much against my own will very often.⁵ However, in a word, I see that I live an easy, not a penitential, life; God help me, as He can!⁶

⁴ Instead of "I am sorry for them," Ribera's edition has, "I laugh within myself."

⁵ See *Life*, ch. xxxi. 15.

⁶ The last two lines are not in Ribera and the other old editions. The sequel was written at the convent of St. Joseph, Avila, in the course of 1563.

7. It is now nine months, more or less, since I wrote this with my own hand; since then I have not turned my back on the graces which God has given me; I think I have received, so far as I can see, a much greater liberty of late. Hitherto I thought I had need of others, and I had more reliance on worldly helps. Now I clearly understand that all men are bunches of dried rosemary, and that there is no safety in leaning on them, for if they are pressed by contradictions or evil speaking they break down. And so I know by experience that the only way not to fall is to cling to the cross, and put our trust in Him who was nailed thereto. I find Him a real Friend, and with Him I find myself endowed with such might that, God never failing me, I think I should be able to withstand the whole world if it were against me.

8. Having a clear knowledge of this truth, I used to be very fond of being loved by others; now I do not care for that, yea, rather, their love seems to weary me in some measure, excepting theirs who take care of my soul, or theirs to whom I think I do good. Of the former I wish to be loved, in order that they may bear with me; and of the latter, that they may be more inclined to believe me when I tell them that all is vanity.

9. In the very grievous trials, persecutions, and contradictions of these months,⁷ God gave me great courage; and the more grievous they were, the greater the courage, without weariness in suffering. Not only had I no ill-feeling against those who spoke evil of me, but I had, I believe, conceived a deeper affection for them. I know not how it was; certainly it was a gift from the hand of our Lord.

10. When I desire anything, I am accustomed naturally to desire it with some vehemence; now my desires are so calm, that I do not even feel that I am

⁷ The Saint refers to the troubles she endured during the foundation of the monastery of St. Joseph.

pleased when I see them fulfilled. Sorrow and joy, excepting in that which relates to prayer, are so moderated, that I seem to be without sense, and in that state I remain for some days.

11. The vehement longings to do penance which come, and have come, upon me are great ; and if I do any penance, I feel it to be so slight in comparison with that longing, that I regard it sometimes, and almost always, as a special consolation ; however, I do but little, because of my great weakness.

12. It is a very great pain to me very often, and at this moment most grievous, that I must take food, particularly if I am in prayer. It must be very great, for it makes me weep much, and speak the language of affliction, almost without being aware of it, and that is what I am not in the habit of doing, for I do not remember that I ever did so in the very heaviest trials of my life : I am not a woman in these things, for I have a hard heart.

13. I feel in myself a very earnest desire, more so than usual, that God may find those who will serve Him, particularly learned men, in all detachment, and who will not cleave to anything of this world, for I see it is all a mockery ; for when I see the great needs of the Church, I look upon it as a mockery to be distressed about aught else.* I do nothing but pray to God for such men, because I see that one person, who is wholly perfect in the true fervour of the love of God, will do more good than many who are lukewarm.

14. In matters concerning the faith, my courage seems to me much greater. I think I could go forth alone by myself against the Lutherans, and convince them of their errors. I feel very keenly the loss of so many souls. I see many persons making great progress ; I see clearly it was the pleasure of God that such progress should have been helped by me ; and

* See *Life*, ch. xxxiv. 19, with respect to F. Garcia de Toledo. *Way of Perfection*, i. 1.

I perceive that my soul, of His goodness, grows daily more and more in His love.

15. I think I could not be led away by vainglory, even if I seriously tried, and I do not see how I could imagine any one of my virtues to be mine, for it is not long since I was for many years without any at all ; and now, so far as I am concerned, I do nothing but receive graces, without rendering any service in return, being the most worthless creature in the world. And so it is that I consider at times how all, except myself, make progress ; I am good for nothing in myself. This is not humility only, but the simple truth ; and the knowledge of my being so worthless makes me sometimes think with fear that I must be under some delusion. Thus I see clearly that all my gain has come through the revelations and the raptures, in which I am nothing myself, and do no more to effect them than the canvas does for the picture painted on it. This makes me feel secure and be at rest ; and I place myself in the hands of God, and trust my desires ; for I know for certain that my desires are to die for Him, and to lose all ease, and that whatever may happen.

16. There are days wherein I remember times without number the words of St. Paul,⁹—though certainly they are not true of me,—that I have neither life, nor speech, nor will of my own, but that there is One in me by Whom I am directed and made strong ; and I am, as it were, beside myself, and thus life is a very grievous burden to me. And the greatest oblation I make to God, as the highest service on my part, is that I, when I feel it so painfully to be absent from Him, am willing to live on for the love of Him. I would have my life also full of great tribulations and persecutions ; now that I am unprofitable, I should like to suffer ; and I would endure all the tribulations in the world to gain ever so little

⁹ Gal. ii. 20 : " Vivo autem, jam non ego ; vivit vero in me Christus,"

more merit—I mean, by a more perfect doing of His will.¹⁰

17. Everything that I have learnt in prayer, though it may be two years previously, I have seen fulfilled. What I see and understand of the grandeurs of God, and of the way He has shown them, is so high, that I scarcely ever begin to think of them but my understanding fails me,—for I am as one that sees things far higher than I can understand,—and I become recollected.

18. God so keeps me from offending Him that I am verily amazed at times. I think I discern the great care He takes of me, without my taking scarcely any care at all, being as I was, before these things happened to me, a sea of wickedness and sins, and without a thought that I was mistress enough of myself to leave them undone. And the reason why I would have this known is that the great power of God might be made manifest. Unto Him be praise for ever and ever! Amen.

JESUS.

This Relation here set forth, not in my handwriting, is one that I gave to my confessor,¹¹ and which he with his own hand copied without adding or diminishing a word. He was a most spiritual man and a theologian: I discussed the state of my soul with him, and he with other learned men, among whom was Father Mancio.¹² They found nothing in it that is not in perfect agreement with the holy writings. This makes me calm now, though, while God is leading me by this way, I feel that it is necessary for me to put no trust whatever in myself. And so I have always done, though it is painful enough.

¹⁰ See *Life*, ch. xxxvii. 3.

¹¹ Probably Fr. Pedro Ibañez.

¹² A Dominican, who had studied at the Sorbonne and filled during sixteen years the chair of divinity at Alcalá, and for eleven years that of Salamanca. He was equally renowned as preacher.

You, my father, will be careful that all this goes under the seal of confession, according to my request.

RELATION III.

OF VARIOUS GRACES GRANTED TO THE SAINT FROM THE YEAR 1568 TO 1571 INCLUSIVE.

1. WHEN I was in the monastery of Toledo, and some people were advising me not to allow any but noble persons to be buried there,¹ our Lord said to me: "Thou wilt be very inconsistent, My daughter, if thou regardest the laws of the world. Look at Me, poor and despised of men: are the great people of the world likely to be great in My eyes; or is it descent or virtue that is to make you esteemed?" [1569 or 1570.]

2. After Communion, the second day of Lent, in St. Joseph of Malagon, our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to me in an imaginary vision, as He is wont to do; and when I was looking upon Him I saw that He had on His head, instead of the crown of thorns, a crown of great splendour, over the part where the wounds of that crown must have been. And as I have a great devotion to the crowning with thorns, I was exceedingly consoled, and began to think how great the pain must have been because of the many wounds, and to be sorrowful. Our Lord told me not to be sad because of those wounds, but for the many wounds which men inflict upon Him now. I asked Him what I could do by way of reparation; for I was resolved to do anything. He replied: "This is not the time for rest"; that I must hasten on the foundations, for He would take His rest with the souls which entered the monasteries; that I must admit all who offered themselves, because there were many souls that did not serve Him

¹ Alonzo Ramirez wished to have the right of burial in the new monastery, but the nobles of Toledo looked on his request as unreasonable. See *Foundations*, chs. xv. and xvi.

because they had no place wherein to do it; that those monasteries which were to be founded in small towns should be like this; that the merit of those in them would be as great, if they only desired to do that which was done in the other houses; that I must contrive to put them all under the jurisdiction of one superior,² and take care that anxieties about means of bodily maintenance did not destroy interior peace, for He would help us, so that we should never be in want of food. Especial care was to be had of the sick sisters; the prioress who did not provide for and comfort the sick was like the friends of Job: He sent them sickness for the good of their souls, and careless superiors risked the patience of their nuns. I was to write the history of the foundation of the monasteries. I was thinking how there was nothing to write about in reference to the foundation of Medina, when He asked me, what more did I want to see than that the foundation there was miraculous? By this He meant to say that He alone had done it, when it seemed impossible.³ I resolved to execute His commands. [1570.]

3. Our Lord told me something I was to tell another, and as I was considering how I did not understand it at all,—though I prayed to Him, and was thinking it might be from Satan,—He said to me that it was not, and that He Himself would warn me when the time came.⁴ [1570 or 1571.]

² See *Way of Perfection*, ch. v. 4.

³ See *Book of the Foundations*, ch. iii.

⁴ St. Teresa had a great reluctance to deliver such messages. One day she said to our Lord, "Why doest Thou give me this trouble? Canst Thou not speak directly to that person? Why charge me with such a mission?" Our Lord answered: "Since thou canst not do great things for Me, I wish thee at least to help others to serve Me. Moreover, the person in question has not the necessary dispositions that I should speak to him Myself, and if I did it he, little given to prayer, would not believe Me." On another occasion she said to the Divine Master: "Lord, are there not others—for instance, theologians—who would carry out this mission better than I, a wretched sinner, if Thou didst but speak to them?" He answered: "Theologians will do nothing to enter into personal communication with me. Repulsed by them, I must choose women to open to them My heart and speak of My affairs" (*Ribera*, iv. 5).

4. Once, when I was thinking how much more purely they live who withdraw themselves from all business, and how ill it goes with me, and how many faults I must be guilty of, when I have business to transact, I heard this: "It cannot be otherwise, My daughter; but strive thou always after a good intention in all things, and detachment; lift up thine eyes to Me, and see that all thine actions may resemble Mine." [1570 or 1571.]

5. Thinking how it was that I scarcely ever fell into a trance of late in public, I heard this: "It is not necessary now; thou art sufficiently esteemed for My purpose; we are considering the weakness of the wicked." ⁵ [1570 or 1571.]

6. One Tuesday after the Ascension,⁶ having prayed for awhile after Communion in great distress, because I was so distracted that I could fix my mind on nothing, I complained of our poor nature to our Lord. The fire began to kindle in my soul, and I saw, as it seemed to me, the most Holy Trinity⁷ distinctly present in an intellectual vision, whereby my soul understood, through a certain representation, as a figure of the truth, so far as my dulness could understand, how God is Three and One; and thus it seemed to me that all the Three Persons spoke to me, that They were distinctly present in my soul, saying unto me "that from that day forth I should see that my soul had grown better in three ways, and that each one of the Three Persons had bestowed on me a distinct grace,—in charity, in suffering joyfully, in a sense of that charity in my soul, accompanied with fervour." I learnt the meaning of those words of our Lord, that the Three Divine Persons will dwell in the soul that is in a state of grace.⁸ Afterwards

⁵ *Interior Castle*, M. vii. ch. iii. 10.

⁶ May 29, 1571, at St. Joseph's, at Avila.

⁷ *Life*, ch. xxvii. 10.

⁸ St. John xiv. 23: "Ad eum veniemus, et mansionem apud eum faciemus."

giving thanks to our Lord for so great a mercy, and finding myself utterly unworthy of it, I asked His Majesty with great earnestness how it was that He, after showing such mercies to me, let me go out of His hand, and allowed me to become so wicked; for on the previous day I had been in great distress on account of my sins, which I had set before me. I saw clearly then how much our Lord on His part had done, ever since my infancy, to draw me to Himself by means most effectual, and yet that all had failed. Then I had a clear perception of the surpassing love of God for us, in that He forgives us all this when we turn to Him, and for me more than for any other, for many reasons. The vision of the Three Divine Persons—one God—made so profound an impression on my soul, that if it had continued it would have been impossible for me not to be recollected in so divine a company. What I saw and heard besides is beyond my power to describe.

7. Once, when I was about to communicate,—it was shortly before I had this vision,—the Host being still in the ciborium, for It had not yet been given me, I saw something like a dove, which moved its wings with a sound. It disturbed me so much, and so carried me away out of myself, that it was with the utmost difficulty I received the Host. All this took place in St. Joseph of Avila. It was Father Francis de Salcedo who was giving me the most Holy Sacrament. Hearing Mass another day, I saw our Lord glorious in the Host; He said to me that his sacrifice was acceptable unto Him.

8. I heard this once: "The time will come when many miracles will be wrought in this church; it will be called the holy church." It was in St. Joseph of Avila, in the year 1571.

