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THE
VISIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS
OF
BLESSED ANGELA OF FOLIGNO.

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The BOOK of the VISIONS &
INSTRUCTIONS of Blessed
ANGELA of FOLIGNO 

as taken down from her own lips by Brother Arnold, of the Friars Minor  Translated into English from the Original Latin by the Rev. A. P. J. CRUIKSHANK, D.D., author of "Blessed Louis Grignon de Montfort and his Devotion"

Second Edition

O donum ! quod est super omne donum, quia tu ipse es amor.—c. 69.

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TO
THE POOR LITTLE ONE OF
Jesus Christ,
S. Francis of Assisi,
WITH THE PRAYER
THAT HE WHO BORE UPON HIS HEART AND
HANDS AND FEET
The Wounds of God made Man,
MAY NOW,
FROM HIS SERAPH'S THRONE IN HEAVEN,
IMPRINT UPON THE DISTRACTED HEART AND
BUSY LIMBS OF ENGLAND
THE KNOWLEDGE AND PURSUIT OF
THE RICHES OF THE
Poverty of the Blessed Cross,
WHICH ARE FOUND
SO LOVINGLY TAUGHT IN EVERY PAGE AND
EVERY LINE OF THESE
VISIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS
OF HIS OWN TRUE-HEARTED DAUGHTER,
AND DEAR UMBRIAN SAINT,
B. Angela of Foligno.

O donum, quod est super omne donum, quia tu ipse es amor! O summum bonum, dignatus es facere nos te, amorem, cognoscere et facis nos amare talem amorem, et ideo illi, qui venient ante faciem tuam, erunt remunerati secundum amorem quem habuerant, et nihil aliud est, quod ducat contemplatores ad contemplandum, nisi verus amor. O admirabile, mirabilia facis tu in filiis tuis! O superatum bonum! O incomprehensibilis bonitas et charitas ardentissima! O divina persona, quæ dignasti nos substantificare in medio substantiæ tuæ! O istud est mirabile supra omne mirabile, quod facis in filiis tuis! O occultum admirabile! Non est intellectus humanus, qui ad istam substantiam non deficiat. Sed cum gratia et lumine divino sentimus dictam sententiam, et ista est arrha illorum, qui sunt veri solitarii, et omnes chori Angelorum sunt hic occupati, et in ista occupatione occupent se omnes illi, qui sunt veri contemplatores, et postea erunt solitarii, et a terra separati. Istorum conversatio in cælis est. Deo gratias. Amen.—*B. Angel. de Fulgii. Instructiones, cap. 69.*

O filii mei, studeatis esse parvi, ut Christus exaltet vos in perfectione meritorum et suæ gratiæ. Sitis ita humiles, quod tamquam nihil vos existere continue aestimetis..... Igitur aestimetis vos nihil. O nihil incognitum! O nihil incognitum! In veritate anima non potest habere meliorem visionem nec scientiam, quam videre suum nihil, et stare in suo carcere.—*Ibid. cap. ult. de Testament. et suprema admonitione.*

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE Book of the Visions and Instructions of B. Angela of Foligno, is simply the history of her spiritual and mystical life, from the first faltering footsteps which she took on the Way of Perfection, to the day when our Lord came Himself to take her home, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." For touching simplicity and beauty it stands out among other writings of the same kind, and as it was taken down from her own lips, it may be regarded as the canticle of the love of one of the tenderest of human souls under the guidance of the Love of God. It is a thoroughly Franciscan work, breathing in every line the atmosphere of Umbria, which, even now after so many centuries, and although torn from the gentle sceptre of the Vicar of Christ, is still fresh and fragrant with the

memory of Christ's "poor little one," who bore His Wounds;—of that beautiful "valley of Spoleto," which

(1) See chap. xx. itself the Garden of Italy, is
p. 57, and chap. I. also one of the fairest gar-
p. 166. dens of God's Church. What
more touching or more

beautiful page, for example, can be found in the long and varied history of even the Franciscan Saints than that walk of the Holy Woman from Foligno to Assisi, and from Assisi back again to Foligno, which is related in the twentieth chapter of this work? Who that has ever drunk in the religious and natural beauty of that marvellous Sanctuary on the Umbrian hills, with the valley of the Clitumnus lying at its feet, but must feel himself refreshed, in these days of restless worship of mammon and selfish ease, with the simplicity and holy poverty, and love of the natural beauty of God's most fair creation, which are to be found in these Visions and Instructions, and which also form the privileged inheritance bequeathed by S. Francis to his children? It is indeed a work, as the Saint herself tells us, which

"God has sealed"¹—sealed we may add, with His double seal, as the Author of nature and of grace—sealed, most of all, with His own privy-seal, on which are engraved the Wounded Heart and bleeding Hands and Feet of His most dear Son; for the spirit of the true Franciscan knows not anything upon earth "but Jesus Christ and Him Crucified." Indeed, the many expressions of devotion to the Sacred Heart of our Blessed Lord come upon us as a surprise, in a work belonging to the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century, and must be classed with the revelations of S. Gertrude, and her sister S. Mechtild, as foreshadowings and anticipations of the great devotion of the latter times.

Such, in a few words, is the work of which a translation is now offered to English-speaking Catholics, although the translator could have wished that it had been made by abler, and what is far more important, by holier hands. Still, it is a work which deserves to be widely known, and if in any way this translation may serve to contribute to the knowledge of

this glorious Saint, he may perhaps hope to receive some little share in the blessing which has been promised to "all those who shall think of her, or remember her, or even hear her named," even the blessing of "that Right Hand which was nailed unto the Cross."

It was the original intention of the translator to give in this Preface a short sketch of mediæval spirituality, but on further consideration he has determined not to burden the present work with any lengthened remarks of his own, but rather to reserve them for the Introduction to the Revelations of our own Mother Juliana of Norwich, a new edition of which he is at present preparing for the press. Father Dalgairns has already pointed out that the latter work, although almost unknown, is one of the most remarkable books of the Middle Ages, and that it contains visions and passages of such beauty as to rival the revelations of B. Angela of Foligno.¹ A comparison, therefore, of the spirit of the "woman of the valley of Spoleto" with that of our English anchoress, who lived only thirty-

(1) "Essay on the Spiritual Life of Mediæval England."

four years after the death of her Italian sister, cannot fail to offer many points of interest, especially when looked at in the light of the spiritual life of the age in which they lived, and in the reflection cast by the centuries which had gone before. But at the same time such a comparison would seem to be more in its place as an Introduction to the second work; if for no other reason than because, as it appears at least to the translator, the general idea of mediæval spirituality will be more easily grasped after it has been studied in the Visions and Instructions of B. Angela, which are perhaps the simplest and the most easy to be understood of its many outward manifestations.

These Visions and Instructions were all taken down, word by word, from her own lips, by her confessor, Brother Arnold, of the Friars Minor, of whom hardly anything seems to be known, except what he himself relates in the Second Prologue. The Saint seems to have spoken in Italian, and in many instances Brother Arnold has simply Latinized the Italian words, in order not to depart from her meaning. Indeed, there are not a few

passages which could not have been understood at all without some knowledge of the Italian language, as at times even Latin words are used in an Italian sense, rather than with their own meaning. A few of the more remarkable of these words will be found in the margin.

The high authority of B. Angela as a teacher of the spiritual and mystical life may be gathered from the fact that Bollandus (*ad diem 4 Januari.*) quotes the words of one of the early Fathers of the Society of Jesus, in which he speaks of her as the "mistress of theologians," (*theologorum magistra*), "whose whole doctrine has been drawn out of the Book of Life, Jesus Christ our Lord." Nor is this the only high testimony which he adduces.

The *Editio Princeps* of the Book of the Visions and Instructions was published at Paris, 1598, and a reprint appeared at Cologne, 1601. The work was re-edited by Bollandus, (*Tom. i. Act. Sanct. ad diem 4 Januari.*) after he had collated it with the *Codex* of Cornelius Duynius, and with other MSS. A later edition was brought out in 1851, by the Rev. J. H. Lammertz, Parish Priest of Kessenich, and published by

J. M. Heberle, (H. Lempertz and Co.) Cologne. In this edition, which, however, is not so free from typographical errors as could be wished, the editor has brought forward some valuable suggestions in connection with the text, which is chiefly that of Bollandus, diligently compared throughout with the *Editio Princeps*, and has retained the headings of the chapters, which Bollandus had set aside. As the object of the translator has been to present to the reader as faithful an idea of the very words of the Holy Woman, as lay within his power, he has adopted the readings which have seemed to him the most correct, but in every case of important variation, the different readings will, he believes, be found in the margin.

It only remains for him to add, that he has thought it well to preserve, as far as possible, the simple Scriptural style of the original, rather than to clothe it in a more modern dress, in which much of its charm would have been lost. That he has not, however, always succeeded in this, no one is more painfully conscious than himself.

May the Servant of God, whose words are written in this book, obtain for every

one who reads it the fulfilment of the promise made to her for all those who should make remembrance of her, or hear her named; and may God's dear Mother's blessing go along with this little work, to the greater Glory of her Son.

G O D A L O N E.

Feast of our Lady's Immaculate Conception,
1871.

NOTE.

1. It would be well to read chap. xxvii. (especially p. 94.) in connection with the other chapters mentioned in the note at p. 204, in order fully to understand the Saint's meaning.

2. In a note at p. 97, the "great and noble company with which God cometh in the Sacrament of the altar," is interpreted of poverty, sorrow and contempt. The Saint, however, no doubt means also to refer to the Angelic company of the *Thrones*.—(See chap. xxxvii. pp. 136-7.)

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BROTHER ARNOLD'S FIRST PROLOGUE.

LEST the wisdom of this world which puffeth up (in other words, the earthly and diabolical wisdom of their inflated spirit, who speak great things and do but little) should remain unconfounded by the Eternal Wisdom of God, God Himself hath raised up a woman of the secular state, bound to the world, entangled by ties to husband and children and riches, simple in knowledge, weak in strength, but who, by the power of God, infused into her through the cross of the God-Man Jesus Christ, hath broken the chains of the world, and mounted up to the summit of evangelical perfection. Now this woman hath renewed the perfect and most wise foolishness of the cross of Christ, the wisdom of the perfect, and hath not only proved that it is possible to observe and keep to the way of the good Jesus, the trace of which hath been lost, and of which the tall giants of the world, as well by word as by deed, assert that it cannot be kept, but hath also shown that it is an easy way,

and full of great delight. O heavenly wisdom of Gospel perfection, how hast thou with the Eternal God made the wisdom of this world foolish'

(1) The Ed. Prin. has here "and Thou O Eternal God." in this Thy servant! For to men Thou hast opposed

a woman, to the puffed up one who is humble, to the crafty one who is simple, to the learned an ignorant one, to religious hypocrisy contempt of her own condition, to idle tongues, and hands that do no work, a marvellous zeal of works and silence of words, to the prudence of the flesh the prudence of the spirit, which is the knowledge of the cross of Christ. Hence it is that in a valiant woman there appeareth openly what in the speculations of blind men was buried by carnal exposition. Far then from the sons of this holy mother be all false shame, and learn ye from Angela,

(2) Ab Angela. the Angel^s of Great Counsel, the way of riches, the wisdom of the cross of

Christ, that is to say, poverty, and sorrow, and contempt, and the true obedience of our good God, the God-Man Jesus Christ, and of His most sweet Mother, and teach this wisdom to men and women, and to every creature, by the language of efficacious works. And that ye may glory in having been called to so high a discip-

ship,' know, my most dearly beloved, that this wisdom is the teacher of the discipline of God, and the worker of God's works. Bear in mind, my dearly beloved, that the apostles who first preached the passible life of Christ, learnt from a woman that He had risen from the dead; and so too, as most dear sons of our holy Mother Angela, learn along with me the rule, dead indeed in carnal men, but which was first possessed and preached by our first parents, Blessed Francis and his companions, and which now, by the observance of this holy mother of ours, has become immortal. Now this is contrary to the order of God's Providence, and for the shaming of carnal men, to make a woman a doctor, to whose teaching there is nothing like in all the earth; even as Blessed Hierome said of Olda the Prophetess,² that for the shame of men who were doctors of the law, but transgressors of what it commanded, the gift of prophecy had been translated unto the weaker sex of women.

(1) The punctuation has been here somewhat altered from that of the Ed. Prin. which in general is very incorrect. —Lammertz.

(2) Lib. ii. cap. 8, contra Pelag.

BROTHER ARNOLD'S SECOND PROLOGUE.

IN the name of the Most Blessed Trinity, and of our Lord, God and Man, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and of the most reverend Virgin Mother of the same.

This is the manifestation of the gifts of the Most High, touching the soul of Mother Angela of Foligno. For, in accordance with what our Saviour saith in the Gospel: "If a man love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and will make our abode with him."

And again: "He that loveth Me, I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him."⁽¹⁾ John xiv. 21, 23.

Now, of this experience, and of the doctrine of this experience, our Lord Himself giveth most ample proof; and of late it hath been shown forth to some extent in the devotion of certain of His faithful, and in a singular manner in the soul of the holy Mother Angela, whose Revelations and Visions I, Brother Arnold of the Order of Friars Minor, after many prayers, and for very grave reasons, have

6 *Brother Arnold's Second Prologue.*

with difficulty obtained, although I was united with her in great familiarity, and in the charity of Christ. For, by reason of the absolute enclosure in which she kept the gifts of God, (whence at times also she was wont to say, "My secret to myself, my secret to myself,") I should never have had them, as far as I can see, had I not previously shewn the great displeasure which I felt at seeing that we should be deprived of such great gifts on account of her humility. Moved, then, by compassion, and at times by the manifest good of her neighbour, and most of all by the will and command, and compulsion of God, I obtained what is written below, yet not without difficulty, and as it were against her will, for, as she told me many times, she seemed, when she revealed me anything, not to say anything at all. Nay, rather she seemed unto herself to blaspheme, because of the loftiness of the revelations, and the impossibility of expressing them, for by human words nothing can be expressed, save those things alone which are related concerning us, as having been done either in the body, or in the imagination; whereas, what is divine, or what the mind undergoeth under divine influence, is wholly unutterable.

Now when this holy woman began to make known unto me the secrets of God,

she told me very wonderful things about the world, and in words mighty and efficacious, and full of light, but different from those in which I have described them; and often she was not able to explain, although by her words I understood somewhat. And she was troubled and sad, because she was unable to manifest unto me her knowledge. Hence at times I also of a truth was able to take in so little of what she told me to write, that I felt myself like a sieve or canvas

strainer,¹ that poureth forth the precious substance, and retaineth only the gross. Moreover, it may to a certain extent be seen, that I have been unable to take in those divine words of hers, save only the more ordi-

(1) *Saccia*, from the Italian. *Saccare* in low Latin, per saccum colare et exprimere; and *saccadum*, liquor aquæ fœci vini admixtus, sacco expressus. See Duncange.

nary, because at times, although I had written them correctly as far as I was able to catch them from her lips, yet when I came to re-read them, in order to correct them, she marvelled and said that she no longer knew them. And once upon a time she said unto me that I spoke without any unction, and she marvelled at this. And another time she said: "These words remind me of what *sac*, but the writing is obscure; for what thou readest doth not explain unto me what I have experienced." And yet another time she

8 *Brother Arnold's Second Prologue.*

said: "What is worst, and what is nothing at all, that hast thou written; but of the precious gifts which my soul experienceth, of those thou hast written nothing."

And this at times doubtless arose through my fault; not that I added anything of my own, but because of a truth I could not take in what she said, by reason of my insufficiency, and because I knew not how to write quickly; and, besides, I had not always occasion, nor time, nor even a suitable place in which to confer with her, on account of many obstacles. Hence at times, too, I went to write with my conscience in disorder, and then all communication was cut off between her and myself, so that I was able to write nothing in order. And I tried at times to make first a confession of my sins, that by the help of the grace of God I might proceed in order. For these reasons, then, I wrote without order, and I esteem it a wonder on the part of God if I have written anything in order. Moreover, I have had no small sorrow and pain to think that many things which I thought worthy to be written down, have been omitted by me for the reasons aforesaid. Yet by the merits of this holy woman I have frequently experienced in the very act of writing a spiritual and new grace, which I had never experienced before, and therefore it was with great reverence and with

great fear that then I wrote, so that I added nothing of my own, no, not even one single word, save as I was able to take it down from the mouth of her who uttered it. And frequently I caused her to repeat several times the word which I had to write. Moreover, I tried to put down her very own words in the vulgar tongue, lest, peradventure, by changing them into other Latin words, I might depart from her meaning. Sometimes also she said unto me: "I would have no consciousness of saying these things, were it not for one word which hath been spoken unto me, for it hath been told me that the more I shall speak of these things, the more will remain unto me." And frequently she said unto me, that she had been told in revelation to place at the end of what is written below these words: "For all that is here said, God be thanked!"

This holy woman then belonged to a certain place called Foligno, about three leagues distant from Assisi, and at the beginning of her conversion her husband was still alive, and she had many children. But after her conversion she went through as great penance as her body could bear, even as I myself know. And besides this she underwent very many temptations and torments in body and soul. For both in soul and body she suffered torments invisibly from the powers of darkness and of

spiritual wickedness, which others suffer visibly and apparently; and these were all the more severe, as the evil

(1) *Melius*, not in MS. nor in Ed. Prin., but supposed to be omitted by Lammertz. Without some such word it is impossible to understand the sentence.

spirits are better¹ acquainted with different means of tormenting man than any human creature. Hence it happened that when a certain one worthy of belief marvelled much at this, and

had great compassion, hearing, as he did, from the very lips of this faithful servant of Christ, how horribly she was tormented, he saw by revelation of God that it was all true. Thus he, too, from that time compassionated her with marvellous fellow-feeling, and was moved to exceeding great devotion. Moreover, the faithful servant of Christ prayed very much and exceeding fervently, and was most careful in confession. And it came to pass once upon a time that she confessed to me, according to her wont, with so perfect a knowledge of her sins, and with so much contrition, and with so many tears, from the beginning of her confession even to the end, and with such earnestness of humility that I wept in my heart, believing for certain that, were the whole world to be deceived, yet God would not suffer her to be deceived, so great was her uprightness and truthfulness. And on the following night, having been sick even

unto death, it was with great difficulty that she came the next morning to the church of the brethren, where I said Mass and gave her communion; and I know that she never communicated without receiving from God some great grace, and as it were a new grace continually. Moreover, so great was the efficacy of the illustrations and lights and consolations which she received in her soul, that very frequently they flowed over upon her body, so as to be seen. Hence at times, when she was standing with me, her soul was lifted up, nor was she able to understand anything of what I was reading over to her. And she was changed in face and in body, by reason of the words which God spake unto her, and so great was her devotion and delight in these consolations, that at times her eyes shone like candles, and her face was as a rose. And at times, too, her frame seemed to fill out, and in face she became glorious and like unto the angels, and wonderful beyond the condition of man; and she forgot to eat and drink, as if her spirit no longer lived in her mortal body. And once upon a time, as I have been told by her companion, a most devout virgin, as they were walking along the road, she became all glorious, and joyful, and ruddy, and her eyes became large, and shone with such brilliancy that she seemed no longer her-

self. Now, when her companion saw this, she grew sad, for she feared lest some one might meet them and see her. Wherefore her companion covered her face, and said: "Why dost thou not cover thy face, for thine eyes seem to shine like candles?" And because she was timid and very simple, and knew not as yet the gifts of grace, she mourned and struck herself, and smote her breast, and said: "Tell me, why hath this happened unto thee? For the rest, try to hide thyself from men, for henceforth we cannot walk upon the earth. Alas! what shall we do?" And the servant of God comforted her, and said: "Fear not; for if we meet with men God will help us." And this she said so many times that her companion could not tell the number. And I have been told also by this same companion, that once, while the holy mother lay in ecstasy of soul, she saw upon her side, as it were, a most pleasing star, of numberless and varied and shining colours; and there went forth from it large and subtle rays of wondrous beauty; and after that they had gone forth from her body as she lay upon her side, they twined themselves together on her side, and then mounted upwards towards heaven; and all this while awake, at about the third hour. And the star, she said, was not large. At times, also, on account of the torments of her soul,

and the vehement temptations and vexations, and infirmities, of body, and out of languor of love for her Beloved, she became quite languid, and parched and pale, so that it excited compassion to see her. And almost always was she weak and infirm in body. And I, the brother who have written these things, after that I had written all that will be found below, besought and implored the aforesaid faithful servant of Christ, to pray to God, and to ask of Him, that if I had written anything false or superfluous, He, God Himself, might reveal and point it out to her, so that from Himself we might know the truth concerning them. And that faithful one answered me and said: "Several times have I asked of God to make known unto me, if in these things which I have spoken and thou hast written, there were any lie or anything superfluous; and several times have I been assured, and answer hath been made me, that all that I have spoken and thou hast written, all was true, nor was there aught therein false or superfluous, although in this manner it was not so perfectly expressed as was fitting." Again, God spake unto her in this wise: "All that is written in this book is according to My Will, and hath gone forth from Me, and I will seal it." Then again He said: "And I will confirm it." Moreover, I who have written

these things have added nothing to her words, but many things have I left out of those good things which she spoke, because I was unable to grasp them in my understanding. Besides all these things, God so disposing, have been examined by two Brothers Minor, worthy of faith, who, for the greater certainty, have conferred with the faithful servant of Christ, concerning all that I had taken down from her lips. And again, all hath been examined by the Lord James of Colonna, and by eight Brothers Minor of renown, some of whom have been lectors in general studies, and others inquisitors, and others guardians, men indeed worthy of faith, and modest, and by God's grace very spiritual, whom no one hath accused of falsehood, but whom all, on the contrary, humbly venerate, and hold very dear.

However, let no one who may chance to read this little book, marvel because sweet words and full of love, have been frequently spoken to Christ's faithful servant, for such a manner of speaking is found also in Holy Writ, as may be seen in the Canticle of Canticles; especially since, as will be evident to the reader, the grace of God preserved her from in any way being puffed up. Nay, by such words was she made very humble. More-
over, inasmuch as she saith, that when raised' and trans-

(1) *Quando*, Ed. Prin. *quandoque*.

formed into a state of illumination and joy or delight, she thought to lose such a state no more for ever, I understand this word, and other like words in this sense, namely, that her blessed soul was formed anew, by the divine enlightenment, into a certain abiding state of transformation into the infinite light of God, and into a state of feeling hitherto not experienced by her, a state continued as a habit, and not interrupted, so to speak, by way of act. Yet that same state,¹ as I believe, received fresh increase of fervour, joy, sweetness, and relish, the same enlightenment and feeling remaining all the while, so as to make up one continued act. And for this reason it may be said that, so far as relateth to the ways and intentions by which and for which she received greater fervour and sweetness, as well as spiritual illustrations and representations, the state itself was renewed.

(¹) I have ventured to read here *status* for *actus*.—
Trans.

THE BOOK OF THE
VISIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS
OF
BLESSED ANGELA OF FOLIGNO.

PART I. THE VISIONS.

“ I WAS walking towards the path of penance,” said Angela of Foligno, “and had taken eighteen spiritual steps, before I knew the imperfection of my life.”

THE FIRST LITTLE CHAPTER
OF THE FIRST STEP,

Or degree, will speak of the knowledge which this saint had of her sins.

“At the first step, I began to consider my sins, and I obtained knowledge of my iniquities; at which knowledge my soul was greatly afraid, lest it should be damned in hell, and at this I wept bitterly.”

THE SECOND LITTLE CHAPTER

OF THE SECOND STEP.

*Of the shame which she felt in confessing
her sins.*

“At the second step I began to blush for my sins, and so greatly did I blush that for shame I could not confess them. Hence many times I communicated without confessing, and in sin I received the Body of my Lord. Hence, too, day and night I was upbraided by my conscience; wherefore I besought the Blessed Francis to grant unto me that I might find a suitable confessor, who might well understand my sins, and to whom I might be able to confess. Then it came to pass that very night that there appeared to me an old man, and said: ‘Sister, hadst thou asked me sooner, I would have sooner done what thou hast asked. Nevertheless, that which thou hast asked hath been done.’ In the morning, therefore, when I went to the church of S. Francis, I found a friar preaching on S. Felician, and he was a chaplain of Christ, and had His power; and straightway after the sermon I determined to confess to him. Then I confessed my sins fully, and was absolved, but in this confession I felt no love, but bitterness and shame and sorrow.”

THE THIRD LITTLE CHAPTER

OF THE THIRD STEP.

Of her satisfaction, and fulfilment of the penance enjoined her.

“At the third step I continued to persevere in the satisfaction and penance that had been laid upon me, yet was I still full of sorrow, without other consolation.”

THE FOURTH LITTLE CHAPTER

OF THE FOURTH STEP.

Of her meditation on the mercy of God, above all in this, that He had brought her to do penance.

“At the fourth step I began to consider and recognize the mercy of God, which had granted unto me the aforesaid grace, and had drawn me out of hell. And here I began to be enlightened, and, now, too, I wept and sorrowed more than I had ever done before; and I earnestly desired to perform a harder penance, which I do not mention here.”

**THE FIFTH LITTLE CHAPTER
OF THE FIFTH STEP.**

*Of the profound knowledge which she had,
because she saw in herself nothing but
sin.*

“At the fifth step, when I was thus enlightened, and saw nothing in me but defects, I began to condemn myself, knowing and recognizing for certain that I was worthy of hell, and at this, too, I weiled bitterly. Now you must understand that in these aforesaid steps, there was a delay of time between one and the other. And from this arose a great devotion towards God, and a great sorrow of heart to think that the soul moveth with such difficulty, and that with great grief and heaviness it walketh towards God, taking but a little step at a time. And I know concerning myself, that at each step I was delayed and wept, and nothing more was given unto me, although it was somewhat of a consolation to me that I could weep; but it was a bitter consolation.”

(1) Yet I wept
always and grieved
in sadness, and
nothing more, etc.
—Ed. Prin.

THE SIXTH LITTLE CHAPTER

OF THE SIXTH STEP.

Of the knowledge which was given her, how she had offended all creatures in offending their Creator; and how on this account she asked of them not to accuse her before God.

"At the sixth step, as I thus continued, there was given unto me a certain illumination of grace, by which was conferred upon me a deep knowledge of all my sins. And I saw how, in that I had offended my Creator, I had offended all creatures that had been made for me; and deep down into my memory there were brought back all my sins, and in the confession,² which I made to my God, most deeply did I ponder them. And I called upon all the saints, and the Blessed Virgin, to intercede for me, and ask of the merciful Lord, Who had granted unto me such great and good things, to have pity upon me, and, as I knew myself to be dead in sins, to make me alive, quickening me by His grace. And I asked of all creatures, all of which I saw I had offended, in that I

(1) *Mc* wanting in text.

(2) "In confession," (*Text.*) "In confessionem."—*Ed. Prin.*

had offended their Creator, not to accuse me before God. And it seemed unto me, that all creatures had pity upon me, and all the Saints in like manner. And then it was granted unto me to pray to God with greater fire of love than I was wont."

THE SEVENTH LITTLE CHAPTER
OF THE SEVENTH STEP.

*How there was granted unto her grace to
look upon and look up to the Cross of
Christ, and on it to consider our Lord,
Who hath died for us.*

"At the seventh step there was given unto me a special grace of looking upon the cross, on which, with the eyes both of my heart and body, I considered Christ, Who hath died for us. But this vision and consideration was as yet tasteless, although I had in it great sorrow."

THE EIGHTH LITTLE CHAPTER

OF THE EIGHTH STEP.

How this knowledge was increased in her; that is to say, that our Lord Jesus Christ had died for our sins; and how upon this she felt a greater sorrow for her transgressions.

“ At the eighth step, at the sight of the cross, there was given unto me a yet greater knowledge, how Christ had died for our sins; and then I recognized all my sins with exceeding great sorrow, and I felt that I had crucified Him. But I did not know as yet that the Passion of Christ was so great a benefit, or how He had led me back out of my sins, and had turned me unto penance, and had died for me. Not then did I have such profound knowledge of all this as afterwards; but in this knowledge there was given unto me so great a fire of love and of compunction, that standing near the cross, I despoiled myself of all things in resolve, and offered myself wholly unto Him; and although with fear, yet at that moment I promised Him to observe perpetual chastity and not to offend Him with any of my members, accusing my members at the same time

one by one for the things of the past
And I asked of Him that He would make
me observe what I have just said: chastity,
namely, and the custody of all my senses;
because, on the one hand I feared to pro-
mise the aforesaid, and, on the other hand,
the fire that I have already mentioned
compelled me, and I could not do other-
wise.”

THE NINTH LITTLE CHAPTER
OF THE NINTH STEP.

*Of the desire that was given her of knowing
what might be the way of the Cross; and
how there was shown unto her the man-
ner by which she might arrive at it.*

“Afterwards there was given unto me
the desire of seeking what might be the
way of the cross, that I might be able to
stand at the foot of the cross, and find
refuge there, whereunto all sinners fly.
And I was enlightened and instructed, and
the way of the cross was shown unto me
in this wise:—There came unto me an
inspiration, that if I would go to the cross,
I must despoil myself, in order to be more
light and free; and so I should go to the
cross: that is to say, that I should spare
all who had offended me, and that I should

despoil myself of all earthly things, and of all men and women, and of all friends and relations, and of all other things; and of my possessions and of myself; and that I should give my heart to Christ, Who had done such great and good things for me, as aforesaid, and that I should walk by the thorny way, the way, that is, of tribulation. And then I began to lay aside my better kind of clothes and dresses; and the daintier kinds of food, and of head coverings in like manner. But as yet this was for me cause enough of shame and troublesome, because as yet I did not feel much of the love of God, and I was still with my husband. Hence it was a bitter thing for me when any injury was said or done me; yet I bore up patiently as well as I was able. Moreover, God so willing, it happened at that time that my mother died, who was a great obstacle to me in the way of God. And in like manner my husband died, and all my sons, in a short space of time. And because I had entered on the aforesaid way, and had asked of God that out of all this I might have profit, I received a great consolation from their death. For although at times I sorrowed for them, yet I thought that afterwards, God having given unto me the aforesaid grace, my heart would be always in the Heart of God, and in His will, and the will of God, and His Heart in my heart."

THE TENTH LITTLE CHAPTER
OF THE TENTH STEP.

Of the answer which was made her, when she wished to know what she could do, the better to please God.

“At the tenth step, as I was asking of God what I could do in order the better to please Him, He in His goodness appeared unto me several times, both sleeping and waking, crucified upon the cross, and told me to look upon His Wounds. And in a wonderful manner He showed unto me, how He had borne all things for me; and this happened several times. And when He was showing unto me all things singly and one by one, that He had borne for me, He said unto me: ‘What canst thou do for Me, that will suffice?’ Likewise, He appeared unto me many times when I was awake, but in a more pleasing manner than when I was asleep; although He always appeared unto me very pain-stricken, and dolorous. And He showed unto me the sufferings of His Head, and Eyebrows, and the hair that had been plucked off His beard, and He counted to me the number of all His stripes, assigning to each one its place, as He had borne it, and He said to me: ‘All these

things I have borne for thee.' And then there were brought back to my memory all my sins, and it was shewn unto me, that on account of my sins I had again wounded Christ Jesus, and that for this I ought to have exceeding great sorrow. Then I had greater grief for my sins than I ever had. And in like manner, as He was shewing unto me His Passion, He said unto me: 'What canst thou do for Me that will suffice?' Then I wept much, and shed such burning tears, that the tears burnt into my flesh, and I was forced to lay cold water upon it, in order to cool it."