9. I retain to this day, which is the Commemoration of St. Paul, the presence of the Three Persons of

which I spoke in the beginning⁹; they are present almost continually in my soul. I, being accustomed to the presence of Jesus Christ only, always thought that the vision of the Three Persons was in some degree a hindrance, though I know the Three Persons are but one God. To-day, while thinking of this, our Lord said to me "that I was wrong in imagining that those things which are peculiar to the soul can be represented by those of the body; I was to understand that they were very different, and that the soul had a capacity for great fruition." It seemed to me as if this were shown to me thus: as water penetrates and is drunk in by the sponge, so, it seemed to me, did the Divinity fill my soul, which in a certain sense had the fruition and possession of the Three Persons. And I heard Him say also: "Labour thou not to hold Me within thyself enclosed, but enclose thou thyself within Me." It seemed to me that I saw the Three Persons within my soul, and communicating Themselves to all creatures abundantly without ceasing to be with me. [June 30, 1571, Medina del Campo.]

10. A few days after this, thinking whether they were right who disapproved of my going out to make new foundations, and whether it would not be better for me if I occupied myself always with prayer, I heard this: "During this life, the true gain consists not in striving after greater joy in Me, but in doing My will." It seemed to me, considering what St. Paul says about women, how they should stay at home,¹⁰—people reminded me lately of this, and, indeed, I had heard it before,—it might be the will of God I should do so too. He said to me: "Tell them they are not to follow one part of the Scripture by itself, without looking to the other parts also; perhaps, if they could, they would like to tie My hands." [Beginning of July 1571, same place.]

⁹ See § 6, *Relation ix.* 12.

¹⁰ Titus ii. 5: "Sobrias, domus curam habentes."

11. One day after the octave of the Visitation, in one of the hermitages of Mount Carmel, praying to God for one of my brothers, I said to our Lord,—I do not know whether it was only in thought or not, for my brother was in a place where his salvation was in peril,—“If I saw one of Thy brethren, O Lord, in this danger, what would I not do to help him!” It seemed to me there was nothing that I could do which I would not have done. Our Lord said to me: “O daughter, daughter! the nuns of the Incarnation are thy sisters, and thou holdest back. Take courage, then. Behold, this is what I would have thee do: it is not so difficult as it seems; and though it seems to thee that by going thither thy foundations will be ruined, yet it is by thy going that both these and the monastery of the Incarnation will gain; resist not, for My power is great.”¹¹ [July 10, 1571, same place.]

12. Once, when thinking of the great penance practised by Doña Catalina de Cardona,¹² and how I might have done more, considering the desires which our Lord had given me at times, if it had not been for my obedience to my confessors, I asked myself whether it would not be as well if I disobeyed them for the future in this matter. Our Lord said to me: “No, my daughter; thou art on the sound and safe road. Seest thou all her penance? I think more of thy obedience.” [1572.]

13. Once, when I was in prayer, He showed me by a certain kind of intellectual vision the condition of a soul in a state of grace: in its company I saw by intellectual vision the most Holy Trinity, from whose companionship the soul derived a power which was a dominion over the whole earth. I understood the meaning of those words in the Canticle: “Let my

¹¹ This took place in 1571, when the Saint had been appointed prioress of the monastery of the Incarnation at Avila; the very house she had left in order to found that of St. Joseph, to keep the rule in its integrity.

¹² See *Book of the Foundations*, ch. xxviii. Ribera quotes a letter of St. Teresa to Fr. Martin Gutierrez, Rector at Salamanca, on the same subject.

Beloved come into His garden and eat." " He showed me also the condition of a soul in sin, utterly powerless, like a person tied and bound and blindfold, who, though anxious to see, yet cannot, being unable to walk or to hear, and in grievous obscurity. I was so exceedingly sorry for such souls, that, to deliver only one, any trouble seemed to me light. I thought it impossible for any one who saw this as I saw it,—and I can hardly explain it,—willingly to forfeit so great a good or continue in so evil a state. [1571.]

14. One day, in very great distress about the state of the Order, and casting about for means to succour it, our Lord said to me: "Do thou what is in thy power, and leave Me to Myself, and be not disquieted by anything; rejoice in the blessing thou hast received, for it is a very great one. My Father is pleased with thee, and the Holy Ghost loves thee." [1570 or 1571.]

15. "Thou art ever desiring trials, and, on the other hand, declining them. I order things according to what I know thy will is, and not according to thy sensuality and weakness. Be strong, for thou seest how I help thee; I have wished thee to gain this crown. Thou shalt see the Order of the Virgin greatly advanced in thy days." "I heard this from our Lord about the middle of February, 1571. [Salamanca.]

16. On the eve of St. Sebastian, the first year of my being in the monastery of the Incarnation¹⁵ as prioress there, at the beginning of the *Salve*, I saw the Mother of God descend with a multitude of angels to the stall of the prioress, where the image of our Lady is, and sit there herself. I think I did not see the image then, but only our Lady. She seemed to be like that picture of her which the Countess¹⁶ gave

¹³ Cant. v. 1: "Veniat dilectus meus in hortum suum, et comedat." See *Interior Castle*, M. vii. ch. i. 4.

¹⁴ *Foundations*, i. 7.

¹⁵ Jan. 19, 1572.

¹⁶ Maria de Velasco y Aragon, Countess of Osorno; this painting is still at the convent of St. Joseph, Avila.

me; but I had no time to ascertain this, because I fell at once into a trance. Multitudes of angels seemed to me to be above the canopies of the stalls, and on the desks in front of them; but I saw no bodily forms, for the vision was intellectual. She remained there during the *Salve*, and said to me: "Thou hast done well to place me here; I will be present when the sisters sing the praises of my Son, and will offer them to Him." After this I remained in that prayer which I still practise, and which is that of keeping my soul in the company of the most Holy Trinity; and it seemed to me that the Person of the Father drew me to Himself, and spoke to me most comfortable words. Among them were these, while showing how He loved me: "I give thee My Son, and the Holy Ghost, and the Virgin: what canst thou give Me?"¹⁷

17. On the octave of the Holy Ghost, our Lord was gracious unto me, and gave me hopes of this house,¹⁸ that it would go on improving—I mean the souls that are in it. [May 1572.]

18. On the feast of the Magdalen, our Lord again confirmed a grace I had received in Toledo, electing me, in the absence of a certain person, in her place.¹⁹

19. In the monastery of the Incarnation, and in the second year of my being prioress there, on the octave of St. Martin, when I was going to Communion, the Father, Fr. John of the Cross,²⁰—divided the Host between me and another sister. I thought it was done, not because there was any want of Hosts, but that he wished to mortify me because I had told him

¹⁷ See *Relation* iv. 2.

¹⁸ The monastery of the Incarnation, Avila.

¹⁹ Yepez says that one day, on the feast of St. Magdalen, she was filled with envy at the great love that Saint had borne our Lord. But He said to her: "Magdalen loved Me while I was on earth, but thou lovest Me now that I am in heaven"; and for several years He renewed this grace on the feast of St. Magdalen. See *Relation* ix. 9.

²⁰ St. John of the Cross, at the instance of the Saint, was sent to Avila, with another father of the reformed Carmelites, to be confessor of the nuns of the Incarnation, although they did not (nor do they now) belong to the Reform.

how much I delighted in Hosts of a large size. Yet I was not ignorant that the size of the Host is of no moment; for I knew that our Lord is whole and entire in the smallest particle. His Majesty said to me: "Have no fear, My daughter; for no one will be able to separate thee from Me,"—giving me to understand that the size of the Host mattered not.

20. Then appearing to me, as on other occasions, in an imaginary vision, most interiorly, He held out His right hand and said: "Behold this nail! it is the pledge of thy being My bride from this day forth. Until now thou hadst not merited it; from henceforth thou shalt regard My honour, not only as of one who is Thy Creator, King, and God, but as thine, My veritable bride; My honour is thine, and thine is Mine." This grace had such an effect on me, that I could not contain myself: I became as one that is foolish, and said to our Lord: "Either ennoble my vileness or cease to bestow such mercies on me, for certainly I do not think that nature can bear them." I remained thus the whole day, as one utterly beside herself. Afterwards I became conscious of great progress, and greater shame and distress to see that I did nothing in return for graces so great.

21. Our Lord said this to me one day: "Thinkest thou, My daughter, that meriting lies in fruition? No; merit lies only in doing, in suffering, and in loving. Thou hast never heard that St. Paul had the fruition of heavenly joys more than once; while he was often in sufferings.²¹ Thou seest how My whole life was full of dolours, and only on Mount Tabor hast thou heard of Me in glory.²² Do not suppose, when thou seest My Mother hold Me in her arms, that she had that joy unmixed with heavy sorrows. From the time that Simeon spoke to her, My Father made her see in clear light all I had to suffer. The grand

²¹ 2 Cor. xi. 27: "In labore et ærumna, in vigiliis multis."

²² St. Matt. xvii. 2: "Et transfiguratus est ante eos."

saints of the desert, as they were led by God, so also did they undergo heavy penances; besides, they waged serious war with the devil and with themselves, and much of their time passed away without any spiritual consolation whatever. Believe Me, My daughter, his trials are the heaviest whom My Father loves most; trials are the measure of His love. How can I show My love for thee better than by desiring for thee what I desired for Myself? Consider My wounds; thy pains will never reach to them. This is the way of truth; thus shalt thou help Me to weep over the ruin of those who are in the world, for thou knowest how all their desires, anxieties, and thoughts tend the other way." When I began my prayer that day, my headache was so violent that I thought I could not possibly go on. Our Lord said to me: "Behold now, the reward of suffering. As thou, on account of thy health, wert unable to speak to Me, I spoke to thee and comforted thee." Certainly, so it was; for the time of my recollection lasted about an hour and a half, more or less. It was then that He spoke to me the words I have just related, together with all the others. I was not able to distract myself, neither knew I where I was; my joy was so great as to be indescribable; my headache was gone, and I was amazed, and I had a longing for suffering. He also told me to keep in mind the words He said to His Apostles: "The servant is not greater than his Lord."²³ [November 1572.]

RELATION IV.

OF THE GRACES THE SAINT RECEIVED IN SALAMANCA AT
THE END OF LENT, 1571.

I. I FOUND myself the whole of yesterday in great desolation, and, except at Communion, did not feel

²³ St. John xiii. 16: "Non est servus major domino suo."

that it was the day of the Resurrection.¹ Last night, being with the community, I heard one² of them singing how hard it is to be living away from God. As I was then suffering, the effect of that singing on me was such that a numbness began in my hands, and no efforts of mine could hinder it; but as I go out of myself in raptures of joy, so then my soul was thrown into a trance through the excessive pain, and remained entranced; and until this day I had not felt this. A few days previously I thought that the vehement impulses were not so great as they used to be, and now it seems to be that the reason is what I have described; I know not if it is so. Hitherto the pain had not gone so far as to make me beside myself; and as it is so unendurable, and as I retained the control of my senses, it made me utter loud cries beyond my power to restrain. Now that it has grown, it has reached this point of piercing me; and I understand more of that piercing which our Lady suffered; for until to-day, as I have just said, I never knew what that piercing was. My body was so bruised, that I suffer even now when I am writing this; for my hands are as if the joints were loosed, and in pain. You, my father, will tell me when you see me whether this trance be the effect of suffering, or whether I felt it, or whether I am deceived.

2. I was in this great pain till this morning; and, being in prayer, I fell into a profound trance; and it seemed to me that our Lord had taken me up in spirit to His Father, and said to Him: "Whom Thou hast given to Me, I give to Thee³;" and He seemed to

¹ St. Teresa says in this Relation it was the first day of Easter, but in the *Interior Castle*, M. vi. ch. xi. 6, where she relates the same fact, she speaks of the last of the Easter days, *i.e.* Tuesday, April 17.

² Isabel of Jesus, born in Segovia, and whose family name was Jimena, told Ribera (*vide* lib. iv. cap. v.) that she was the singer, being then a novice in Salamanca. She made her profession in 1573, accompanied the Saint to Segovia, became prioress of Palencia and later of Salamanca, where she died in 1614. See also *Concept. of Divine Love*, vii. 2.

³ See *Relation* iii. § 16.

draw me near to Himself. This is not an imaginary vision, but one most certain, and so spiritually subtle that it cannot be explained. He spoke certain words to me which I do not remember. Some of them referred to His grace, which He bestows on me. He kept me by Him for some time.

3. As you, my father,⁴ went away yesterday so soon, and I consider the many affairs which detain you, so that it is impossible for me to have recourse to you for comfort even when necessary,—for I see that your occupations are most urgent,—I was for some time in pain and sadness. As I was then in desolation,—as I said before,—that helped me; and as nothing on earth, I thought, had any attractions for me, I had a scruple, and feared I was beginning to lose that liberty. This took place last night; and to-day our Lord answered my doubt, and said to me “that I was not to be surprised; for as men seek for companions with whom they may speak of their sensual satisfactions, so the soul—when there is any one who understands it—seeks those to whom it may communicate its pleasures and its pains, and is sad and mourns when it can find none.” He said to me: “Thou art prosperous now, and thy works please Me.” As He remained with me for some time, I remembered that I had told you, my father, that these visions pass quickly away; He said to me “that there was a difference between these and the imaginary visions, and that there could not be an invariable law concerning the graces He bestowed on us; for it was expedient to give them now in one way, now in another.”

4. After Communion, I saw our Lord most distinctly close beside me; and He began to comfort me with great sweetness, and said to me, among other things: “Thou beholdest Me present, My daughter,—it is I. Show me thy hands.” And to me He seemed

⁴ Fr. Martin Gutierrez, Rector of the Jesuit College of Salamanca.

to take them and to put them to His side, and said : "Behold My wounds ; thou art not without Me. Finish the short course of thy life." By some things He said to me, I understood that, after His Ascension, He never came down to the earth except in the most Holy Sacrament to communicate Himself to any one. He said to me, that when He rose again He showed Himself to our Lady, because she was in great trouble ; for sorrow had so pierced her soul that she did not even recover herself at once in order to have the fruition of that joy. By this I saw how different was my piercing.⁵ But what must that of the Virgin have been ? He remained long with her then because it was necessary to console her.

5. On Palm Sunday,⁶ at Communion, I was in a deep trance,—so much so, that I was not able even to swallow the Host ; and, still having It in my mouth, when I had come a little to myself, I verily believed that my mouth was all filled with Blood ; and my face and my whole body seemed to be covered with It, as if our Lord had been shedding It at that moment. I thought It was warm, and the sweetness I then felt was exceedingly great ; and our Lord said to me : "Daughter, My will is that My Blood should profit thee ; and be thou not afraid that My compassion will fail thee. I shed It in much suffering, and, as thou seest, thou hast the fruition of It in great joy. I reward thee well for the pleasure thou gavest me to-day." He said this because I have been in the habit of going to Communion, if possible, on this day for more than thirty years, and of labouring to prepare my soul to be the host of our Lord ; for I considered the cruelty of the Jews to be very great, after giving Him so grand a reception, in letting Him go so far for supper ; and I used to picture Him as remaining with me, and truly in a poor lodging, as I see now. And

⁵ See above, § 1.

⁶ April 8, 1571. The Saint was then at Salamanca.

thus I used to have such foolish thoughts—they must have been acceptable to our Lord, for this was one of the visions which I regard as most certain; and, accordingly, it has been a great blessing to me in the matter of Communion.

6. Previous to this I had been, I believe, for three days in that great pain, which I feel sometimes more than at others, because I am away from God; and during those days it had been very great, and seemingly more than I could bear. Being thus exceedingly wearied by it, I saw it was late to take my collation, nor could I do so,—for if I do not take it a little earlier, it occasions great weakness because of my sickness; and then, doing violence to myself, I took up some bread to prepare for collation, and on the instant Christ appeared, and seemed to be breaking the bread and putting it into my mouth. He said to me: “Eat, My daughter, and bear it as well as thou canst. I condole with thee in thy suffering; but it is good for thee now.” My pain was gone, and I was comforted; for He seemed to be really with me then, and the whole of the next day; and with this my desires were then satisfied. The word “condole” made me strong; for now I do not think I am suffering at all.

RELATION V.

OBSERVATIONS ON CERTAIN POINTS OF SPIRITUALITY.

I. “What is it that distresses thee, little sinner? Am I not thy God? Doest thou not see how ill I am treated here? If thou lovest Me, why art thou not sorry for Me? Daughter, light is very different from darkness. I am faithful; no one will be lost without knowing it. He must be deceiving himself who relies on spiritual sweetnesses; the true safety lies in the witness of a

good conscience.¹ But let no one think that of himself he can abide in the light, any more than he can hinder the natural night from coming on; for that depends on My grace. The best means he can have for retaining the light is the conviction in his soul that he can do nothing of himself, and that it comes from Me; for, even if he were in the light, the instant I withdraw, night will come. True humility is this: the soul's knowing what itself can do, and what I can do. Do not neglect to write down the counsels I give thee, that thou mayest not forget them. Thou seekest to have the counsels of men in writing; why, then, thinkest thou that thou art wasting time in writing down those I give thee? The time will come when thou shalt require them all." [Date unknown.]

On Union.

2. "Do not suppose, My daughter, that to be near to Me is union; for they who sin against Me are near Me, though they do not wish it. Nor is union the joys and comforts of union,² though they be of the very highest kind, and though they come from Me. These very often are means of winning souls, even if they are not in a state of grace." When I heard this, I was in a high degree lifted up in spirit. Our Lord showed me what the spirit was, and what the state of the soul was then, and the meaning of those words of the *Magnificat*, "Exultavit spiritus meus." He showed me that the spirit was the higher part of the will.

3. To return to union; I understood it to be a spirit, pure and raised up above all the things of earth, with nothing remaining in it that would swerve from the will of God, being a spirit and a will resigned

¹ 2 Cor. i. 12: "Gloria nostra hæc est, testimonium conscientiæ nostræ."

² See St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, bk. ii, ch. v. See *Relation ix.* 5.

to His will, and in detachment from all things, occupied in God in such a way as to leave no trace of any love of self, or of any created thing whatever.³ Thereupon, I considered that, if this be union, it comes to this, that, as my soul is always abiding in this resolution, we can say of it that it is always in this prayer of union: and yet it is true that the union lasts but a very short time. It was suggested to me that, as to living in justice, meriting and making progress, it will be so; but it cannot be said that the soul is in union as it is when in contemplation; and I thought I understood, yet not by words heard, that the dust of our wretchedness, faults, and imperfections, wherein we bury ourselves, is so great, that it is not possible to live in such pureness as the spirit is in when in union with God, raised up and out of our wretched misery. And I think, if it be union to have our will and spirit in union with the Will and Spirit of God, that it is not possible for any one not in a state of grace to attain thereto; and I have been told so. Accordingly, I believe it is very difficult to know when the soul is in union; to have that knowledge is a special grace of God, because nobody can tell whether he is in a state of grace or not.⁴

4. You will show me in writing, my father, what you think of this, and how I am in the wrong, and send me this paper back. [Year unknown.]

5. I had read in a book that it was an imperfection to possess pictures well painted,—and I would not, therefore, retain in my cell one that I had; and also, before I had read this, I thought that it was poverty to possess none, except those made of paper,—and, as I read this afterwards, I would not have any of any other material. I learnt from our Lord, when I was not thinking at all about this, what I am going to say: “that this mortification was not right. Which is

³ See *Foundations*, ch. v. 10.

⁴ Eccl. ix. 1: “Nescit homo utrum amore an odio dignus sit.”

better, poverty or charity? But as love was the better, whatever kindled love in me, that I must not give up, nor take away from my nuns; for the book spoke of much adorning and curious devices—not of pictures.⁵ What Satan was doing among the Lutherans was the taking away from them all those means by which their love might be the more quickened; and thus they were going to perdition. Those who are loyal to Me, My daughter, must now, more than ever, do the very reverse of what they do." I understood that I was under great obligations to serve our Lady and St. Joseph, because, when I was utterly lost, God, through their prayers, came and saved me. [Year unknown.]

6. One day, after the feast of St. Matthew, I was as is usual with me, after seeing in a vision the most Holy Trinity, and how It is present in a soul in a state of grace.⁶ I understood the mystery most clearly, in such a way that, after a certain fashion and comparisons, I saw It in an imaginary vision. And though at other times I have seen the most Holy Trinity in an intellectual vision, for some days after the truth of it did not rest with me,—as it does now,—I mean, so that I could dwell upon it. I see now that it is just as learned men told me; and I did not understand it as I do now, though I believed them without the least hesitation; for I never had any temptations against the faith. [September 22, year unknown.]

7. It seems to us ignorant women that the Persons of the most Holy Trinity are all Three, as we see Them painted, in one Person, after the manner of those pictures, which represent a body with three faces; and thus it causes such astonishment in us that we look on it as impossible, and so there is nobody who dares to think of it; for the understanding is perplexed, is

⁵ See St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, bk. iii, ch. xiv, 3, ch. xxxiv.; *Way of Perfection*, ch. xxxiv. 10.

⁶ See *Relation* iii. 13.

afraid it may come to doubt the truth, and that robs us of a great blessing.

8. What I have seen is this : Three distinct Persons each one by Himself visible, and by Himself speaking.⁷ And afterwards I have been thinking that the Son alone took human flesh, whereby this truth is known. The Persons love, communicate, and know Themselves. Then, if each one is by Himself, how can we say that the Three are one Essence, and so believe ? That is a most deep truth, and I would die for it a thousand times. In the Three Persons there is but one will and one power and one might ; neither can One be without Another : so that of all created things there is but one sole Creator. Could the Son create an ant without the Father ? No ; because the power is all one. The same is to be said of the Holy Ghost. Thus, there is one God Almighty, and the Three Persons are one Majesty. Is it possible to love the Father without loving the Son and the Holy Ghost ? No ; for he who shall please One of the Three pleases the Three Persons ; and he who shall offend One offends All. Can the Father be without the Son and without the Holy Ghost ? No ; for They are one substance, and where One is there are the Three ; for They cannot be divided. How, then, is it that we see the Three Persons distinct ? and how is it that the Son, not the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, took human flesh ? This is what I have never understood ; theologians know it. I know well that the Three were there when that marvellous work was done, and I do not busy myself with much thinking thereon. All my thinking thereon comes at once to this : that I see God is almighty, that He has done what He would, and so can do what He will. The less I understand it, the more I believe it ; and the greater the devotion it excites in me.

⁷ Antonius a Sancto Joseph, in his notes on this passage, is anxious to save the Thomist doctrine that one of the Divine Persons cannot be seen without the other, and so he says that the Saint speaks of the Three Persons as she saw Them—not as They are in Themselves.

May He be blessed for ever! Amen. [Year unknown.]

9. If our Lord had not been so gracious with me as He has been, I do not think I should have had the courage to do what has been done, nor strength to undergo the labours endured, with the contradictions and the opinions of men. And accordingly, since the beginning of the foundations, I have lost the fears I formerly had, thinking that I was under delusions,—and I had a conviction that it was the work of God: having this, I ventured upon difficult things, though always with advice and under obedience. I see in this that when our Lord willed to make a beginning of the Order, and of His mercy made use of me, His Majesty had to supply all that I was deficient in, which was everything, in order that the work might be effected and that His greatness might be the more clearly revealed in one so wicked.

10. Antiochus was unendurable to himself, and to those who were about him, because of the stench of his many sins.⁸

11. Confession is for faults and sins, and not for virtues, nor for anything of the kind relating to prayer. These things are to be treated of out of confession with one who understands the matter,—and let the prioress see to this; and the nun must explain the straits she is in, in order that the proper helps may be found for her; for Cassian says that he who does not know the fact, as well as he who has never seen or learnt, that men can swim, will think, when he sees people throw themselves into the river, that they will all be drowned.⁹

12. Our Lord would have Joseph tell the vision to

⁸ 2 Maccab. ix. 10, 12: "Eum nemo poterat propter intolerantiam fetoris portare . . . nec ipse jam fetorem suum ferre posset."

⁹ Cassian, *Collat.* lib. vii. ch. iv.: "Nec enim si quis ignarus natandi, sciens pondus corporis sui ferre aquarum liquorem non posse, experimento suæ voluerit imperitiæ definire, neminem penitus posse liquidis elementis solida carne circumdatum sustineri."

his brethren, and have it known, though it was to cost Joseph so much.

13. How the soul has a sense of fear when God is about to bestow any great grace upon it ; that sense is the worship of the spirit, as that of the four ¹⁰ elders spoken of in Scripture.

14. How, when the faculties are suspended, it is to be understood that certain matters are suggested to the soul, to be by it recommended to God ; that an angel suggests them, of whom it is said in the Scriptures that he was burning incense and offering up the prayers of the saints.¹¹

15. How there are no sins where there is no knowledge ; and thus our Lord did not permit the king to sin with the wife of Abraham, for he thought that she was his sister, not his wife.

RELATION VI.

THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE TO FATHER GRATIAN WHICH THE SAINT MADE IN 1575.

I. IN the year 1575, in the month of April, when I was founding the monastery of Veas, Father Jerome of the Mother of God Gratian happened to come thither.¹ I began to go to confession to him from time to time, though not looking upon him as filling the place of the other confessors I had, so as to be wholly directed by him. One day, when I was taking food, but without any interior recollection whatever, my soul began to be recollected in such a way that I thought I must fall into a trance ; and I had a vision, that passed away with the usual swiftness, like a

¹⁰ Antonius a Sancto Joseph says that the Saint meant to write four-and-twenty, in allusion to Apoc. iv. 4 (*Life*, ch. xi, 18).

¹¹ Apoc. viii. 4.

¹ See *Foundations*, ch. xxii.

meteor. I seemed to see close beside me Jesus Christ our Lord, in the form wherein His Majesty is wont to reveal Himself, with F. Gratian on His right. Our Lord took his right hand and mine, and, joining them together, said to me that He would have me accept him in His place for my whole life, and that we were both to have one mind in all things, for so it was fitting. I was profoundly convinced that this was the work of God, though I remembered with regret two of my confessors whom I frequented in turn for a long time, and to whom I owed much; that one for whom I have a great affection especially caused a terrible resistance. Nevertheless, not being able to persuade myself that the vision was a delusion, because it had a great power and influence over me, and also because it was said to me on two other occasions that I was not to be afraid, that He wished this,—the words were different,—I made up my mind at last to act upon them, understanding it to be our Lord's will, and to follow that counsel so long as I should live. I had never before so acted with any one, though I had consulted many persons of great learning and holiness, and who watched over my soul with great care,—but neither had I received any such direction as that I should make no change; for as to my confessors, of some I understood that they would be profitable to me, and so also of these.