THE ELEVENTH LITTLE CHAPTER,
OF THE ELEVENTH STEP.

How, on account of the knowledge which had been given her of her sins, she began to do too rigorous penance, and what happened unto her with regard to it.

"At the eleventh step, on account of my sins I moved myself to do more rigorous penance than it is right here to mention; and I imagined that I could do it, and I forced myself thereunto. And when it seemed unto me that I could

not do sufficient penance with the things of the world, I determined to leave everything altogether, that I might be able to do penance, and come to the cross, as God had inspired me. Now the aforesaid determination was given unto me by God through grace, wonderfully in this wise. When I was vehemently desiring to become poor, and was often thinking that perhaps I might die before I could do so, and when, on the other hand, I was being attacked by many temptations, as for instance that because I was young, begging my bread might be to me a danger and a cause of shame; then, again, the thought suggested itself unto me, that if I did this I should have to die of hunger

and cold and nakedness,
 (1) And that from this too I should be dissuaded by all.—
Another reading. and' this even, although all should dissuade me from it.

And at length, by the mercy of God, there came unto me a certain great illumination in my heart, and together with this illumination there came unto me a certain firmness, which at the time I believed, and still believe I should lose no more for ever; and I resolved and determined, that if I had to die of hunger and nakedness or shame, because it was actually pleasing or might be pleasing unto God, yet in no way would I avoid it, on account of the aforesaid evils. even were I certain that all the aforesaid evils

would happen unto me; because, even if they did happen, I would still die willingly for God. And then I truly determined what has been said."

THE TWELFTH LITTLE CHAPTER
OF THE TWELFTH STEP.

How she prayed our Lady, the Virgin Mary, and S. John the Evangelist, to obtain for her grace ever to have graven on her memory the Passion of Christ.

"At the twelfth step I asked of the Blessed Mother of Christ, and S. John the Evangelist, by the sorrow which they had undergone, to obtain for me a certain sign by which I might be called ever to bear in mind the Passion of Christ."

THE THIRTEENTH LITTLE CHAPTER
OF THE THIRTEENTH STEP.

Of what happened unto her while she was in prayer, and persevering in the same prayer, because she had murmured and mocked at a certain man.

"At the thirteenth step, as I was persevering in the aforesaid prayer and

desire, I had a dream in which was shown to me the Heart of Christ, and it was said unto me: 'In this Heart there is no lie, but all things therein are true.' And it seemed unto me that this had happened because I had, as it were, jested at a certain preacher."

(1) "Feceram
quasi truffas."—
From the Italian.

THE FOURTEENTH LITTLE CHAPTER
OF THE FOURTEENTH STEP.

How she grew in the knowledge of Christ.

"At the fourteenth step, on a certain occasion, while I was awake, and as I was standing in prayer, Christ shewed Himself unto me still more clearly, and gave me a greater knowledge of Himself. And He called me and told me to place my mouth in the wound of His side. And it seemed unto me that I placed my mouth therein, and drank of His Blood as it flowed fresh from His side, and it was given unto me to understand that in that Blood He cleansed me. And here I began to have great consolation, although at the thought of His Passion I had sorrow. And I asked of our Lord to cause me to shed all my blood, and to pour it forth for the love of Him, as He had done for me. And I

desired, for the love of Him, that all my members might suffer affliction, and a viler and more bitter death than His Passion. And in my thought I desired to find some one who might kill me, provided that I might suffer for His faith or love what I asked of Him; namely, that He would grant me this grace, that as Christ was crucified on the tree, so, too, He might crucify me on some river-bank, or in some very vile place, or on some very vile thing.¹ Then I understood that I was not worthy to die as the holy martyrs had died; but still I desired that He would make me die in some more vile way, and by a more bitter death. Nor could I think of a death vile enough for my desire, and yet wholly unlike the death of the Saints, for of their death I thought myself in no way worthy.”

(¹) Wanting in Ed. Prin.

THE FIFTEENTH LITTLE CHAPTER
OF THE FIFTEENTH STEP.

Of the grace which the Virgin Mary and St. John obtained for her, to be able to feel the sorrow of the Passion of the Lord, and also of the sorrow which they themselves felt.

“At the fifteenth step, I fixed my desire on S. John and on the Virgin Mother of

God, by keeping them in mind and thinking of them, and I asked of them, by the sorrow they had undergone in the Passion of our Lord, that they would obtain for me the grace to feel the sorrow of the Passion of Christ, or at least their sorrow; and they implored and obtained this grace for me, and so great was the sorrow which S. John once gave unto me, that that sorrow was greater than I had ever felt before. And it was given unto me to understand that S. John had undergone such great sorrow for the Passion and Death of Christ, and for the Dolours of Christ's Mother, that I thought and still think that he was more than martyr. Hence, too, at the same time there was given unto me a desire of stripping myself of all things together with my whole will, and although I was grievously attacked by the demon, and he often tempted me not to do so, and although I was prevented doing so by the Friars Minor, and by all of whom it was proper for me to take counsel, yet in no way was I able even for all the evils or good that might happen unto me, to abstain from giving away all that I had to the poor, and if this were impossible, at least from having anything to do with my possessions any more. And therefore it did not seem to me that I could keep back anything without greatly offending Him Who had thus enlightened me. Yet

was I still in bitterness for my sins, and knew not if those things that I was doing were pleasing unto God ; but with a bitter wail I cried and said: ‘ Lord, even if I am damned, yet will I do penance and despoil myself of all things and serve Thee.’ And while I was still in bitterness for my sins, and felt not as yet any of the sweetness of God, I was changed from that state in this wise.”

THE SIXTEENTH LITTLE CHAPTER

OF THE SIXTEENTH STEP.

*Of what it was granted unto her to feel when she said the Lord's Prayer.*¹ (1) “Of our Holy Father.”—*Ed. Prin.*

“At the sixteenth step: I came once into the Church, and asked of God to grant me some grace. And while I was praying and saying the *Our Father*, God Himself put the *Our Father* into my heart with so great a clearness and understanding of the goodness of God and my own unworthiness, as would be out of my power to express. Moreover, each word was explained unto me in my heart, and I spoke it with great slowness and contrition, and compunction ; so that although on the one hand I wept on account of my

sins and my unworthiness, which I knew to be there, yet had I great consolation, and I began to taste somewhat of the sweetness of God, because in the said *Our Father* I understood better the goodness of God than in any other thing, and I still find it there better than in anything else. Nevertheless, as in the said *Our Father*, my sins were shown unto me, and my own unworthiness, I began to be so ashamed as not to dare to lift up my eyes to heaven, or to the crucifix, or to any other thing. But I recommended myself to the Blessed Virgin, that she might obtain for me grace and the forgiveness of sins, yet still I was in bitterness for my sins.

“O sinners, with what heaviness doth the soul walk towards penance! So strong are her fetters, and so wicked are they who help her, rather I should say they who hinder her, the world the flesh and the devil!

“Know, however, that at each of the above-mentioned steps, I was delayed for a good while¹ before I was able to move to the next step. But at certain of the steps I was delayed more, and at others less.”

(1) Per bonum tempus.

THE SEVENTEENTH LITTLE CHAPTER
OF THE SEVENTEENTH STEP.

How our Lady obtained for her the grace by which another faith was given unto her, greater than human, so that it seemed unto her that the faith which she first had was dead in comparison with that second faith which had been newly granted her.

“After this, at the seventeenth step, it was shown unto me that the Blessed Virgin had obtained for me a grace by which she gave me a faith other than human; because it seemed unto me that up to that time my faith had been dead in comparison with that which she had obtained for me, and it seemed unto me also that my former tears had been as it were forced² in comparison with those which I afterwards had. For afterwards I sorrowed over the Passion of Christ, and the Dolours of His Mother, more efficaciously, and then, too, whatever I did, however great it might be, seemed unto me but little, and I had the desire of

(1) “Idem tempus.”—Another reading.

(2) “Per vim”—Text. “Parvæ”—MS.

doing greater penance. Then also I shut up my heart in the Passion of Christ, and hope was given unto me that therein I might be delivered. And I began to have consolation through dreams, and I had beautiful dreams, and in them was given unto me consolation. And then began to be given unto me sweetness and consolation with regard to God inwardly in my heart, and outwardly in my body, continually, both waking and sleeping. But because as yet I felt no certainty, there was still a mixture of bitterness, nor was my heart at rest, but I desired to hear something else from God."

The MS. here adds: "And of these dreams and visions she related one out of many, and said: 'On a certain occasion when I was in the prison in which I had shut myself up for the greater Lent, and was making acts of love, and meditating upon a certain word of the Gospel, a word of very great worth and of exceeding love; and while I was near a certain book, namely, the Missal, and was thirsting to see that word, at least in writing, and when I could scarcely contain or restrain myself save for the fear of pride, from opening the book on account of my exceeding thirst and love; even in the midst of my longing, I fell into a kind of sleep, and I slept; and straightway I was led away in vision, and it was said unto me, that the understanding of the Epistles is a thing so delectable, that if a man rightly understand them he would forget all worldly things. And he who led me said unto me: Wouldst thou prove this? And when I gave assent, and thirsted to prove this, straightway he led me away, and made me prove it. Then I understood with such great clearness the things of God, that on the spot I forgot all worldly things. And he who led me said unto me even more than this, for he told me that

the understanding of the Gospel is a thing most delectable, so that if a man understood it, he would forget not only all worldly things, but he would also forget his own self altogether. And still more he told me, and made me prove it, and at once I understood the things of God with such great delight, that I begged of him who guided me that I might never depart from that state any more. And he answered me, that what I asked could not be as yet: and immediately he led me back again. And I opened my eyes, and I felt the greatest joy concerning those things which I had seen, but exceedingly did I grieve that I had lost them. And even now they give me much pleasure when I think of them. And from that moment so great a certainty remained with me, and so great a light, and so burning a love of God, that I affirmed for certain that nothing is ever preached about the love of God, and they who preach cannot preach about it, and the things that they preach they do not understand. And this was told me by him who had led me away in vision."

THE EIGHTEENTH AND LAST STEP
OR DEGREE.

How from that time, namely, from the reception of that great faith, which she had obtained from our Lady, she began to have such thoughts of God that she could not be moved from prayer either by day or night, and that she refused to eat or to leave her prayer.

"At the eighteenth step, then, I began to have thoughts of God, and such great delight in prayer, that I forgot to eat, and

I desired that there might be no need for me to eat, in order to remain in prayer. And in this was mixed up a certain temptation, namely, not to eat, and if I did eat, to eat but very little; but I knew that this was a deception. And the fire of love within my heart was so great, that I felt no fatigue in my genuflections, or in any other kind of penance. After this, however, I attained to still greater fire and fervour in the love of the charity of God;

(1) *Stridebam*, in the sense of the Italian *gridare acutamente*.

for if I heard speak of God, I cried out' so loud and shrilly that if any one had stood over me with an axe to kill me, I could not have kept from crying out. And this happened to me the first time when I sold my farm, that I might give it to the poor, for it was the best piece of land that I had. And before that I was wont to make jests about Petruccio, but afterwards in no way could I do so. Moreover, it happened frequently, when I heard speak of God, that I cried out in the presence of other persons. And when any of them said to me that I was inordinate,²

(2) A demoniac. —MS.

on account of what happened unto me; I also said in like manner that I was weak and inordinate, and that I could not do otherwise. Nor was I able to satisfy those who spoke evil against me on

account of this, but I was greatly ashamed. And whenever I saw the Passion of Christ depicted, I could scarcely contain myself, and fever seized on me, and I became weak. For this reason my companion hid from me the pictures of the Passion, as well as she could, lest I might see them. During that time of crying out I had many illuminations, thoughts, visions, and consolations, some of which are written below."

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER

Speaks of the many and divers kinds of temptations, by which she was tortured in body and soul.

"Lest, however, the magnitude and multitude of the revelations and visions should exalt me, and the delight of these things lift me up above what I am, there was given unto me a tempter, who afflicteth me by manifold temptation and affliction. For I am afflicted thereby both in body and soul; and innumerable are the torments of the body, which are excited in many ways by many devils. Nay, I hardly believe that the sufferings and infirmities of my body could be written, for there remaineth not in me one of my

members that doth not suffer horribly. Never am I without pain, without languor; continually am I weak, and frail, and full of pain, to such an extent that I am obliged to be always lying down. There is not in me one of my members that is not struck and twisted, and punished by the devils, and I am always weak, and always swollen, and so full of pain in all my members, that it is a great punishment for me to move; and yet I am tired with lying, and I am also unable to take sufficient food.

“Moreover, the torments and sufferings of my soul, (which without comparison I say are more bitter and in greater number than those of the body) I suffer as it were continually at the hands of the demons themselves. Nor do I know to what to liken them, save to a man who, hung up by the throat, with his hands tied behind his back, and his eyes veiled, should remain hanging by the rope on the scaffold, and yet continue alive, without, however, the hope of any help, or remedy, or support. And I say that even more desperately and cruelly am I tormented by the demons. For I see that the demons hang up my soul in such a way, that even as one who is hung hath no support, so, too, in like manner, there seemeth to me to remain no support for my soul, and all its virtues are overturned, my soul being

conscious and looking on all the while. And when my soul seeth that all her virtues are overturned, and are departing, and that in this matter' she

can offer no opposition; then her pain burneth so great, that at times I can

scarcely weep by reason of the desperate pain and anger that I suffer; sometimes, however, I weep as if all remedy were gone. At times, also, such great anger cometh upon me that I can scarcely hold myself from tearing myself all to pieces. At other times I can hardly keep from striking myself horribly; and sometimes, when I have struck myself, I have caused my head and my other members to become swollen. And when my soul seeth all her virtues fall away and depart, then my soul lamenteth, and I cry out to God, almost without ceasing: 'My God, my God, do not Thou forsake me.'

"Likewise, there is another torment that I suffer; because all my vices have come to life in me again, and from time to time revive. Not that they are lastingly alive, or that they get the mastery of my reason; but they afford and bring upon me great suffering. Yet, as I have said, they have no continual life, and when they die again I have great consolation. Yes, I see that I am delivered over to many demons, who cause the vices at

which I shudder, and which were dead, to come to life again, and they add other vices also, which have never existed. And I, remembering that God was afflicted and despised and poor whilst on earth, would desire, if need were, that all my evils might be doubled. And sometimes I am plunged in the darkness of the demons, in which all hope of good seemeth unto me to be wanting, and this darkness is most horrible. And vices are stirred up in my body, which inwardly in my soul I know to be dead, but outside my soul, as it were, they are raised up by the demons, and even those vices which have never existed are raised up. And in my body I suffer at least in three parts: for in those parts which for shame I dare not mention, the fire is so great that I was wont to apply material fire to extinguish that other fire of concupiscence, until my confessor forbade me. And when I am in that darkness, I believe I would rather choose to be roasted than to suffer what I have just related; nay, at such times, I cry out, and call for death, in any way whatsoever that God may grant it unto me, and then I say unto God: 'Lord, if Thou must send me to hell, delay not, but do it at once, and since Thou hast forsaken me, O do Thou finish with me, and plunge me into the abyss.' And then I understand that this is the work of

devils, and that those vices do not live in my soul, because the soul never consenteth to them, but the body suffereth violence. And so great is the pain, and the weariness, that were it to last, the body could not bear it. Yet the soul also seeth that all power is taken from her, and although she consenteth not to the vices, yet hath she no power at all to resist them; and she seeth that they are opposed to God, and so falleth down and is tormented therein. And there is a certain vice permitted by God to come upon me, which was never in me; but openly and clearly do I know that it is permitted by God to come upon me. And the aforesaid vice is so great that it surpasseth all other vices. And there is a certain virtue, which is clearly given me by God in opposition to the aforesaid vice, and by that virtue I am powerfully delivered by God. And if I had no certain faith with regard to God, in that one thing alone, and not for any other reason, I would have faith, and in that one thing my faith would be certain and secure, nor could I doubt about it.' And the virtue prevaieth ever, and the vice decayeth, and the virtue holdeth me,

(1) This passage is somewhat obscure, apparently on account of the punctuation of the Ed. Princeps. The Saint seems to say, that even if she were moved by no other arguments to believe in God, yet the fact that this virtue has been given to her by God with such great certainty, would alone suffice to make her believe in Him.

and suffereth me not to fall into the vice. And the virtue is of such strength, that not only doth it hold me,' but it giveth me such strength of virtue, that in it I truly know God, and am so enlightened and confirmed, that not all the men in the world, nor all the devils of hell, nor any other thing whatsoever, could move me to the least sin; and, together with this virtue, there remaineth in me faith in God. Moreover, the vice is so great, that I am ashamed to tell it. So great indeed is this vice, that when the aforesaid virtue is hidden from me, and it seemeth unto me that it hath left me, there is nothing with regard to either shame or punishment that could keep me from at once falling into sin. Yet then it is that the virtue of which I have spoken cometh upon me, and powerfully freeth me, so that I could not sin for all the good things or evils of this world. And these labours I underwent for two years and more.*

* The MS. adds the following note, which should not be passed over. "And I, the Brother who have written these things, beheld the aforesaid faithful one of Christ at the above-mentioned sixth step, in a far more horrible state than can be described, and the aforesaid sixth step lasted for a short time, that is, for two years, and it went on at the same time with the seventh step, which began a little while before the sixth, and followed it, and it was more wonderful than all the others. And I saw that the aforesaid sixth step, in passing away, ceased for a little time, but did not wholly and altogether pass away, especially with regard to many infirmities of the body of which she was always full. And I

“Likewise in my soul there grew up a conflict between a certain kind of humility and a certain kind of pride which had very great weariness. Humility cometh to me, because I see that I have fallen away from every good, and am beyond the reach of all virtue and all grace, and I see in myself so great a multitude of sins and defects, that I cannot think that God will for the future have mercy upon me. And I perceive that I am the house of the devil, and that I give credit to demons and do their works, and am their daughter; and I see myself beyond the reach of all righteousness, and all truth, and worthy of the lowest and last depth of hell. And the aforesaid humility is not that humility which at times I have, and which maketh my soul contemptible, and causeth it to arrive at the thought of the goodness of God; for the aforesaid humility bringeth nothing but innumerable evils. Hence within my soul it seemeth unto me that I am wholly surrounded by demons, and I behold defects in my soul and body, and God is closed to me, and hidden in all

saw that the aforesaid faithful one of Christ remained at the seventh step in a state beyond all description, growing ever more and more in God, and although always very infirm, and able to eat but little, yet very full in body, and fresh coloured. Nevertheless she was full of pain, and all the members and joints of her body were swollen, so that it was a torment for her to move or walk, or even to sit; yet all these sufferings of body she accounted for very little.”

(1) "In omnipotestate," others read "parte."
 power¹ and grace, so that in no way can I remember God, nor have I any remembrance of Him, because

He doth not permit it. And seeing myself damned, I care in no way about my damnation, for far more do I care and grieve that I have offended my Creator, Whom I could wish not to have offended, and not to offend for all the good and evil that can be named. Hence, when I see my innumerable offences aforesaid, I fight

(2) Ed. Prin. "and against."
 with all my members² against the demons, in order to be able to conquer and prevail against the aforesaid vices and offences.

And yet I cannot do so in any way at all, nor do I find, so to speak, any ford, or any little window, or any remedy whatsoever, by which I can escape or help myself; and I keep weighing in my mind that I have fallen to such a depth. Hence in this humility I am frequently swallowed up in an abyss, and it causeth me to see the superabundance of my malice and iniquities, so that I perceive not how I can manifest them or disclose them in any way, so as to be able to make known my hypocrisies, and iniquities and sins. And I would wish to go naked through cities and streets, and to hang pieces of meat and fish about my neck, and to say, 'This is that most vile woman, full of evil and

hypocrisy, the sower of all vices and evils. For I did good in order to be spoken of by men, and I caused it to be said to all who invited us, that I do not eat flesh or fish, and all the while I was full of gluttony, and fond of good living, and drunken. And I made it appear that I would only receive what was sufficient for me, and I studied to be outwardly poor; yet where I lay down there also I laid many coverings, and in the morning I caused them to be taken away, lest any persons should come in and see them. See, then, the devil of my soul, and the malice of my heart. Hear how I am a hypocrite, and the daughter of pride, and how I am a deceiver, and the abomination of God. And I made myself out to be the daughter of prayer, and I was in truth the daughter of wrath, and pride, and the daughter of the devil. And I made it appear that I had God in my soul, and the consolations of God in my cell, and all the while I had the devil, both in my soul and in my cell. Know too, that during the whole time of my life I studied how to have the fame of sanctity; and know in truth that on account of the malice and hypocrisy that are hidden in my heart, I have deceived many people, and am the murderer of many souls and of my own.' And afterwards, still being in the same abyss, I turned me to those my brothers, who are

called my children, and said unto them, 'Do not believe me for the future. Do ye not see that I am possessed of the devil? O ye who are called my children, ask of the justice of God that the demons may go out of my soul, and make known my most wicked works, so that through me God may be no longer blamed. And do ye not see that all the things I have told you are false? And do ye not see, that if there were no malice in all the world, yet I would fill the whole world with the abundance of my malice? Do not believe me any more. Do not adore this idol any longer, for in it the devil is hidden, and all the words that I have spoken unto you have been false words, and feigned, and devilish. Ask of the justice of God, that this idol may fall down and be broken, and that her devilish works may be manifested, and the lies,

(1) "Inorpellata," from the Italian.

and the tinselled¹ and gilded words which she has spoken. for I gilded myself with the words of God, that I might be honoured and worshipped instead of God. Pray that the devils may go out of this idol, so that the world may no more be deceived by such a woman.' And for this I pray the Son of God, Whom I dare not name, that if He Himself show not openly what I am, He may cause me to be manifested by the earth opening and

swallowing me up; so that I may be made an example, and men and women may say, 'O how tinselled and gilded she was, and yet within and without she was nothing but imposture.' And I would wish to place a chain and a gallows-rope' round my neck, (1) "Ritortam," and to be dragged through cities and streets, so that the boys might drag me along and cry, 'This is that most vile woman, who her whole life long hath made what is false appear true;' and that men and women might say, 'O see what a miracle God hath wrought. Through her own self hath He caused her malice to be manifested, and the iniquities and sins which have remained hidden during the whole time of her life.'

"Yet to say all this seemed little enough unto my soul. Know, then, that I am sunk in such despair as I have never in any way experienced before, and that I have wholly despaired of God, and of all His good things, and I have made a written agreement² between myself and Him. And therefore am I certain that there is not a person in the world so full of all malice, and damnable as I am; because whatever God hath granted unto me and given, He hath permitted it unto my greater despair and damnation. Hence I

(2) *Chartam*, from the Italian *far carta*, a written agreement binding upon the person signing it.

ask of you all to pray unto the justice of God, not to delay any longer dragging the demon from this idol, and manifesting the most wicked works that are therein, for my head is split in two, my body faileth, my eyes are darkened by reason of the multitude of my tears, and all my members are disjointed, because I am unable to make known the malice and lies of my soul. Yet I rejoyce that in part at least they begin to be manifested. And without real humility I saw that all these things were true; and thou who hast written them know that thou hast written but little in comparison with all my wickedness, and iniquities and abuses, because when I was as yet a little one, I began to work what was evil. These and other things like unto these am I forced to say, plunged as I am in the abyss of the afore-said humility, and weighed down thereby.

“Then afterwards pride beginneth, for I become nothing but anger, nothing but pride, nothing but sorrow, and I become full of bitterness, and puffed up. And another and most grievous bitterness do I receive from the good things which God hath done unto me, for I remember them not in any way for my relief, but only for my hurt and in sorrowing wonder. That is to say, I wonder how ever there could have been in me any virtue, and I doubt whether in me there hath been any true

virtue, nor do I see any reason why God should have permitted it. Then, too, in this temptation all good is closed unto me and hidden, for meanwhile I become nothing but anger, and pride, and sadness, and I become full of bitterness and puffed up, and I am punished and pain-stricken, more than I can say. And if all the wise men of the world, and all the Saints of Paradise were to speak to me comforting words of every kind in order to console me, and were to promise me all the good things that can be mentioned, and even if God Himself were to give them unto me, (unless He were otherwise to change me, or unless He were to work otherwise in my soul,) yet would these give me no consolation, nor bring me any relief, nor whilst in this state, would I believe in them; nay, all these things would be for me an increase of my pains and evils, and would cause me greater anger, and wonder and sadness and pain than I am able to express. Hence, in commutation of the aforesaid torments and temptations, and that God might take from me the aforesaid, willingly would I choose and desire to suffer all evils, and all infirmities, and all the pains that are felt in all the bodies of men; and I believe that

(1) *In tantum*, in the sense of the Italian *intanto*. The passage, however, may also mean: "so full of anger, pride, etc., that she is unable to express what she is become."—*Trans.*

to me these would be lighter and lesser evils than the above-mentioned torments. Hence, too, several times have I said, that in commutation of the aforesaid torments, I would choose rather to suffer every kind of martyrdom. And this state of torment and temptation, of which I have been speaking, began a little while before the Pontificate of Pope Celestine, (1294) and lasted more than two years, during which I was often tormented; and even yet am I not perfectly and wholly cured, although now I feel it but little, and only outwardly, and not inwardly. But still, since I have been in that state, I recognize that between the aforesaid wicked humility, and the aforesaid pride, my soul hath been greatly purged and purified. For in them, and by the wicked humility, I acquire true humility, without which no man is saved. And the greater this humility, the greater the purgation of the soul. Hence I recognize that between the aforesaid humility and pride my soul is burnt and martyred. And on account of the knowledge of my offences and defects, which my soul gaineth by means of the aforesaid humility, it becometh purged from pride and from the demons; and therefore the more deeply the soul is afflicted, and impoverished, and humbled from below, the more it is fitted and purged and purified for mounting higher; for no soul can otherwise be

raised on high, or to any higher degree, save so far as it hath been humbled, and more deeply planted and rooted in humility."

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Concerning the ten Visions and noteworthy consolations, which she had from God. In this chapter the first of these is treated: how, namely, she felt God within her soul, in so far as He is All Good, and how all the powers of her soul were bound fast during the whole of that time in such a way that she could not think of, or remember any created thing, save only God Himself.

"Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who comforteth us in every tribulation.

"For in every tribulation, although a sinner, He hath deigned to comfort me, and during that time of crying out of which mention hath been made at the eighteenth step of my conversion, and after that illumination which I had in a wonderful way when saying the "*Our Father*," I felt a great consolation in the sweetness of God in this wise. There

came unto me an inspiration, and I was drawn to consider the blessed union of the Godhead and Manhood of Christ, and the Divinity and the Humanity in Christ. And in the contemplation of this and in the delight I felt very great consolation ; and it was greater than I had ever experienced, so that for a great part of that day I stood upon my feet in the cell ; and there enclosed, I prayed, amazed and alone. And my heart was so affected by that delight, that afterwards I lay down and lost my speech. And my companion came to me, and thought and believed that I should die ; but she wearied me, because she was a hindrance in my way.

“Moreover, on a certain occasion, whilst **this** still continued, before I had completed giving all my goods to the poor, although but little remained for me to give, while I was at prayer one evening, it seemed unto me that I had no longer any feeling about God, and on this account I lamented and asked of God, saying: ‘Lord, that which I do, I do only to find Thee. Shall I then find Thee, when I have accomplished these things?’ And many like things I said in prayer. And answer was made unto me, saying: ‘What wilt thou?’ And I answered: ‘I desire not gold nor silver, nay, even wert Thou to give me the whole world, I desire it not: and nothing do I desire, save Thee

alone.' Then He answered me and said: 'Study diligently, and make haste, because straightway when this that thou art doing is done, the whole Trinity will come unto thee.' At that time also many other things were promised unto me, and He drew me forth out of every tribulation, and sent me away with much of the sweetness of God. Then I looked that it might happen unto me as had been said. And I related these things to my companion with a certain doubt, for in the vision great things had been said unto me and promised; nevertheless He sent me away with much of the sweetness of God."

"After this I went to S. Francis's at Assisi, and as I was on the way, the aforesaid promise was fulfilled unto me, and yet I had not completed giving all my goods to the poor, although but little remained; for a certain holy man, who ought to have arranged it, had died in the meanwhile, and so was prevented completing the matter. For he was converted by the grace of God for my admonishment, and as he was going to strip himself of his own possessions, and to give them to the poor, he died on the way. Nevertheless, God wrought many miracles through him, and his sepulchre is had in reverence. It came to pass, therefore, as I was going to S. Francis's at Assisi, I went along the way praying, and amongst other things I

asked of the Blessed Francis that he would obtain for me from God the grace of observing well the rule of S. Francis, which I had lately promised, and that he would acquire for me the grace that I might feel somewhat of Christ, and above all, that he might make me to live and end my days in poverty. For this cause also,

that I might more¹ securely possess this freedom of poverty, I had gone to Rome to ask of the Blessed Peter to obtain for me the grace of true poverty. And so it came to pass that, by the merits of the Blessed

Peter and the Blessed Francis, there was granted unto me by the grace of God, as I most certainly felt, the gift of true poverty. Whilst, then, I was journeying along and praying and making these requests, just as I had arrived between the cave and the narrow path which leadeth up to Assisi, and a little beyond the cave, in that place it was said unto me: 'Thou hast asked of My servant Francis, and I have been pleased to send another messenger. And I am the Holy Ghost, Who have come unto thee to give thee consolation, which otherwise thou hadst never tasted. And I will come with thee, inwardly within thyself, as far as S. Francis's, and some of those who

(1) "Supra habere." The *supra* has here probably the force of the Italian *sopra*. Lammertz, however, thinks that it may also perhaps be taken for *superiori tempore*.

are with thee will notice it a little. And it is My will to come with thee, and to speak with thee the whole of that way, and I will not give over speaking, nor wilt thou be able to listen to anything else but Me; for I have bound thee fast, and will not depart from thee, until thou shalt come the second time to S. Francis's, and then I will depart from thee so far as relateth to this consolation. But otherwise I will not depart from thee, if thou lovest Me.' Then He began to say unto me the words that follow, to provoke me to love Him: 'O my sweet daughter! O my daughter, my temple! O my daughter, my delight! Love Me, because thou art much loved by Me, much more than I am loved by thee!' And often did He say unto me: 'O My daughter and sweet spouse!' And He added in an underbreath, 'I love thee more than any woman in the valley of Spoleto. Now, therefore, that I have placed Myself in thee and rested, do thou place thyself and rest in Me. Behold, I was with the Apostles, and they saw Me with the eyes of the body, yet they felt Me not as thou feelest Me. Moreover, after thou hast returned home, thou shalt feel another sweetness, which thou never hast experienced before, and then I will not only speak to thee, as now I speak to thee, but thou shalt feel Me. Thou hast asked of My servant Francis, hoping with him,

and through him, to obtain what thou hast desired, and because My servant Francis hath loved Me much, therefore have I done much for him. And if, at the present day there were any person who loved Me more, still more would I do for him.' Moreover, He said unto me, that there were few good at the present day, and that there was but little faith, and He complained and said: 'So great, I say, is the love which I have for the soul that loveth Me without malice, that were there now any soul that perfectly loved Me, I would give unto it greater grace than formerly I gave unto the Saints, of whom many great things are related in times past, which God did unto them. And there is not anyone who can excuse himself from this love, because every one can love God, and He requireth nothing save that the soul seek Him and love Him, because He Himself truly loveth the soul, and He is Himself her love.' But these words are deep.