2. When I had resolved on this, I found myself in peace and comfort so great that I was amazed, and assured of our Lord's will; for I do not think that Satan could fill the soul with peace and comfort such as this; and so, whenever I think of it, I praise our Lord, and remember the words, "*posuit fines tuos pacem,*"² and I wish I could wear myself out in the praises of God. [May 1575.]

3. It must have been about a month after this my resolve was made, on the second day after Pentecost,

² Psalm cxlvii. 14: "He hath made thy borders peace."

when I was going to found the monastery in Seville, that we heard Mass in a hermitage in Ecija, and rested there during the hottest part of the day. Those who were with me remained in the hermitage while I was by myself in the sacristy belonging to it. I began to think of one great grace which I received of the Holy Ghost, on one of the vigils of His feast,³ and a great desire arose within me of doing Him some most special service, and I found nothing that was not already done,—at least, resolved upon,—for all I do must be faulty; and I remembered that, though I had already made a vow of obedience it might be made in greater perfection, and I had an impression it would be pleasing unto Him if I promised that which I was already resolved upon, to live under obedience to the Father-Master, Fr. Jerome. On the one hand, I seemed to be doing nothing, because I was already bent on doing it; on the other hand, it would be a very serious thing, considering that our interior state is not made known to the superiors who receive our vows, and that they change, and that, if one is not doing his work well, another comes in his place; and I believed I should have none of my liberty all my life long, either outwardly or inwardly, and this constrained me greatly to abstain from making the vow. This repugnance of the will made me ashamed, and I saw that now I had something I could do for God, I was not doing it; it was a sad thing for my resolution to serve Him. The fact is, that the objection so pressed me, that I do not think I ever did anything in my life that was so hard—not even my profession—unless it be that of my leaving my father's house to become a nun.⁴ The reason for this was that I had forgotten my affection for him, and his gifts for directing me; yea, rather, I was looking on it then as a strange thing, which has surprised me; feeling nothing

³ The Saint refers to what she has written in her *Life*, ch. xxxviii. 11, 12
See also *Relation* ix.

⁴ *Life*, ch. iv. 1.

but a great fear whether the vow would be for the service of God or not: and my natural self—which is fond of liberty—must have been doing its work, though for years now I have no pleasure in it. But it seemed to me a far other matter to give up that liberty by a vow, as in truth it is. After a protracted struggle, our Lord gave me great confidence; and I saw it was the better course, the more I felt about it: if I made this promise in honour of the Holy Ghost, He would be bound to give him light for the direction of my soul; and I remembered at the same time that our Lord had given him to me as my guide. Thereupon I fell upon my knees, and, to render this tribute of service to the Holy Ghost, made a promise to do whatever he should bid me do while I lived, provided nothing were required of me contrary to the law of God and the commands of superiors whom I am more bound to obey. I adverted to this, that the obligation did not extend to things of little importance,—as if I were to be importunate with him about anything, and he bade me cease, and I neglected his advice and repeated my request,—nor to things relating to my convenience. In a word, his commands were not to be about trifles, done without reflection; and I was not knowingly to conceal from him my faults and sins, or my interior state; and this, too, is more than we allow to superiors. In a word, I promised to regard him as in the place of God, outwardly and inwardly. I know not if it be so, but I seemed to have done a great thing in honour of the Holy Ghost—at least, it was all I could do, and very little it was in comparison with what I owe Him.

4. I give God thanks, Who has created one capable of this work: I have the greatest confidence that His Majesty will bestow on him great graces; and I myself am so happy and free and joyous, that I seem to be in every way free from myself; and though I thought that my obedience would be a burden, I have

attained to the greatest freedom. May our Lord be praised for ever ! [May 23, 1575.]

RELATION VII.

MADE FOR RODRIGO ALVAREZ, S.J., IN FEBRUARY OR MARCH 1576.¹

1. THIS nun took the habit forty years ago, and from the first began to reflect on the mysteries of the Passion of Christ our Lord, and on her own sins, for some time every day, without thinking at all of anything supernatural, but only created things, or of such subjects as suggested to her how soon the end of all things must come, discerning in creatures the greatness of God and His love for us.

2. This made her much more willing to serve Him : she was never under the influence of fear, and made no account of it, but had always a great desire to see God honoured, and His glory increased. To that end were all her prayers directed, without making any for herself ; for she thought that it mattered little if she had to suffer in purgatory in exchange for the increase of His glory even in the slightest degree.

3. In this she spent about two-and-twenty years in great aridities, and never did it enter into her thoughts to desire anything else ; for she regarded herself as one who, she thought, did not deserve even to think about God, except that His Majesty was very merciful to her in allowing her to remain in His presence, saying her prayers, reading also in good books.

4. It must be about eighteen years since she began to arrange about the first monastery of Barefooted Carmelites which she founded. It was in Avila, three

¹ The autograph of this Relation, preserved at Viterbo, differs in parts from the printed versions.

or two years before,—I believe it is three,—she began to think that she occasionally heard interior locutions, and had visions and revelations interiorly. She saw with the eyes of the soul, for she never saw anything with her bodily eyes, nor heard anything with her bodily ears; twice, she thinks, she heard a voice, but she understood not what was said. It was a sort of making things present when she saw these things interiorly; they passed away like a meteor most frequently. The vision, however, remained so impressed on her mind, and produced such effects, that it was as if she saw those things with her bodily eyes, and more.

5. She was then by nature so very timid, that she would not dare to be alone even by day, at times. And as she could not escape from these visitations, though she tried with all her might, she went about in very great distress, afraid that it was a delusion of Satan, and began to consult spiritual men of the Society of Jesus about it, among whom were Father Araoz,² who was Commissary of the Society, and who happened to go to that place, and Father Francis, who was Duke of Gandía,—him she consulted twice³; also a Provincial, now in Rome, called Gil Gonzalez,⁴ and him also who is now Provincial of Castile,⁵—this latter, however, not so often,—Father Baltasar Alvarez,⁶ who is now Rector in Salamanca; and he

² Antonio Araoz, born at Vergara in 1515, was related to St. Ignatius, whose disciple he became in Rome in 1539. He was Provincial in Spain, and from 1562 to 1565 Commissary-General; it was during this time he came into contact with St. Teresa. He died in 1573.

³ See *Life*, ch. xxiv. 4.

⁴ Gil Gonzalez d'Avila, born in 1532 at Burujon, Estramadura, was successively Provincial of three provinces, holding for thirty years the office of superior. He remained twelve years in contact with the holy mother; during her priorship at the convent of the Incarnation he frequently visited her. His death occurred in 1596.

⁵ Juan Suarez, born at Cuenca in 1525. He joined the Society in 1551, and was twice Provincial of Castile, making his journeys of inspection always on foot. By nature amiable and kind-hearted, he suffered much from depression when he became rigorous. He made St. Teresa's acquaintance during her stay at Valladolid. She wrote to him on Feb. 10, 1578; there exists also a note of his to the Saint. He died at Valladolid in 1595.

⁶ See *Life*, ch. xxiv. 5.

heard her confession for six years at this time ; also the present Rector of Cuenca, Salazar⁷ by name ; the Rector of Segovia, called Santander⁸ ; the Rector of Burgos, whose name is Ripalda,⁹—and he thought very ill of her when he heard of these things, till after he had conversed with her ; the Doctor Paul Hernandez¹⁰ in Toledo, who was a Consultor of the Inquisition¹¹ ; the Doctor Gutierrez,¹² who was Rector in Salamanca when she talked to him, and other fathers, some of the Society, whom she knew to be spiritual men, these she sought out, if any were in those places where she went to found monasteries.

6. With the Father Fray Peter of Alcantara, who was a holy man of the Barefooted Friars of St. Francis, she had many communications, and he it was who insisted so much upon it that her spirit should be regarded as good. They were more than six years trying her spirit minutely, as it is already described at very great length,¹³ as will be shown hereafter : and

⁷ Gaspar de Salazar, *Life*, ch. xxxiii. 9. The autograph calls him Rector of Sigüenza (not Cuenca).

⁸ Luis Santander founded in 1559 the College of Segovia ; in 1571 he was at Valencia, but three years later the Saint met him at Segovia, and she speaks of him repeatedly with great praise.

⁹ Jerome Ripalda filled various posts of superiority, among others at Burgos, Valladolid, and Salamanca, where he met St. Teresa in 1573. He ordered her to write the *Book of Foundations*, and she speaks of him as "my great friend of the Society" (letter to Fr. Gratian, Dec. 1576). He gave evidence in the process of her beatification. He was a great theologian, and composed the catechism still in use in Spain. He died in 1618 at the age of eighty-four.

¹⁰ Paul Hernandez, founder of the college at Seville, made the acquaintance of the Saint at Toledo in 1568. She speaks of him in her letters as "a father of the Society, a great friend of mine," and there is also a letter of hers to him, dated Oct. 4, 1578. He used to say, "Mother Teresa of Jesus is great from head to foot, but beyond her head she is greater still," in allusion to her supernatural gifts.

¹¹ The autograph adds here : "Another was called Ordoñez, who has been Rector of Avila." She wrote to him from the convent of the Incarnation to Medina del Campo, where he resided (July 27, 1573).

¹² Martin Gutierrez. See *Rel.* iii. 12. Other Jesuits whom the Saint consulted were Pedro Domenech (see *Life* xxxiv. 3), Henry Enriquez, Bartholomew Perez de Nueros, Provincial of Castile, whom she knew for ten years ; Gonsalvo d'Avila, Rector of Avila in 1578 ; Juan del Aguila ; and Francis Suarez, the great theologian.

¹³ See *Life*, ch. xxv. 18.

she herself in tears and deep affliction ; for the more they tried her, the more she fell into raptures, and into trances very often,—not, however, deprived of her senses.

7. Many prayers were made, and many Masses were said, that our Lord would lead her by another way,¹⁴ for her fear was very great when she was not in prayer ; though in everything relating to the state of her soul she was very much better, and a great difference was visible : there was no vainglory, nor had she any temptation thereto, nor to pride ; on the contrary, she was very much ashamed and confounded when she saw that people knew of her state, and except with her confessors or any one who would give her light, she never spoke of these things, and it was more painful to speak of them than if they had been grave sins ; for it seemed to her that people must laugh at her,¹⁵ and that these things were womanish imaginations, which she had always heard of with disgust.

8. About thirteen years ago, more or less, after the house of St. Joseph was founded, into which she had gone from the other monastery, came the present Bishop of Salamanca, Inquisitor, I think, of Toledo, previously of Seville, Soto by name.¹⁶ She contrived

¹⁴ See *Life*, ch. xxv. 20, and ch. xxvii. 1.

¹⁵ See *Life*, ch. xxvi. 5.

¹⁶ Don Francisco de Soto y Salazar was a native of Bonilla de la Sierra, and Vicar-General of the Bishops of Astorga and Avila, and Canon of Avila ; Inquisitor of Cordova, Seville, and Toledo ; Bishop, successively, of Albaracin, Segorve, and Salamanca. He died at Merida in 1576, poisoned, it was suspected, by the sect of the Illuminati, who were alarmed at his faithful zeal and holy life. "She went to the Inquisitor, Don Francisco Soto y Salazar—he was afterwards Bishop of Salamanca—and said to him : 'My lord, I am subject to certain extraordinary processes in prayer, such as ecstasies, raptures, and revelations, and do not wish to be deluded or deceived by Satan, or to do anything that is not absolutely safe. I give myself up to the Inquisition to try me, and examine my ways of going on, submitting myself to its orders.' The Inquisitor replied : 'Señora, the business of the Inquisition is not to try the spirit, nor to examine ways of prayer, but to correct heretics. Do you, then, commit your experience to writing, in all simplicity and truth, and send it to the Father-Master Avila, who is a man of great spirituality and learning, and extremely conversant with matters of prayer ; and when you shall have his answer you may be sure there is nothing to be afraid of.' " (Jerome Gratian, *Lucidario*, cap. iii.).

to have a conference with him for her greater security, and told him everything. He replied, that there was nothing in all this that concerned his office, because everything that she saw and heard confirmed her the more in the Catholic faith, in which she always was, and is, firm, with most earnest desires for the honour of God and the good of souls, willing to suffer death many times for one of them.

9. He told her, when he saw how distressed she was, to give an account of it all, and of her whole life, without omitting anything, to the Master Avila, who was a man of great learning in the way of prayer, and to rest content with the answer he should give. She did so, and described her sins and her life. He wrote to her and comforted her, giving her great security. The account I gave was such that all those learned men who saw it—they were my confessors—said that it was very profitable for instruction in spiritual things; and they commanded her to make copies of it, and write another little book¹⁷ for her daughters,—she was prioress,—wherein she might give them some instructions.

10. Notwithstanding all this, she was not without fears at times, for she thought that spiritual men also might be deceived like herself. She told her confessor that he might discuss these things with certain learned men, though they were not much given to prayer, for she had no other desire but that of knowing whether what she experienced was in conformity with the sacred writings or not. Now and then she took comfort in thinking that—though she herself, because of her sins, deserved to fall into delusions—our Lord would not suffer so many good men, anxious to give her light, to be led into error.