"Now, that God is the love of the soul, He showed unto me in a lively manner, by His advent, and by the cross, which He bore for us, although He Himself was so immense and glorious; and He unfolded unto me His Passion, and the other things which He did for us. And He added: 'See, then, if in Me there be any thing else but love.' Then my soul understood for certain that He was nothing

but love. He complained, however, that at that time, He found so few persons in whom to place His grace, and He said, that now He would give far greater grace to those whom He found loving Him, than up to this time He had given to the other saints, who have lived hitherto. Then again He said unto me: 'My sweet daughter love Me, because thou art much more loved by Me than I by thee. O My loved one, love Me!' And He said: 'Immense is the love that I have for the soul that loveth Me without malice!' And it seemed unto me that He desired that the soul should share in that love, which He had for the soul, according to its capacity and virtue, and that if only the soul desired this, He would accomplish it. Again He said unto me: 'My loved one, My spouse, love Me! For thy whole life, thy eating and drinking, thy sleeping, and all thy manner of living,' all are pleasing unto Me, if thou lovest Me.' Again He said unto

(1) 1 Cor. x. 31.

Me: 'I will work in thee great things in the sight of the people, and I will make Myself known in thee, and I shall be glorified, and My Name shall be praised in thee by many people.'² These things, and others like unto them, did He say unto me. But I, when I heard these words, reckoned

(2) *Gentium, gentibus*, in the sense probably, of the Italian *gente* rather than of "nations," although, of course, the latter sense is not excluded.

my sins, and considered my defects, how I was not worthy of that great love. And at these words I began much to doubt, and my soul said unto Him Who spake unto me: 'If Thou wert the Holy Ghost, Thou wouldst not say these things unto me, for they are not fitting for me nor becoming; and I am weak, and may have vain glory from them.' And He answered unto me: 'Now see and think, whether with regard to all these things thou wilt be able to have vain-glory, so as to be lifted up, and to go out of these words, and to think of other things.'

"And I tried to wish to have vain-glory, that I might prove if that were true that He had said, and if He were indeed the Holy Ghost. And I began to look through the vineyards, so as to go out of these words, and wherever I looked He said: 'Now look around and see, this is My creation;' and I felt an unutterable sweetness. Moreover, in the midst of this, all my sins were brought back unto my memory, and on my own part I saw nothing in me but sins and defects, and I felt in me more humility than I had ever felt before.

"And He said unto me further, that so much was I beloved, that the Son of God and of the Virgin Mary, had stooped down to me, and had come to speak with me. Moreover, Christ said unto me: 'Even if

the whole world were now to come with thee, thou wouldst not now be able to speak with any other. For now, when I shall come with thee, the whole world shall also come with thee.' And to give me security from doubt He said unto me: 'I am He Who was crucified for thee, and I had hunger and thirst for thy sake, and so much have I loved thee, that I shed all My Blood for thee.' And He told me all His Passion, and said: 'Ask a grace for thyself and thy companions, and for whomsoever thou wilt. and prepare thyself to receive it, for I am much more prepared to give than thou to receive.' Then my soul cried out and said: 'I will not ask, because I am not worthy.' And all my sins were brought back unto my memory. Again my soul said: 'If Thou, Who hast spoken unto me from the beginning, wert the Holy Ghost, Thou wouldst not tell me such great things, and if Thou wert within me, so great ought to be the joy within me, that I could not bear it and live.' And He answered unto me: 'Can anything be, or can anything be done save in accordance with My will? Therefore I give not unto thee any other joy, neither more than thou hast. And less than this have I given unto another, and he to whom I gave it fell down and neither felt nor saw. And this sign again I give unto thee that I am He. Try now to speak with thy

companions, and think of other things whatsoever thou wilt, whether good or evil, and thou wilt not be able to think of aught but God. For I am He alone, Who can bind fast the mind. Moreover, all these things I do unto thee, not for thy merits, but out of My goodness.' And in the midst of this all my evil deeds were brought back unto my memory, and I saw my sins, on account of which I was worthy of hell. And I saw this more clearly than I had ever done before. And He told me that if I had come with others, not such as those with whom I had come, the aforesaid things would not have been done unto me or said. For my companions in a certain way were noticing my languor, for that at every word I received great sweetness. And I was unwilling to arrive at the end, or that that path might end, even for the whole time that the world should last. And how great the joy was, and the sweetness of God, that I felt, I cannot disclose, above all, when He said: 'It is I the Holy Ghost, Who am entering within thee.' And likewise, when He told me all the other things, I felt great sweetness. So it came to pass that He went with me as far as S. Francis's, as He had said unto me, and He departed not from me, but continued with me even after my repast, until the second time I went to S. Francis's. And it came to pass the second time

when I came to the church of S. Francis, that straightway when I knelt down at the entrance of the door of the church, and saw the painting representing S. Francis in the bosom of Christ, Christ said unto me: 'Thus will I hold thee closely in My embrace, and much more closely than can be seen with the eyes of the body. And now this is the hour when I will fill thee, My sweet daughter, My temple, My delight, and will let thee go. For I said unto thee that so far as this consolation is concerned, I leave thee, but (otherwise) I will never leave thee if thou lovest Me. And although it was a bitter word, nevertheless in the very word itself I felt such great sweetness that it was most delightful. And then I looked that I should see Him with the eyes of my body and my soul, and I saw Him. And if thou askest me what I saw, know that I saw something real and true, full of majesty, immense, I know not what: but it seemed to me that it was good. Moreover, many words of sweetness spake He unto me. And in withdrawing from me He made a very peaceful departure, and He went away with immense sweetness, and He went away openly, and slowly, and not suddenly. And amongst other words He spake unto me these: 'My sweet daughter, sweet unto Me more than I to thee, My beloved temple, thou hast the ring of My love, and thou art espoused by Me: and

for the future thou shalt not depart from Me, and thou hast the benediction of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, thou and thy companion also.' And straightway my soul cried out: 'Oh, then, since thou wilt not depart from me, I shall never sin again mortally.' And He answered: 'This I say not unto thee.' And at the time of departure, as I asked a grace for my companion, He answered unto me: 'To thy companion will I give another grace.' Thus then He withdrew, nor did He permit me to fall down, as He was leaving, but I stood on my feet. Nevertheless, after His departure, I fell down in a sitting position, and began to cry with a loud voice, and to scream, and to call out, and I cried aloud without any shame, calling out and saying this word: 'O my Love, hitherto I have not known Thee, why dost Thou leave me thus?' But more I could not say, except that in crying this out I wished to form the word and say it, and I could not form it, so wrapped up was it in my voice and cry; and so the word was not understood by them that heard. Now this cry and exclamation happened unto me at the entrance of the door of the church of S. Francis, where, after the departure of God, I sat languishing, and I cried aloud and called out in the presence of all the people, insomuch that they who had come

with me, and my acquaintances stood afar off and were ashamed, believing that there was some other cause for it. He left me therefore with the certainty, and without a doubt, that He who had spoken to me was God. Moreover, by reason of His sweetness, and for sorrow at His departure, I cried out, and wished to die, and great was my grief that I did not die, and that I remained when He was gone. And at that moment all my limbs were disjointed. After this I went back from Assisi, and with great sweetness I went along the way, speaking of God, and it was to me the greatest punishment to be silent. But I tried to abstain from speaking on account of the company. Moreover, Christ spake unto me on the way back from Assisi: 'I give unto thee a sign,' He said, 'that I am Christ Who am speaking unto thee, and Who have spoken: and I give unto thee the cross and the love of God, inwardly within thee, and this shall be a sign with thee for ever.' And straightway I felt this cross and love of God inwardly in my soul, and it flowed over upon my body, and I felt this cross in my body, and when I felt it my soul melted away in the love of God. Afterwards, however, when I had returned and remained at home, I felt a peaceful and quiet sweetness, and so great was it that I cannot express it. And there came unto me a desire of dying.

(and so great a punishment was it for me to live, by reason of this peaceful and quiet and so delightful sweetness, that I

(1) *Supra veni-rem; supra*, like the Italian *sopra*, being here evidently meant to add force to the expression. Compare marginal note at p. 56.

cannot express it,) in order that I might more effectually arrive at¹ the fulness of that sweetness, somewhat of which I then felt, and that I might not lose that which I had. And I desired to die,

and to go out of the world, and to live was a punishment for me, above the pain and sorrow of my mother's death, and of that of my sons, and above every pain that I could think of. And I lay at home languid, on account of what had happened, for eight days, and I cried out: 'Lord, have pity upon me, and permit me not to remain longer in this world.' Afterwards, however, I felt sweet odours that I cannot describe, and so great were they, and others besides, that I cannot express them; and indeed I can but relate a few words. But the delight and the sweetness which I felt I cannot relate. Moreover, many times the same voice spake unto me, but not so slowly, nor with such sweetness, nor so profoundly. And after I had returned from Assisi, and was lying down, as has been said, my companion, who was of wonderful simplicity and purity, and virginity, heard a voice that said unto her: 'The Holy Ghost is within

the cell.' She came therefore unto me, and began to inquire, and said: 'Tell me what thou hast, for it hath been told me that I should come unto thee.' And I answered: 'As it hath been told thee, I am pleased.' Then I communicated unto my companion several of these secrets."

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER. ✓

Concerning her second consolation and vision, in which she saw God in so far as He is the Highest Beauty. Hence it seemed unto her, that all created beauty was as nothing in comparison with His beauty.

"Once upon a time I was in prayer, and lifted up in spirit, and God spake unto me words very peaceful and full of love. And looking up, I saw God Who spake unto me.

"But if thou askest what I saw, I tell thee that I saw Him, and more than this I know not how to tell, except that I saw a fulness, and a brightness, with which I felt myself so greatly filled, that I know not how to speak of it, nor do I know how to offer any similitude. Yet I saw not any thing like a body, but it was, as it is in heaven, namely, so great a beauty that

I know not how otherwise to speak of it, save that I saw the Highest Beauty, that containeth all good. And all the Saints stood before that most fair Majesty to praise It; moreover, it seemeth unto me that I stood therein but a little while. And God said unto me: 'O my most loving and sweet daughter, all the Saints of paradise have for thee a special love, and My Mother likewise, and I shall join thee unto their company.' Moreover, although these things were said unto me, yet all that was said concerning His Mother and the Saints seemed unto me but little. But I was so delighted in Him, and so great was the sweetness which I felt concerning Him, that I cared not to look at either the Angels or the Saints; for I saw that all the good, all the beauty of the Saints and Angels, was from Him and in Him, and He Himself was All and the Highest Good, and All Beauty, and so greatly was I delighted in His Beauty that I cared not to look at any creature. Moreover, He said unto me: 'Immense is the love that I have for thee, but I show it not, nay, I hide it from thee.' Then my soul said unto Him: 'Why hast Thou such great love, and takest such delight in me, who am so base, and who my whole life long have offended Thee?' And He answered: 'So great is the love that I have laid up in thee, that I hardly remem-

ber thy defects, although My eyes see them ; and in thee I have much treasure laid up.' Then my soul felt that it was most certainly true ; so that in nothing did she doubt, but saw and felt that the Eyes of God were looking at her, and on these Eyes the soul looked. And in this she had such delight that no man, not even were there to come down one of the Saints in Paradise, could declare it. And when He said unto me that He was hiding much love from me, because I was not able to bear it, my soul made answer: 'If Thou art the Almighty God, Thou canst make me able to bear it.' And He answered: 'If here I did so, here wouldst thou have all thou wishest for, and thou wouldst have no hunger after Me ; therefore I will not do this thing for thee, nay, it is My will that in this world thou shouldst have hunger after Me and desire, and that thou shouldst languish because of Me.'

THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER.

Of her third consolation and vision, in which she saw God in so far as He is Infinite Omnipotence: and of the wonderful lowliness with which God has bowed Himself down to His creatures. In this vision was granted unto her the grace to be of use to all, both present and future, who should make remembrance of her.

“Once upon a time, a voice from God spake unto me and said: ‘I Who speak to thee am the Power of God, and I bring to thee the divine grace; and the grace which I bring to thee is this, that it is My will that thou shouldst be of use to all men who see thee; and not only to them, but also that thou shouldst help and be of use to those who shall think of thee, or remember thee, or hear thee named, and to those who shall have more of Me, to them shalt thou be more of use. Then my soul, although it felt great joy, said: ‘I desire not this grace, because I fear lest it should be hurtful unto me, and lest I should have vain-glory therefrom.’ And suddenly He answered and said: ‘Thou hast not therein to do anything; for it is

not thine, but thou art only the guardian' thereof; guard it well, and give it back to Him, Whose it is.' Then my soul apprehended that in this way it could not harm me. He said also unto me: 'It is pleasing unto Me that thou hast this fear.' After this, as I was in the church, there spake unto me a most sweet voice, that straightway refreshed my whole mind, and said unto me: 'My sweet daughter,' or rather, it said something much better, and added: 'No creature can give thee consolation, save I alone. And I will show thee of My power.' And straightway the eyes of my soul were opened, and I saw a certain plenitude of God, in which I comprehended all the world, that, namely, which is beyond the sea, and on this side the sea, and the sea itself, and the abyss, and all things, in which I saw nothing but the power of God in a manner utterly unutterable. And my soul, in its exceeding wonder cried out and said: 'Behold the world is pregnant' with God! And I comprehended all the world as if it were some little thing. And I saw that the power of God exceedeth and filleth all things. And He said unto me: 'I have shown thee somewhat of My power.' And I comprehended that afterwards I should under-

(1) "Guardiana." The Ed. Prin. has "gravanda."

(2) I have followed here the reading of the MS. Lammeritz reads *plenus*.

stand other things better. And He said unto me: 'Thou hast seen somewhat of My power; now see My lowliness.'

(1) "Profunditatem Dei ad homines."

(2) Deep a lowliness of God towards men and all things.—Ed. Prin.

I saw so deep a stooping down^t of God towards men, and so great a lowliness,² that my soul, comprehending His unutterable Power and His deep lowliness, wondered thereat, and accounted itself as wholly nothing, and saw nothing in itself but pride. And I began to think with myself, and to account myself unworthy of Communion, so that I refused to communicate. And He said unto me, after that He had shown me His power and His lowliness: 'My daughter, to this point of vision unto which thou hast come, no creature can come, unless it be raised by a most special grace of God.' When, therefore, I was in the church, near about the Elevation of the Body of Christ, He said unto me: 'Behold now the Power is on the altar, and I am within thee; and if Thou receivest Me, thou receivest Me Whom thou hast already received. Communicate, therefore, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and I, Who am worthy, make thee worthy.' And then there remained in me an unutterable sweetness and great joy, which I believe I shall never be without my whole life long."

THE TWENTY-THIRD CHAPTER.

Of the fourth consolation and vision, in which she saw God, in so far as He is the Highest Wisdom; and learnt from it how all things whatsoever should be judged.

“Once upon a time, having been asked by some one to pray to God for certain things, which he wished to know, I doubted whether I should do so, because it seemed unto me pride and folly to ask God for such things. And as I was standing thinking of this, of a sudden my mind was lifted up, and at the first lifting up, it was placed at a table without beginning and without end, yet was I not placed so as to look on the table itself, but on that which was on the table. And I saw a certain unutterable fulness of God, about which I can relate nothing, nor say anything at all, save this, that I saw the plenitude of the Wisdom of God and all Good.

“And I saw this plenitude of God’s Wisdom, and in it I saw that it was not lawful to inquire or to wish to know what the Wisdom of God will do, for this is to go before it, and dishonour it. And,

therefore, when I see persons inquiring into this, it seemeth unto me, and I understand that they err. And from that time, and through what I saw upon that table, namely, the Divine Wisdom, there hath remained with me the power of understanding and judging all spiritual persons and other spiritual things, when I hear them spoken of or related. And I judge not with that judgment with which I used to judge, and at the same time to err and sin; but with another and true judgment, by which I understand whence it is that I have or can have the consciousness of sinning therein. And I know not how to relate anything of what I saw, but my soul carried away from the vision

(1) "Reportavit de visione (ad) vocabulum." The "ad" seems superfluous.—Lammertz.

a word,' namely, the *table*, and that at the first elevation of mind I was placed *at a table*. But of the things upon the table, which I was placed there to see, I am able to relate nothing, save what I have said."

THE TWENTY-FOURTH CHAPTER.

Of the fifth consolation and vision, in which she saw God in so far as He is the Highest Justice; and how she obtained from this knowledge the grace of conformity with the judgments of God Himself.

“On a certain occasion, while I was in prayer, I besought God, not doubting of anything, but wishing to know more of God, and I said: ‘Why, O Lord, hast Thou created man, and after Thou hast made him, why hast Thou permitted us to sin? And why hast Thou permitted for Thyself so great a Passion as that of Thy Son for our sins; since Thou mightest have perfectly decreed that without all this we might have been acceptable unto Thee, and pleasing, and endowed with as much virtue as we now have by means of the aforesaid?’ And my soul comprehended that without any doubt, what I had said, namely, that without the aforesaid, God could have made us (partakers)⁽¹⁾ of virtue and salvation, was true. And it seemed unto me, that I was

(1) *Participes*, not in text, added by Lammertz.

forced into the position of asking and thinking about the aforesaid; for as I was in prayer, I wished to remain in prayer, and not to leave it, but I was placed by God (as it were) in those thoughts; at least so it seemeth unto me. And I inquired about the aforesaid for many days, not doubting in anything, as hath been already said.¹ And it was

(1) From "as we now have by means," &c., down to "hath been already said," is wanting in the Ed. Prin.

given unto me to understand, that God had so done and permitted, because by this His goodness was better shown forth, and better adapted unto us. But this was not enough to enable me fully to understand; yet I understood for certain and knew that God could have done otherwise had He otherwise willed to save us.

"On one occasion, however, my soul was lifted up, and saw that what I sought had neither beginning nor end; and the soul itself, when it was in that darkness, wished to return back to itself, and could not; wished to proceed and could not. Then suddenly it was lifted up higher and enlightened, and it saw the unutterable Power of God, and it saw the Will of God, and His Justice and Goodness, in which I most fully understood all the things about which I had asked. And my soul was drawn out of all that former darkness. For in the darkness I lay upon the ground,

but in that exceeding great illumination I stood upon my feet, on the top of the large toes of my feet, and I was more agile in body, and renewed, than I had ever been before. And I was so full of charity,¹ and with such joy did I have understanding of the power and will and justice of God, that not only did I have knowledge of those things about which I had inquired, but I was also satisfied with regard to all things. But this I cannot make known in any words whatsoever; for it is wholly above nature.

(1) "Claritatis."
MS.

"And although I fully understood that God could otherwise have saved us, had He willed, yet was I unable to recognize how His Power and goodness could have been better made known unto us, or better expressed.

"And from that moment I have remained so content and secure that even were I to know for certain that I should be damned, yet in no way could I grieve, or labour less, or study less to honour and to pray to God; such understanding had I of His justice and of the rectitude of His judgments. And this leaveth in my soul a peace, a quiet, and a solidness, the like of which I remember not to have ever had so fully; and in this I abide continually. Moreover, after that I had seen the Power of God and His Will and Justice, I was

raised up higher still ; and then I saw not either the Power or the Will of God in the same way as before. But I saw something stable, so indescribable for me that I can tell nothing about it, save that it was All Good. And my soul was in unutterable joy ; and I saw not love therein, but that something which is unutterable. And I had gone out from that former state, and was placed in this highest unutterable state, but whether I was in the body or out of the body I cannot tell. And all things past seemed not unto me to belong unto any high state. And it leaveth in me a mortification of vices and a security in virtue, whereby I love good and ill, benefits and wrongs ; that is to say, from the latter I derive no displeasure. Thus then I am left in great peace, and in veneration of the judgments of God, so that sometimes in the morning or the evening in my prayer I say unto God : ‘By Thy judgments deliver me, O Lord!’ or : ‘By Thy judgment, deliver me, O Lord!’ And I am as much delighted in this, and I say it as confidently as when I say : ‘By Thy Advent deliver me, O Lord ! By Thy Nativity deliver me, O Lord ! By Thy Passion, deliver me, O Lord !’ For I no more recognize the Goodness of God in any of the Blessed, or of the Saints, or in many good and holy men, than in one of the damned.

or in many of the damned. But this depth was not shown unto me, save once only: and never shall I forget its memory or its joy. And if all the things that are of faith were by an impossibility to fail, yet in this there would remain unto me certainty about God, and His judgments, and the justice of His judgments. But oh, what depth is here! Yet it all tendeth unto the good of the blessed. For the soul that hath this knowledge of the judgments of God, and of these deep things, shall gather fruit in all things out of this knowledge of God."

THE TWENTY-FIFTH CHAPTER.

Of the sixth consolation and vision, in which she saw God, in so far as He is Infinite Love; and how from this vision she was wholly transformed into love.

"On a certain occasion during Lent, I seemed to be very dry and without devotion; and I prayed unto God, that He would give me of Himself, in that I was dry of every good. Then the eyes of my soul were opened, and I saw Love that came towards me; and I saw the beginning but I did not see the end, but only its continuation. And I know not how to

express it by any similitude of colours. And straightway, when Love came unto me, I saw with the eyes of my soul all these things more openly than aught that can be seen with the eyes of the body. And love came unto me as it were under the likeness of a scythe. Not that it must be understood as if there were any likeness of measurable quantity; but it was, as it were, the likeness of a scythe, because in the beginning, when love presented itself, it afterwards withdrew, without bestowing itself, so as to make itself intelligible. And then straightway was I filled with love, and inestimable satiety, which although it satisfied me, yet generated in me a very great hunger, and so inestimable was it, that all my members were then disjointed, so that my soul languished away, and desired to arrive at what remained. And I refused to see or hear or feel any creature. And I did not speak. But my soul spake inwardly, and cried out and prayed that Love might not make it languish with such great love, for life I accounted death. And for this my soul called first upon the Blessed Virgin, and afterwards upon the Apostles, and besought them to come with her, and kneel down, and tell the Most High not to cause or permit her to suffer any longer this death, but that she might come to Him Whom she felt. And in like manner my

soul besought Blessed Francis, and implored the Evangelists, and cried to them. And while from coming nearer to it, I thought myself all love, by reason of the love which I felt, I said: 'Many are there who believe themselves to be in a state of love, and all the while they are in a state of hatred; and many, on the other hand, are there, who believe themselves to be in a state of hatred, and they are in a state of love.' Moreover, my soul sought to see this for certain, and God granted unto me to feel this openly, so that then I remained wholly satisfied. Then was I filled with that love to such a degree that I do not believe I can be again without that love for ever; nor could I believe any creature that were to tell me otherwise. And even were an angel to tell me otherwise, I would not believe, but would answer: 'Thou art he who hast fallen down from heaven.' And I saw in me two parts, as if a division had been made in me, and on one side I saw love and all good that was from God and not from me; and on the other side I saw myself dry, and that from myself there was no good thing; and by this I saw that it was not I that loved, however much I might see myself in love, but that the love was from God alone. And after this, love gathered itself up in me, and then it conferred upon me still greater love, and more burning, than

before. And there came unto me a desire of going to meet that love. And between the aforesaid love (which is so great, that at the time it was impossible for me to know that there could be greater love, except when another and a mortal love came upon me;) between that pure love, I say, and that other mortal love and exceeding burning heat, there is a certain middle kind, of which I can relate nothing, because it is of such great depth, and of such joy and gladness that it cannot be described. Then, too, was I unwilling to hear about the Passion, nor would I that God should be named unto me, because when He is named unto me, I feel Him with such delight that for very love I am tormented with languor; and all else, that is less than He, is an obstacle in my way. And there seemeth unto me nothing that can be said about the Gospel, or the life of Christ, or about anything that God hath spoken, for greater things beyond comparison do I behold in God. And after that this love is over, I remain all satisfied and angelical, so that I love frogs and toads, and even the devils; and whatever I see done, even sin itself, when I see it committed by others, displeaseth me not, since I believe that God justly permitteth it to be done. And when I am in that state, if a dog were to bite me I should not care; nay, it would not seem unto me

that I should suffer any pain. Yet at such a time there is not, neither can there be, any remembrance or sorrowful memory of the Passion of Christ, nor are there in that state any tears.

“And that state is greater than to stand at the foot of the cross in continual recollection, as Blessed Francis stood; although the soul frequently seeth another degree, and desireth to behold the Flesh that hath died for us, and to come to it; and then there is love with exceeding great joy, without the sorrow of the Passion. Nevertheless, on one occasion, together with that love there was joined unto it a recollection of priceless value, namely, of the Precious Blood, by which was given absolution to the world; and I wondered how they could stand together therein; yet was there no sorrow of the Passion. However, the Passion is the way and the teaching by which I sought to walk.”

THE TWENTY-SIXTH CHAPTER.

Of the seventh consolation and vision, in which she saw God, in so far as He is Three and One, yet not in darkness nor in mist; and how from this moment she was left with perfect faith, and certain hope, and in all security.

“Once upon a time my soul was lifted up, and I saw God in brighter light, and in more exceeding fulness, than I had ever seen Him before; yet in this vision I saw no love, and I lost the love
(1) “Non amor.” which I had before, and I became unlove.’

“And after this I saw Him in a kind of darkness, and on this account I saw Him in darkness, because it is a greater good than can be thought of or understood, and everything which can be thought of or understood reacheth not to this. And then there was given unto my soul a faith most certain, a hope secure and very firm, a security about God so continual that it took away all fear. And in that good, which seemeth to be in such darkness, I gathered up my whole being, and was made so secure with regard to God,

that never can I doubt but that I possess God for certain ; and in that most efficacious good, which seemeth to be in darkness, all my hope is now gathered up and secure. Frequently, therefore, do I see God in this way and in this good, that cannot outwardly be related, nor even thought of by the heart. Yea, I say, in this most certain and enclosed good, which I understand with so much darkness, I have all my hope ; and in seeing, whatever I wish to have, I have all ; whatever I wish to know, I know all, and in it I see all good. Nor can the soul, in seeing, think of the departure of this good, or of her departure from it, or that at some future time she must depart from it ; but she delighteth in an ineffable way in the All-Good, and seeth nothing at all that can be related by the mouth, or even conceived by the heart. And nothing doth she see, and yet she seeth all things whatsoever : and because this good is joined with darkness, the more it is seen in darkness, the more certain it is, and the more it surpasseth all things ; and it is most secret. And afterwards I see darkly that it surpasseth every good and all things ; and everything else is darkness, and everything that can be thought of is less than this good. Again: when the soul seeth the power of God, and when it seeth the wisdom of God, and even when

it seeth the will of God, all of which I have seen in other wonderful and ineffable ways, all this is less than this most certain good. For this good, that I see, is whole; but all the other things are in part; and when those other things are seen, although they are ineffable, yet do they bring great joy, which floweth over upon the body. But in this way, when God is seen in darkness, it bringeth not laughter to the mouth, nor fervour nor devotion to the heart, nor burning love; for the body trembleth not neither is moved nor changed, as it is wont to be in the other ways. For the body seeth nothing, but the soul seeth, and the body is at rest, and sleepeth, and the tongue is cut short, so that then it can speak nothing at all. And all the friendships which God hath shown unto me, many and unutterable, and all the sweet words which have been spoken unto me, and all the other things which have been given unto me or done, are so far less than this good which I see in such great darkness, that I cannot place my hope in them; nay, even were it possible that they were all untrue, yet in nowise would they lessen my hope; nor would that my most secure hope be lessened, which is made certain in this All-Good, which I see in such great darkness.

“However, unto this aforesaid most high and altogether ineffable manner of

seeing God, in such great darkness, and over-wonderful' grace of vision, my mind was only thrice lifted up, although many and numberless times have I seen this All-Good joined always with darkness, but not in the aforesaid most high manner, nor with such great darkness. And whensoever² on the one side my body is wasted by infirmities, and the world with its thorns and bitternesses driveth me out of it, and the demons with much insistence are afflicting me, and infesting me with almost continual persecution; (for they have power over me, in that God in order to afflict me, hath placed my soul and body in their hands, so that it seemeth unto me that I see them even bodily fighting against me;) then on the other side God draweth me towards Himself in that good, which I see in darkness. For in the darkness I see the Holy Trinity, and in the Trinity Itself, which I see in such great darkness, it seemeth unto me that I stand and abide in the midst of It, and this draweth me more than any other thing that I have seen hitherto, or any other good, so that between them there can be no comparison. And whatever I say with regard to this seemeth unto me to be nothing; nay, it seemeth unto me that when I say any-

(1) "Supermirabilii."

(2) "Quando," Lammerz; "quandiloque," Ed. Prin.

thing I speak ill, and my speech appear-
eth blasphemy; so far doth this good
exceed all my words.

“Again, when I see this good, I do not
then when I am in it, have any thoughts of
the Humanity of Christ, or of the God-
Man, or of anything which hath form; and
yet at such a time I see all things, and see
nothing. But when I am separated from
this good, of which I have spoken, I see
the God-Man, and He draweth my soul
with such gentleness as at times to say:
‘Thou art I and I am thou.’ And I see

those eyes, and that face,
so' full of peace that it em-
braceth and draweth my
soul with immense closeness.

(1) “Tam,” Lam-
mertz; “Tuam,”
Ed. Prin. and MS.

And then from those eyes and that face
there cometh that good of which I have
spoken, which I see in the darkness. And
this floweth forth, and cometh from within,
and it is this that delighteth me so, that I
cannot express it. And by abiding in
this God-Man my soul is kept alive, and
in this God-Man I abide much more than
in the good in the darkness. But the
good from out the darkness draweth my
soul, far more than abiding in the God-
Man, beyond comparison. And in the
God-Man I abide as it were continually,
and so continually that on a certain occa-
sion a great security was given unto me
concerning God, that there was nothing

betwixt myself and Him; and from that moment there was neither day nor night in which I had not continually this joy in His Humanity. And I have a desire of singing and praising God, and I say: 'I praise Thee, my beloved God, in Thy cross have I made my bed. And for my head-rest or pillow' ofttimes I have found poverty, and in another part of the bed whereon to rest¹ I have found pain with contempt. For on the aforesaid bed He was born, and lived, and died. And the love of this company, that is, of poverty, and pain, and contempt, God the Father so esteemed that He gave it to His Son, and in this bed the Son hath willed to lie continually and ever hath He loved it, and agreed in this with His Father. And in this bed I have rested, and do rest, for it is my bed, and in this bed I hope to die, and by this bed I hope to be saved. And the joys which I wait for at His Hands and Feet, cannot be related. For when I see Him I would wish never to depart from Him, but to approach Him nearer; therefore for me to live is to die. And when I think of Him I cannot speak, for my tongue is cut; and when I depart from Him the world and the things I find there compel me to desire

(1) "Pro capitali vel plumario;" the latter word from the Italian "*piumaccio*."

(2) "Ad pausandum;" probably from the Italian "*posare*," rather than from "*pau-sare*." See p. 91.

the things aforesaid all the more. And, therefore, my desire, by reason of the languor of expectation is to me a deadly punishment. However, in these visions and consolations, my soul is very often lifted up and consoled by my most sweet God, to Whom be glory and honour for ever and ever. Amen."

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Of the eighth consolation and vision, in which she saw God by a certain wonderful manifestation; and by which she acquired firmness and indescribable delight.

"Afterwards I was lifted up in spirit, and I found myself wholly within God, in a different way to any I had ever been accustomed. And it seemed unto me that I was in the midst of the Trinity in a higher and more perfect way than I was wont to be, in that I received greater good than usual, and because I was in this good continually, and full of joy and delight, nay, of exceeding great and unutterable delight, wholly surpassing all that I have ever experienced.

"Moreover, in my soul the operations

of God were so ineffable that no Saint nor Angel could relate or unfold them; and I understand that these operations of God, and this exceeding deep abyss no angel, nor any other creature, is capable of comprehending. And it seemeth unto me, that what I say is ill-said and blasphemy. And I was drawn forth out of all that I formerly had, in which I was wont to be delighted, that is, with regard to the life and humility of Christ, and the consideration of that most mysterious company, which God so loved from everlasting, and which He gave also to His own Son, and in which I used to be delighted, namely, in the poverty and pain and despisedness of the Son of the Living God. For in these I was wont to take my rest,¹

and these were my bed.

(1) "Repausatio
mea." See p. 89.

And I was drawn forth out of all that manner of seeing God in darkness, which was wont so greatly to delight me. And I was drawn forth out of all that former state by so great an unction and sleep, that in no way could I perceive it, save that now I remember that I have those things no longer.

"And in those ineffable good things, and in the aforesaid operations of God, which take place in my soul, God first presenteth Himself therein, by working His divine operations, and afterwards immediately manifesteth Himself, by opening

Himself out unto the soul, and by giving it even greater gifts, with still greater certainty and ineffable clearness. And He first presenteth Himself unto the soul in two ways. In one way He is presented inwardly in my soul, and then I understand that He is present, and how He is present in all nature, even in everything that hath being, in the demon, in the good Angel, in hell, in Paradise, in adultery, in murder, in every good work, and in everything that hath being in every kind of way, as well fair as foul. Hence, when I am engaged in this truth, I am not less delighted in seeing God, whether I have understanding of a good Angel, and a good work, or of an evil one; and in this way God is very constantly presented unto my soul. And this presenting or presentation of Himself is an enlightenment, and is attended with great truth, and the grace of God, so that, when the soul perceiveth it, she cannot offend in anything; and this enlightenment bringeth unto the soul many of the good things of God. And then, when she understandeth that God is present, she is humbled exceedingly, and receiveth confusion at the thought of her sins. And here the soul receiveth an exceeding weight of wisdom, and great consolation of God, and great joy. In the other way, God is presented more specially, and quite differently from the first way.

and He giveth another kind of joy from the first, and He gathereth up the whole soul into Himself, and worketh therein many divine operations, with far greater grace, and with an unutterable abyss of delight and illumination; so that the mere presenting of Himself by God, without other gifts, is that good which the saints have in life eternal. But of the gifts which the saints have in that eternal life, some saints have more, others less. And in these gifts, although I am not able to explain, nay, although what I say is rather havoc and blasphemy, than any explanation; yet in these gifts, I say, are contained certain enlargements of the soul, by which the soul is rendered more fit to catch hold of and to possess God. And straightway, when God presenteth Himself unto the soul, He manifesteth Himself, by opening Himself unto the soul, and He enlargeth her, and giveth unto her gifts and sweetnesses, which before she had never experienced, together with far greater depth,¹ than hath yet been spoken of. And then the soul is drawn forth out of all darkness, and her knowledge of God becometh greater, than I can understand to be possible, and this is done with so great a clearness, and sweetness, and certainty, and with so great a depth, the depth as it

(1) "Profundo."
—Ed. Prin. "Profunditate."—MS.

were of an abyss, that there is no heart that can attain unto it. Hence, neither to understand anything thereof can my heart return, nor even to think anything concerning it, save only that it is given by God unto the soul to be so lifted up, that never again of itself, or in any other way, can the heart extend itself to reach it. And therefore it is that the soul cannot say anything at all about it, nor can any word be found by which to speak of it, or sound it forth, nor can any thought or understanding extend itself to these things; and these are higher than all other things, because God cannot be understood by anything that can be said or thought.

“And although the Scripture of God is so high that there is no man wise enough in the whole world, even had he as much wisdom as can be given in this present state, so as to be able to understand it, without his understanding being overpowered by it; yet of these divine and ineffable operations of this manifestation of God, which exist, and take place in the soul, no man can speak or even stammer anything at all. And because my soul is often lifted up to the secrets of God, on this account do I understand wherein the holy and divine Scripture is easy and difficult, and wherein it seemeth to assert, and to contradict, and that from which some gather no profit, in that for

want of observation they are damned on account of it, and that which others observe and are saved. And I stand in this knowledge, and on this account, when I return from the secrets of God, I speak in safety a few little words, but outside, as it were, these divine and ineffable operations, and in nowise approaching near unto them; for indeed, were I to speak of these, or to utter words, I should but commit havoc; and this is why I say that I blaspheme. For if all the consolations of God, and all spiritual joys, and all divine delectations that have ever been in the world, and not only those that have been, but even if all the saints who have been from the beginning of the world until now, had constantly given explanations about God, and if all worldly delights, good or evil, that have ever been, were to be turned into good and spiritual delights, and were to last for me until they were perfected, and until they brought me unto the unutterable good of this divine manifestation; yet for all the things aforesaid would I not give or exchange the delight that I have from this unutterable manifestation of God, even during so short a space as the opening and shutting of the eyes. And this I say unto thee, that in this manner in some little way I may place it in thy heart to con-

(1) "Cambiar-
rem," from Italian
"Cambiare."

ceive how even still this unutterable good that I have infinitely surpasseth all the things aforesaid. Yet I have it not merely for the space of opening or shutting the eyes, but I have it for a good space of time, and very often in this way, but very efficaciously. But in another way, although not so efficaciously, I have it almost continually.

“And although I can receive sorrow and joy externally in some little way, yet inwardly my soul is a chamber in which no joy nor sorrow entereth, nor delight of any virtue whatsoever, or of anything that can be named; but there entereth into it all that good. And in this manifestation of God, (although I blaspheme by so naming Christ, because I am unable by any word perfectly to name Him,) is the whole Truth, and in it I understand and possess the whole truth, that is in heaven and in earth, and in hell, and in every creature, together with so great a certainty that in nowise, were the whole world to say the opposite, could I believe otherwise, nay, I should mock at them.”

(1) “*Facorem trufias.*” For I see Him Who is Being, and how He is the being of all created things.” And I see how He made me capable of understanding the things aforesaid in a more perfect way than hitherto I had done, when I saw Him in the darkness, which

(2) “*Creatoris,*” MS.

was wont to give me such unctiōn. And I see myself alone with God, all clean, all sanctified, all true, all just, all righteous, all assured, all heavenly in Him, and when I am in this state I remember not any other thing. And at times, when I have been in this state, God has said unto me: 'Daughter of Divine Wisdom, temple of the Beloved, delight of the Beloved, and daughter of peace, in thee resteth the whole Trinity, the whole Truth, so that thou holdest Me, and I hold thee.' Moreover, one of the operations of the soul, which God giveth unto it, is that I understand, with great capacity and delight, how God cometh in the Sacrament of the Altar, with that great and noble company.' When, however, I remain outside this exceeding high state, I see myself all sin, and obedient unto sin, crooked and unclean, all false and full of error; but I remain quiet, and there resteth in me a divine and continual unctiōn, which is the highest of all unctiōns, that I have ever had all the days of my life.

"Moreover, to the aforesaid state I have not progressed of myself, but I have been led by God, and lifted up, so that I knew not how to wish for this state, nor to desire it, nor to ask it, and I am now in this state continually, and very often my soul

(1) The Saint seems here to refer to poverty, sorrow, and contempt, which were the constant companions of our Lord.—See above chap. xxviii., and more especially chapters lix. lx. and lxi.

is lifted up by God, nor is my consent required, because, while I neither hope nor think anything of Him, of a sudden my soul is raised by God and our Lord, and I take in the whole world; and it seemeth not unto me that I am on earth, but that I stand in heaven in God. And this most excellent state, in which I now am, is far above all the other states which I have experienced as yet; for it is of such fulness, and of such clearness, and certainty, and ennoblement, and enlargement, that I feel no other state approacheth unto it. And this manifestation of God I have had more than a thousand times, and each time in a new and other and different manner from the time before.

“And once, on the Feast of Holy Mary at Candlemas, I had this unutterable manifestation of God, and while it was going on in my soul, at that very time there was made unto my soul a representation of itself, and my soul saw itself more noble and higher than I had ever been able to think of or understand; nor could I at other times believe that my soul, or the souls that are in paradise, could be so noble. And my soul could not then comprehend itself. Hence, if the soul, being created, and finite, and circumscribed, cannot comprehend itself, how much less can it comprehend its Creator, who is immense, and infinite, and uncircumscribed?

“Moreover, my soul presented itself then unto God with very great security, so that it carried with it no fear, but it presented itself unto God with greater delight than I had ever experienced, and with greater, and new, and most excellent joy, and in so new and clear and miraculous a way, that never could I understand it in my soul. And in this meeting,’ which I then had (1) “Obviations.” with God, when at the same time I understood, and had the aforesaid unutterable manifestation of God, there were given unto me most high words concerning God, which I will not have thee write. Moreover, when the soul returneth to herself, there remaineth in her this desire, and this she findeth in herself, that she would be pleased to suffer every punishment and every injury for God, and that for nothing, that can be either done or said, would she be able for the future to separate herself from God. Hence my soul cried out and said: ‘O sweet Lord! what is there that can separate me from Thee?’ And I understood it to be said unto me, that there is nothing that can for the future separate me from God, by the help of His grace. Moreover, all these things aforesaid I heard said unto me by God in a more wonderful locution than I can myself relate. It was also said unto me that the aforesaid un-

utterable manifestation of God is the same good which the Saints possess in life eternal, nor is this good other than the aforesaid, but there it is another kind of experience, and only different from the aforesaid, that the least Saint who possesseth least thereof in life eternal, hath more than can be given unto any soul in this present life before the death of the body; and I say that my soul in that unutterable manifestation of God understood this."

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Of the ninth consolation and vision, in which it was promised her, that there would be granted unto her that which she had so long implored of the Virgin our Lady to obtain for her, namely, the grace to be made certain that in these visions she was not deceived.

"Once upon a time, on a feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a little while after my conversion, I besought the Blessed Virgin to obtain for me from her Son, the grace to know that I was not deceived in the locutions which were made me. Moreover, a divine voice spake unto me, and

promised me that so it should be done. And it added these words: 'God hath shown Himself to thee, hath spoken to thee, hath given unto thee His own feeling of Himself. Thou, therefore, avoid speaking, seeing, and hearing all else besides, save in relation to Him.' And I understood that all the things aforesaid were told me with great discretion and maturity; and in the aforesaid locutions, which were made unto me, I remained in joy, and in great hope of having what I had asked. He said also unto me in the aforesaid locution, that the grace would be given unto me that whatsoever I did, I should do it with His leave. I began, therefore, to perform the three things that had been said unto me, and my heart was lifted up from all earthly things, and placed in God, and whatever I did, whether I eat, or spoke, prevented not my heart being ever in God, and nothing could I either think, or see, or feel, save God. And when I stood at prayer, and wished to go and eat, I asked for leave, and He gave it unto me, saying: 'Go and eat, with the blessing of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;' and He gave unto me leave, sometimes quickly, at other times more slowly. At last, being in the spirit, I saw God at a certain Mass about the elevation of the Body of Christ. And after this vision of Him, there remained

in me an unutterable sweetness and great joy, which I believe I shall never be without my whole life long. And in the aforesaid vision, I was made sure of what I had formerly asked, nor did there remain in me any doubt of this, but I was satisfied, and the promise was wholly fulfilled, that in the aforesaid locutions I had not been deceived."

THE TWENTY-NINTH CHAPTER.

Of the tenth consolation and vision, in which she was assured by God that she was not deceived in the aforesaid visions.

"At another time, while I was in prayer, of a sudden there were spoken unto me words very pleasing, and He spake thus: 'My sweet daughter, far more sweet unto Me than I to thee. My beloved temple,' the Heart of God Almighty standeth over thy heart.' And together with these words there came unto me a most delightful feeling, such as I had never experienced; for all the members of my body felt it, and I lay thinking upon these words. And again He said: 'God Almighty hath placed His love in thee more

(1) "Templum meum, dilectum meum." — Ed. Prin., Ms.

than in any woman of this city ; He taketh delight in thee, and in thy companion. Study then that the life of both of you be a light to all, who desire to look upon it ; moreover, to those who will not look, their judgment shall be severe and hard.' And my soul comprehended that this cruel judgment would be for men of letters, rather than for laymen, because they despise these divine things, and know them through the Scriptures.

"Again He added: 'So great is the love of God Almighty, that He hath placed in both of you, that continually He standeth with you, but not with these feelings ; and His eyes are now upon you.' And it seemed unto me, that I saw with the eyes of my mind the Eyes of God, and they delighted me more than I am able to express ; and I grieve that what we are saying now seemeth but mockery.' Moreover, al- (1) "Pro truffis." though there was great joy, yet my sins were brought back into my memory, and there seemed to be no good in me ; and it seemed unto me that never had I done anything that could please God. And I doubted, too, for that such great things were said unto me, and I began to say: 'If Thou, Who speakest unto me, wert the Son of God Almighty, would not my soul receive greater joy than it now receiveth ? For I could never

bear such a joy, to feel that Thou wert in me, and also that I am so unworthy. And He answered: 'It is because I will not, that now thou hast not greater joy; yet greater is prepared for thee. Know also that the whole world is full of Me.' And then I saw that all creation was full of Him. And He said unto me: 'I can do all things, and also make thee to see Me, as when I walked with the Apostles, and yet not to feel Me.' Moreover, these things He said not unto me in corporal words, but my soul comprehended all things that He thus said, and many things greater than these; and so in truth I felt it to be.

"Moreover, in order that it might be declared unto me, whether this were true that He said unto me, my soul cried out: Since this is so, and since Thou art God Almighty, and these things are true that Thou sayest, and that are so exceeding great, give unto me a sign that I may be safe, and draw me out of doubt. And I asked that He should give or speak some corporal sign, that I might be able to see; namely, that He should put in my hand a candle, or a precious stone, or some other thing, or that He should give me any other sign whatsoever, as He might will; promising at the same time that I would not show this sign save to whom He would. And He answered: 'That which

Thou askest is a sign which would give unto thee joy, only when thou shouldst touch it, but it would not draw thee out of doubt, and in such a sign thou mightest be deceived. But I will give unto thee a sign, better than that thou askest; and this sign shall be continually with thee, inwardly in thy soul, and thou shalt always feel it. Moreover, this shall be the sign: thou shalt ever be fervent in love, and in the love of God, and enlightened by the knowledge of God within thee. And let this be a most certain sign unto thee, that it is I, because none can make this sign, save I alone. And this is the sign that I place inwardly in thy soul, and that is better than the other that thou didst ask. I place in thee a love of Me, by which thy soul will become inebriated, and fervent, and constantly glowing by reason of Me, so that thou wilt desire to suffer tribulations for the love of Me. And if any one shall say or do unto thee evil, thou wilt take it for a favour, and wilt cry out that thou art unworthy of such a favour. For this love I had for thee, and it was so great that for thee I bore all things in patience and humility. Then, therefore, shalt thou know that I am in thee, if, when any one shall say or do evil unto thee, thou hast not only patience, but a great desire for it, and takest it for a favour; and

this is a certain sign of the grace of God. And behold! now do I anoint thee with a *syricose*¹ ointment, with which one of My Saints was anointed, whose name was Holy Syricus, and many other Saints.'

(1) "Syrocoso"
—"siricoso."—MS.

"Then of a sudden I felt this unction, together with so great a sweetness that I desired to die, and that my death might be accompanied by all bodily torment; nor did I think of any value the torments which the Saints underwent for Christ, but more terrible torments did I desire to be laid upon me for the sake of Christ. And I desired that the whole world might cry shame upon me, and that death might be laid upon me with every torment. And it was exceedingly delightful for me to pray to God for those who might do unto me all manner of evil, nor did I wonder at those Saints who prayed to God for those who put them to death, and for their persecutors, for they were forced not only to pray to God, but even to endeavour to obtain for them some special grace. Therefore it was that I felt most prepared to pray to God for those who had done me evil, and with great affection to love them, and to have compassion upon them. Moreover, in this emotion I felt a greater sweetness within and without, than I had ever felt before, nor can I make it known in words in any way, neither little nor much.

And this consolation was of another and different kind to the former ones, for in the other delectations I desired straightway to depart from the world; but in this there was a desire that my death might be severe and long, and accompanied with every torment, and that all the torments of the world might be in every member; and yet all these things seemed unto me but little. And my soul understood that every torment was small in respect to those good things that are promised in life eternal. And my soul understood for certain that it was so. And if all the wise men of the world were to tell me otherwise I would not believe them. And were I to swear that all who walk by the aforesaid way are saved, I do not believe that I should lie. And this sign He left so firmly within my soul and lit up with so clear a light, that I believe I would rather suffer martyrdom than be able to be in any other state. And this sign I feel continually to be the right way of salvation, namely, *to love and desire to suffer for the love of God.*

“And I heard a voice from God, which spake unto me, and said: ‘See that at the end of these things there be written. Thanks be to God! And whosoever will preserve grace, let him not lift his eyes from the cross, whether he be in joy or in sorrow, as I may grant unto Him or per-

mit.' Moreover, the things that have been said above concerning the aforesaid sign, my soul understood more plainly than I can express, and in such fulness that many more things were given unto me to understand than are mentioned, and still more fully and with greater delectation, about which we shall say nothing at all, nor can we say anything. And God grant that it be not for me a sin to relate these things so badly and imperfectly."

THE THIRTIETH CHAPTER.

Of the seven chief Visions and Revelations which she had whilst meditating on the Passion of our Lord. And in this same chapter the first of these Visions is treated, how there was revealed unto her the poverty which Christ had in being deprived of all help from men, and how the obstinate hearts of all His persecutors, and their craft in endeavouring to destroy and blot out His name were also shown unto her.

"Once upon a time I was meditating on the Passion and the poverty of the Son of God Incarnate. And Christ showed unto me, and I saw His poverty to be very

great, and clearly did He show it in my heart, and He desired that I should see and consider it well. And I saw those for whom He made Himself poor, and then I had and felt very great sorrow and reproof, so that my heart as it were fainted away.

“Moreover, after this He showed unto me more of His Passion; and then I saw Him poor, and deprived of friends and relatives, and I saw Him so poor in Himself that so far as relateth to His Humanity He was unable to help Himself. And although it may be said, that at that time the Divine Power was hidden by reason of the Humanity, yet I say that it was not hidden; and concerning this I was thus taught by God, that it was not hidden; and then, too, I had and felt greater sorrow than before, for in Him I knew that my pride was so great that from that time to this I have not had, and cannot have joy. And I was still standing and meditating on the Passion of that Son of God Incarnate, and I meditated with sorrow; and further it pleased Him to show unto me more of His Passion than I had ever heard related. And I understood how Christ in His Passion saw all the obstinate hearts of the wicked who were opposed to Him, and how He saw all the members of His body with great solicitude destroy His name. He saw too, how carefully they remembered

and studied to destroy Him, and He saw all the subtleties, craft and machinations which the wicked wrought against Him. And He saw all their counsels, and the multitude of their detractions, and their anger, and exceeding great rage, and He saw all their contrivances, and all their thoughts, by which they planned how the more cruelly to afflict Him, for the cruelty of His Passion was manifold. And He saw all the penalties, and the wrongs, and the shame. And my soul saw more of His Passion than I like to tell; nay, I desire to hold my tongue.

“And then my soul cried out and said:

(1) “Mother of the Afflicted One.”
—Ed. Prin.

‘O Holy Mary, afflicted Mother,’ tell me somewhat of the Passion of the Blessed Son of God, because thou hast seen more of that Passion than any Saint, by reason of the zeal which thou hadst continually for Him Who was thy love. For thou didst see Him with the eyes of thy head and the eyes of thy soul, and most earnestly didst thou gaze on Him, because thou didst love Him so exceedingly. Again my soul cried and said: ‘Is there any Saint who knoweth how to tell me anything of that Passion, of which I hear no remembrance made, nor anything spoken or related, as my soul seeth it? For it is so great that I cannot relate it. And my soul perceived

that the Passion of Christ was so great that although Holy Mary saw more than any other Saint, yet in many ways do I understand that in nowise could she express it, no, nor any other Saint. And if any one should relate it I would say, 'Thou art He Who hast suffered it.' Having therefore thus seen the Passion of the Son of God, I was in greater sorrow than I had ever been, nor would it be wonderful if my body were here to faint, for as yet I can have no joy when I call it to mind, and I have lost that vigour of mind which used to make me glad, and for a long time I have been unable to rejoice."

THE THIRTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Of the second Vision and Revelation which she had of our Lord's Passion, in which was announced and declared unto her the most sharp pain of His soul, and in which also very many causes of that pain were made known to her.

"At another time there was announced to me that sharp sorrow which was in the soul of Christ, which was so great a sorrow that the heart is insufficient to think of it, or the tongue to speak of it.

And because in the Virgin's Son I saw such great dolour, my soul was exceedingly afflicted, and transformed into such great sorrow, that I never was before in such sorrow; and therefore I was unable to find any joy.

"Moreover, my soul then understood the manifold cause and reason why that sorrow of His was most sharp.

"Because that soul of His was without any sin, and altogether holy, and for Himself no punishment was due.

"Likewise, because only for His exceeding great love of us did He receive that sorrow, for us who are ungrateful, and His enemies, and most unworthy, and who, whilst He redeemed us by His Passion, derided Him and mocked Him.

"Likewise, because the sin of those who crucified Him was exceeding great, and because that soul of His, which hated all sin, and was displeased thereat, sorrowed more for this than for any other sin.

"Likewise, because many were the nations which committed that sin, for the Gentiles and Jews, and almost the whole world, had met against Him on the day of the Feast; for the nations therefore was His sorrow great.

"Likewise, by reason of the malice of His adversaries, whose zeal was so great to destroy Him, and His memory, and His name, and His elect disciples.

“Likewise, because He had compassion on the disciples who fell away from the faith, and who suffered persecution for His sake.

“Likewise had He compassion on His most dolorous Mother.

“Likewise, because He was left in the midst of punishments without any one to help Him or console Him.

“Likewise, because that most holy and most noble Soul of His received sorrow on every side, and sadness, and straits, and sorrow, by reason of all the pains and penalties which were suffered by His most holy and delicate virgin Body, and all these were united together in that one and only most holy Soul of His.

“And many other reasons were there which were clearly shown unto me, but these I will not, nay, I cannot express. Hence, carried out of myself for sorrow, I was transformed into the sorrow of the Crucified. Moreover, on account of these things, the mercy of God granted unto me grace: first, that He hath so confirmed my will, that I cannot will save as He wills; secondly, that He hath placed me in a state in which I undergo few changes, and I possess God in such great fulness that now am I no more in that state in which I was wont to be, but I am led to the most perfect peace of heart, and flesh, and soul, and in all things am I content.”

THE THIRTY-SECOND CHAPTER.

Of the Third Vision and Revelation which she had of the Lord's Passion, concerning the fixing of the nails in His Hands and Feet, and of the consolation which at the same time was given unto her.

“ At another time I was thinking of the great pain which Christ bore upon the cross ; and I thought of those nails, of which I had heard it said, that they carried away the Flesh of His Hands and Feet into the wood ; and I desired to see at least a little of that Flesh of Christ which the nails carried away into the wood. And then I had such great sorrow for that punishment of Christ, that I was unable to stand upon my feet. But I bowed my head, and sat down, and I saw Christ bending His Head over my arms, which I had thrown upon the ground, and then He showed unto me His Throat and His Arms. Moreover, straightway, the former sorrow was turned into such great joy, and so different from other joys, that I neither saw nor felt anything else. And so great was the beauty of His throat that it is unutterable. And then I understood that His beauty arises from His Godhead,

but nothing else was shewn unto me save that most fair and most sweet throat; nor do I know how to compare its beauty to anything, or to any colour of this world, save only to the glory of the Body of Christ, which sometimes I see at the Elevation."

THE THIRTY-THIRD CHAPTER.

Of the Fourth Vision and Revelation which she had of the Lord's Passion, and how many things were said unto her concerning the true love which He had for us; and how our love towards Him is false and not true, in comparison with His love.

"Another time, on the fourth feria of the Greater Week (Holy Week), I was meditating on the death of the Son of God, and I meditated with sorrow, and I tried to empty my mind of everything that filled it, that I might be able to keep my mind recollected for the consideration of the Passion and Death of the Son of God, and I was wholly taken up in this thought and desire, namely, how I might empty my mind of all that filled it, so as more efficaciously to think about the Passion.

“And then there came a voice within my soul that said: ‘I have not loved thee in jest.’” Moreover, this word

(1) “*Per truffam.*” struck a deadly pain into my soul, because straightway the eyes of my soul were opened, and I saw clearly that what He said was most true. For I saw the works and the effect of that love, and I saw all that this Son of God worketh by reason of that love. And I saw what He underwent in life and in death, this God-Man, who suffered His Passion by reason of His ineffable and tender love, and I understood that the aforesaid word is most true, namely, that He loved me not in jest, but that by a most true and most perfect and most tender love, hath He loved me.

“And I saw how that in me it was just the opposite; how I loved Him not, save in jest, and not truly; and to see this was unto me a deadly pain, and an intolerable sorrow, so that I thought I should die. And then of a sudden there were spoken unto me other words, that increased my sorrow, and they were the same words as before, but He added: ‘I have not loved thee in jest, I have not served thee in feignedness, I have not felt thee by the lengthening out² of My Being.’ And then the aforesaid deadly

(2) “*Per elongationem;*” that is, by that miraculous extension and enlargement of the soul by which she herself had felt God.
—*Trans.*

pain and sorrow was increased. Then, too, my soul cried out and said: 'O Master, that which Thou sayest is not in Thee, is all in me, for I have never loved Thee save in jest, and with falsehood and hypocrisy; and never have I desired to come near to Thee in truth, so as to feel the labours that Thou hast willed to feel and to suffer for me; and never have I served Thee truly and for Thy sake, but with double-dealing and negligently.'

"Seeing, therefore, the aforesaid, how He had truly loved me, and that all the signs of most true love were in Him, and how He had given Himself up wholly and entirely to my service, and how He had come so near unto me that He had been made man, in order that He might truly bear and feel my sorrows in Himself; and seeing all the contrary in my own self, so great became my sorrow and pain that I almost died. And I felt that, by reason of my exceeding great sorrow the ribs of my breast were disjointed, and my heart seemed unto me as if it would burst. And as I thought in a special manner on that word of His: 'I have not felt thee by the lengthening out of My being;' He added: 'I am more closely united to thy soul, than thy soul to itself.' But by this word my sorrow was increased, for the more I saw that God was closely joined unto me, the more I knew that I was lengthened out

and enlarged on my side. And afterwards He spoke some words to show His tender love, and He said: 'If a man desired to feel Me in his soul, I would not take Myself away from him, and whosoever desired to see me, to him with great complacency would I give a vision of Myself, and whosoever desired to speak with Me, with exceeding great complacency would I speak with him.' But these words stirred up within me a certain desire: namely, not to wish to feel, or to see, or to speak, or to do anything by which God might be offended. And this it is that God especially requireth of His sons, and of His elect, that, inasmuch as they have been called and chosen to feel Him, and to see Him, and to speak with Him, they should, in accordance with His will, wholly avoid all that is opposed to Him. Thus then was this shewn unto me, and He said: 'They who are lovers and followers of this My poverty, and sorrow, and contempt, which have been always Mine, these are My lawful and elect sons. And they whose mind is fixed on this My Passion and Death, in which alone and not elsewhere is true salvation and the life of all, these are My lawful sons, and the others are not My sons.' "

THE THIRTY-FOURTH CHAPTER.

Of the Fifth Vision and Revelation which she had of the Lord's Passion, namely, of the aspect of the disjoining of His members, and of the blessings which are given to those who compassionate His Passion, and share His labours and sorrows in this life.

“At another time, while I was in the church of Blessed Francis, about the Elevation of the Lord's Body, as the organ was playing the Angels' hymn, *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus*, my soul was taken and lifted up into the very Uncreated Light, and was so absorbed and attracted that it is all unutterable. And whatever is here said is wholly nothing, and in no language of man can be expressed that blessed creation of the Uncreated Almighty God. After so deep an absorption into God, the former attraction and influence still abiding with me, there appeared unto me the likeness of the blessed God-Man Crucified, as if only then taken down from the cross. And His Blood appeared as fresh and red as it flowed through the wounds, as if it had just been shed from sores and wounds.

newly made. Then, too, there appeared in all the parts of the members of that Blessed Body so great a loosening of the joints, and of union in the joints of all the members, by reason of the dreadful and cruel stretching and horrible treatment of His virgin limbs by the murderous hands of the traitors who nailed Him to the cross, that the nerves and joints of the bones seemed wholly loosened from the due symmetry of the body, yet His skin seemed nowhere to be broken. Wherefore at this sight all my bowels were transfixed with such compassion, that truly I seemed both in body and soul to be all transformed into the dolours of the Crucified.

“And I was transfixed by a sharper dart at the sight of the dire loosening of the joints, and of the stretching of the limbs, by which all the nerves seemed shrunken and wasted, and His bones could be numbered, than at the sight of His open wounds; because in the former the secret of His Passion was more deeply revealed unto me, and the dire cruelty of those who tortured Him. And of a truth the sight of this so cruelly mangled Body of the good and beloved Jesus excited in me such compassion, that not only all my bowels, but even my bones and joints seemed to feel new pain, and to call forth fresh lamentation, and a terrible feeling of

sorrow that transfixed both my soul and body.

“While, therefore, I thus stood, wholly absorbed in this sorrow, and as it were transformed into the dolours of the Crucified, I heard Him moaning most sweet blessings over those who were devout to His Passion, and over those who imitated it, and over those who compassionated Him, saying: ‘Blessed are ye of My Father, who, having had compassion upon Me, and having likewise suffered tribulation together with Me, and having followed My way, have merited to wash your robes in My Blood. Blessed are ye, who by suffering with Me sorrow and contempt for yourselves, have been found worthy to have compassion upon Me and My poverty; upon Me, Who was crucified for your sake, and Who was afflicted with immense sorrows, that I might satisfy for you, and redeem you from measureless and everlasting torments. Blessed are ye, who shall be devoutly mindful and compassionate of My Passion, which is the miracle of all ages, the health and life of the abandoned, the sole refuge of sinners, for ye shall be made partakers and joint heirs with Me for ever and ever, both of the kingdom, and the glory, and the Resurrection, which by it I have purchased. Blessed are ye of My Father, and of the Holy Ghost, and truly are ye

blessed with the blessing which I will give at the last judgment, because when I came unto My own, ye did not drive me away like My persecutors, but willingly did you receive Me in My desolation as a guest, into the hospital of your hearts by your compassion, and when I hung naked on the cross, hungry, and thirsting, and weak, and pierced by nails, and dying, ye were glad to have compassion upon Me, and to be My fellows. In this ye have indeed fulfilled the works of mercy. Therefore, in that fearful hour ye shall hear: 'Come ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world;' for I was hungry on the cross, and at least by compassion ye gave Me to eat;' and all the rest He added in a wondrous way. Moreover, I say it is

impossible to express the
 (1) "Ceratum." melting' love that shone
 forth in the eyes of that

blessed Face of the God-Man Jesus Christ, as they looked upon those who had compassion upon Him. And then He added further: 'O truly ye are happy and wholly blessed, and if on the cross I prayed unto My Father for My crucifiers and tormentors with tears and groans, and made excuse for them, saying, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do; what shall I say for you, who have devoutly had compassion upon Me, and

have been My fellows, when not upon the cross, but in My glory, exceeding happy, I shall judge the world?" Thus then I remained more consoled, and attached to the Passion of the blessed Son of God, than I am able to express; for other words in great number did He utter in order to provoke and exceedingly to kindle my love, which I know not how to relate, neither am I able."