11. Having this in view, she began to communicate with fathers of the Order of the glorious St. Dominic, to which, before these things took place, she had been

¹⁷ This book is the *Way of Perfection*, written by direction of Fr. Bañes.

to confession,—she does not say to them, but to the Order.¹⁸ These are they with whom she afterwards had relations. The Father Fray Vicente Baron, at that time Consultor of the Holy Office, heard her confessions for eighteen months in Toledo, and he had done so very many years before these things began. He was a very learned man. He reassured her greatly, as did also the Fathers of the Society spoken of before. All used to say, If she does not sin against God, and acknowledges her own misery, what has she to be afraid of? She confessed to the Father Fray Pedro Ibañez, who was reader in Avila; to the Father-Master Fray Dominic Bañes, who is now in Valladolid as rector of the college of St. Gregory, I confessed for six years, and whenever I had occasion to do so communicated with him by letter; also to the Master Chaves¹⁹; to the Father-Master Fray Bartholomew of Medina,²⁰ professor in Salamanca, of whom she knew that he thought ill of her; for she, having heard this, thought that he, better than any other, could tell her if she was deceived, because he had so little confidence in her. This was more than two years ago. She contrived to go to confession to him, and gave him a full account of everything while she remained there; and he saw what she had written,²¹ for the purpose of attaining to a better understanding of the matter. He reassured her so much, and more than all the rest, and remained her very good friend.

¹⁸ The Saint had such great affection for the Order of St. Dominic that she used to say of herself: "Yo soy la Dominica in passione," meaning thereby that she was in her heart a child of the Order.

¹⁹ Diego de Chaves, of the convent of San Esteban of Salamanca, theologian at the Council of Trent, and professor at Compostella. For some time he lived at Avila, where he made the acquaintance of St. Teresa, who speaks of him in her letters. He died June 17, 1592, at the age of eighty-five years, of which he had spent sixty-eight in the Order of Friars Preachers.

²⁰ Bartholomew de Medina, born at Medina del Rioseco, was professor at Alcalá and Salamanca. When the Saint lived at Alba de Tormes in 1574 he came every morning from Salamanca (a distance of 25 kilometres) to hear her confession. He died Dec. 30, 1580.

²¹ When this father had read the *Life* he had it copied, with the assent of F. Gratian, and gave the copy thus made to the Duchess of Alba.

12. She went to confession also to Fray Philip de Meneses,²² when she founded the monastery of Valladolid, for he was Rector of the college of St. Gregory. He, having before that heard of her state, had gone to Avila, that he might speak to her,—it was an act of great charity,—being desirous of ascertaining whether she was deluded, so that he might enlighten her, and, if she was not, defend her when he heard her spoken against; and he was much satisfied.

13. She also conferred particularly with Salinas,²³ Dominican Provincial, a man of great spirituality; with another Licentiate named Lunar,²⁴ who was prior of St. Thomas of Avila; and, in Segovia, with a Reader, Fray Diego de Yangües.²⁵

14. Of these Dominicans, some never failed to give themselves greatly to prayer, and perhaps all did. Some others also she consulted; for in so many years,

²² Philip de Meneses, of Trujillo in Estramadura, was professor at Alcalá and Rector of San Gregorio at Valladolid. He was charged by Philip II, with the reform of several Orders, and died in 1572 in Galicia while carrying out this work.

²³ Juan de Salinas, born in 1497, died in 1569. St. Teresa saw him at Toledo. Bañez narrates that Salinas asked him one day: "Who is this Teresa of Jesus whom you seem to make so much of? Don't trust the virtue of women." Bañez replied: "As your Reverence is going to Toledo, you can see her and form your own opinion." Some time afterwards they met again, and Bañez asked what impression the Provincial had received. He replied: "You have deceived me: you told me she was a woman, but I found her a man, even with a strong beard" (*y de los muy barbados, i.e. of a strong, virile character*).

²⁴ This passage is not in the autograph, nor is the Presentado Lunar mentioned anywhere in the writings of the Saint.

²⁵ Diego de Yangües, or Yangües, born in 1535, filled successively the chair of Divinity in several universities. While at Segovia he was St. Teresa's confessor, and he witnessed an ecstasy of hers in the grotto of St. Dominic beneath the Dominican convent. She entrusted to him the revision of the *Book of Foundations* and the *Interior Castle*; it is supposed that he was the confessor who ordered her to throw her book on the *Canticle of Canticles* (*Conceptions of Divine Love*) into the fire. St. Teresa had great confidence in his learning and judgment, and consulted him orally and by letter as long as she lived. Other Dominicans with whom she was acquainted were Melchior Cano (nephew of the famous theologian), whom she knew at Avila and Segovia; Bartholomew del Aguilar, one of her confessors at Seville (1575-76); Juan de la Cuevas, Provincial and afterwards Bishop of Avila, who presided at the constituent chapter of the province of Discalced Carmelites (1581); Pedro Fernandez, visitor of the Carmelites; Ferdinand del Castillo, who, on behalf of the Inquisition, examined her *Life*, and remained her devoted friend; and Juan Gutierrez.

and because of the fear she was in, she had opportunities of doing so, especially as she went about founding monasteries in so many places. Her spirit was tried enough, for everybody wished to be able to enlighten her, and thereby reassured her and themselves. She always, at all times, wished to submit herself to whatever they enjoined her, and she was therefore distressed when, as to these spiritual things, she could not obey them. Both her own prayer and that of the nuns she has established are always carefully directed towards the propagation of the faith; and it was for that purpose, and for the good of her Order, that she began her first monastery.

15. She used to say that, if any of these things tended to lead her against the Catholic faith and the law of God, she would not need to seek for learned men nor tests, because she would see at once that they came from Satan. She never undertook anything merely because it came to her in prayer; on the contrary, when her confessors bade her do the reverse, she did so without being in the least troubled thereat, and she always told them everything. For all that they told her that these things came from God, she never so thoroughly believed them that she could swear to it herself, though it did seem to her that they were spiritually safe, because of the effects thereof, and of the great graces which she at times received; but she always desired virtues more than anything else; and this it is that she has charged her nuns to desire, saying to them that the most humble and mortified will be the most spiritual.

16. All that is told and written she communicated to the Father-Master Fray Dominic Bañes, who is now in Valladolid, and who is the person with whom she has had, and has still, the most frequent communications. He sent her writings to the Holy Office in Madrid, so it is said. In all this she submits herself to the Catholic faith and the Roman Church. Nobody

has found fault with them, because these things are not in the power of any man, and our Lord does not require what is impossible.

17. The reason why so much is known about her is that, as she was in fear about herself, and described her state to so many, these talked to one another on the subject, and also the accident that happened to what she had written.²⁶ This has been to her a very grievous torment and cross, and has cost her many tears. She says that this distress is not the effect of humility, but of the causes already mentioned. Our Lord seems to have given permission²⁷ for this torture; for if one spoke more harshly of her than others, by little and little he spoke more kindly of her.

18. She took the greatest pains not to submit the state of her soul to any one who she thought would believe that these things came from God, for she was instantly afraid that the devil would deceive them both. If she saw any one timid about these things, to him she laid bare her secrets with the greater joy; though also it gave her pain when, for the purpose of trying her, these things were treated with contempt, for she thought some were really from God, and she would not have people, even if they had good cause, condemn them absolutely; neither would she have them believe that all were from God; and because she knew perfectly well that delusion was possible, therefore it was that she never thought herself altogether safe in a matter wherein there might be danger.

19. She used to strive with all her might never in any way to offend God, and was always obedient; and by these means she thought she might obtain her deliverance, by the help of God, even if Satan were the cause.

20. Ever since she became subject to these supernatural visitations, her spirit is always inclined to seek

²⁶ See *Foundations*, ch. xvii, 12, note.

²⁷ *Life*, ch. xxiii, 15.

after that which is most perfect, and she had almost always a great desire to suffer ; and in the persecutions she underwent, and they were many, she was comforted, and had a particular affection for her persecutors. She had a great desire to be poor and lonely, and to depart out of this land of exile in order to see God. Through these effects, and others like them, she began to find peace, thinking that a spirit which could leave her with these virtues could not be an evil one, and they who had the charge of her soul said so ; but it was a peace that came from diminished weariness, not from the cessation of fear.

21. The spirit she is of never urged her to make any of these things known, but to be always obedient.²⁸ As it has been said already,²⁹ she never saw anything with her bodily eyes, but in a way so subtile and so intellectual that at first she sometimes thought that all was the effect of imagination ; at other times she could not think so. These things were not continual, but occurred for the most part when she was in some trouble : as on one occasion, when for some days she had to bear unendurable interior pains, and a restlessness of soul arising out of the fear that she was deluded by Satan, as it is described at length in the account she has given of it,³⁰ and where her sins, for they have been so public, are mentioned with the rest : for the fear she was in made her forget her own good name.

22. Being thus in distress such as cannot be described, at the mere hearing interiorly these words,³¹ "It is I, be not afraid," her soul became so calm, courageous, and confident, that she could not understand whence so great a blessing had come ; for her confessor had not been able—and many learned men, with many words, had not been able—to give her that peace and rest which this one word had given her. And thus, at other times, some vision gave her strength,

²⁸ *Life*, ch. xxvi. 5.

³⁰ *Life*, ch. xxv. 19.

²⁹ § 4.

³¹ *Life*, ch. xxv. 22.

for without that she could not have borne such great trials and contradictions, together with infirmities without number, and which she still has to bear, though they are not so many,—for she is never free from some suffering or other, more or less intense. Her ordinary state is constant pain, with many other infirmities, though since she became a nun they are more troublesome, if she is doing anything in the service of our Lord. And the mercies He shows her pass quickly out of memory, though she often dwells on those mercies,—but she is not able to dwell so long upon these as upon her sins; these are always a torment to her, most commonly as filth smelling foully.

23. That her sins are so many, and her service of God so scanty, must be the reason why she is not tempted to vainglory. There never was anything in any of these spiritual visitations that was not wholly pure and clean, nor does she think it can be otherwise if the spirit be good and the visitations supernatural, for she utterly neglects the body and never thinks of it, being wholly intent upon God.

24. She is also living in great fear about sinning against God, and doing His will in all things; this is her continual prayer. And she is, she thinks, so determined never to swerve from this, that there is nothing her confessors might enjoin her, which she considers to be for the greater honour of our Lord, that she would not undertake and perform, by the help of our Lord. And confident that His Majesty helps those who have resolved to advance His service and glory, she thinks no more of herself and of her own progress, in comparison with that, than if she did not exist, so far as she knows herself; and her confessors think so too.

25. All that is written in this paper is the simple truth, and they, and all others who have had anything to do with her for these twenty years, can justify it. Most frequently her spirit urged her to praise God, and

she wished that all the world gave itself up to that, even though it should cost her exceedingly. Hence the desire she has for the good of souls; and from considering how vile are the things of this world, and how precious are interior things, with which nothing can be compared, she has attained to a contempt of the world.

26. As for the vision about which you, my father, wish to know something, it is of this kind: she sees nothing either outwardly or inwardly, for the vision is not imaginary; but, without seeing anything, she understands what it is, and where it is, more clearly than if she saw it, only nothing in particular presents itself to her. She is like a person who feels that another is close beside her; but because she is in the dark she sees him not, yet is certain that he is there present. Still, this comparison is not exact; for he who is in the dark, in some way or other, through hearing a noise or having seen that person before, knows he is there, or knew it before; but here there is nothing of the kind, for without a word, inward or outward, the soul clearly perceives who it is, where he is, and occasionally what he means.³² Why, or how, she perceives it, she knoweth not; but so it is; and while it lasts, she cannot help being aware of it. And when it is over,—though she may wish ever so much to retain the image thereof,—she cannot do it, for it is then clear to her that it would be, in that case, an act of the imagination, not the vision itself,—that is not in her power; and so it is with the supernatural things. And it is from this it comes to pass that he in whom God works these graces despises himself, and becomes more humble than he was ever before, for he sees that this is a gift of God, and that he can neither add to it nor take from it. The love and the desire become greater of serving our Lord, who is so mighty that He can do that which is more than our imagina-

³² See *Life*, ch. xxvii. 5.

tion can conceive here, as there are things which men, however learned they may be, can never know. Blessed for ever and ever be He Who bestows this! Amen.

RELATION VIII.

ADDRESSED TO FATHER RODRIGO ALVAREZ (MARCH OR APRIL 1576).

I. THESE interior things of the spirit are so difficult to describe, and, still more, in such a way as to be understood,—the more so as they pass quickly away,—that, if obedience did not help me, it would be a chance if I succeeded, especially in such difficult things. I implore you, my father, to take for granted that it is not in my mind to think this to be correct, for it may well be that I do not understand the matter; but what I can assure you of is this, that I will speak of nothing I have not had experience of at times, and, indeed, often.

2. I think it will please you, my father, if I begin by discussing that which is at the root of supernatural things; for that which relates to devotion, tenderness, tears, and meditations, which is in our power here to acquire by the help of our Lord, is understood.

3. The first prayer of which I was conscious,—in my opinion, supernatural,—so I call that which no skill or effort of ours, however much we labour, can attain to, though we should prepare ourselves for it, and that preparation must be of great service,—is a certain interior recollection¹ of which the soul is sensible; the soul seems to have other senses within itself then, which bear some likeness to the exterior senses it possesses; and thus the soul, withdrawing

¹ *Interior Castle*, M. iv. ch. iii.

into itself, seeks to go away from the tumult of its outward senses, and accordingly it drags them away with itself; for it closes the eyes on purpose that it may neither see, nor hear, nor understand anything but that whereon the soul is then intent, which is to be able to converse with God alone. In this prayer there is no suspension of the faculties and powers of the soul; it retains the full use of them; but the use of them is retained that they may be occupied with God. This will be easily understood by him whom our Lord shall have raised to this state; but by him whom He has not, not; at least, such a one will have need of many words and illustrations.

4. Out of this recollection grow a certain quietude and inward peace most full of comfort; for the soul is in such a state that it does not seem to it that it wants anything; for even speaking wearies it,—I mean by this, vocal prayer and meditation; it would do nothing but love. This lasts some time, and even a long time.

5. Out of this prayer comes usually what is called a sleep of the faculties; but they are not so absorbed nor so suspended as that it can be called a trance; nor is it altogether union.

6. Sometimes, and even often, the soul is aware that the will alone is in union; and this it sees very clearly,—that is, it seems so to it. The will is wholly intent upon God, and the soul sees that it has no power to rest on, or do, anything else; and at the same time the two other faculties are at liberty to attend to other matters of the service of God,—in a word, Martha and Mary are together.² I asked Father Francis³ if this was a delusion, for it made me stupid; and his reply was, that it often happened.

7. When all the faculties of the soul are in union, it is a very different state of things; for they can then do nothing whatever, because the understanding is as it

² See *Life*, ch. xvii. 6.

³ See *Life*, ch. xxiv. 4.

were surprised. The will loves more than the understanding knows; but the understanding does not know that the will loves, nor what it is doing, so as to be able in any way to speak of it. As to the memory, the soul, I think, has none then, nor any power of thinking, nor are the senses awake, but rather as lost, so that the soul may be the more occupied with the object of its fruition: so it seems to me. They are lost but for a brief interval; it passes quickly away. By the wealth of humility, and other virtues and desires, left in the soul after this may be learnt how great the blessing is that flows from this grace, but it cannot be told what it is; for, though the soul applies itself to the understanding of it, it can neither understand nor explain it. This, if it be real, is, in my opinion, the greatest grace wrought by our Lord on this spiritual road,—at least, it is one of the greatest.

8. Raptures and trance, in my opinion, are all one, only I am in the habit of using the word trance instead of rapture, because the latter word frightens people; and, indeed, the union of which I am speaking may also be called a trance. The difference between union and trance is this, that the latter lasts longer and is more visible outwardly, because the breathing gradually diminishes, so that it becomes impossible to speak or to open the eyes; and though this very thing occurs when the soul is in union, there is more violence in a trance, for the natural warmth vanishes, I know not how, when the rapture is deep; and in all these kinds of prayer there is more or less of this. When it is deep, as I was saying, the hands become cold, and sometimes stiff and straight as pieces of wood; as to the body, if the rapture comes on when it is standing or kneeling, it remains so⁴; and the soul is so full of the joy of that which our Lord is setting before it, that it seems to forget to animate

⁴ See *Life*, ch. xx. 23.

the body and abandons it. If the rapture lasts, the nerves are made to feel it.

9. It seems to me that our Lord will have the soul know more of that, the fruition of which it has, in a trance than in union, and accordingly in a rapture the soul receives most commonly certain revelations of His Majesty, and the effects thereof on the soul are great,—a forgetfulness of self, through the longing it has that God our Lord, Who is so high, may be known and praised. In my opinion, if the rapture be from God, the soul cannot fail to obtain a deep conviction of its own helplessness, and of its wretchedness and ingratitude, in that it has not served Him Who, of His own goodness only, bestows upon it graces so great; for the feeling and the sweetness are so high above all things that may be compared therewith that, if the recollection of them did not pass away, all the satisfactions of earth would be always loathsome to it; and hence comes the contempt for all the things of the world.

10. The difference between trance and transport^s is this,—in a trance the soul gradually dies to outward things, losing the senses and living unto God. A transport comes on by one sole act of His Majesty, wrought in the innermost part of the soul with such swiftness that it is as if the higher part thereof were carried away, and the soul leaving the body. Accordingly it requires courage at first to throw itself into the arms of our Lord, that He may take it whithersoever He will; for, until His Majesty establishes it in peace, there whither He is pleased to take it—by take it I mean the admitting of it to the knowledge of deep things—it certainly requires in the beginning to be firmly resolved to die for Him, because the poor soul does not know what this means—that is, at first. The virtues, as it seems to me, remain stronger after this, for there is a growth in detachment, and the

^s “Arrobamiento y arrebatamiento.”

power of God, Who is so mighty, is the more known, so that the soul loves and fears Him. For so it is, He carries away the soul, no longer in our power, as the true Lord thereof, which is filled with a deep sorrow for having offended Him, and astonishment that it ever dared to offend a Majesty so great, with an exceedingly earnest desire that none may henceforth offend Him, and that all may praise Him. This, I think, must be the source of those very fervent desires for the salvation of souls, and for some share therein, and for the due praising of God.

11. The flight of the spirit—I know not how to call it—is a rising upwards from the very depths of the soul. I remember only this comparison, and I made use of it before, as you know, my father, in that writing where these and other ways of prayer are explained at length,⁶ and such is my memory that I forget things at once. It seems to me that the soul and spirit are one and the same thing; but only as a fire, if it is great and ready for burning; so, like fire burning rapidly, the soul, in that preparation of itself which is the work of God, sends up a flame,—the flame ascends on high, but the fire thereof is the same as that below, nor does the flame cease to be fire because it ascends: so here, in the soul, something so subtle and so swift seems to issue from it, that ascends to the higher part, and goes thither whither our Lord wills. I cannot go further with the explanation; it seems a flight, and I know of nothing else wherewith to compare it: I know that it cannot be mistaken, for it is most evident when it occurs, and that it cannot be hindered.

12. This little bird of the spirit seems to have escaped out of this wretchedness of the flesh, out of the prison of this body, and now, disentangled therefrom, is able to be the more intent on that which our Lord is giving it. The flight of the spirit is something

⁶ See *Life*, chs. xviii, 8, xx, 32, and xxi.

so fine, of such inestimable worth, as the soul perceives it, that all delusion therein seems impossible, or anything of the kind, when it occurs. It was afterwards that fear arose, because she who received this grace was so wicked; for she saw what good reasons she had to be afraid of everything, though in her innermost soul there remained an assurance and a confidence wherein she was able to live, but not enough to make her cease from the anxiety she was in not to be deceived.

13. By impetus I mean that desire which at times rushes into the soul, without being preceded by prayer, and this is most frequently the case; it is a sudden remembering that the soul is away from God, or of a word it has heard to that effect. This remembering is occasionally so strong and vehement that the soul in a moment becomes as if the reason were gone, just like a person who suddenly hears most painful tidings of which he knew not before, or is surprised⁷; such a one seems deprived of the power of collecting his thoughts for his own comfort, and is as one lost. So is it in this state, except that the suffering arises from this, that there abides in the soul a conviction that it would be well worth dying in it. It seems that whatever the soul then perceives does but increase its suffering, and that our Lord will have its whole being find no comfort in anything, nor remember that it is His will that it should live: the soul seems to itself to be in great and indescribable loneliness, and abandoned of all, because the world, and all that is in it, gives it pain; and because it finds no companionship in any created thing, the soul seeks its Creator alone, and this it sees to be impossible unless it dies; and as it must not kill itself, it is dying to die, and there is really a risk of death, and it sees itself hanging between heaven and earth, not knowing what to do with itself. And from time to time God

⁷ *Life*, ch. xvi. 6. *Relation* iv. 1.

gives it a certain knowledge of Himself, that it may see what it loses, in a way so strange that no explanation of it is possible ; and there is no pain in the world—at least I have felt none—that is equal or like unto this, for if it lasts but half an hour the whole body is out of joint, and the bones so racked, that I am not able to write with my hands : the pains I endure are most grievous.⁸

14. But nothing of all this is felt till the impetus shall have passed away. He to whom it comes has enough to do in enduring that which is going on within him, nor do I believe that he would feel if he were grievously tortured : he is in possession of all his senses, can speak, and even observe ; walk about he cannot,—the great blow of that love throws him down to the ground. If we were to die to have this, it would be of no use, for it cannot be except when God sends it. It leaves great effects and blessings in the soul. Some learned men say that it is this, others that it is that, but no one condemns it. The Father-Master d'Avila⁹ wrote to me and said it was good, and so say all. The soul clearly understands that it is a great grace from our Lord ; were it to occur more frequently, life would not last long.

15. The ordinary impetus is, that this desire of serving God comes on with a certain tenderness, accompanied with tears, out of a longing to depart from this land of exile ; but as the soul retains its freedom, wherein it reflects that its living on is according to our Lord's will, it takes comfort in that thought, and offers its life to Him, beseeching Him that it may last only for His glory. This done, it bears all.

16. Another prayer very common is a certain kind of wounding¹⁰ ; for it really seems to the soul as if an

⁸ *Life*, ch. xx. 16 ; *Interior Castle*, M. vi. ch. xi. 4.

⁹ See his letter (n. 6), of Sept. 12, 1568, at the end of the Introduction.

¹⁰ See *Life*, ch. xxix. 17.

arrow were thrust through the heart, or through itself. Thus it causes great suffering, which makes the soul complain; but the suffering is so sweet, that it wishes it never would end. The suffering is not one of sense, neither is the wound physical; it is in the interior of the soul, without any appearance of bodily pain; but as I cannot explain it except by comparing it with other pains, I make use of these clumsy expressions,—for such they are when applied to this suffering. I cannot, however, explain it in any other way. It is, therefore, neither to be written of nor spoken of, because it is impossible for any one to understand it who has not had experience of it,—I mean, how far the pain can go; for the pains of the spirit are very different from those of earth. I gather, therefore, from this, that the souls in hell and purgatory suffer more than we can imagine, by considering these pains of the body.

17. At other times, this wound of love seems to issue from the inmost depth of the soul; great are the effects of it; and when our Lord does not inflict it, there is no help for it, whatever we may do to obtain it; nor can it be avoided when it is His pleasure to inflict it. The effects of it are those longings after God, so quick and so fine that they cannot be described; and when the soul sees itself hindered and kept back from entering, as it desires, on the fruition of God, it conceives a great loathing for the body, on which it looks as a thick wall which hinders it from that fruition which it then seems to have entered upon within itself, and unhindered by the body. It then comprehends the great evil that has befallen us through the sin of Adam in robbing us of this liberty.¹¹

18. This prayer I had before the raptures and the great impetuositities I have been speaking of. I forgot to say that these great impetuositities scarcely ever leave me, except through a trance or great sweetness

¹¹ See *Life*, ch. xvii. 9.

in our Lord, whereby He comforts the soul, and gives it courage to live on for His sake.

19. All this that I speak of cannot be the effect of the imagination; and I have some reasons for saying this, but it would be wearisome to enter on them: whether it be good or not is known to our Lord. The effects thereof, and how it profits the soul, pass all comprehension, as it seems to me.

20. I see clearly that the Persons are distinct, as I saw it yesterday when you, my father, were talking to the Father Provincial¹²; only I saw nothing, and heard nothing, as, my father, I have already told you. But there is a strange certainty about it, though the eyes of the soul see nothing; and when the presence is withdrawn, that withdrawal is felt. How it is, I know not; but I do know very well that it is not an imagination, because I cannot reproduce the vision when it is over, even if I were to perish in the effort; but I have tried to do so. So is it with all that I have spoken of here, so far as I can see; for, as I have been in this state for so many years, I have been able to observe, so that I can say so with this confidence. The truth is,—and you, my father, should attend to this,—that, as to the Person who always speaks, I can certainly say which of Them He seems to me to be; of the others I cannot say so much. One of Them I know well has never spoken. I never knew why, nor do I busy myself in asking more of God than He is pleased to give, because in that case, I believe, I should be deluded by Satan at once; nor will I ask now, because of the fear I am in.

21. I think the First spoke to me at times; but as I do not remember that very well now, nor what it was that He spoke, I will not venture to say so. It is all written,—you, my father, know where,—and

¹² Diego de Acosta, one of five brothers who joined the Society. He was student and professor at the Roman College. St. Teresa made his acquaintance at Seville, and remained on very friendly terms with him.

more at large than it is here ; I know not whether in the same words or not.¹³ Though the Persons are distinct in a strange way, the soul knows One only God. I do not remember that our Lord ever seemed to speak to me but in His Human Nature ; and—I say it again—I can assure you that this is no imagination.

22. What, my father, you say about the water, I know not ; nor have I heard where the earthly paradise is. I have already said that I cannot but listen to what our Lord tells me ; I hear it because I cannot help myself ; but, as for asking His Majesty to reveal anything to me, that is what I have never done. In that case I should immediately think I was imagining things, and that I must be in a delusion of Satan. God be praised, I have never been curious about things, and I do not care to know more than I do.¹⁴ What I have learnt, without seeking to learn, as I have just said, has been a great trouble to me, though it has been the means, I believe, which our Lord made use of to save me, seeing that I was so wicked ; good people do not need so much to make them serve His Majesty.