THE THIRTY-FIFTH CHAPTER.

Of the Sixth Vision and Revelation which she had of the Lord's Passion; how by His Passion we are freed from all kinds of sins, and that in no tribulation should we take away our eyes from the Cross.

"Another time, whilst I was praying and meditating on the Passion of Jesus Christ, with exceeding great sorrow and compassion of heart, and as I was thinking and pondering, how great was the magnitude of iniquity in every sin of mine, since for its remission and reconciliation, before God the Father could be appeased, God the Son had not only to pray, and implore with many tears, but by reason of it must needs die upon the cross. And while I

pondered also how great must be the damnation, and how great and how infinite the misery and numberless torments which await me for every mortal sin of mine, since to satisfy for it, not an angel, nor an archangel, but the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Very God, was forced to suffer and undergo for me the misery of death and the torment of the cross. And as I pondered also not alone on my ingratitude, which I show Him in return for so great a benefit, but that I even daily offend Him in return for it, and neither desire to call to mind the benefit of His Resurrection, nor care to cooperate with Him by doing penance for my salvation; even then was I struck dumb at the infinite goodness and mercy of God, and at my exceeding great wickedness and foolishness. And whilst I thought of these things, it was shown unto me how, by the Passion of Christ, we are freed from every kind of sin and torment and punishment, which we have deserved on account of them. And this was shewn unto me so clearly that I could hardly contain myself from crying it out before every one. And thus was it declared unto me by Christ Crucified, when He appeared unto me, as when He hung upon the cross for our sakes, namely, that no man can make excuse if he be not saved. For to save his soul he hath no more to do than what a sick man doth for his physician,

who, desiring health, both maketh known his infirmity, and disposeth himself to do what the physician hath told him. So, too, a man in sin need do nothing more, nor spend aught in medicine, save only show himself to the Physician by the acknowledgment and confession of his sin, and dispose himself to perform what the Physician telleth him, and keep from what is opposed to His advice.

“Moreover, my soul understood that the medicine was the Blood of Christ ; and He giveth this medicine without price, and it costeth nothing more to the sick sinner than to dispose himself, and then the Physician Christ giveth him health, and healeth his infirmity. Moreover, there were shown unto my soul all my sins, and I saw that all my members had a spiritual infirmity. And hearing this, straightway my soul endeavoured to make known all the sins which she had committed with the different members of the body, and faculties and powers of the soul ; and said: ‘O Lord, master and physician of eternal health, O my God, since, by the mere confession of my infirmities and diseases, Thou hast been pleased to cure me ; and since, O Lord, I am very weak, nor is there aught in me save what is wholly corrupt and infectious, alas ! wretched that I am, I show unto Thee, O Lord, all my infirmities, and all the sins of all my mem-

bers, and of all the parts of my soul and body.' Upon this I began to number all my sins, and said: 'O Lord, merciful Physician, look Thou upon my head, how I have often adorned it with the emblems of pride, and deformed it by braiding my hair, and committed many other sins. Look, Lord, on my wretched eyes, full of uncleanness, and infected with envy.' And in like manner I tried to number and confess all the other sins of all my members.

"And when He had heard with great patience all these things, thus gladly and with joy did Christ make answer, how He had healed all these sins in order, and taking great compassion on my soul, He said: 'Fear not, neither despair, My daughter; for, although thou wert infected with a thousand deadly diseases and even dead by a thousand deaths, yet by the medicine which I will minister unto thee, thou mayest be healed, if only thou wilt devoutly apply it unto thy soul and body. Know then, that for the infirmities of thy head, which thou hast declared and made known unto Me in many ways, and by reason of which thou art displeasing unto God, and a torment unto thyself, infirmities which thou hast brought upon thee by washing, and combing and anointing, and colouring, and adorning, and braiding of thy hair, by lifting thyself up on high,

by being proud, by seeking vain-glory, that thou mightest appear unto men to be against God, and for which thou oughtest to be cast down into hell, and into the depth of the lake of fire, and to be humbled, and accounted as most vile for ever ; for all these things have I satisfied, and done penance, and undergone exceeding grievous punishment. And so for thy washes, and combings, and ointments, which thou hast abused, My most holy Head was pulled, and its hair was plucked out, and it was pierced with exceeding sharp thorns, and struck with a reed, and covered all over with blood, and subjected to every vile jest and mockery, and crowned with a vile crown.'

“‘So also for the infirmities of thy face, which thou didst bring upon thee by washing it in like manner and anointing it, and showing it unto wretched men and seeking their favour, I have made and ordained a medicine. For sins of this kind I did satisfaction, when all My Face was stained and rendered vile by the filthy spittle of worthless men, and was swollen and deformed by very grievous blows, and soiled with a dirty cloth. And for thine eyes, by which thou didst look at vain and hurtful things, and by thy very looks didst take manifold delight against God, I have satisfied ; for with Mine own eyes I shed exceeding bitter tears, and I

had them blindfolded, and bathed in the Blood that flowed from My Head. And for thine ears, by which thou hast offended God, in listening to vain and hurtful news, and taken delight therein, I have done exceeding great penance. For with My ears I heard many things, that brought upon me much and exceeding great sadness, namely, false accusations, detractions, insults, curses, derisions, mockings, blasphemies, and the unjust sentence that condemned Me to death, and the weeping of My most affectionate Mother, who sorrowed with Me with exceeding sorrow. And for the sins of thy mouth, and of thy gluttony, by which thou hast taken delight in banquetings and drunkenness, and in the sweetness of meat, I had My Mouth wasted away by hunger, and fastings, and thirst, and made bitter by vinegar and myrrh, and gall. For the sins of thy tongue, which thou hast let loose to detractions, calumnies, derisions, curses, blasphemies, lies, perjuries, and other sins, I have had My Mouth closed before judges and false witnesses, and in it I had no excuse; but I prayed to God with My whole Heart for My malefactors, and the truth I always preached. For the sins of thy smell, by which thou hast taken delight in flowers and perfumes, I felt the abominable stench of the spittle which I suffered to fall upon My Face and Eyes and Nose.

“For the sins that thou hast committed with thy neck, by swaying it to and fro in anger and pride and lasciviousness, and by lifting it up against God, I had My Neck struck by many blows and smites. For the sins of thy shoulders, by which thou hast offended God, by carrying divers things in opposition to Him, I did penance by carrying the cross on which I was hung. For the sins of thy hands and arms, by which thou hast been guilty of many sinful embraces and touches and evil deeds, I had My Hands pierced with large nails, and fixed and pressed into the wood, through bearing the whole weight of My Body upon the cross. For the sins of thy heart, by which thou hast sinned through anger, envy, sadness, sinful love, and evil concupiscences and lusts, I had My Heart and My Side transfixed by a sharp lance, and out of it flowed a medicine exceeding powerful, in streams sufficient to cure all the passions and sins of the heart. I mean, water for the cooling of evil concupiscences and loves, and blood for the remission of anger, and sadness, and rancour. For the sins of thy feet, by which thou hast sinned through vain dancing, and lascivious walking and gadding about, I had My Feet not only twisted and bound, but transfixed and nailed into the wood of the cross, and

(1) "Pro sotul-
ribus rostratis et
fenestratis." *Fene-
stratis*—with open
work like a lattice
window.

instead of peaked and lat-
ticed shoes,¹ I had My Feet
all bleeding, and their blood,
and that of My whole Body,
flowed down upon them.

"For the sins of thy whole body, by
which thou hast sinned in giving it up to
delights, and sleep, and by giving it plea-
sure in divers ways, I was nailed to the
cross, and terribly scourged, and drawn
out like a skin or hide,² and

(2) "In modum
pellis tractus."

stretched out upon the cross,
and I stood dripping with a
bloody sweat, that trickled
down into the ground, and I was most
closely fastened to the hard wood, and
suffering thereon most fearful torment,
crying out, groaning, weeping, lamenting,
sighing, I died at last, killed by most cruel
men. For the sins of thy ornaments, and
superfluous and vain and curious clothing,
I was stretched naked on the cross, while
vile men tore My robe and garments,
and threw dice for them before My eyes.
Naked as I was born of the Virgin, was I
exposed to the cold, and the winds, and
the air, and the gaze of all men and
women, and I was stretched up on high,
that I might the better be seen and
marked. For the sins of thy riches,
which thou hast committed by wrongly
acquiring, spending, and retaining them,
I was poor, and had no palace nor house,

nor cottage where I was born; nor during My life had I any continual dwelling place, nor any sepulchre when I was dead; but I should have been left unto the dogs and the birds, had not a certain one, by reason of his piety and My misery, taken compassion upon Me, and laid Me in his own sepulchre. My Blood, My Life, I gave for sinful men, and so I kept nothing for Myself, but in life and in death I wished always to be poor, and so I remained.'

“What more? No sin of the soul, nor any disease canst thou point out, for which I have not brought a remedy, and satisfied sufficiently for all; and for the infinite torments and pains which the poor soul ought in justice to suffer in hell by reason of the aforesaid sins, I was all full of grief and tormented. But if thy soul remain not in its neglect, there will be no need to grieve any more, provided that here it grieve together with Me, and have compassion on Me and My pains, and live with Me, as My companion in ignominy, and poverty,

(1) In some MSS. the following words are here added:—

“And because the soul hath taken interior delight in each sin, she seeth that Christ in His Most Holy Soul had undergone manifold and divers and horrible pains; namely, of bodily passion, because His Soul was inexpressibly tormented; and of the Passion of His Most Holy Mother, and by reason of the irreverence done to God by sin, and also from compassion on our wretchedness. And all these sorrows joined together in His Most Holy Soul, most horribly and inexpressibly tormented Him.” The above words seem to be those of the Blessed Angela, but are wrongly placed.
—Lammertz.

and contempt, as long as it liveth. And because Mary Magdalen, who was weak, had all this and desired to be freed from it, therefore was she freed from all her infirmity, and whosoever be in the same state, may find health even as she.' Likewise the Crucified said unto me: 'Those My sons, who go back from My kingdom through sin, and make themselves sons of the Devil, when they return to the Father, then the Father hath great gladness, and showeth unto them joy from above. For so great is the joy the Father hath at their return, that He giveth unto them grace from above, that He giveth not to those who have been virgins, and who have never gone away from Him. And this He does by reason of the immensity of the love and mercy which He hath for them, by which He hath pity on them and on their misery; and also because they have sorrow for having offended so great a Majesty, and so clement and so good a God. And for the two reasons aforesaid, he who hath been the greater sinner may receive the greater grace and mercy.' Likewise He said unto me: 'Whosoever will find grace, let him not lift his eyes from the cross, whether according to My will or permission, he be his whole life long in sorrow or in joy.' "

THE THIRTY-SIXTH CHAPTER.

Of the Seventh Vision and Revelation which she had of the Lord's Passion, and of her consolation when she saw how He communicateth Himself unto us, and shareth our being.

“Once upon a time I was looking upon a cross, and on it was the figure of the Crucified, and as I looked at the Crucified with the eyes of my body, of a sudden my soul was inflamed with so fervent a love that the very members of my body felt it with great joy and delight. For I saw and felt that Christ embraced my soul with that arm, with which He was crucified, and I rejoiced with exceeding great joy, more than I had been wont to do. Then from that moment there hath remained in me a joy, and a clear illumination, by which my soul knoweth and comprehendeth how we see this our flesh made one company with God; and this is a true unutterable delight for my soul, and it is an abiding joy, and a clearer illumination than I ever received before. For there remaineth in me so great a security and certainty of my state, that I have no

doubt at all but that this state is most certainly from God, and that the voices which I feel speaking within me are from God also. And I wonder how hitherto I doubted of this; for I am so perfectly assured of this state, that if all in the world were to tell me the opposite, I could not believe, because I cannot doubt it. And I am so delighted to see that Hand which He showed unto me with the marks of the nails, and which He will one day show unto all men when He shall say: 'See, here are the wounds which I bore for you.'

"And even now, when I am in this vision and embrace, my soul receiveth such great joy that I can feel no sadness in the Passion, although I see that it is the Hand of the Crucified One, and that it is wounded. And all my joy is now in the Passion of this God-Man; and at times it seemeth unto my soul, by reason of this most close embrace of which I have spoken, that my soul entereth inwardly into the side of Christ, and the joy which it then receiveth can in no way be told. For it is so great that at times I have been unable to stand on my feet, but I had to lie down, and then I lost my speech. Hence also it came to pass, when the Passion of Christ was represented in the Piazza S. Maria, and it might have seemed that I ought to have wept, that

on the contrary I was marvellously touched and delighted with so great a joy, that I lost my speech and lay down, after I had this unutterable feeling of God. And I tried to get at a little distance from the persons around me, and I accounted it a marvellous grace that I was able for a little while to be delighted. And I lay down and lost my speech, and the use of my limbs; and it seemed unto me that then my soul entered inwardly into the side of Christ, and there was no sorrow; nay, there was such great joy that it cannot be told."

THE THIRTY-SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Of the Seven chief Visions and Consolations, which she had of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. And in this chapter is treated the first of these Visions and Consolations, and of the manner in which our Lord cometh in this Sacrament, and of the company which He bringeth with Him.

"On another occasion, while Mass was being said, and as I was endeavouring in my thoughts to think of the humility of God, and of His exceeding great good-

ness, that He should will to come to us in the Sacrament of the Altar, I was lifted up in spirit, and I had a new and clear intelligence of the manner in which God cometh in the Sacrament of the Altar. And first, it was told me, that the Body of Christ could have been on every altar by reason of the power of God, which cannot be comprehended in this life. And although of this power many things are said in Scripture, yet they who read understand but little: 'But they who feel something of Me,' He said, 'understand more, yet not even they nor the others understand in this life although the time shall come when ye shall understand.' Afterwards I had an illumination, and understood how God cometh in this Sacrament in a manner that never, either before or after, hath been so clearly shown unto me. And I saw how Christ came with an exceeding fair company, and greatly was I delighted when I beheld that company. Moreover, I marvelled how I could have taken delight in that company, for I was not wont to take delight save in Christ alone. And although I took delight in Christ, and in His most fair company, yet in one way I understood and took delight in Christ, and in another and different way in His company. Moreover, as I marvelled at the beauty of that company, and desired to know who they were, it was told

me that they were *thrones*. Now that company was most bright, and a host of such exceeding multitude that if it had not been that I understood that God maketh all things with measure, I had thought that that company was without number and measure, and innumerable; yet had it not any measure in breadth or length, but it was ineffable."

THE THIRTY-EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Of the Second Vision and Consolation which she had of the Most Holy Sacrament, on the Feast of the Angels; and of the delight which she felt at their presence.

"On the Feast of the Angels, in September, whilst I was in the church of Foligno, and desired to communicate, I prayed to the Holy Angels, and especially to St. Michael and the Angels of the Seraphim, and said: 'O ministering Angels, who have the power and the office from God, to administer Him to others, by expressing His knowledge and love, I beseech of you to present Him unto me, such as the Father of Mercies gave Him unto men, and as He willeth and hath

willed to be received and worshipped by us; that is to say, poor, and sorrowing, and despised, and wounded, and bleeding, and crucified, and dead upon the cross.' Then said the Angels unto me with unutterable pleasantness and sweetness: 'O thou who art pleasing unto God, behold! He is ministered unto thee, and thou hast Him present; and over and above it hath been granted thee, that thou mayest present Him and administer Him to others.' Then in truth I beheld Him present, and I saw Him very clearly with the eyes of my soul, in the Sacrament, even as I had asked for Him, namely, dolorous, and bleeding, and crucified, and afterwards dead upon the cross. Then, too, I felt so exceeding sharp a pain, that it seemed unto me, that my heart would burst by reason of the presence of so dolorous a vision; and on the other hand, I took delight and joy in the presence of the Angels, and never would I have thought, unless I had seen it, that the Angels were so pleasing, and that they could give such joy unto the soul.

"Moreover, while Mass was being said, a certain priest, who was celebrating, was near the Communion, and as he was receiving the Body of Christ, and breaking the Host, I heard a voice as of one weeping, who said: 'Alas! many are there who break Me in pieces, and even draw

Blood from My back.' Then I thought that peradventure that priest was not in a fit state to take the body of Christ, and I prayed, and said: 'Grant that this my brother be not such a one.' And straight-way the voice made answer: 'He shall not be so for ever.'



THE THIRTY-NINTH CHAPTER.

Of the Third Consolation and Vision of the Most Holy Sacrament; and of the blessing which the Virgin Mary our Lady gave her and how she felt God in her soul.

"At another time, I was standing in the Church hearing mass, and about the Elevation of the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, when the people were kneeling down for the Elevation of Christ's Body, I was rapt in spirit, and there appeared unto me the most Blessed Virgin Mary, and said: 'My daughter, dear unto my Son, and unto me, now hath my Son come unto thee, and thou hast received His blessing. And she made me understand, that her Son Jesus Christ after the Consecration was on the altar, as if she would tell me news of a new joy. Moreover, these

words gave me such joy and gladness, that I know not if any one, neither do I believe there is any one, who can express it. For the most Blessed Virgin Mary spake the aforesaid words unto me with great humility, and at the same time, I felt a new feeling in my soul, and exceeding great sweetness. Hence afterwards I marvelled how I had been able to stand on my feet, when I felt such great joy. And after this she said unto me: 'Now that thou hast received the blessing of my beloved Son, it is fitting that I should come unto thee, and give thee my blessing.' Then she blessed me, and said: 'Be thou blessed of my Son and me; and strive diligently and earnestly to love Him, as much as thou art able, for thou art much loved, and thou shalt come at last to that which is infinite.' And then my soul received joy, as I had never received before. Moreover, at the Elevation of the Body of Jesus Christ, incense was given unto me of the aforesaid joy. But then I saw nothing in the Body of Christ, as I had been wont to do, but I felt Christ truly in my soul.

"Moreover, I knew in this, that there is nothing which so bindeth the soul with burning fire, and with delight of love, as when Christ is therein; and the fire which used at times to burn in my soul, but it

was the sweet fire of love. Moreover, when this fire is in the soul, then I know that God is truly therein; for from no other can it come. For then also all my members feel, and even sound, as if they were disjointed. And this disjointing I feel more intensely, while the most Sacred Body of Christ is being elevated, and it is especially my hands that are disjointed and opened.”

THE FORTIETH CHAPTER.

Of the Fourth Consolation and Vision of the Most Holy Sacrament, in which she saw that in It was the fulfilment of every good.

“When at another time I went to communicate, a voice from God spoke unto me, and said: ‘Beloved, all good is in thee, and thou goest to receive all good.’ Then I began to think: If all good is in thee, why goest thou to receive? And straightway answer was made unto me, saying: ‘One thing doth not exclude the other.’ And when I drew nigh to communicate, it was said unto me: ‘Now is the Son of God upon the altar, both according to His Humanity, and according

to His Godhead, and He is accompanied by a multitude of Angels.' And when I had a great desire of seeing Him with the Angels, as had been said unto me, then was God shown unto me, as I saw Him. But I saw Him not in the likeness of any form, but I saw a fulness, a beauty, and in the midst thereof, I saw all good. And it was said unto me : 'O Beloved, so shalt thou stand before Him in life everlasting.' But the greatness of the consolation which my soul then received, cannot be explained.

"Moreover, for a little while, when I communicate, the Host becometh extended in my mouth, and hath no longer the taste of bread, but another taste as of flesh, but a most savoury taste, which I know not how to liken to anything in the world; nor is the Host hard as before; nor doth it go down in little broken morsels as it used to do, but whole and entire, and with such great sweetness, that had it not been that I had heard that a man ought to swallow it quickly, I would have held it in my mouth for a long space of time. And so it goeth down whole with that unknown taste of flesh, nor would there afterwards be any need, unless it were the custom, of drinking anything, in order more easily to receive it. Moreover, when it goeth down, it giveth me a sense of pleasure; and this is apparent even outwardly in

the body, so that it maketh me to tremble with such exceeding vehemence, that it is with great labour I can receive the chalice.'

"And now, when I make the sign of the cross on myself, and place my hand on my head, and when I say: 'In the name of the Father,' I feel nothing new; but when I place my hand upon my heart, saying: 'And of the Son,' straightway I feel such love and consolation that it seemeth unto me, that I find Him there. But this I would not have told, nor caused to be written, any more than the other things, had I not been counselled so to do."

(1) It was customary at this time to receive an ablu-tion of wine after Communion. Large chalices, anciently used for this purpose, are still preserved in some of the churches of Italy.

THE FORTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Of the Fifth Consolation and Vision of the Most Holy Sacrament, in which she saw the Angels adorning a certain altar as if for a marriage feast, whence she knew that in a short while she was to pass away out of the world.

"It happened once during a certain illness, that I felt great desire to communicate, and there was no one to bring me the Most Sacred Body of Christ, and I

began to mourn exceedingly And behold! in the very act of mourning and of desiring to communicate, I began to think of the Angels' own feast, of their praise of God, and how they laud God continually; and I began to meditate on the office of the Angels in praising God, and in ministering unto Him, and in standing before Him. And behold! of a sudden I was lifted up, and straightway there stood before me an exceeding great multitude of Angels, and they led me to a certain altar, and said unto me: 'This is the altar of the Angels.' And upon the altar they showed unto my soul the Angels' praise, Him, namely, Who is all praise. And the Angels said unto my soul: 'In Him, Who is upon the altar, is the perfection and fulfilment of the sacrifice, that thou seekest.' Prepare then to receive Him, Who hath espoused thee with the ring of His love; and behold now the marriage is come; and in a new manner is He desirous of celebrating the union and the marriage act. But I cannot express what joy I received, because all this my soul felt in truth, and because it caused my whole soul to faint away more fully than can be expressed in words. Moreover, this was a sign unto me that soon I was to pass away out of the world; for it happened about the beginning of my last illness."

THE FORTY-SECOND CHAPTER.

Of the Sixth Consolation and Vision of the Most Holy Sacrament, in which she saw God in great majesty and empire.

“It happened another time that in the consecrated Host I saw Christ as a Boy. Moreover, He seemed unto me to be a tall Boy, and exceeding lordly, as if He held the sceptre and dominion, for He seemed to hold something in His Hand, as it were as a sign of dominion, and to be seated on a throne. But I know not how to describe what He held in His Hand, yet I saw it with the eyes of my body. And although I saw this I knelt not when the others knelt; but I had exceeding great delight in seeing Him. And I felt great displeasure and uneasiness, because the priest laid the Host too quickly upon the altar, for the Boy was of such exceeding great beauty, and so magnificently adorned, that I cannot in any way express what I saw, and He seemed to be twelve years old. And the vision of Him was of such joy that I do not believe that I shall lose it any more for ever; and so certain was it that I doubt not in any way but

that it happened in very truth. Moreover, my delight in seeing Him was so great, that I asked Him not even to help me ; and nothing did I ask either good or bad, only I took such delight in gazing at that fair beauty, that I knew not what to say."

THE FORTY-THIRD CHAPTER.

Of the Seventh Consolation and Vision of the Most Holy Sacrament, in which she saw how, wherever God is, there also are His elect.

"It happened likewise another time, that while Mass was being said, I was lifted up in spirit, and I asked of the Lord, saying: 'Behold, Lord, Thou art in this Sacrament of the altar, tell me, Lord, where are Thy faithful?' And, opening my understanding, He answered and said: 'Where I am, there are My faithful with Me.' Then I myself saw that it was so, and most clearly I beheld that wherever He was, there I was also ; but that that state of being was not the Being which is within God, but that which is without. And it is He alone who is everywhere, and embraceth all things. Moreover, very often I saw the Body of Jesus Christ

under divers forms in this Blessed Sacrament. For at times in this Sacrament I saw the throat of Christ in such splendour and beauty that the splendour that shone forth from Him was greater than the splendour of the sun; and by that exceeding great beauty it was given unto me to understand for certain that God was there. For beyond comparison it is a greater beauty than the beauty of the sun; yea greater far, although at home I have seen still greater beauty in that throat and neck, nay, so great, that I do not believe that I shall ever again lose the joy of that vision; and I know not how to make it known, save by the similitude of the Host of the Body of Christ. But I feel it to be a great pain, that I cannot make it known. I saw also in the Host, from time to time, two most splendid Eyes, so large that the Host seemed to have passed away, save only the edges. Moreover, in this vision I am refreshed with such exceeding joys that I know not how to compare one with the other, but each is so great, that it seemeth unto me that I henceforward can never lose it."

THE FORTY-FOURTH CHAPTER

How this holy woman was lifted up in spirit, and saw the glorious Virgin our Lady praying for the human race.

“Once upon a time I was lifted up, and I was not then in prayer, but I had sat myself down to rest, for it was after dinner. Hence I was not even thinking about it, but of a sudden my soul was lifted up, and I saw the Blessed Virgin in glory, and when I understood that a woman was placed in such majesty and glory and dignity as she was, I was marvellously delighted; for to see her was joy unutterable. For the Blessed Virgin Mary stood praying for the human race, and I saw her in such shapeliness and power of humanity that I cannot express it. And at this I was ineffably delighted. And while I was thus gazing on her, of a sudden there appeared Jesus Christ, sitting by her side in His glorified Humanity.

“And when I understood how that Flesh had been punished and reviled and crucified, and all the punishments and wrongs and contempt, and ignominy that

He had borne for us, and which I then saw in a marvellous manner, in nowise did I grieve about them; nay, my delight was so exceeding great that it cannot be expressed, and I lost my speech, and thought that I should die. And it was for me a punishment over-great, that I did not die, and that I came not at once to that unutterable Something which I saw. And this vision lasted for three days continually, and yet I was not prevented from eating, although I eat but little, for my body was always languid, and I had to lie down, and spoke not at all; nor was I hindered from doing any other thing, but when God was named unto me, I could not suffer it for exceeding great delight."

THE FORTY-FIFTH CHAPTER.

How again she saw the Virgin our Lady offering Christ in the Temple; and how Christ was placed in the arms of this holy woman, and it was told her that, because the Lord had offered Himself, she also ought to offer herself to Him.

"On the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, early in the morning, while I was in the church of the Friars Minor at

Foligno, a voice spake unto me, and said: 'This is the hour in which our Lady the Virgin Mary came with her Son into the Temple.' And my soul heard this with great love. Then was my soul lifted up, and I saw our Lady entering at this hour into the Temple, and my soul went to meet her with great reverence and love. And when for a little while I was afraid to come nigh unto her, our Lady herself gave unto my soul great security, and held out unto me her Son Jesus, and said: 'O lover of my Son, take Him!' and she delivered her Son into my arms, and He seemed unto me to have His eyes closed, as if He slept, and He was wrapped in swaddling clothes.

"Moreover, our Lady sat down as if wearied by her journey, and made such beautiful and pleasing signs, and her presence was so good and gracious, and it was so sweet and pleasant a thing to see her, that my soul not only regarded the Child Jesus, Whom she held so closely in her arms, but was forced also to look upon our Lady. While then I thus stood, of a sudden, the Child remained all naked in my arms, and opened and shut Its eyes, and then looked again; and straightway in the look of those eyes of His I felt and had such love that it wholly overcame me. For from those eyes there went forth so great a splendour and fire of love and joy,

that it is unutterable. And then of a sudden there appeared an immense ineffable majesty, and He said unto me: 'He who hath not seen Me little, hath not seen Me great;' and He added: 'I have come to thee, and offered Myself to thee, that thou mayest offer thyself to Me.' Then my soul, in a marvellous and indescribable manner, offered itself unto Him, and afterwards I offered my whole self, and my children who follow me perfectly in all things I also offered, keeping back nothing for myself, either of mine or of theirs. And my soul understood that God graciously accepted that offering, and received it with great readiness.

‡ "But of the cheerfulness and ineffable joy, and delight indescribable, which I had when I understood that God received and accepted my offering with such great benignity, I can say nothing at all, for it is impossible for me to make it known. Another time I saw the Blessed Virgin exhorting me to knowledge, and blessing me, and she told me of the dolour of her compassion for her Son."

THE FORTY-SIXTH CHAPTER.

Of the First Vision of those Four Visions and Consolations, which she had concerning her spiritual sons, who were to serve and follow Jesus Christ, in order to discover and make known the Way of the Cross.

“Once upon a time I was lifted up, and drawn and absorbed into the Uncreated Light, and I saw what I cannot tell. Moreover, while this influence was still upon me, there appeared unto me One like unto the likeness of the Blessed God-Man Who was crucified, as if He had been but just taken down from the cross. And His Blood appeared so fresh and red, and it flowed forth from His wounds as if the wounds had but just been made. And in His joints there appeared so great a loosening of the nerves by reason of this cruel stretching by which He was extended on the cross, that the joints of the bones seemed wholly to have slipped from their proper place; and at this sight my bowels were transfixed, more than I can say, and I grieved more than I had ever grieved before in any sorrow whatsoever.

“ Whilst then I thus stood all absorbed in this grief, behold of a sudden round about the Crucified there appeared a multitude of my sons, who were devout in preaching, and imitating the poverty and contempt and sorrow of the Crucified. Then the Blessed Jesus called them and drew them to Him, and embraced each of them, and drawing them and pressing their heads, He placed them against the wounds of His side, that they might kiss it, with so much love that the joy that had been born in my soul, at the sight of the tender love He had shown them, made me forget the former sorrow. Moreover, there was a difference of degree in the way in which He pressed my sons to His side, for some He pressed very often, and some but very little, and some He, as it were, wholly took into His side, and on their lips there appeared a redness as of ruby Blood, which in some adorned and coloured their cheeks and whole face, according to the degree above stated; and pouring upon each of them ample blessings, He said: ‘O blessed sons, try and find out the way of the cross, the way, that is, of my poverty and contempt, and sorrow, by which means I may have an abundance of fellow-workers in the world, for in a singular, manner have I chosen you, that through your means, and by your word and example, My truth may be discovered

(1) The MS. has the following marginal note of the writer of the Visions: "And although she saw all and each in their several degrees, yet did she here refuse to speak in particular of any one. Nor did it seem to me proper that this should be inquired into, save only that each one should strive, as far as he is able, to attach himself to that Blessed Crucified One, and to embrace by every endeavour in his power, His command to follow the way of contempt and of poverty, and of the cross."

and made known, which hath been trampled upon and hidden.' And my soul understood, that in proportion as they had been pressed to His side, so were these words spoken of each of my sons.' But it would be impossible to express the tender love that shone in the look of the eyes of that Blessed Face of the God-Man Jesus Christ, as He gazed upon these my sons, and when He pressed them to His sacred Side, and in all the signs and words and blessings which He showed or spake unto them, or poured upon them."

THE FORTY-SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Of the Second Vision and Consolation, which she had concerning these her spiritual sons aforesaid.

"Another time, when I was in a certain procession, I felt that same abyssmal attraction of the Uncreated God, of which

I have already spoken, but in an ineffable manner. And I saw the Blessed God, Three and One, dwelling in His majesty in the souls of my sons, and transforming these my sons in different degrees into Himself, according to the degrees above-mentioned, and to see this was in truth paradise itself. For so generously did He appear to be poured out upon them, that I myself could not look at them enough, and so great was the blessing that the Uncreated God poured out upon them, and so exceeding sweetly and tenderly was it bestowed, that it was ineffable.' Then she besought her sons, saying: 'O my beloved sons, be ye wholly a sacrifice of holocaust, both in mind and body. Think, my brothers, how much, both in affection and in deeds, ought He to be loved, Who giveth Himself unto us so tenderly, and Who so lovingly seeketh to take possession of our whole being.'

"And when in like manner the God-Man Crucified was shown unto me with His limbs disjointed, as hath already been described, He was carried before my eyes through the air during the

(1) The MS. has the following note of the writer of the Visions: "And I who write these things secretly looked, and saw that in her face she seemed to be wholly changed into angelical, and marvellous, and glorious joy; and so great was the blessing which the Uncreated God poured out upon these her sons, and so sweetly and tenderly was it given, that the ineffable manner of its bestowal is honoured most by silence."

whole of the procession, borne up by no human hand. And as my sons gathered round Him, and He pressed them to the wound of His side, as hath been said, He Himself said: 'I am He who taketh away the sins of the world, and all your sins have I taken away, nor shall they be imputed to you any more for ever. This is the pool of true cleansing. This is the house of your habitation. Fear not, then, my sons, to defend by word and deed this truth of My life and way, though it be attacked by the wicked, for I am ever with you, your helper and defence.'

"Also there was shown unto me the cleansing of all my sons in a triple degree, at that time, and formerly in many ways. Some were cleansed in a special way, namely, by the reception of great grace and strength for the easy avoidance of sin. Others by the reception of grace for performing with delight the works of virtue; others in all perfection of the soul, and by being transformed into the Crucified. And although much beauty is given unto the soul in each of these changes and graces, yet in the second there is very great and delightful beauty. But in the third it is so exceeding great that it is wholly ineffable; and except this I can say nothing. But these my sons seemed transformed into God, so that I saw nothing else but God, at one time in His

Passion, at another glorified, and He seemed to have wholly transubstantiated them into the abysses of His Being."¹

(1) "Transubstansiasse et in-abyssasse."

THE FORTY-EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Of the third Consolation and Vision, which she saw in reference to her above-mentioned spiritual children.

"During the same procession, as we were drawing nigh unto a certain church of the Blessed Virgin, behold the Queen of Mercy and Mother of all grace, who at first appeared lifted up on high, bowed herself down over these her sons and daughters, and blessing them in a new and most gracious way, murmured over them all kinds of benedictions, and all of them she kissed upon the breast, some more, some less. Some she embraced in the arms of so mighty a charity, that all luminous as she appeared, she seemed to absorb them into a certain infinite light within her breast. Yet it seemed not unto me that I saw my arms of flesh, but a certain admirable light into which she absorbed them, enclosing them within her bosom, in her exceeding great and tender love."

THE FORTY-NINTH CHAPTER.

Of the Fourth Consolation and Vision, which she saw in reference to her spiritual children already mentioned, that, dead to this world, and living to God alone, they should preach to others mortification and life.

“ Likewise, on another day, while Mass was being said, amongst many things that I saw, there appeared unto me the Blessed Francis, all glorious, and he made me his wonted salutation, which is this: ‘The peace of the Most High be with thee!’ Moreover, he saluteth me ever in a most pious, and humble, and gracious, and affectionate voice. Then he praised in certain of my children, who were burning with the zeal of observing the rule of poverty, their strong resolution, but he asked that it might be increased for them in deed. And he said: ‘The eternal, and full and abundant blessing which I have received from the eternal God, come down upon the heads of these most dear children, who are both thine and mine; tell them to live, that is, to follow the way of Christ, and to make it known by word and

deed ; and not to fear, because I am with them, and the Eternal God is their helper.' And with such affection did he praise these his children for their good resolution, and strengthen them to go on in safety, and to help him in his own intention ; and so lovingly did he bless them, that he seemed to melt away over them in love.

“Many other things I saw concerning myself, and concerning my children, that I cannot express. But what I saw, and perceived, that I tell. For I saw for certain that the Blessed God Himself is tenderly poured out upon them, and His most sweet Mother, and that they desire to bear our burden of penance ; only they ask of you, my children, that ye be shining examples of their luminous, and dolorous, and most poor, and contemptible life ; and they wish and desire to see you dead and at the same time alive, and that your habitation may be in heaven, and only the use of your body in the world ; and that, even as a dead man is not affected either by honour or dishonour, so ye may be unchangeable with regard to the world's outward existence, and may preach mortification to others more by your life than by contentious words. And in all your actions let your intention ever be in heaven, in that Blessed God-Man Who was crucified ; so that whether outwardly you act or

speak, or eat, inwardly ye
 (1) "Intrinseca may be ever intrinsecated'
 ti." in the Blessed God, Who
 desireth to bear you about
 continually within Himself, and that you
 should help Him in all your actions. And
 may He deign to fulfil this in you, Who
 deigneth in His mercy to require it at
 your hands, through the merits of His
 most holy Mother. Amen "

THE FIFTIETH CHAPTER.

Of the Instructions and Consolations which she had from God in her tribulations, and of the treasure and value of labours and tribulations, and how thereby every man is made to come nearer unto God.

"Once upon a time I asked of God to
 give me something from Himself. And
 He made me the sign of the cross. And
 I asked Him also to show me who were
 His children. And amongst other things
 this example was told me:—Suppose a
 man had many friends, and had invited
 them to a banquet, which he had carefully
 prepared. if many of those who had been
 invited refused to come, would he not
 grieve for those who did not come,

because he had prepared so abundant and costly a banquet? But those who came, would he not receive them with great joy? And although he might receive all with joy, yet those whom he loved most, he would place near himself at his own special table; and further, with those whom he loved most familiarly, he would eat out of one dish, and drink out of one cup. But I asked of Him, with great delight of soul, saying: 'O Lord, when dost Thou invite all, tell me?' And He answered and said: 'I have invited all to life everlasting; and they who desire to live, let them come; for no man can make excuse that he is not called. But some who have been called come and are placed at table.' And He gave me to understand that He is Himself the table and the food.

"Moreover, I asked concerning those who had been called, and had come, by what way they had come thither? And He answered: 'By the way, I say, of tribulation; such as are virgins, chaste, poor, weak, patient;' and He named many other kinds of those who through tribulation should be saved. And at each word I understood the reason and explanation, and I was delighted exceedingly. And in general all those mentioned above were called and named His children. Moreover, it was told me by the voice that

..

spake with me, how virginity and poverty, and fever, and loss of possessions and temporal goods, and tribulation, were given by God unto His children, for their advantage, but that they did not consider, neither understand at first, but although at the beginning they were troubled, yet afterwards, as true sons, they bore them with patience and thanksgiving. Such in general are all they who attain unto life everlasting, nor is there any other way.

“ But they who are invited to this spiritual table, whom the Lord taketh with Him, to eat out of one dish with Him, and to drink out of one cup, these are they who desire and study to know, Who is that good Father and Lord, Who hath invited them. And to be able to please Him, by imitating His Cross, and by taking on them of their own free will His poverty and contempt and affliction. And to these His children God permitteth many tribulations to happen; and this He doth to them as a special grace, that with Him they may eat out of one dish. ‘ For at that table,’ said Christ, ‘ was I called to drink the chalice of the Passion, which was sweet unto Me by reason of My love for you, although in itself it was most bitter. These therefore my children, when they recognise this grace, although for awhile they find tribulations bitter, yet soon they come to find them sweet, by reason of the

love and grace and honour and value which are in them ; nay, they are troubled when they are not afflicted, and the more they are delighted and feel God, the more they suffer tribulation. Therefore I say and affirm, that the sons of God feel the sweetness of God even in the midst of their persecutions, and tribulations, and penance. And this was told and shown unto me in a wonderful way by God, when He spake with me, as I have already related, and this I have myself experienced times innumerable. Hence at the time when I was troubled by the brethren,¹ and those who despised me, I was not able to make known the sweetness which I then felt, nor the tears of joy with which I was then anointed.

(1) Probably the Friars-Minor. (Tr.)

“Again, during a certain grievous illness, as I was silent, and very weak and afflicted, there appeared unto me the God-Man Jesus, full of consolation, and He seemed unto me to have exceeding great compassion, and He said: ‘I have come to serve thee:’ but the service which He did me was to stand before my bed, and show Himself unto me, so full of mildness that it was ineffable ; and I saw Him with the eyes of my mind, far more clearly than anything can be seen with the eyes of the body, and so great was my joy

and delight that concerning all this I can say nothing at all; nay, it is all unutterable.

“Again, one Holy Thursday I said to my companion: ‘That we should go and look for Christ.’ And she said: ‘Let us go to the hospital, and perchance we shall find Christ among the poor, and the suffering, and the afflicted.’ And we took off all our head-cloths, as far as we could, (for we had nothing else,) and we told the waiting woman of the hospital to sell them, and to buy something for the poor of the hospital to eat. And although she refused for a long time to do this, and said that we were bringing disgrace upon ourselves, yet, because we pressed her, she went and sold those poor little cloths, and with the price thereof she bought some fish: and we ourselves brought bread that had been given us by the love of God for our food. And after we had offered these things unto the poor, we washed the feet of the poor women who were living there, and the hands of the men, and especially of a certain leper, whose hands were very fetid, and withered up, and cramped, and corrupt; and we drank of the water with which we had washed him. But in that draught we felt such sweetness that we went all the way back in great sweetness, and it seemed unto me that in everything I tasted a wonderful sweetness like unto

that which I had tasted therein. And because a certain little scale' of the leper's wounds had fastened in my throat, I endeavoured to swallow it as if I were communicating, and at last I swallowed it. And in this I found such sweetness that I cannot express it. Wherefore I say that in penance, and in affliction and tribulation accepted for the love of God, although in the beginning a man is troubled, yet afterwards his consolation becometh exceeding great.

(1) MS. "scarpula;" Ed. Prin. "scamula" tor "squamula."

"Another time I was standing greatly troubled in the spirit, and it seemed unto me that for the space of a month I had had no feeling of God; nay, it seemed unto me that I was, as it were, forsaken of God, and I could not confess my sins; and on the one hand it seemed unto me that this had happened unto me by reason of my pride, and on the other hand I saw so deeply my many sins, that it appeared unto me that I could not confess them with due contrition, or even utter them with my mouth. It seemed also unto me that I could not make them known, and that on this account I could not praise God, nor remain in prayer. But this at least of God seemed to remain unto me, namely, that I was not so greatly troubled as I ought to be, on account of my having

wilfully forsaken God through sin, and of not having resolved never to offend Him more, for all the evil or good of the world, nor to consent to evil: and thus was I troubled and sorely and horribly afflicted the whole of that time.

“At last, through the mercy of God there spake unto me a voice that said: ‘My daughter, loved by Almighty God, and by all the saints of paradise, God hath laid up His love in thee, and He hath more love for thee than for any woman in the Valley of Spoleto.’ And my soul cried out and said: ‘How can I believe this? I who am full of tribulation, and as it seemeth unto me, forsaken of God?’ And He answered: ‘When it seemeth unto thee that thou art the more forsaken, then art thou the more beloved and nearer unto God.’ And then He added: ‘A father who hath a dear son, who is very dear unto him, ministereth unto him food in moderation, neither doth he suffer him to drink pure wine, nor to eat anything hurtful, lest it should do him harm; but he tempereth the wine with water, that it may profit him. So doth God act; for with consolations He mingleteth temptations and tribulations, and in temptations and tribulations He holdeth the soul; for unless He held it, it would be dashed to pieces, and fall away; and when it seemeth forsaken, then is it most loved.’ Then

was my trouble somewhat tempered, yet not wholly taken away; for as yet I had no desire to confess, but there began to come unto me a desire of confession and communion. And in a short while my trouble was wholly taken away. And then a voice spake unto me and said: 'It is My will that thou communicate, for if thou receivest Me, thou hast already received Me, and if thou receivest me not, even so thou hast already received Me. Communicate then, with the blessing of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And make thy communion in reverence and honour of Almighty God, and of the Holy Virgin Mary, and of the Saint of the day, (it was the Feast of S. Anthony that day,) for a new grace will be given unto thee, which thou hast not had as yet.' Then was given back unto me the grace of confessing my sins, and the desire of communicating, and I confessed. Moreover, while Mass was being said, I saw myself all full of sins and defects, so that I could not speak, and I began to think that the communion which I wished to make would be for my condemnation.

"Yet after this I was wonderfully disposed, so as to be able to place myself wholly within Jesus Christ, and then I placed myself within Him with such confidence and security, as I had never expe-

rienced before ; and I placed myself within Him and His merits, as if I were dead, with a marvellous certainty that He would make me to live. I communicated therefore in this confidence, and after communion I had a wonderful feeling, for He left in me a peace, by which it was given unto me to understand, and also to feel, that every tribulation which had happened, had happened for my good. And this communion which I made, caused my soul to see and to desire to give myself all to Christ, because I saw that Christ had given Himself all to us, and now in a new way do I take delight in the desire of martyrdom, and I long for it, and I delight in tribulations when they happen ; and I rejoice more than I was wont. Wherefore I say, that in the end God consoleth every soul, that liveth in tribulation.

“For another time, when I was thus troubled, so that it seemed unto me that I was forsaken, a voice spake unto me and said: ‘O beloved, know that thou art not forsaken, but in tribulation God the Almighty is nearer unto thee and thou unto God.’ And my soul cried out: ‘If this is so, that I am nearer unto God in tribulation, let Him be pleased to take from me all sin, and give unto me His blessing, and unto my companion also, and unto the brother who hath written these sayings.’ And thus was it said unto me: ‘Thy sins

have been taken away, and I give thee a blessing with the Flesh of that Hand, which was nailed unto the Cross.' And then I saw that Hand raised in blessing over our heads, and I took delight at the sight of that Hand, for of a truth it was exceeding delightful to see it. And thus He spake unto us three: 'Receive ye the blessing of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and lay hold of it for ever.' And He said unto me: 'Tell thy brother, who hath written these things, to strive to make himself little; for he is much loved by God Almighty, and therefore let him strive to love Him.' Thus then in many ways did He deign to comfort me, Who comforteth us all when we are in trouble, to Whom be and is honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

THE FIFTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Of the Illumination and feeling or Inspiration which was given her by God, concerning the way and state of the Salvation of Souls ; and of those, who will not follow interior admonitions and inspirations.

“ Once upon a time, when I was praying in my cell, these words were spoken unto me : ‘ All who are taught of God, and enlightened to understand the way of God, and who in this light and teaching which cometh unto them spiritually from God, close their ears, that they may not hear, and their eyes that they may not see, and who will not attend, nor listen to what Christ is saying unto them in their souls, but who are wholly engrossed in following another doctrine from that which they understand hath come to them from God, and who desire to hold on to the common way against their conscience, these have a curse from God Almighty.’ Moreover, many times was this word spoken unto me. But I shuddered to hear it, for it seemed unto me exceeding terrible, and I feared that it was a decep-

tion ; namely, that to those to whom God giveth light and grace, afterwards He giveth malediction. Then there was placed before me an example, and frequently was it commanded me, that I should cause it to be written. Now the example was of a scholar, who is placed by his father at school, and the father putteth himself to vast expense for him, and showeth him honour in clothes and books ; and when he hath been taught under the guidance of a lower master, afterwards he procureth that he be transferred to a higher one. If, after this, the aforesaid scholar acteth negligently, and taketh no care about his learning, but returneth unto a worldly state, and unto some vile office, or unto the service of some great workshop, and nothing remain unto him of all that he hath learnt ; such a father, I say, must needs have great trouble and indignation with regard to such a son. And such a son is he who first is taught by preaching and the holy Scriptures, and unto whom is given to understand by a spiritual light, and the inspiration of God, how to follow the way of Christ, for the learning of which God first causeth him to be taught by others, and afterwards teacheth him by a spiritual light and doctrine, that cannot be taught save by God alone ; and this He doth, that he may be a guide unto himself, and a light unto others. If such

a one acteth negligently, and groweth heavy and dull, and despiseth his own light, and the doctrine and inspiration of God, then God taketh from him that light and grace, and he receiveth a curse. And I was told, that I should write this word, and tell it also unto a certain Friar, to whom I confessed, because it touched him.

“Again, another voice from God spake unto me, and said: ‘There is a certain generation of men that knoweth God only from the exceeding goodness of the good things which He hath done them, and these know Him but little; and there is another generation of men, who, although they know God through His good gifts, yet know Him much better from His own goodness, which they experience in themselves.’ Again, from another voice I received knowledge, and I heard as it were a voice of one who cried and said: ‘O how great, O how great are they who are not great readers of My Scriptures, but who fulfil them, and do them!’ Again He said, that the whole Scripture of God is fulfilled in the example of the life of Christ. And once upon a time, when I was at prayer, and said unto God, ‘I know, Lord, that Thou art my Father and my God, teach me then what Thou wilt have me to do, and instruct me in what is pleasing unto Thee, for I am ready to

obey;' when therefore I stopped and thought upon these words from early morning even unto Tierce, I both saw and heard. But what I saw and understood, in no way can I, neither know I how to tell. For it was an abyss unutterable, and He showed unto me what He is Himself, and who are they who live in Him, and they who do not live in Him, and He said: 'Of a truth I tell thee, that no way is right, save that which followeth in My footsteps, because in that way, which is Mine, there is no deception whatsoever.' Moreover, this word hath been often said unto me, by many voices that spake unto me in truth, and in great clearness."

HER MANIFOLD CONSOLATION IS ENDED.

PART II.

THE INSTRUCTIONS OF BLESSED ANGELA.

THE FIFTY-SECOND CHAPTER.

*How it may be known and held for certain
that God is come into the Soul.*

“**Y**OU must know then, that God cometh sometimes into the soul neither invited nor asked nor prayed for, and He placeth therein an unwonted fire and sweetness, in which she taketh delight and rejoiceth; for she believeth that this cometh from God, Who by His presence is working within her, yet this is not certain. Again, the soul knoweth that God is in her, because, although she seeth Him not within her, yet she seeth that His grace is there, in which she taketh great delight, yet still this is not certain. Likewise she knoweth that God is come unto her, because God speaketh unto her most

sweet words, in which the soul taketh great delight, and she feeleth Him with exceeding pleasure, and in this feeling she taketh great delight. But still there remaineth some doubt, although it is not great. For as yet the soul is not perfectly or wholly certain whether God be within her; because such voices and feelings can come even from another spirit than His. There remaineth then a doubt, and it seemeth unto me that this happeneth either on account of her great malice and defects, or by the will of God, because it is His will, not to make her more certain or secure.

“Moreover, my soul is made certain that God is within her, when she feeleth Him in another way to what she is wont, and with a notable and redoubled feeling, and with such great love and divine fire, that all love of soul and body is taken from her, and she speaketh and knoweth and understandeth things which she hath never heard from any mortal; and she understandeth them with great light, and it is an exceeding punishment for her, to be silent about them; and if she be silent, she is silent out of zeal not to displease her love, nor to give scandal, and out of humility, because she desireth not to speak of such exceeding high things, lest they be remarked. And at times, it thus hath happened unto myself, for on account

of my burning desire for my neighbour's salvation, I have spoken certain words, and have been blamed; and then it hath been told me: 'Sister, go back to the divine Scripture; we do not understand thee.' Likewise in this feeling, by which the soul is made certain that God Almighty is within her, there is given unto the soul, so perfect a will, that the whole soul is truly in harmony therewith, and all the members of the body, in all things and in every kind of way, are in harmony with the soul, and are made truly one with her, nor do they in any way resist her will. And she willeth perfectly the things that are God's, which formerly of a truth she was not in the habit of willing with her whole will. And this will is given by grace, and in it the soul knoweth that God Almighty is in her, and giveth her security. For it is given unto the soul to desire God, and the things which are God's, after the likeness of the true love with which God hath loved us; and the soul feeleth that God, Who cannot be measured, is mingled with her, and hath given her His company.

"Likewise, when the most high God cometh unto the rational soul, it is at times given her to see Him, and she seeth Him within her, without any bodily form, and she seeth Him more clearly than one mortal man can see another; for the eyes

of the soul behold a fulness, spiritual not bodily, about which I can say nothing at all, for words and imagination fail me. Moreover, in this vision the soul is delighted with unutterable delight, and then she looketh at nothing else, save that alone; for this it is that filleth the soul beyond all that can be reckoned. And this sight and vision, in which she thus seeth God Almighty, nor can look at aught else, is so deep, that I grieve that I cannot make aught thereof known; for it is not a thing that can be touched or imagined, but it is inestimable beyond all that can be reckoned.*

“Further, the soul knoweth that God is in her beyond all doubt in many ways, of which we will only mention two. One is an unction that of a sudden so reneweth the soul, and rendereth all the members of the body tame and in harmony with her, that she cannot be annoyed or hurt by anything that can disturb her even in the least, and she feeleth and heareth that God is speaking to her. And in this exceeding great and wholly unutterable unction the soul understandeth for certain and beyond all doubt that God Almighty is within her. For this could not be brought about by any Saint of Paradise, or by any Angel. But it is so ineffable that I grieve much that I cannot compare it to anything; and God spare me, because

this I do not willingly, for with my whole heart would I gladly make known anything of His goodness, if it were in my power, and were pleasing unto Him. The other way in which the rational soul knoweth God Almighty to be within her is by an embrace which God giveth her; for never can father or mother embrace their child, nor any person embrace another with so much love, as God Almighty embraceth the rational soul. For with so much love doth our Lord Jesus Christ embrace the rational soul in an indescribable manner, and fold her to Himself; and with so great a sweetness and gentleness that I believe not that any man in the world can speak of or express it, or believe himself to have experienced it, and although peradventure a man may believe that he hath some little experience thereof, yet not in that way. For Jesus Christ bringeth into the soul a most sweet love, by which she is all on fire in Christ, and He bringeth with Him a light so great by which she understandeth so mighty a fulness of the goodness of God Almighty, as experienced within her, that much more doth she understand than experience within herself; then is she assured and made certain that Jesus Christ is within her. But we say nothing of all these things in comparison with what they really are. Moreover, the soul hath then no tears.

neither of joy, nor of sorrow, nor of any other kind, nor of any other state; for it is a far lower state when the soul hath tears of joy. Likewise God bringeth with Him unto the soul such an overflowing fullness of joy, that the soul knoweth no more how to ask; nay, were it to last, she would have here a paradise. And this joy springeth forth, and floweth over on all the members of the body, and every wrong that is said or done unto her, is held for nothing and rendered sweet. And by reason of the change wrought in the body, at times I have not been able to conceal it from my companion or from others, because sometimes I become, as my companion hath told me, resplendent and ruddy, and my eyes shine like unto candles, or I become pale, as if I were dead, according to the variety of the visions and revelations. Moreover, the aforesaid joy is not finished for many days; and certain joys I have that I believe I shall lose no more for ever, but I believe that they will be fulfilled and perfected, and now I am never without them in my life. Hence also when my sorrow cometh, straightway I remember those joys, and in no way am I disturbed. Moreover, there are so many ways by which the soul knoweth that God is in her, that in nowise could I tell them or relate them."

THE FIFTY-THIRD CHAPTER.

*How the Soul giveth spiritual hospitality,
and receiveth her Lord within her.*

“In all the aforesaid ways doth the soul know that God hath come unto her. But as yet we have said nothing of the way in which she giveth Him hospitality. And all that we have said is far less than that which the soul feeleth when she knoweth that she hath given hospitality to a stranger. For then when the soul hath given hospitality to this stranger, she arriveth at such knowledge of the infinite goodness of God, that at times when I was brought back to myself, I knew for certain that they who feel more of God presume less to speak of Him; for in that very feeling which they have of that Infinite and Unutterable One, they presume less to speak of God, thinking that whatever they say (and yet they cannot say it) is in comparison as nothing.¹

(1) “*Quidquid dicunt, nec dicere possunt, quasi nihil.*” The passage is somewhat obscure, but I have preferred to translate it as in the text, rather than follow Lammertz’s interpretation, viz. “thinking that all they say is as nothing in comparison with what they cannot say,” as it seems to me that the “*quasi nihil*” answers simply to the common Italian expression “*quasi niente.*”—*Trans.*

“Hence, were any preacher of the divine mysteries to understand, as I myself at times have understood, he would not know how to say anything, nor would he presume to speak anything of God; nay, he would hold his tongue and be silent. For so much doth the above surpass the understanding, and all things that in anywise can be thought of or spoken or reckoned, that His goodness cannot perfectly be explained. But it happeneth not that the soul loseth any feeling of the body, or that the soul layeth aside the body, but she perceiveth these things without the senses. Hence it cometh to pass that a man who seeth these things efficaciously by his intellect, beholdeth them with such wonder when compared unto what can be spoken in bodily words, that were any preacher to be in that state, and to wish to speak of God, he would say unto the people: ‘Go away, for I know not how to speak anything of God.’ And therefore I understand and say, that all things that have been said in the Scripture, or by all men, from the beginning of the world, do not seem unto me to say anything of the marrow of the goodness of God, no, not even one half grain of millet in comparison with all the world.

“But when the soul is assured by God, and is refreshed by His presence, in like

manner also doth the body receive satisfaction and ennoblement, and it is refreshed together with the soul, although far less. For the soul by its reason speaketh unto the body and sensuality, when it is thus refreshed, and saith: 'See now, how good are these things of which thou hast experienced from God through me; but infinitely greater are the things that are permitted and that will faithfully be paid, if thou givest consent unto me; know then what good and great things we have lost, thou and I, through thy not obeying, but contradicting me. Hence for the future, in those things that are God's it behoveth thee to be wholly obedient.' And straightway is the body subjected unto the soul, and sensuality unto the reason; and it feeleth that it hath a share in the delight of the soul, and it answereth the soul, and saith: 'My delights were once of the body and vile, because I am the body; but thou that art so noble, and capable of the delight of God, oughtest not to give consent unto me, nor to cause me and thee to lose such great and good things;' and the body lamenteth against the soul, and sensuality against the reason, with a long and most sweet lamentation, for it feeleth the sweetness and delight of the soul to be greater than could have been suspected; and it is made obedient unto her."

THE FIFTY-FOURTH CHAPTER.

*Of the ways in which it may happen that
spiritual men may be deceived.*

“There are however certain ways by which there may be deception in spiritual persons. One way there is, and it is the chief, namely, when love in the soul is not pure, but is mixed up with personal and self-love, that is, love of her own will; for in this she hath somewhat of the love of the world, and the world inviteth and commendeth her, and yet all commendation and invitation on the part of the world unto such devotion is false. And such a person, by the very fact that the world seeth her and commendeth her, seemeth to be glowing with devotion, and there is an increase of the tears and sweetness of which I have already spoken, and of the trembling and the crying out, which take place in that spiritual love which is not pure; and although in this spiritual but not wholly pure state she have tears and sweetness, yet such things take not place inwardly in the soul, but outwardly in the body, nor doth the love itself enter into the soul; and soon the

sweetness faileth in such a person, and it is forgotten; nay, sometimes it bringeth bitterness in addition. And all these things have I proved in myself, and I would not know how to discern well between the aforesaid, unless that my soul came unto certain truth; for when love is pure, the soul after such feelings thinketh herself wholly dead, and seeth that she is nothing, and maketh herself dead before God, and putrid, and becometh humble out of reverence to God, and remembereth no more any praise or any of her own good; nay, so greatly doth she see herself to fail and to be full of evils, that at times she believeth that she cannot be fully delivered by any Saint, save only by God Himself, although she more readily asketh the Saints to help her before God, because by reason of her unworthiness she dareth not to pray to God, and for this reason she hath recourse to the Holy Virgin Mary, and the other Saints, that they may help her. And when she is commended by any one, she accounteth it wholly as a jest' and mockery. And this right and pure (1) "Truffam." love from God is inwardly in the soul, and causeth her to see her defects and the goodness of God. And the tears and sweetness which then take place and are enjoyed, never bring with them bitterness, but certainty and fresh

(1) The MS. adds: "And the aforesaid love cannot in any way be mixed up with the love of the world." — "And while I who have written these things was speaking to her of the story of Moses striking the rock, before I could finish speaking, the faithful one of Christ herself said:—

loved by God, and perceiveth in himself spiritual good things, and worketh spiritual good, and speaketh of it, yet because he giveth himself too much assurance, and passeth beyond moderation, on this account doth God permit a certain deception to arise within him, that by this

(2) "And she said that in the aforesaid manner she understood that it had happened with Moses. That is to say, when I had finished speaking to her of that story."—MS.

means he may recognize God and himself.² Another way is when a spiritual person feeleth much of God, and is in a state of good love, and worketh good works with a pure and excellent heart, and hath determined in nowise any longer to please the world, nor to have the name of being holy, and hath resolved to be all-pleasing to Christ, and placeth himself wholly in Christ, and is then wholly

sweetness; and such a love as that of which I have spoken bringeth Christ inwardly within the soul, and the soul understandeth that in this there can be no deception.¹

"There is another way in which God permitteth deception to take place in spiritual persons, and it is this: When a spiritual and devout person feeleth himself much

loved by God, and perceiveth in himself spiritual good things, and worketh spiritual good, and speaketh of it, yet because he giveth himself too much assurance, and passeth beyond moderation, on this account doth God permit a certain deception to arise within him, that by this means he may recognize God and himself.² Another way is when a spiritual person feeleth much of God, and is in a state of good love, and worketh good works with a pure and excellent heart, and hath determined in nowise any longer

within Christ, with great and unutterable joy, and feeleth himself wholly in the embrace of Christ. Yet ought the soul to know how to keep what is her own, and to give to God what is God's. If not, then God permitteth a certain deception to take place within her, in order to preserve her, and because God is jealous for her, lest she should go beyond bounds; yet still the soul is not satisfied with what hath been mentioned, until God lead her into the full knowledge of Himself, and into the full knowledge of the goodness of God, in which alone there can be no deception, nay, in which the soul is led into the full knowledge of the truth. Moreover, the knowledge of the truth is said to be full, when the soul seeth that she is filled in such a way that she cannot be filled any more. But she is filled with the knowledge of Himself, so that she cannot see anything else, nor remember any other thing, and then of a sudden she cometh to the knowledge of the goodness of God, and then she seeth both together in a way wholly unutterable, yet still even this doth not seem to be enough, but God showeth zeal for her by permitting her to suffer tribulations."

THE FIFTY-FIFTH CHAPTER.

Of Poverty of Spirit, that suffereth us not to be deceived in spiritual feelings.

“Now the thing that suffereth not the soul to be deceived in such feelings is poverty of spirit. For once when a certain voice spake to me from God, I heard poverty of spirit commended as so great a means of instruction and good, as altogether to exceed our understanding. For God said unto me: ‘I tell thee that if poverty were not so great a good, I would not have loved it so much, and if it were not so noble, I would not have taken it on Myself.’ For pride can exist in those alone who possess anything or believe that they possess anything. For the first man who fell, and the Angel, on this account became proud and fell, because they accounted and believed that they had somewhat of their own. But neither Angel nor man hath aught of himself, save only God alone. But humility existeth in those only who are so poor that they see they have nothing: for an exceeding great good is poverty. And God Himself made His own most dear Son

poorer than any other man hath ever been, or will be; yet He it is Who hath Being more than we are able to say, but God made Him as poor as if He had no being. Now this hath seemed foolishness unto sinful and mortal men, who have been deprived of true light; but so it hath not seemed unto the wise, nor unto those who have true understanding. And the aforesaid truth is so deep, as also the truth of this virtue, that is of poverty, and how poverty is the root and mother of all humility and all good, is so deep that it cannot be written. For he who hath poverty can never come to ruin, nor fall by deception. And were a man to see the good of poverty, he would be loved of God, and were he to consider its measureless value, never would he be able to keep aught for himself of temporal things, and were he to see how much God hath loved true poverty, he would keep nothing at all.