23. I remember another way of prayer which I had before the one I mentioned first,—namely, a presence of God, which is not a vision at all. It seems that any one, if he recommends himself to His Majesty, even if he only prays vocally, finds Him ; every one, at all times, can do this, if we except seasons of aridity. May He grant I may not by my own fault lose mercies so great, and may He have compassion on me !

¹³ See *Relation* iii. 6.

¹⁴ See St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, bk. ii, ch. xxii.

RELATION IX

OF CERTAIN SPIRITUAL GRACES SHE RECEIVED IN
TOLEDO AND AVILA IN THE YEARS 1576 AND 1577.

I. I HAD begun to go to confession to a certain person¹ in the city wherein I am at present staying, when he, though he had much good-will towards me, and always has had since he took upon himself the charge of my soul, ceased to come here; and one night, when I was in prayer, and thinking how he failed me, I understood that God kept him from coming because it was expedient for me to treat of the affairs of my soul with a certain person on the spot.² I was distressed because I had to form new relations—it might be he would not understand me, and would disturb me—and because I had a great affection for him who did me this charity, though I was always spiritually content when I saw or heard the latter preach; also I thought it would not do because of his many occupations. Our Lord said to me: “I will cause him to hear and understand thee. Make thyself known unto him; it will be some relief to thee in thy troubles.” The latter part was addressed to me, I think, because I was then so worn out by the absence of God. His Majesty also said that He saw very well the trouble I was in; but it could not be otherwise while I lived in this land of exile: all was for my good; and he comforted me greatly. So it has been: he comforts me, and seeks opportunities to do so; he has under-

¹ Diego de Yepes, Hieronymite, prior of Sisle, afterwards Bishop of Tarazona, where he died May 7, 1613, aged eighty-three, having been warned of his impending death by an apparition of the Saint. He is the author of a valuable biography of St. Teresa.

² Don Alonzo Velasquez, Canon of Toledo, afterwards Bishop of Osma, to whom Relation xi. is addressed. The Saint speaks of this in a letter to Father Gratian in September 1576, and in the *Book of Foundations*, ch. xxx. 1.

stood me, and given me great relief; he is a most learned and holy man. [August 1576.]

2. One day,—it was the Feast of the Presentation,—I was praying earnestly to God for a certain person, and thinking that after all the possession of property and of freedom was unfitting for that high sanctity which I wished him to attain to; I reflected on his weak health, and on the spiritual health which he communicated to souls; and I heard these words: “He serves Me greatly; but the great thing is to follow Me stripped of everything, as I was on the cross. Tell him to trust in Me.” These last words were said because I thought he could not, with his weak health, attain to such perfection. [November 21, 1576.]

3. Once, when I was thinking of the pain it was to me to take my food and do no penance, I understood that there was at times more of self-love in that feeling than of a desire for penance. [1576.]

4. Once, when I was in great distress because of my offences against God, He said to me: “All thy sins in My sight are as if they were not. For the future, be strong³; for thy troubles are not over.” [1576 or 1577.]

5. One day, in prayer, I felt my soul in God in such a way that it seemed to me as if the world did not exist, I was so absorbed in Him. He made me then understand that verse of the *Magnificat*, “Et exultavit spiritus meus,” so that I can never forget it.⁴ [1575-6.]

6. Once, when I was thinking how people sought to destroy this monastery of the Barefooted Carmelites, and that they purposed, perhaps, to bring about the destruction of them all by degrees, I heard: “They do purpose it; nevertheless, they will never

³ *Foundations*, ch. xxxi, 25.

⁴ Ribera says this event took place at Seville, while Fuente erroneously places it at Toledo. *Relation* v. 2.

see it done, but very much the reverse."⁵ [Seville, 1575-6.]

7. Once, in deep recollection, I was praying to God for Eliseus⁶; I heard this: "He is My true son; I will never fail him," or to that effect; but I am not sure of the latter words. [Seville, 1575.]

8. Having one day conversed with a person who had given up much for God, and calling to mind that I had given up nothing for Him, and had never served Him in anything, as I was bound to do, and then considering the many graces He had wrought in my soul, I began to be exceedingly weary; and our Lord said to me: "Thou knowest of the betrothal between thee and Myself, and therefore all I have is thine; and so I give thee all the labours and sorrows I endured, and thou canst therefore ask of My Father as if they were thine." Though I have heard that we are partakers therein,⁷ now it was in a way so different that it seemed as if I had become possessed of a great principality; for the affection with which He wrought this grace cannot be described. The Father seemed to ratify the gift; and from that time forth I look at our Lord's Passion in a very different light, as on something that belongs to me; and that gives me great comfort. [Seville, 1575-6.]

9. On the Feast of the Magdalene, when thinking of the great love I am bound to have for our Lord, according to the words He spoke to me in reference to this Saint, and having great desires to imitate her, our Lord was very gracious unto me, and said, I was to be henceforward strong; for I had to serve

⁵ The Spanish text, as printed by Fuente, says: "*Descalzas*" (Barefooted Nuns), but it appears to the present editor probable that there is some mistake. There never was a set purpose of dissolving the convents of nuns, which had all been founded by the leave of the General. But the General Chapter of 1575 had decreed the dissolution of three convents of Barefooted Friars founded without the General's permission. The Saint most probably alludes to these, more especially to the convent at Triana, near Seville, in which city she was then living.

⁶ Father Jerome Gratian.

⁷ St. Peter iv. 13; "Communicantes Christi passionibus gaudete,"

Him more than I had hitherto done.⁸ He filled me with a desire not to die so soon, that I might have the time to occupy myself therein; and I remained with a great resolution to suffer. [Seville, 1575.]

10. On one occasion, I understood how our Lord was in all things, and how He was in the soul; and the illustration of a sponge filled with water was suggested to me.⁹ [Seville, 1575-6.]

11. When my brothers came,—and I owe so much to one of them,¹⁰—I remained in conversation with him concerning his soul and his affairs, which wearied and distressed me; and as I was offering this up to our Lord, and thinking that I did it all because I was under obligations to him, I remembered that by our Constitutions¹¹ we are commanded to separate ourselves from our kindred, and I was set thinking whether I was under any obligation, our Lord said to me: “No, My daughter; the regulations of the Order must be only in conformity with My law.” The truth is, that the end of the Constitutions is, that we are not to be attached to our kindred; and to converse with them, as it seems to me, is rather wearisome, and it is painful to have anything to do with them. [July 1575.]

12. After Communion, on St. Augustine’s Day,¹² I understood, and, as it were, saw,—I cannot tell how, unless it was by an intellectual vision which passed rapidly away,—how the Three Persons of the most Holy Trinity, whom I have always imprinted in my soul, are One. This was revealed in a representation so strange, and in a light so clear, that the impression made upon me was very different from that which I

⁸ See § 4, above. *Relation* iii. 18.

⁹ *Life*, ch. xviii. 20. *Relation* iii. 9.

¹⁰ This was in 1575, when the Saint was founding the monastery of Seville; the brother was Don Lorenzo, returned from the Indies, who now placed himself under the direction of his sister.

¹¹ In the chapter “De la Clausura,” § 16: “De tratar con deudos se desvien lo mas que pudieren.”

¹² See *Relation* iii. 9.

have by faith. From that time forth I have never been able to think of One of the Three Divine Persons without thinking of the Three; so that to-day, when I was considering how, the Three being One, the Son alone took our flesh upon Him, our Lord showed me how, though they are One, They are also distinct. These are marvels which make the soul desire anew to be rid of the hindrances which the body interposes between it and the fruition of them. Though this passes away in a moment, there remains a gain to the soul incomparably greater than any it might have made by meditation during many years; and all without knowing how it happens. [August 28, 1575.]

13. I have a special joy on the Feast of our Lady's Nativity. When this day was come, I thought it would be well to renew our vows; and thereupon I saw our Lady, by an illuminative vision; and it seemed as if we made them before her, and that they were pleasing unto her. I had this vision constantly for some days, and our Lady was by me on my left hand. One day, after Communion, it seemed to me that my soul was really one with the most Holy Body of our Lord, then present before me; and that wrought a great work and blessing in me. [September 8, 1575.]

14. I was once thinking whether I was to be sent to reform a certain monastery¹³; and, distressed at it, I heard: "What art thou afraid of? What canst thou lose?—only thy life, which thou hast so often offered to Me. I will help thee." This was in prayer, which was of such a nature as to ease my soul exceedingly.

15. Once, having a desire to render some service to our Lord, I considered that I could serve Him but poorly, and said to myself: "Why, O Lord, dost Thou desire my works?" And He answered: "To see thy good will, My child." [Seville, 1575 and 1576.]

¹³ The monastery of Paterna, of the Calced Carmelite nuns. This was in 1575.

16. Once our Lord gave me light in a matter that I was very glad to understand, and I immediately forgot it, so that I was never able to call it again to mind; and so, when I was trying to remember it, I heard: "Thou knowest now that I speak to thee from time to time. Do not omit to write down what I say; for, though it may not profit thee, it may be that it will profit others."¹⁴ As I was thinking whether I, for my sins, had to be of use to others, and be lost myself, He said to me: "Have no fear." [Seville, 1575-6.]

17. I was once recollected in that companionship which I ever have in my soul, and it seemed to me that God was present therein in such a way that I remembered how St. Peter said: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God¹⁵;" for the living God was in my soul. This is not like other visions, for it overpowers faith; so that it is impossible to doubt of the indwelling of the Trinity in our souls, by presence, power, and essence.¹⁶ To know this truth is of the very highest gain; and as I stood amazed to see His Majesty in a thing so vile as my soul, I heard: "It is not vile, My child, for it is made in My image."¹⁷ I also learnt something of the reason why God delights in souls more than in any other creatures; it is so subtle that, though the understanding quickly comprehended it, I cannot tell it. [1575.]

18. When I was in such distress, because of the illness of our father,¹⁸ that I had no rest, and after Communion one day was making most earnestly my petition to our Lord that, as He had given him to me, I might not lose him, He said to me: "Have no fear."

19. Once, with that presence of the Three Persons

¹⁴ *Relation* v. 1.

¹⁵ St. Matt. xvi. 16: "Tu es Christus, Filius Dei vivi."

¹⁶ *Life*, ch. xviii. 20; *Relation* xi. 8.

¹⁷ Gen. i. 26: "Ad imaginem et similitudinem Nostram."

¹⁸ This refers to Father Gratian, whose health caused the Saint great anxiety, especially after he had been repeatedly thrown by his mule. Mr. Lewis translated "troubles" instead of "illness," and alluded to the persecution undergone by Father Jerome; but this would be an anachronism

which I have in my soul, I was in light so clear that no doubt of the presence of the true and living God was possible ; and I then came to the knowledge of things which afterwards I could not speak of. One of these things was, how the Person of the Son only took human flesh. I cannot, as I have just said, explain it at all ; for some of these things were wrought in the secret recesses of the soul, and the understanding seems to grasp them only as one who is in his sleep, or half awake, thinks he comprehends what is told him. I was thinking how hard it was to remain alive, seeing that it was living on that robbed us of that marvellous companionship ; and so I said to myself : " O Lord, show me some way whereby I may bear this life ! " He said unto me : " Think, my child, when life is over, thou canst not serve Me as thou art serving Me now, and eat for me, and sleep for Me. Whatsoever thou doest, let it be done for Me as if thou wert no longer living, but I ; for that is what St. Paul said." ¹⁹ [1575.]

20. Once, after Communion, I saw how His Father within our soul accepts the most Holy Body of Christ. I have understood and seen how the Divine Persons are there, and how pleasing is this offering of His Son, because He has His joy and delight in Him, so to speak, here on earth ; for it is not the Humanity only that is with us in our souls, but the Divinity as well, and thus is it so pleasing and acceptable unto Him, and gives us graces so great. I understood also that He accepts the sacrifice, though the priest be in sin ²⁰ ; but then the grace of it is not communicated to his soul as it is to their souls who are in a state of grace : not that the inflowings of grace, which proceed from this Communion wherein the Father accepts the sacrifice, cease to flow in their strength, but because of his fault who has to receive them ; as it is not the fault of the sun that it does not illumine a lump of pitch,

¹⁹ Galat. ii, 20 : " Vivo autem, jam non ego : vivit vero in me Christus "

²⁰ *Life*, ch. xxxviii, 30.

when its rays strike it, as it illumines a globe of crystal. If I could now describe it, I should be better understood; it is a great matter to know this, because there are grand secrets within us when we are at Communion. It is sad that these bodies of ours do not allow us to have the fruition thereof. [1575.]

21. During the Octave of All Saints, I had two or three days of exceeding anguish, the result of my remembrance of my great sins, and I was also in great dread of persecutions, which had no foundation except that great accusations were brought against me, and all my resolutions to suffer anything for God failed me: though I sought to encourage myself, and made corresponding acts, and saw that all would be a great pain for me, it was to little purpose, for the fear never left me. It was a sharp warfare. I came across a letter, in which my good father²¹ had written that St. Paul said that our God does not suffer us to be tempted beyond our power to bear.²² This was a very great relief to me, but was not enough; yea, rather, on the next day I was in great distress at his absence, for I had no one to go to in this trouble, for I seemed to be living in great loneliness. And it added to my grief to see that I now find no one but he who can comfort me, and he must be more than ever away, which is a very sore trouble. [1575.]