“Now this teaching is the teaching of Divine Wisdom, that first maketh the soul to see her own defects and poverty, and to believe and truly account herself to be poor of all merit and good; and in consequence it maketh her to be poor, and to love poverty, and thus illuminated by a certain gift of grace, inasmuch as she seeth, and as she seeth the good of poverty, she loveth it. And afterwards it

maketh her to see the divine goodness, and thus in her whole being she loveth God Almighty. Since she accounteth that she hath nothing of her own to love; and as she loveth, so she worketh, and thus all confidence in herself is taken away from her, and she putteth her trust in the Most High alone. And therefore, since she putteth her whole trust in God, all doubt

(1) The MS. adds: "As the Divine Wisdom taught the Incarnation of Christ to the Blessed Virgin, and first made her to know herself, and after that she knew herself, all doubt was taken from her with regard to God; and straightway she put her trust in God's goodness, and knowing herself and the goodness of God, she said: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done unto me according to Thy word;' so likewise Divine Wisdom teacheth us in the Humanity of God, Who, although He was God, yet willed that Humanity to be bound in obedience unto the Father in all His Will."

about God is taken away from her, He Himself enlightening her. And if a man were to possess this truth, all the demons and all other things that we could mention, would not be able to deceive his soul, for in this poverty of spirit the soul receiveth a most clear and most luminous teaching as to the practice of this life, so that never, while she hath this truth, can she be deceived.

"And therefore I understand that poverty is the mother of all virtues, and it is the teaching of Divine Wisdom. For as Divine Wisdom hath taught us by the Resurrection that we are mortal, so by poverty of spirit it hath taught us that we are blessed." And there-

fore all wisdom of the world, except it be brought into this truth, is nothing, and is turned to damnation; and all the wise of the world, except they be brought into this truth, are altogether nothing, and go forward to damnation. And when the soul understandeth this truth, then it worketh without any intention of vain glory, and without regard of any merit.”

THE FIFTY SIXTH CHAPTER.

Of the Elevation of the Soul, by abstraction from the senses, which is called ecstasy or rapt.

“There is nothing then that the soul understandeth or apprehendeth, to be compared with the rapt, in which she understandeth and apprehendeth nothing, save that unto which she can inwardly attain. For when the soul is lifted above herself by the illumination of God’s presence, and is placed in the bosom of God, and God in her, then she understandeth and taketh delight, and resteth in those good things of God, that she can in nowise describe, for they are above the understanding, and above all manner of speech, and above all words. But in these the soul swimmeth

in joy and knowledge, and enlightened by these she understandeth the meaning of obscure and difficult words, which Christ hath spoken. She understandeth also in like manner, why and how in the soul of Christ there was pain without relief. For my soul, as hath been said, when it was enlightened, and transformed into the Passion of Christ, found no relief therein, so great it was. Hence also my soul, when it remembereth the sorrow of the soul of Christ, cannot then find any joy; but this happeneth not when she remembereth the Passion of His Body, because then, after the sorrow, she findeth joy again, and understandeth the hidden meanings I have spoken of by her devotion aforesaid. She understandeth also that there was sharp pain in the soul of Christ, while He was in His Mother's womb, just as afterwards He had upon the cross, save that in His Mother's womb He had no experience. And by this also the soul understandeth the judgments of God, and other ineffable things by the presence of God, Who raiseth her to Himself. And full often doth God work marvels in the soul, which I understand no creature can work, save He alone. For sometimes it happeneth that of a sudden, the soul is lifted up in God into such great joy, that were it to last, I believe that the body would not be able to endure it, would

lose all its senses and the use of its members. And often doth God play' in this way in the soul and with the soul, and straightway departeth when the soul desireth to keep Him, yet there remaineth in the soul great joy and security, and the joy that remaineth is so great that in no way doth she doubt that her God is present. And of this vision or feeling I know not at all how to give any similitude, or even how to call it. And the illumination, and elevation, and delight or joy were wont to happen unto me at one time in one way, at another in another, so that there was always novelty as it were therein, and this is wholly unutterable; for the revelations and visions are at one time of one kind, and at another of another, and so in like manner the delight and joy and gladness. Nor am I able to say anything else about it, nay, to speak of it is rather to speak ill, and to make havoc, and imperfectly to describe it, and to blaspheme, than to make anything known."

(1) "Et faci
Deus sæpc istum
ludum."

THE FIFTY-SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Of the Recollection needful for the soul, in order to come unto the knowledge of God and of herself.

“ I am blinded, and full of darkness, and without truth ; therefore, my little children, all words that you have from me, hold them as suspected, as if coming from some malignant person, and mark all things well, and believe none of my words, save those alone that are like unto the foot-prints of Jesus Christ, and that provoke and lead to the imitation of His Life. Hence it is, my little children, that now I take no delight in writing of anything save my sins, and in deploring them, and in writing of the redemption of those who have been redeemed by the Passion of Christ the Spotless One. But upon account of the letter you have sent me, I am forced to write to you in return. Now this I write unto you, that hath been newly impressed upon my heart. Know, my children, that there is nothing needful for you, save God. For to find God, and to have your mind recollected in Him, this

is needful for you. In order, then, that your mind may be recollected in God, every superfluous custom must be cut off, every superfluous familiarity of men and women whatsoever, all superfluous knowledge and desire of knowing many new things, and all superfluous work and business. In a word, for this a man must separate himself from all things that distract his mind. In consequence, let him endeavour to enter into the abyss of his miseries, and think of what he hath done in times past, and what he is doing now, and what he will do, and how according to his merits it will be with him in time to come, after his death, in that time, namely, which will never have an end. And let no day pass without his thinking of these things, or at least let no night pass. And therefore let him think, and turn over in his mind, and endeavour to know the mercy of God, how Christ Jesus hath dispensed mercy unto him in all his miseries, and let him take care not to forget this benefit.² For to know God and ourselves is our perfection; and in the whole world there is nothing of which I now delight to write or speak, save only of these two things: to know God and one's self. And for this a man must be continually shut up in the prison of his own self, and never go out of this his prison, and if in this his prison he findeth no good, let him seek for a prison

somewhere else, and not be lifted up above himself.

“O my most dear little children, all visions, all revelations, all contemplations, are of no avail, except a man have true knowledge of God and of himself. Of a truth I tell you, that without this the other things profit nothing, and hence it is that I wonder how you look for a letter from me, for I see not how any words of mine can or ought to console you, unless I write to you concerning this knowledge; and I take no delight in speaking of aught save this; and concerning all things hath silence been laid upon me, save concerning this. Therefore I pray you to ask of God to give this light to all my children, and make you ever to abide in this knowledge. Now, that the knowledge of God is needful for you is clear; for since our end is the kingdom of heaven, and we cannot nor ought not to obtain it, save according to the manner in which He who is God and Man obtained it, it is needful for you to know this God-Man, and His life, and His words, and those things on account of which He obtained glory; that by imitation of His works, and by transformation into Himself, we may be able in like manner to follow after Him, and by His merits and grace to possess the kingdom with Him.

“ But most needful is it for us to know

and to have cognizance of the God-Man, how He was crucified for us, and underwent His Passion, and in what respects He hath given unto us a rule of life. For thus hath His own infinite charity been made more known unto us, and His inestimable love, than in any other benefit conferred upon us by God. And on this account it is needful for us, lest we should be ungrateful, to be transformed into His love, so that we may love Him as He hath loved us, and our neighbour in like manner, and mourn for Him our Beloved One, because He suffered His Passion, and was crucified out of pure love for us. For by knowing also what great things God hath done for us, and more especially for our redemption, we are provoked and led and instructed, to consider of what condition we are, that is that we are of an exceeding noble condition, since we are so loved by the Most High God, that He willed to deliver Himself unto death for our sakes; for unless man were a most noble creature, and of great value, this He would not have done. We are provoked, too, by this knowledge of the God-Man who was crucified for us, to procure our salvation, for when we see that a God so high and far removed, and different from us, showed such love for us in procuring our redemption and salvation, then deservedly ought we ourselves to take care about ourselves

and our own salvation, and to be fellow-helpers of the Lord God Himself in carrying out His will, by doing penance. From the knowledge therefore of the God-Man who was crucified, do we obtain infinite other advantages, and more especially since, having been saved by His Passion, we are inflamed unto exceeding great love.

“ But for this is required constant meditation, and deep knowledge of the God-Man Who was crucified. For as we see, so we love; therefore the more we see of this crucified God-Man, the more perfectly and purely do we love Him, and by His love are transformed into Him. Moreover, according to our love and transformation into His love, are we in like manner transformed into the sorrow which the soul seeth in this sorrow-stricken God-Man. And as much as a man seeth and knoweth, so much doth he love; so, too, as much as the soul seeth of the sorrow of her Beloved One, so much doth she suffer, and so much is she transformed into the sorrow of Him whom she loveth. And in like manner, the more a man seeth of this sorrow-stricken God-Man, the more he loveth, and the more he grieveth for His grief, and is transformed into Him by sorrow. For even as the soul is transformed into this most sweet God-Man by love, so also is she transformed by sorrow; but all this is

done by the perfect vision of God and of one's self. For after that the soul looketh upon the infinite depths of God, to name which seemeth unto me rather to blaspheme than to name, and beholding at the same time the vileness and unworthiness of sinners, with whom He hath deigned to form a friendship and blood-relationship, and to undergo for them an exceeding shameful death; then the soul, the more she knoweth these things, and the more deeply she considereth and seeth them, so much the more tenderly is she transformed into the very love of this God-Man **JESUS CHRIST**. When also she beholdeth sinners, and creation itself to be so full of defects, that even while beholding them she groweth blind, (for the soul hath so many defects that they are beyond all comparison;) when, I say, the soul afterwards seeth, by the light of God which enlighteneth her, that she alone was the cause of such excessive and infinite sorrow, as that which **JESUS CHRIST** suffered for her, and seeing, too, the more than infinite nature and exceeding goodness of God, that for so vile a creature He should stoop so low as to become Man, and desire to be continually tormented with unutterable sorrow during His life, and although the Creator of heaven and earth, to die so vile a death. when, I say again, the soul seeth and

knoweth this well, then is she wholly transformed into sorrow; and the more she knoweth, and the more deeply she considereth, so much the more is she affected by sorrow. For if at any time in the world a man careth to satisfy his human nature, it is about his death that he is most solicitous. But the King of kings although His whole life was an indescribable Cross, by reason of the unutterable and continual sorrow that He suffered, yet at His death for a gilded chamber and a bed of purple, He had a loathsome cross, so exceeding vile, that He could not be supported thereon, save by the fixture of the nails that held Him up. For those nails held Him by His Hands and Feet upon the Cross, otherwise He could not have been held thereon. And for servants anxious and ready to satisfy His wants, He had the satellites of the devil, always anxious and ready to afflict Him more cruelly, and wound Him more keenly, so that even at His death they would not give Him a little water when He asked for it, and cried out that He was athirst.

“And more than this, when the soul seeth that wretched man, by reason of his sins, had incurred the loss of all his goods, and deserved everlasting woes, and had become contemptible and a laughing-stock to the Unutterable Godhead, and to

Angels, and to demons, and to all creatures, and when she seeth that the Most High God and Man Christ Jesus, when He was most rich, became very poor, that He might raise man up from poverty; and when He was exceeding happy in all delights, was made full of sorrows, that by His well-nigh infinite sorrow He might redeem man from everlasting and infinite woes, and satisfy and suffer for him; and likewise that God Himself, most glorious and above all praise, was made obedient and humble, and desired to be despised and thought of no account, and to be reviled, and to be taken for the most contemptible of men, and to appear as such, that He might make contemptible man honourable and glorious; when the soul considereth well these things and seeth them, then is she still more affected and transformed by sorrow; and the more she seeth and considereth, by so much the greater sorrow is she transformed.

“Therefore, the more the soul knoweth the depth of God, and His worth and mercy and infinite goodness, which He hath made known to man, and effectually shewn forth, and the more she seeth the wretchedness of man, and his defects, and unworthiness and ingratitude and unfaithfulness and vileness, so much the more is she affected by the love of the God-Man, and by the sorrow of His Passion, and is

transformed into His likeness, in which lieth the whole perfection of man. Thus, then, to know God and one's self, is exceeding needful and useful above all things; and we should dwell on this knowledge continually night and day; and these things, as deeply as he is able, let a man contemplate, for then more perfectly is he transformed into the likeness of Christ, and into love and sorrow, as hath been already said. Therefore, my son, with my whole soul I earnestly entreat of thee not to lift off thine eyes from this sorrow-stricken God-Man, for the sight and consideration of Him hath power to enlighten and inflame the soul with love and fervour of devotion, if thou keepest thine eyes fixed upon thyself. But if they wander about, strive to keep them fixed on Him. Furthermore, I exhort and entreat of thee with my whole soul, if thy soul be not lifted up to see this sorrow-stricken God-Man, that thou go back and begin again, and consider the whole way of His Passion and Cross. But if thou canst not do this in thy heart, at least say with thy lips the prayers that relate to His Passion, carefully and often, for what is frequently said with the lips in the end giveth warmth and fervour to the heart. For whosoever hath perfectly seen this sorrow-stricken God-Man, as He really was, even most poor, and despised, full of

unutterable and continual sorrow, and wholly emptied out and brought to nothing for our sakes, even, I say, as He really was, (but to see this is given by grace.) I am certain that he would follow Christ through poverty, and continual sorrow, and through contempt and vileness. But as to the grace of God, no man can make excuse for himself, that he cannot have or find it; for God, since He is most liberal, most liberally bestoweth it upon all, that is, upon those who ask for it and desire it.

“I desire then, my son, that thou shouldst not fill thy heart save with this Uncreated God, and with His knowledge and love, and that in thy soul there may be no other fulness save that of the Uncreated God. But if thou canst not have this, keep at least and hold fast the knowledge I have spoken of above, that is to say, of the sorrow-stricken Crucified God-Man, and if each of these be taken from thee, rest not my son until thou shalt find it again, and shalt hold fast one of these two kinds of fulnesses, which truly fill and satisfy the heart and soul with every good. Therefore, my son, most firmly hold, and believe me when I say that he who desireth to keep to the way of God, and to come nigh unto Him, and to enjoy Him in this life and in the next, must first of all know God in truth, and not only outwardly, superficially, and as it were by the colour

(1) Lammertz thinks that this is not to be understood of Holy Scripture, but of mere ordinary writing. This, however, will not appear quite so certain, if we compare these words with other passages (see e. g. chaps. lii. liii. and lvi.) where the saint seems to contrast the knowledge of God acquired by the reading of Holy Scripture, with that which is bestowed upon the soul in the higher and more mystical operations of grace.

of Scripture,¹ or of words, or of the likeness of any creature (for this manner of knowing him, namely, by way of speech, is but a simple kind of knowledge of God,) but he must know Him in truth, by understanding His exceeding worth and beauty, His sweetness, depth, power, goodness, liberality, mercy, and loving-kindness, and that He is the Highest Good, and that in the highest degree. For after one manner doth a wise man understand a thing, and after another a simple person. For a wise man knoweth a thing in truth, but a simple man knoweth a thing as it seemeth to be in appearance. Just as a simple person, when he findeth a precious stone, desireth it and longeth for it by reason of its glitter and beauty, and not for any other reason, because he knoweth not the truth about it; but a wise man when he findeth such a precious stone, longeth for it and desireth it with great earnestness, because, besides its glitter and beauty, he knoweth its value and its true virtue. So, too, the wise soul not only careth to know God in appearance, by a certain superficial consideration, but striveth to know Him in

truth, and to learn His goodness and worth, and to such a soul He is not only good, but the Highest Good. And thus knowing Him she wholly loveth Him for the sake of His goodness, and loving Him she desireth to possess Him. And then He, the Highest Good, giveth Himself unto her, and the soul feeleth Him, and tasteth His sweetness, and enjoyeth Him with exceeding great delight. Then, too, the soul being made partaker of the Highest, since He is the Highest Love, is affected by this Highest love, and becometh enamoured of this her Beloved One, and desireth to hold Him fast, and embraceth Him, and presseth Him to her, and joineth herself with God. And God draweth her to Himself with exceeding great sweetness of love, and the power of love transformeth the lover into the loved, and the loved into the lover: that is, the soul, inflamed by the love of God, transformeth herself by the power of love into God, her Beloved One, Who is loved by her with such great sweetness. Even as heated iron receiveth in itself the heat and colour and power and strength and form of fire, and is made, as it were, fire, and giveth itself wholly, and not in part, and snatcheth itself from itself by remaining in itself

(1) The MS. and Ed. Prin. have *ipsum* instead of *ipse*. According to this reading no direct reference is made to the soul in the latter part of the sentence.

substantially inflamed: so the soul that is united to God by the perfect grace of the love of God, is made as it were all divine, and is transformed into God, not

changed indeed in her own substance,¹ but wholly transformed in her life by the love of God, and is made as it were all divine. See then what good things the knowledge of God bringeth unto us! For in the way of God, as hath been said before, and in him who wisheth to possess God, His knowledge must needs go before, and His love follow after, that transformeth the lover into the loved. Such is the soul that knoweth God in truth, and fervently loveth the good which she hath known.

“But the soul cannot have this knowledge of itself, neither by Scripture, nor by learning, nor by any created thing, although these may help and dispose thereto; but only by the light and grace of God. Moreover, I believe that the soul cannot find this knowledge, nor obtain it from the Most High God, Who is the Highest Good and the Highest Light, and possess it for her own, more quickly or more easily than by devout, pure, continual, humble and violent prayer, not only of the

(¹) By this passage all other similar passages about the transformation of the soul into God, should be understood; for from these words it is clear that although transformed into God, the substance of the soul remains unchanged. We have here a remarkable instance of the theological accuracy of the Saint's instructions.

lips, but of the soul and heart, and of all the powers of the soul and senses of the body, by asking and seeking for it with exceeding great desire. Wherefore let the soul that desireth to find this foundation-stone, namely, this true knowledge of God and the aforesaid light, make her prayer by studying, thinking and reading continually in the book and concerning the book of life; and this book of life is the whole life of Christ, as long as He lived in this mortal life. For God the Father Most High, showeth and teacheth unto the soul the form and manner and way by which she may possess this knowledge of God, and may come unto God by love; and this example and authority God Himself, the Father Most High, showeth and teacheth in His own most loving Son.

“Therefore, my most loving children, if you desire the light of the grace of God, if you wish to remove your hearts far away from cares, if you wish to put a rein upon hurtful temptations, if you wish to become and to be perfect in the way of God, be not slothful in flying unto the Cross of Christ. Of a truth there is no other way of God reserved for His children, by which they may find God and keep Him when He is found, save the way and life and death of this sorrow-stricken God-Man, which I have been wont to call the Book of Life. And no man can approach

to read this Book, save by continual prayer, for continual prayer enlighteneth and lifteth up, and transformeth the soul. For the soul that is enlightened by the light that is received in prayer, clearly seeth the way of Christ, prepared and trodden by the feet of the Crucified One: and running along this way with dilated heart, she is not only removed far away from the heavy cares of the world, but is also lifted up above herself to taste the sweetness of God. Lifted up therefore by the fire of God, and set on fire by love, she is transformed into God Himself, and all of this is found in looking at the Cross by continual prayer

“Wherefore, (my most dear son.) fly unto this Cross, and ask to be enlightened by Him Who died thereon for thy sake. Go unto Him in order to know Him fully, so that, buried in the knowledge of thy own defects, thou mayest be able to rise and taste the sweetness of God and in this thou wilt appear incomprehensible to thyself, since, although full of defects, He hath thus redeemed thee, and taken thee up into His own Sonship, and promised Himself to be thy Father. Be not then ungrateful unto Him, but strive to fulfil in all things the will of so honourable and loving a Father. For if in His lawful sons the good pleasure of God the Father is not fulfilled, how is it fulfilled in His

bastard children? Now they are said to be bastards who wander about outside their Father's discipline, through concupiscence of the flesh. But His lawful sons are they who strive to be conformed unto their Master and Father, Who suffered for them, in all things, that is, in poverty and sorrow and contempt. And these three things, my most dear son, know and hold to be the foundation and fulfilment of all perfection. For by these three is the soul enlightened, perfected, and openly prepared for transformation into God. O my most beloved son, know that all human perfection lieth in the knowledge of God and of thyself, that is, in seeing the immensity of God in all perfection and good, and that thou thyself art nothing. But such a manifestation and knowledge of God and of one's self belongeth not save to the lawful sons of God, who have true prayer, and who read and fervently meditate on the Book of Life. For before these His true sons God the Father hath spread out and laid the Book of Life, that is, the Life of the God-Man Jesus Christ. And in this let them desire to know nothing, save to consider well what is found therein; there will they be filled with that blessed knowledge which puffeth not up, and they will find all needful doctrine for themselves and for others. Hence, if thou desirest to be enlightened and taught above measure,

read in this Book of Life; and if thou runnest not over it, nor lightly passest by whilst thou art reading. thou wilt be enlightened and taught in all things needful for thyself, and through thee others also, of whatever state they may be. And if thou readest well therein, and makest meditation, not running hastily through it, thou wilt be so greatly informed,⁽¹⁾ and set on fire of God, that every tribulation thou wilt receive as an exceeding great consolation, and thou wilt come to look upon thyself as unworthy even of tribulation. And what is more, if any praise of men or prosperity shall come upon thee by reason of any sufficiency which God hath given thee, yet wilt thou not be puffed up, nor lifted up on high, for when thou readest in the Book of Life, thou wilt see and know in truth that it is not thine own praise; and this is one of the signs by which a man may know that he is in the grace of God, when concerning nothing is he puffed up, nor lifted up on high, but is humbled exceedingly. Above all things, then, my son, must thou strive truly to know God and thine own self, but this is not done nor obtained, save by continual and fervent prayer, and reading in the Book of Life."

(1) "Inflamed."
—MS.

THE FIFTY-EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Of the Book of Life, which is Christ Jesus, God and Man, in Whom is known and taught and learnt whatever belongeth unto our salvation ; and how the Life of this our Lord was nothing else than exceeding bitter penance. And of the three things that were His companions even unto death ; namely, extreme poverty, contempt, and continual sorrow ; and how by means of these things, and not by any other way, are we to go unto Him.

“ Know then, that this Book of Life is no other than Christ the Son of God, Who is the Word and Wisdom of the Father, and Who appeared unto this end, namely, that by His life and death and doctrine He might teach us. Thou must see then what was His life and conversation, which He led and held without ceasing in His mortal Body. For His life is an example and rule to every one that desireth to be saved. But His life was nothing else but exceeding bitter penance, and by this was He accompanied continually during His life in this world, so that from the hour in which the soul of Christ was created,

and infused into His most holy Body, in the womb of the most pure Virgin, to that last hour in which that most holy Soul departed from His most holy Body, by the exceeding cruel death of the cross, never was He without the company of penance, which was not the case with the Apostles, nor with the Blessed Virgin, nor with the other Saints.

“Now the companions which God the Father Most High, according unto His most wise dispensation, hath willed that His well-beloved Son should have in this world, were these: first, most perfect, continual and extreme poverty; secondly, most perfect, extreme, and continual contempt; thirdly, most perfect, continual, and extreme sorrow. This was the company by which Christ was accompanied His whole life long, that unto us He might give an example of choosing it above all things, and of loving and bearing with it even unto death; for by this way did He Himself, so far as He was Man, ascend into heaven, and by it the soul can go, and ought to go unto God; nor is there any other right way save this. For it is right and fitting that the way which the Head kept, should be kept also by the members of His Body, and that the company which surrounded the Head, should also accompany His members.”

THE FIFTY-NINTH CHAPTER.

*Of the first companion that accompanied
our Lord Jesus Christ even unto death:
His exceeding poverty.*

“The first companion, then, of Jesus Christ, the Book of Life, and of our salvation, was His continual and exceeding and most perfect poverty; and this was in three ways; one great, the other greater, joined with the first; but the third, joined with the first and the second, was most perfect. The first degree, then, of the most perfect poverty of Christ, Who is the Book and Way and Master of the soul, consisted in His desire of being poor in all temporal things of this world, so that He had neither land nor vineyard, nor garden, nor any possession, nor gold, nor silver, nor money, nor anything of His own, neither did He receive or wish to receive of the things of this world, save only to relieve the extreme want of His bodily life. And He had hunger and thirst and penury, and suffered cold and heat, with much labour and austerity and hardship; neither did He desire to supply the wants of His body with such things as were delicate and

exquisite, but with those which were coarse and common, and which according to place and time were found in that province, wherein Christ without house or habitation lived and dwelt as a beggar. The second poverty of Christ was greater than the first, because in this it was His will to live and to be poor as to friends and relatives, and all familiarity of the great and powerful, and all friendship of this world, so that He had not any friend, neither did He desire to have, and this too neither on the part of His Mother, nor on that of Joseph His reputed father, nor on the part of His disciples, nor of any of His friends, for whose sake not a single blow, nor a single stroke of the hammer, nor a single scourge, nor a single imperious word was ever spared Him. And it was His will to be born of a most poor and humble Mother, and to be brought up under His reputed father, a poor carpenter; and He despoiled Himself of love, and of the familiarity of powerful kings and pontiffs and scribes, and of the love of friends and relations; so that neither for His Mother's sake, nor for that of a relative, nor for any one at all, did He consent to forego anything that was pleasing, or could be pleasing, unto the will of His Father Most High. His third and highest poverty lay in His having despoiled Himself of Himself,

when as Christ He showed Himself poor in power. And first, in that He made Himself poor and helpless as to His own power, for though He was Himself Almighty, and nothing impossible unto Him, yet He willed to appear and to live in this world, as if without power, even as a weak and frail man. For besides the miseries of human nature, and His infancy and childhood and other infinite weaknesses, which, save only guilt and sin, for our sakes He took upon Himself, it was as a weak man that He appeared and lived; and He was wearied by journeys, and by preaching, and by the cures that He wrought, and by visiting the sick, and by reproaches.

“ And what is more, not only did men who were sinners receive power over Him, but even all the elements and insensible bodies received the power of inflicting suffering and affliction upon Him, from Him who had created them, and He as one helpless resisted not, but as a man who is powerless to resist, so for our sakes did He suffer all things. For unto the thorns He gave power to enter and pierce most cruelly through His awful and divine Head; and unto the thongs and cords He gave power to bind Him and hold Him to the pillar, and to bind one hand with another, although it was He who shook the earth at His death. Oh!

make me glad, O ye sons of God, by being faithful to that God of yours, Who hath been most faithful unto you, and pour forth the bowels of your compassion, and of your whole

(1) "Deviscerate being," over this His most lowly faithfulness to you, and this His most faithful

lowliness. See, my son, how it is for thee alone, that He the author of all life cast Himself down so low, in order that He might raise thee up; it is for thee that even insensible objects struck and wounded Him their Maker in all things, and that He who is wholly uncircumscribed was held fixed to one place. Unto the veil gave He power to blindfold Him, Who is Himself the true light and luminary that giveth light to all things. Unto the scourge gave He power to inflict on Him most cruel stripes. Unto the nails gave He power to pierce through and enter into His Hands and Feet, those Feet with which He had gone about giving light to the blind and hearing to the deaf. Unto the cross gave He power to bear Him up, as He hung upon it in His torment, after having been scourged and nailed thereon; and to expose Him naked before all, and at the last to make Him suffer a most cruel death. Unto the vinegar and gall gave He power to embitter His mouth. To the lance gave He power to enter and

open and pierce through (Oh! what a marvel is this to hear!) His most divine side and Heart and inward parts, so that from the inward and hidden parts of His Heart He poured forth Blood and water upon the ground. For these His creatures ought and were able to obey their own Lord and Maker, and not the creatures that misused them. But Oh! may the exceeding deep and faithful and unwonted lowliness of His Most High Majesty cast down and confound the pride of our nothingness! For He who is the author of all life, and Who alone hath being, willed to be subjected and brought to nothing before all His creatures, even before those that were senseless, that thou who wast dead, who hadst become insensible to the things of God, through this His exceeding lowly humiliation mightest have life. So faithfully and purely did He love thee, O man, who knewest nothing; and alone, and for the love of thee alone did He consent to be emptied out, in order that to thee He might give a most perfect being. For the very lance both ought and could have doubled itself up and refused to obey the creature that abused it, by not piercing through this the most divine Side of its own true Lord and Maker. And so also the other senseless things both could and ought to have refused to obey, when

turned against their Lord and Maker, had they not received power over Him

“Unto His crucifiers and the soldiers and Jews, and unto Pilate and other most wicked men, gave He power to judge Him, accuse Him, blaspheme Him, insult Him, strike Him, mock Him, and slay Him, Who Himself by a word could have hindered all, or by simply bowing His Head have overthrown and annihilated all things, or have given command to one of the least of His Angels, out of the countless thousands of His Powers and Virtues, to cast all things down by one blow into the depths of the sea. For unless He Himself had given them power, and shown Himself passible and weak, beyond all doubt no creature could have offered any harm to its Creator, nay every creature would have shrunk in horror from so doing. What more? Unto the elements, unto the cold and heat and hunger and thirst did He subject Himself, as also unto other senseless creatures, and He hid His power, and He despoiled Himself before men, that He might teach us, wretched and passible mortals, of the patience which we should have under tribulation, and that He might redeem man, who had stripped Him of His power, and make him by the glory of the Resurrection, impassible and victorious.

“And what is more, unto the devil gave

He power over Himself, to tempt Him, and to lead Him about, and together with His own members, most wicked men, to persecute Him even unto death, in order that man He might deliver out of his power. Therefore it was that the unconquered Lord, and first mover of all things, shewed Himself passible, and the Creator of all things shewed Himself powerless, and the most mighty King made Himself weak, and repelled not, but subjected Himself unto the devil, and unto senseless creatures, and unto all manner of tribulations and wrongs, and unto all manner of punishments, and unto all sorrow and affliction, bringing confusion by so doing on us wretched men, who wish to be so delicate that not only we take not on ourselves tribulation or penance of our own free will, but we repel as far as we are able, even the afflictions and tribulations which happen unto us by the ordinance of God, and most wickedly do we murmur against God Almighty.

“Secondly, He despoiled Himself of Himself, and made Himself poor as to His own wisdom. For it was the will of our Lord Jesus Christ to appear as a simple man, and an ignorant, and as a fool and a madman, amongst all the men of the world, and it was not His will to appear as a philosopher, or a wordy doc-

(1) "Ampullus," from the Italian.

tor, or a puffed up' disputer, or a scribe, or as one famous in learning, or glorious in wisdom; but by walking in humble truth and simplicity, and exceeding great gentleness, did He have His conversation among men, and by shewing forth the way of truth by the power of His life and virtues and miracles. For since He is the Wisdom of God the Father, and the Lord of knowledge, and the Creator and inspirer of the prophets, He could have made use of the subtleties of knowledge and argument, and of genius, and have shewn forth and made Himself glorious, if He had so willed; yet so simply did He set forth the truth, that He was taken almost by all men not only for a simple man and rude, but for a fool and a madman and a blasphemer. And by this He showed unto us the way of truth, that not of knowledge or of wisdom ought we to boast, nor puffed up by the same, should we desire to acquire the name of being masters before men, or make vain glory our food.