22. The next night after this, reading in a book I found another saying of St. Paul, with which I began to be comforted; and being suddenly recollected, I remained thinking how I had our Lord before present within me, so that I truly saw Him to be the living God. While thinking on this He spoke to me, and I saw Him in my inmost being, as it were beside my heart, in an intellectual vision; His words were: "I am here, only I will have thee see how little thou

²¹ Jerome Gratian.

²² 1 Cor. x. 13: "Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis."

canst do without Me." I was on the instant reassured, and my fears left me; and while at Matins that very night our Lord Himself, in an intellectual vision so clear as to seem almost imaginary, laid Himself in my arms, as He is painted in the pictures of our Lady of Anguish.²³ The vision made me very much afraid, for it was so clear, and so close to me, that it made me think whether it was an illusion or not. He said to me: "Be not afraid of it, for the union of My Father with thy soul is incomparably closer than this." The vision has remained with me till now. What I have said of our Lord continued more than a month: now it has left me. [November 1575.]

23. I was one night in great distress, because it was then a long time since I had heard anything of my father²⁴; and, moreover, he was not well the last time he wrote to me. However, my distress was not so great as that I felt before, for I had hopes, and distress like that I never was in since; but still my anxiety hindered my prayer. He appeared to me on the instant; it could not have been the effect of imagination, for I saw a light within me, and himself coming by the way joyous, with a face all fair. It must have been the light I saw that made his face fair, for all the saints in heaven seem so; and I considered whether it be the light and splendour proceeding from our Lord that render them thus fair. I heard this: "Tell him to begin at once without fear, for the victory is his."

24. One day, after he came, when I was at night giving thanks to our Lord for the many mercies He had given unto me, He said to me: "O my child, what canst thou ask that I have not done?" [November 1575.]

²³ Don Vicente says that here is a proof—if any were wanting—that the Saint wrote this during her sojourn in Seville; because in Avila and in Castile and Aragon the expression is, "our Lady of Dolours"; while in Andalusia it is our Lady of Anguish—"Nuestra Señora de las Angustias."

²⁴ Father Jerome Gratian.

25. Our Lord said to me one day, in the monastery of Veas, that I was to present my petition to Him, for I was His bride. He promised to grant whatever I might ask of Him, and, as a pledge, gave me a very beautiful ring, with a stone set in it like an amethyst, but of a brilliancy very unlike, which He put on my finger. I write this to my own confusion, considering the goodness of God, and my wretched life; for I have deserved hell. Ah, my daughters, pray to God for me, and be devout to St. Joseph, who can do much. This folly I write . . . folly I write. . . .

26. On the eve of St. Laurence, at Communion, I was so distracted and dissipated in mind, that I had no power over it, and began to envy those who dwell in desert places; thinking that, as they see and hear nothing, they are exempt from distractions. I heard this: "Thou art greatly deceived, My daughter; on the contrary, the temptations of Satan are more violent there. Have patience; while life lasts, it cannot be helped." While dwelling on this, I became suddenly recollected, and I saw a great light within me, so that I thought I was in another world, and my spirit found itself interiorly in a forest and in a garden of delights, which made me remember those words of the Canticle²⁵; "Veniât dilectus meus in hortum suum." I saw my Eliseus²⁶ there, not at all swarthy, but in strange beauty: around his head was a garland of precious stones; a multitude of damsels went before him with palms in their hands, all singing hymns of praise unto God. I did nothing but open my eyes, to see whether I could not distract myself from the vision, but that failed to divert my attention; and I thought there was music also,—the singing of birds and of angels,—which filled my soul with joy, though I did not hear any. My soul was in joy, and did not

²⁵ Cant. v. 1.

²⁶ This was the name given to Father Jerome Gratian when the Saint was driven, by the persecution raised against her, to distinguish her friends by other designations than those by which they were usually known.

consider that there was nobody else there. I heard these words: "He has merited to be among you, and all this rejoicing which thou beholdest will take place on the day he shall set aside for the honour of My Mother"²⁷; and do thou make haste, if thou wouldst reach the place where he is." This vision lasted more than an hour and a half. In this respect—differently from my other visions—I could not turn away from it, and it filled me with delight. The effect of the vision was a great affection for Eliseus, and a more frequent thinking of him in that beauty. I have had a fear of its being a temptation, for work of the imagination it could not possibly be. [Seville, 1575.]

27. The day after the presentation of the Brief,²⁸ as I was in the most eager expectation, which utterly disturbed me, so that I could not even pray,—for I had been told that our father was in great straits because they would not let him come away, and that there was a great tumult,—I heard these words: "O woman of little faith, be quiet; everything is going on perfectly well." It was the Feast of the Presentation of our Lady in the year 1575. I resolved within myself, if our Lady obtained from her Son that we might see ourselves and our father free of these friars, to ask him to order the solemn celebration of that feast every year in our monasteries of the Barefooted Carmelites. When I made this resolution, I did not remember what I had heard in a former vision, that he would establish this solemnity. Now, in reading again this little paper, I think this must be the feast referred to.²⁹ [November 1575.]

²⁷ See the next section.

²⁸ Father Jerome Gratian exhibited the Brief which made him Visitor-Apostolic to the Calced Carmelites, who were very angry thereat, and rude in their vexation.

²⁹ See § 26.

RELATION X.

OF A REVELATION TO THE SAINT AT AVILA (JUNE 6, 1579), AND OF CERTAIN DIRECTIONS CONCERNING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ORDER.

IN St. Joseph of Avila, on Pentecost eve, in the hermitage of Nazareth, thinking of one of the greatest graces our Lord had given me on that day some twenty years before,¹ more or less, my spirit was vehemently stirred and grew hot within me,² and I fell into a trance. In that profound recollection I heard our Lord say what I am now going to tell: I was to say to the Barefooted Fathers, as from Him, that they must strive to observe four things; and that so long as they observed them, the Order would increase more and more; and if they neglected them, they should know that they were falling away from their first estate.

The first is, the superiors of the monasteries are to be of one mind.

The second, even if they have many monasteries, to have but few friars in each.

The third, to converse little with people in the world, and that only for the good of their souls.

The fourth, to teach more by works than by words.

This happened in the year 1579; and because it is a great truth, I have put my name to it.

TERESA OF JESUS.

¹ See *Life*, ch. xxxviii, 11.

² Psalm xxxviii, 4: "Concaluit cor meum intra me."

RELATION XI.

WRITTEN FROM PALENCIA IN MAY 1581, AND ADDRESSED TO DON ALONZO VELASQUEZ, BISHOP OF OSMA, WHO HAD BEEN, WHEN CANON OF TOLEDO, ONE OF THE SAINT'S CONFESSORS.¹

JESUS.

I. OH, that I could clearly explain to your Lordship the peace and quiet my soul has found! for it has so great a certainty of the fruition of God, that it seems to be as if already in possession,² though the joy is withheld. I am as one to whom another has granted by deed a large revenue, into the enjoyment and use of which he is to come at a certain time, but until then has nothing but the right already given him to the revenue. In gratitude for this, my soul would abstain from the joy of it, because it has not deserved it; it wishes only to serve Him, even if in great suffering, and at times it thinks it would be very little if, till the end of the world, it had to serve Him who has given it this right; for, in truth, it is in some measure no longer subject, as before, to the miseries of this world; though it suffers more, it seems as if only the habit were struck, for my soul is, as it were, in a fortress with authority, and accordingly does not lose its peace. Still, this confidence does not remove from it its great fear of offending God, nor make it less careful to put away every hindrance to His service, yea, rather, it is more careful than before. But it is so forgetful of its own interests as to seem, in some measure, to have lost itself, so forgetful of self is it in this. Everything is directed to the honour of God, to the doing of His will more and more, and the advancement of His glory.

¹ This is probably the latest account of the state of her soul, for she died on Oct. 4, 1582.

² *Interior Castle*, M. vii. ch. ii. 3-5.

2. Though this be so, yet, in all that relates to health and the care of the body, it seems to me that I am more careful than I was, that I mortify myself less in my food, and do fewer penances: it is not so with the desires I had; they seem to be greater. All this is done that I may be the better able to serve God in other things, for I offer to Him very often, as a great sacrifice, the care I take of my body, and that wearies me much, and I try it sometimes in acts of mortification; but, after all, this cannot be done without losing health, and I must not neglect what my superiors command. Herein, and in the wish for health, much self-love also must insinuate itself; but, as it seems to me, I feel that it would give me more pleasure, and it gave me more pleasure when I was strong, to do penance, for, at least, I seemed to be doing something, and was giving a good example, and I was free from the vexation which arises out of the fact that I am not serving God at all. Your Lordship will see what it will be best to do in the matter.

3. The imaginary visions have ceased, but the intellectual vision of the Three Persons and of the Sacred Humanity seems ever present, and that, I believe, is a vision of a much higher kind; and I understand now, so I think, that the visions I had came from God, because they prepared my soul for its present state; they were given only because I was so wretched and so weak: God led me by the way which He saw was necessary; but they are, in my opinion, of great worth when they come from God.

4. The interior locutions have not left me, for, whenever it is necessary, our Lord gives me certain directions; and now, in Palencia, were it not for these, there would have been committed a great blunder, though not a sin.³

5. The acts and desires do not seem to be so vigor-

³ This relates to the taking of the hermitage of our Lady de la Calle, in Palencia. See *Foundations*, ch. xxix. 11 sqq.

ous as they used to be, for, though they are great, I have one much greater to see the will of God accomplished and His glory increased; for as the soul is well aware that His Majesty knoweth what is expedient herein, and is so far removed from all self-seeking, these acts and desires quickly end, and, as it seems to me, have no strength. Hence the fear I have at times, though without inquietude and pain as formerly, that my soul is dulled, and that I am doing nothing, because I can do no penance; acts of desire for suffering, for martyrdom, and of the vision of God, have no strength in them, and, most frequently, I cannot make them. I seem to live only for eating and drinking, and avoiding pain in everything; and yet this gives me none, except that sometimes, as I said before, I am afraid that this is a delusion; but I cannot believe it, because, so far as I can see, I am not under the sway of any strong attachment to any created thing, not even to all the bliss of heaven, but only to the love of God; and this does not grow less,—on the contrary, I believe it is growing together with the longing that all men may serve Him.

6. But, for all this, one thing amazes me: I have not the feelings I had formerly, so strong and so interior, which tormented me when I saw souls go to their ruin, and when I used to think I had offended God. I cannot have these feelings now, though I believe my desire that God be not sinned against is not less than it was.

7. Your Lordship must consider that in all this, in my present as well as in my previous state, I can do no more, and that it is not in my power to serve Him better: I might do so, if I were not so wicked. I may say, also, that if I were now to make great efforts to wish to die, I could not, nor can I make the acts I used to make, nor feel the pains I felt for having offended God, nor the great fears I had for so many years when I thought I was under a delusion: and

accordingly I have no need of learned men, or of speaking to anybody at all, only to satisfy myself that I am going the right road now, and whether I can do anything. I have consulted certain persons on this point, with whom I had taken counsel on the others, with Father Dominic,⁴ the Master Medina,⁵ and certain members of the Society.⁶ I will be satisfied with the answer which you, my Lord, may give me, because of the great trust I have in your Lordship. Consider it carefully, for the love of God! Neither do I cease to learn that certain souls of people connected with me when they died are in heaven⁷: of others I learn nothing. Oh, in what solitude I find myself when I consider that the comparison of which I spoke to you, concerning the return from Egypt, does not apply to the child at my mother's breast.⁸

8. I am at peace within; and my likings and dislikings have so little power to take from me the Presence of the Three Persons, of which, while it continues, it is so impossible to doubt, that I seem clearly to know by experience what is recorded by St. John, that God will make His dwelling in the soul⁹: and not only by grace, but because He will have the soul feel that presence, and it brings with it so many blessings, particularly this, that there is no need to run after reflections to learn that God is there. This is almost always the state I am in, except when my great infirmities oppress me. Sometimes God will have me suffer without any inward comfort; but my will never swerves—not even in its first movements—from the will of God. This resignation to His will is so

⁴ Dominic Bañez.

⁵ Bartholomew de Medina. He was already dead when St. Teresa wrote this. *Relation* vii. 11.

⁶ Balthasar Alvarez at Toledo and Jerome Ripalda at Valladolid. *Foundations*, ch. xxix. 4 and 5. *Relation* vii. 5.

⁷ Allusion to the revelation she had while at Segovia of the death of her brother, Don Lorenzo de Cepeda, which occurred at Avila, June 26, 1580.

⁸ This passage is obscure because we do not know the question the Saint had put to Velasquez.

⁹ St. John xiv. 23: "Mansionem apud eum faciemus." *Life*, ch. xviii. 20.

efficacious, that I desire neither life nor death, except for some moments, when I long to see God ; and then the Presence of the Three Persons becomes so distinct as to relieve the pain of the absence, and I wish to live—if such be His good pleasure—to serve Him still longer. And if I might help, by my prayers, to make but one soul love Him more, and praise Him, and that only for a short time, I think that of more importance than to dwell in glory.

The unworthy servant and daughter
of your Lordship,

TERESA OF JESUS.

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THOMAS BAKER