"Thirdly, He despoiled Himself of Himself, and made Himself poor with regard to His own fame of sanctity and goodness and innocence, and this is exceeding wonderful; for it was His will mystically to hold on His way in such a manner that not only was He not taken

to be holy by almost all ; but He willed to be accounted a sinner, and the friend of sinners, and a traitor and seducer and conspirator against His country, and to be condemned and numbered among thieves and wicked men, provided that all the while He could work out our salvation in the middle of the earth. For He could have acquired for Himself the fame of sanctity, so that He the Holy of Holies might have been regarded as holy universally by all men, as one who did no sin, but who bore the sins of all. And that which He had given to His servant, John the Baptist, so far as relateth to the fame of sanctity, He, the Chief of the Saints and King of virtues, might have kept for Himself in the sight of all mankind. Yet this He did not, but it was His will to despoil Himself of the fame of sanctity, (save only the truth of the doctrine of life and of justice,) and to make Himself poor, in order that He might condemn our hypocrisy, who even for the good which we neither have nor do, seek for glory before men, and who strive by right and wrong as far as we are able, to acquire the fame of sanctity and of innocence, by excusing ourselves falsely as to our evil deeds, and by untruthfully arrogating unto ourselves works that are good.

"Fourthly. He despoiled Himself of Himself, namely, of His own empire, and

the principedom which He possessed over all things, and over all lordships. For since He was the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and a King whose kingdom shall have no end, yet He willed to live and to be amongst all men as a slave, who is cast away, and who is sold and bought. Nor when they would have made Him king, was it His will to be a king, but He willed to be always obedient unto most wicked kings, even until death, in those things which they claimed, namely, by paying tribute, and by obeying their courts and judgments, and charges, and by being subject unto them. And not only unto kings, but even unto their vilest servants and clients and ministers was He ever obedient even unto blows and the death of the cross. And He Himself, the King of kings, declared before Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world, for He cared not for kingdom and temporal lordship of this world, but it was His will to be ever subject, and not as a lord, or king, or prince, but as a most humble slave did He empty Himself altogether. And He was subject also to His most humble and poor Mother, and to His reputed father, humbly obeying and serving them, until He was thirty years of age. Nor amongst His disciples, whom He chose to be few in number, and of low station, and very poor, did He consent to

be either a king or lord, but He declared that He had come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, until He laid down His life for their ransom, and for that of the rest of sinners. Moreover, living as the Head and Master of these His most poor disciples, in the midst of wretchedness, He was the first to hunger and to thirst and to be troubled, for He was not their Master so as to look for the primacy amongst them, but the first amongst them to bear affliction and humiliation; and so humble was His conversation in their midst, that He ministered unto them at table, and washed their feet and hands. O, measureless madness of ours, who after that such and so great a Lord and King of kings, has been treated with ignominy and contempt amongst men, are ever aspiring unto dignities and prelacies, wishing for liberty, and living without yoke, and none of us desirous to be obedient and subject for the love of Him, but as far as we can, to lord it over others. Not thus, not thus, O Christ, was it Thy will to act, knowing that exceeding hard will be the judgment of those who bear rule, and that the mighty shall be mightily tormented, and that for their life and rule, and for the sins of their subjects, a most strict account will be required. Let then this living Book confound our pride by His own example, which He hath shown us, and let

us ever desire, (like unto Him) to be subject unto those who bear rule over us keeping no will of our own in anything but for the love of Him, Whose will it was to be subject unto all men for the love of us. And for our own security let us not only suffer a state of subjection, but fleeing from prelacies, let us seek for subjection and a lowly state, from our very hearts with an earnest desire.

“This, then, is the highest and continual, and most perfect poverty of the God-Man Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all, Who, although He was the Lord of riches, yet chose to be most poor amongst us, that He might provoke us unto the love of poverty. For He was poor in deed, in will, and in spirit, above all estimate of creatures, for the sake of the infinite and most sweet love wherewith He loved us; poor, I say, and needy, and a beggar. Poor in temporal things, and poor in friends, poor in power, poor in worldly wisdom, poor in fame of sanctity, poor in state of dignity, poor in all things, He preached poverty, and declared that the poor were blessed, and that one day they would be the judges of the world. The rich He condemned, and that riches and abundance were to be despised, He preached with all His strength, by deed and word, by conversation and example. But oh, alas the shame! oh, alas the

shame! This poverty of spirit is now-days driven away, and fled from by almost all, and (what is still more hateful) even by those who read in this Book of Life, and understand and preach and glorify this poverty, which in effect and will and desire and deed is wholly exterminated. For the world hateth this poverty, but Christ loved it, and chose it for Himself and for His own, by declaring it to be most blessed. But what man, what woman, what creature can say, at the present day, that he or she is joined with such glorious company as that by which Christ chose to be attended? Blessed is that man, who in his penance in this world, by the example of Christ, hath chosen it! Woe is me! woe is me! we know and have heard, and we firmly hold how the Son of God, our Creator and Redeemer, our Master and Illuminator, was made for us an ensample, and with what kind of food and drink He was satisfied, how He was clothed, with what kind of raiment He was adorned, in what sort of chambers and palaces He was entertained, by what domestics and friends He was surrounded, in what studies and learning He was engaged, and so too with regard to the other goods of this world; and yet we say that we are Christians, and we wish to be called so, although we in no wise desire, after the example of Christ, to be poor in deed, nor to be made like

unto Him! Whatever we may say in words, by proclaiming His state and poverty to be blessed, yet in deed and in fact, we hate Christ's state and the perfection of His poverty. Woe unto us, who after so great an Example, Teacher, and Master, in very deed, drive far from us such great salvation, and wander away from His state and teaching, after temporal abundance, only to remain empty in the end! And therefore it is that our penance and state of Christianity, go not by the right way of Jesus Christ, nay, basely stray from the same.

“But blessed and truly blessed (as He Himself also hath declared) is and shall be the man, who loveth the poverty of all the things aforesaid, and who in deed and not in word alone, wisheth to be poor in temporal things and in friendships, and in familiarities, and in delights, and varied knowledge and curiosities, and in fame of sanctity, and of all prelacy and dignity! But if a man cannot wholly despoil himself of the aforesaid, at least let him lay aside affection for the same, as far as he is able; for truly he is blessed who is poor in this way, for his is the kingdom of heaven. And whosoever hath done the contrary in deed, although he may have preached and sermonized in word, that man is unhappy and accursed; for his poverty is extreme, and everlasting hunger

will be his in the houses of hell, where is never-ending hunger and thirst, where neither friend nor brother, nor father will be able to redeem or help him, nor will there be any power to escape, nor will worldly wisdom avail; but of all these things will he be deprived in deed, who in deed hath chosen to obtain these things contrary to Christ's teaching, and he will have torment for ever and ever."

THE SIXTIETH CHAPTER.

Of the Second Companion of our Lord Jesus Christ, namely, voluntary contempt joined with self-denial.

"The second companion by which Jesus, the Son of God, was continually accompanied, as long as He lived, was the disgrace and voluntary and perfect contempt joined with ignominy and shame, which it was His will to suffer continually in this world. For He lived as a slave who is cast off and sold and not redeemed, and not only as a slave, but as a slave who is accounted bad and wicked. He was exiled, and reviled, derided, bound, beaten, cuffed, scourged, and at last without cause, without any one to defend Him, He was

numbered with wicked men and thieves, as a vile wretch, and condemned together with them, and died an exceeding shameful and forlorn death upon the cross. And while alive, if any one wished to confer upon Him some temporal honour, He refused either by word or deed ; and He ever fled away from the honours of the world, and ever suffered shame and accepted it gladly, not however on His part giving occasion for it or cause. For the Lord of the world, without reason, without cause, without His having offended or done wrong to any one, was persecuted by almost all men, and derided and mocked. Nay, as soon as He was wrapped in swaddling clothes, and from His very cradle did they persecute Him, and cast Him away into the land of barbarians. And when He had grown up, some called Him a Samaritan and an idolater, and others said that He was a demoniac, or that He was a glutton and a seducer, and a false prophet. For they said: 'See how He is a glutton and a wine bibber, and no prophet nor a just man, neither doth He work miracles by the power of God, but by the prince of the devils He casteth out devils.' And some led Him to mountains and precipices, that they might cast Him down ; and others took up stones to stone Him. And amidst all this there were divers cries against Him, divers mockings

and scoffings, divers detractions and wicked counsels, and they said: 'Lo, He blasphemeth.' And they laid many crafty snares to catch Him, both by word and deed, and they drove Him away from their own parts, and refused to receive Him. And at last they took Him in a base way, and set Him bound before divers judges, and exposed Him to divers judgments and counsels; and some spat on His face, and others gave Him blows; and others clothed Him with a purple garment; and others crowned Him with thorns, and fell down and bent the knee before Him, and mocked Him; and they struck His Head with a rod, and blindfolded His face, and brought upon Him all manner of derision; and others smote Him with scourges; and others gnashed their teeth at Him like bloodthirsty dogs, and condemned Him, and cast Him away as a reprobate and malefactor. And at last He was led naked to His Passion, and all His disciples left Him. And one indeed denied Him, and another betrayed Him, and the rest ran away; and He all the while stood alone naked in the midst of the crowd; for it was a festival day, and it had brought all together. And as a malignant, naked in the midst of malignants, did they lift Him up on high, and hang Him upon the cross, and basely put Him to death. And one man mocked Him as He was dying and

weeping and praying, and scoffed at Him, and said: 'Vah! Thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save Thine own Self; if Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.' And another despised Him, and said: 'He saved others: Himself He cannot save.' And another cast lots for His garment, and another gave Him vinegar and gall to drink, and offered them to Him when He was dying, and had humbly asked for a little water to drink. And another, when He was dead, pierced His side with a lance. And when He had been taken down from the cross, He lay naked on the ground without a sepulchre, until some one asked leave to take Him away and bury Him. And others published abroad a complaint against Him, and said: 'We have remembered how that seducer said, while He was yet alive: After three days I will rise again.' And others concealed His resurrection, and others denied it. And thus in life, and in death, and after death, He was never except in continual contempt and ignominy and vileness, and all this He sought after and suffered, in order that thus He might reach, in so far as He was Man, unto the glory of His resurrection, and exalt us to the highest glory.

"Therefore hath the glorious Son of God been made for us our rule and en-

sample. and Teacher and Master, that we .night despise temporal glory, and not only not seek after it, but even refuse it, when it is presented and offered us. For He never sought His own glory, but the glory of His Father, nay, rather, He refused and despised it, and humbled Himself from heaven even to the feet of the disciples, and emptied Himself, and took the form of a slave, and was made obedient unto death, a death not of any sort, but most shameful and contemptible and bitter, even the death of the cross. But alas! alas! the sorrow! What person is found at the present day, to love such company, that is, to fly honours, and to love the shame which is felt for poverty and low estate and humble office, and other humble things? And what person is there that would wish to be brought to nothing, and cast off, and despised, and not rather to be commended and praised for the good which he hath, or which he worketh and doeth, and speaketh, or which he thinketh that he hath, and even to follow and applaud his flatterers? Of a truth every man hath gone after his own way, nor is there one that doth this good, no not one. And of a truth, if there be such a one, yet he cannot do this, except he be joined with Christ His Head, by true love as His living member. For when he seeth that Christ his King and

Master and Head loveth and desireth such company, then in like manner he too desireth it.

“But many are found, of whom each one saith: ‘I love and seek to love God, and I care not if the world do me no honour, but I desire not that it bring shame upon me, nor do I desire to be cast off, or blamed, or to receive confusion before the face of the world.’ Now this is a clear sign of little faith, and of little justice, and of little love, and of great lukewarmness; because either he hath done that for which he deserveth to bear confusion and punishment and shame, (and few there are who can in justice excuse themselves from this,) or he hath not done it. If he hath done it, then on account of his works, either manifest or hidden, he ought, if he be truly penitent, to suffer with patience, nay even with pleasure of soul and body. And this for two reasons: first, because this shame and confusion and punishment, when borne with patience, satisfieth unto God and his neighbour, according to the will of God’s justice. If, however, he hath not done evil, either by will or deed, yet ought he to bear and suffer all shame and confusion, if God shall permit it, and this with a hundredfold greater patience and joy than in the first way, because all this punishment and confusion and shame will turn to

increase of grace: and when the merit of grace is increased, then the gift and reward of glory is also increased; and thus, beyond all doubt, by suffering the shame and confusion which arise without any fault of men, holy souls and the friends of God grow and are perfected, even as they are perfected by bearing for God's sake poverty and other afflictions. Therefore hath Christ loved shame and fled from honours, that He might teach His friends how to grow in merit and grace. This then is the second companion that ever accompanied the life of Christ. For if we desire to see the beginning and middle and last end of the life of Christ, the Son of God, we shall find that it was all humility, and consisted in living in this world without honour, and in being despised and held for reprobate by the world, and by those who love the world."

THE SIXTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Of the Third Companion, which ever accompanied our Lord Jesus Christ, namely, His exceeding and continual sorrow.

"His third companionship, more experimental and continual, was with the ex-

ceeding grief by which the soul of Christ, as soon as it was infused into His most holy Body, was straightway accompanied. For in that moment in which this His Soul was united with His Human Body and His Godhead, straightway was it filled with the highest wisdom. And therefore Christ was at once both a traveller in this world, and a comprehensor

(1) "Viator et comprehensor." of the next ;† and at once in the womb of His Virgin

Mother did He begin to feel exceeding sorrow, when He knew, saw, considered, and understood, all the punishments, taken both all together and one by one, and each one by itself, which His soul, together with His Flesh, would have to experience and suffer for our sakes. And as when near unto death He was in an agony and in such exceeding great sorrow, that the sweat of His Body was as drops of blood falling upon the ground, because He foresaw the bitterness of death ; so too the soul of Christ, when it foresaw these torments that were to happen unto Him, was pierced with exceeding great sorrow, although His Body felt it not so much as when He was nigh unto His Passion.

"His Holy Soul foresaw the lancets of those most wicked tongues, and the sharpened words of each tongue in particular, and

† That is, of the Beatific Vision.—*Trans*

He knew and continually thought of those by whom He was to be afflicted and killed, mocked and slaughtered; and He saw that for this He had been born, and that for this He had come into the world. Hence He could not but be in sorrow, when He thought how He was to be sold and betrayed, and taken prisoner, and denied, and forsaken, and bound, and smitten, and derided, and struck, and accused, and blasphemed, and cursed, and scourged, and judged, and cast away as reprobate, and condemned, and how He was to be led as a thief to the cross, and to be stripped naked, and crucified, and to die, and to be pierced by a lance. And He knew all the strokes of the hammers, and all the blows of the thongs, and the piercings of the nails, and all the drops of blood, and all the drops of tears which He was to shed, and all the sighs and weepings and dolorous lamentations of Himself and of His Mother, and all these things did the Holy Soul of Christ ever foresee and think upon; and when He was in this state, without doubt He could not have been without sorrow and exceeding great grief of heart and mind. And thus the whole life of Christ was accompanied by exceeding sorrow, sadness, and affliction.

“ Besides all this, Christ our Lord, Who is the true Book of Life, underwent numberless sorrows. For as soon as He was

born He was placed, not in a bath, nor on pillows of down, nor was He wrapped in skins, but He was placed on a little hay in a stable, and in a hard manger, amongst the beasts of the field, and thus, although a most tender little infant, as soon as He was born, did He begin in His Body to suffer bodily afflictions. And then came His pilgrimage with His most sweet and tender Virgin Mother, and the old man Joseph, when He travelled into Egypt over that vast desert, in crossing which the Children of Israel had remained for forty years without food prepared by the hands of men. And then, too, came His pilgrimage to the Temple, according to the statutes of the law, when as yet a very little Boy, He walked continually on foot, although His own village of Nazareth was more than two days' journey distant from Jerusalem.

(1) "Dietas." days' journey distant from Jerusalem.

"And when He became a Man, as soon as He had been baptized, He entered into the wilderness, and there for forty days He fasted and hungered so exceeding much, that the devil thought, by reason of His hunger, to incline Him unto sin. And so by this he first tempted Him. Then He went on foot through the villages and districts and cities, bearing hunger all the while, and thirst, and rain, and heat,

and the burning rays of the sun, and cold, and sweat (1) "Caumata." and weariness, and many annoyances, and last of all He underwent the punishment of death. And all these labours He bore, that He might preach the way of truth, and root out the lies of the demons, and their dominion, and that He might show forth before men an example of shameful penance, and lead them to adopt it; and that He might point out to them that the happiness and good and glory of men consist in bearing sorrows and afflictions, and that He might be unto us a pattern how the things aforesaid are to be borne.

"But of the sorrows which Christ bore at the time of His Passion, no tongue can tell, no heart conceive. For there was in Christ unutterable sorrow, and it was manifold. There was in Him a most intense and sharp sorrow, arising from the compassion which He had for the human race, which He loved with exceeding great love; and not only did He grieve in general for the whole human race that was lost and cast off and damned, but He had compassion for each one of the human race, with exceeding sorrow; and this too, not only for the sins of each one in general, but even also according to the measure of the quantity of the guilt and punishment of each sin, which He knew

for certain they had incurred or would incur in the time to come. As many therefore as there have been and are men in the world, and as many as there are sins that each man hath committed, or will commit, and as many sins as he hath or will have, so many sorrows had Christ arising from His exceeding mercy and compassion. Since, therefore, the sins and punishments of men, which they had incurred and would still incur, were numberless, it is clear that for the love of us He underwent grievous and boundless sorrow. For Christ loved each of His elect ineffably, and with this tender love for them according to the measure of each, He felt ever present before Him their offences, that they had committed and would commit, and the pain and the punishments which by reason of such offences they would have to undergo, and He grieved and compassionated them, and bore their punishments with exceeding grief. Nay, with such and so great sorrow was our most sweet Jesus afflicted for our sakes that His exceeding compassion, with which He grieved for us, drove Him to undergo the torment of the cross, and a horrible death, and infinite sorrows, that He might satisfy for our offences, and redeem us, and relieve us from punishment.

“Again, in Christ there was the sorrow of His own compassion, that is for Him-

self For He had exceeding great compassion for Himself with regard to the dolorous and unutterable punishment which in a way that cannot be explained He saw would come upon Himself. For when Christ saw and considered that for this had He been sent by the Father, that He might bear in His own Person the sorrows and punishments of all His elect, and that He could not be deceived, but that He would have to bear such exceeding and unutterable sorrow, and that for this He had been wholly given; then had He compassion upon Himself with exceeding grief For if a man were to know that some exceeding and ineffable sorrow and punishment must certainly come upon him, and if he were to have this sorrow ceaselessly before his eyes, without doubt he would compassionate himself; and so much the more, as he knew the sorrow to be greater that was to come upon him, and still more as he understood and felt more clearly what would be the nature and the greatness of such a sorrow. And all this was in Christ more than I can say. But this example I mention on account of the grossness of the intellect of man.

“And again, there was in Christ the sorrow of compassion for His own most merciful Father. For infinitely doth Christ love and hath loved His Father, the Lord of Mercies and of all Goodness. For

when He saw that God the Father, whom He infinitely loved, had such compassion and mercy upon us, as to desire to give His own Most Beloved Son, and to deliver Him unto death, Who to Him was something infinitely dear, with infinite sorrow did He compassionate this such great compassion of God the Father; and therefore to offer relief in some way unto His Father's Will, He humbled Himself, and was made obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. But this kind of sorrow it is impossible to explain. Therefore I say that this sorrow in Christ was unutterable; and this unutterable sorrow was granted and permitted to be in Him by the dispensation of the unutterable wisdom of the Godhead. And this unutterable and eternal dispensation of God, ineffably and eternally joined and united with Christ as a companion, caused Him to suffer exceeding grief. And the more wonderful this dispensation of God, so much the more sharp and intense was the sorrow of Christ resulting from it, so that no understanding hath ever been able to comprehend it. For this dispensation of God was the origin of all His sorrows, and from this they spring, and in this they end. And as it is impossible that any understanding can comprehend the infinite depths of charity which He hath shown in His desire to redeem us. so is it im-

possible to comprehend the infinite sorrow which by God's dispensation fell upon Him, and with which He grieved. For this sorrow resulted from the ineffable light which had been given unto Christ. And the Godhead Itself, Light inexpressible, that enlighteneth Christ in a way that cannot be uttered, and liveth in Him by God's dispensation, and transformeth Him in this light of God into sorrow, the Godhead Itself, I say, gave Him such sorrow that the whole is unutterable.

(1) MS. here adds: "For Christ saw that a certain ineffable measure of excessive sorrow had been given Him, and this sorrow, by the very fact that it was ineffable was hidden from every creature. And of this sorrow, that is, of the light of God which had been given Him, the dispensation of God was the source and origin." As these words seem rather to be an explanation of what had gone before, than to belong strictly to the text, they have been placed in the margin.

"And yet again in Christ there was the sorrow of compassion for His most sweet Mother: for as Christ loved and was ever loving His Mother more than any other creature, since it was from her alone that He drew His virgin Flesh, and as she grieved for her Son more than any other creature, by reason of her most noble and deep capacity, which she had in a more excellent degree than any other, so too Christ grieved for her and compassionated her, because He saw her in body and heart and mind to have exceeding grief and great woe. For in the highest degree

did His Mother grieve, and this her grief Christ bore Himself in His own Person, and the foundation of this sorrow was in the dispensation of God.

“And yet once more in Christ there was sorrow for the offences committed against His Father, Whom He loved exceeding much. For He saw how, in His Passion, when man was crucifying his Lord and Maker, God the Father was grievously offended. For greater sin hath there never been, neither can there be, than to put to death and to crucify the Son of God. And consequently God was more offended by this than by any other sin, and for this without doubt Christ’s sorrow was immense. Hence it was that, moved by sorrow and compassion, as well on the part of the Father Who was offended as on that of men who offended Him, He was moved to utter this word: ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ For peradventure God the Father would have again damned the whole human race for this, had not Christ, forgetting, as it were, all His other sorrows in His death, prayed that gracious prayer, and with tears and cries appeased God the Father.

“Lastly there was in Christ the sorrow of compassion for His apostles and disciples. For the apostles and disciples, and the holy women who had followed Him, grieved with exceeding sorrow. As then

Christ loved them with exceeding love, He bore in Himself the sorrow of His scattered disciples in their tribulation. .

“ Besides these sorrows, Christ had to undergo manifold grief. For by four kinds of swords and arrows was this God-Man Christ Jesus wounded. First, there was the perverse cruelty of obstinate hearts, for the hearts of men were continually and most vehemently obstinate against Him, and with continual care did they study, and think, and contrive, how the more basely and cruelly they might root Him and His Name and all His company out of the earth, although He it was Who had come to save them. The second kind was the malice and wickedness of that exceeding great anger and hatred, which His crucifiers continually bore against Him ; for as many as there were thoughts and perverse intentions and wicked devices against Him, so many were the lancets and arrows that pierced the soul of Christ. The third kind was the malice and craft of the tongues that cried out against Him. For as many as there were accusations and detractions and wicked counsels, and mockeries, and derisions, and ribald jests, and blasphemies, and curses, and false sentences, and false testimonies, so many were the sorrows that He bore, and that afflicted His soul. The fourth was the cruel work of the Passion, which in their

cruelty they wrought upon Him, and this is seen by going through His whole Passion step by step. For as many times as the hairs of His beard and Head were plucked out, and as many as were the assaults, and the cords that bound Him, and the blows, and the cuffs, and the spitings, and the stripes, so many were the sufferings which He bore, and chiefly on the part of the nails, for they took large thick nails of equal size, and rough, and square, and with these they pierced through His hands and feet, and transfixed them, and wounded Him in every part, and tore Him to pieces, as they nailed Him to the cross. And from the form of the nails there arose exceeding great pain. For even supposing that His hands and feet had not been nailed unto the wood, yet still His Passion would have been exceeding cruel all the while it lasted; but not content even with this, they stretched His hands and His feet, and they stretched His whole body, and His nerves and bones, and they disjoined them so that they could be numbered, and they nailed Him and pressed Him close unto the cruel wood. Nor even yet were they content, for they raised the cross on high, and exposed Him naked to the cold, and the wind, and the air, and the people; and the heavy weight of His whole Body hung from His Hands and weighed upon His

Feet, so that the cruelty of the nails seemed greater, and He poured forth Blood without ceasing from the nails that were in His wounds, and thus He died in exceeding torment, and all their malice was accomplished.

“ And that the God-Man might show unto us somewhat of His excessive sorrow, and that it might be clear that it was not for Himself, but for our sakes that He bore it, and that He might instruct us ever to sorrow and more tenderly to compassionate His sorrow; for these three reasons, when He was in the midst of this sorrow, did He utter this word: ‘ My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?’ For God could not have forsaken Him, since He was God. But He showed Himself to be Man, when He declared Himself forsaken in His sorrows; for by that cry He made known His exceeding sharp and unutterable sorrow, which He bore for our sakes. And God, in like manner felt indeed the sorrow of Christ, because He bore it. Therefore for us alone did He cry, that He might point out that He suffered this exceeding sorrow, not for Himself, but for us, and so might provoke and admonish us to sorrow and to grieve with Him continually. And lest any one should think that He grieved only when He was on the cross; His Body was so formed and organized, and His Soul in-

fused, and both were so united at the same moment once and for ever with the Word, that from this exceeding wonderful union His Soul was filled with the highest unutterable Wisdom, and by this means He represented to Himself all things present and to come. And therefore it was that He saw exceeding sharp and wholly unutterable sorrow come upon Him as soon as He was formed and conceived; and for this He continually sorrowed (by the dispensation of the Wisdom of God) and He bore this sorrow from the moment of the infusion of His Soul even unto its separation from His Body. And unto this His own words bear witness, when He saith so often, that He carrieth His cross, and when He saith unto His disciples, that not for Himself, but for them and for us, did He bear His cross and was sorrowful; and hence those words of His: 'My Soul is sorrowful, even unto death,' were spoken that He might more effectually provoke us to sorrow for His sorrow.

"And this sorrow, with all the things aforesaid, was vehement and sharp, by reason of the nobleness of His Soul; for the holier and gentler and nobler was His Soul, by so much the sharper and more intense sorrow was He tormented. For that most noble soul of His was tormented by all these wrongs and afflictions with exceeding grief; and all these sorrows

that sprang from the high and unutterable dispensation of His Godhead, so tormented the Soul of Christ, that each sorrow in itself flowed over on His Body, and afflicted Him with grievous bodily sufferings. And this sorrow was more intense by reason of the nobleness and delicacy of His Virgin Body, which was nobler than any other born of woman, and on this account it was more sensitive, and more grievously afflicted by the sorrow aforesaid. Moreover, in Christ the sorrow was most sharp, by reason of His Person, because He was Very God. Hence too, every affliction and wrong that was done unto Him, contained in it an infinite offence. For it was done to Him not only as Man, but as Very God, and for this His sorrow was in some kind infinite, and ineffably did He grieve for every contumely and affliction that came upon Him.

“And in all these things the Saviour of the world, the God-Man Christ Jesus, when He suffered, threatened not, neither did He speak evil, or defend or avenge Himself, nay, not even when He was accused did He excuse Himself, nor when He was spat upon in the face did He hide it; nor when His Hands and Arms were ex-

(1) In the MS. and Ed. Prin. there is here a repetition of *non*. This repetition of a negative was common enough in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For a similar and no less common idiom in early English, see *Ancient Rucle*, 8th Part.

tended on the cross, did He draw them back ; nor when they sought Him to put Him to death, did He hide Himself, but wholly and in every way did He deliver Himself unto their will, that by their wickedness, even against their will, and in return for their ingratitude, He might minister unto them the work of redemption. Nay (and this can neither be conceived nor uttered) even in that exceeding wicked work which they wrought upon Him at His Passion, innocent though He was, He set forth an example of patience, and taught them the truth, and prayed for them most earnestly with tears and groans and cries unto the Father. And in return for their exceeding grievous sin, (for which the whole world and all human nature ought deservedly to have perished,) He did but then bestow greater benefits, inasmuch that in return for the sorrow and Passion, which they ministered unto Him, He satisfied for all our woes, and even then He redeemed us, and opened the gates of paradise to His crucifiers and all others, and reconciled them with His Father, and made us so pleasing unto Him that we are now the sons of God, reconciled by that very work, for which the whole world and every creature should have been damned, because, namely, the creature had been found to inflict such wrong upon His Creator.

“Oh! the gentleness of God! O measureless mercy! O unimaginable kindness! that where infinite wickedness hath abounded, there grace hath much more abounded, —such and so great grace that of a truth it will never have an end!

“The whole of this mystery hath been wrought by His infinite goodness and mercy, that unto us He might be an example of patience in every tribulation and adversity, and that not only we should return no evil unto our enemies, but even confer good upon them, for the love of our Redeemer. For if any patriarch or holy prophet, or angel, or any of the Saints, had given such an example, certainly it would have been accepted; but that the infinite wisdom of God should have appeared amongst us in the flesh, and that Infallible Truth, that can neither deceive nor be deceived, should have given us such an example of living, must in no way be passed over negligently, but most perfectly fulfilled with the greatest care.

“We know, we have heard, all the day long we say and preach, that the Son of God spent His whole life in sorrows, and in such and so great sorrows; nor was it only chance that had brought upon Him the tribulations which He bore with such patience, but He, who had done no sin, Himself chose them, and when He had found them, loved them, and sub-

jected Himself unto them, by bearing them in deed, and by preaching in word, that they who bore them were blessed. Nor did He praise and pronounce blessed these afflictions of body and soul when accepted for the love of God in mere idle words, but He took afflictions on His own Body and soul, such as none other had borne, and He said that by them and through them He had entered into His glory and His kingdom. And He declared that, by no other way, and by no other manner, save by sorrows and pains and tribulations, is it possible for any man to obtain glory everlasting. For of a truth this is the royal way which God hath taken, and most foolish is he who doubteth or neglecteth, after that the Son of God, our Creator, hath gone by it, to follow his Lord, Who is a teacher that cannot err, and his Redeemer.

“For He knew, and truly He knew, what good there lieth hidden in sorrows and tribulations, and for this cause He took them on Himself, and chose them, by flying from delights, and by hating temporal consolations, and by preaching that they are to be hated. And indeed, before that, He, Very God and Man, had chosen them for Himself, and taken them, (although through His holy prophets He had made known the same thing long before) yet in some way they who fled from tribu-

lations and followed pleasures, might seem worthy of excuse: yet since the Son of God hath chosen such and so great adversities, who will be so unhappy and so foolish as to hesitate, or to be negligent any longer, after the truth hath been so clearly shown, and so loudly preached, and after it hath been exemplified by the manifest works of so great a Lord, and made known by so pure an example? Surely, no one, except he be the most foolish of men, and worthy of all damnation. For of what damnation and confusion are we poor wretches worthy, who, being vile sinners, not only have taken no tribulations on ourselves for penance, nor care to receive them, but rather, although God in His infinite mercy and wisdom sendeth them unto us, or permitteth them to come upon us, in order to draw us out of evil and to purge us therefrom, fly from them with impatience, and drive them away from us, and murmur and complain, and fortify ourselves against them with exceeding care, and go in search of consolations and remedies, by which we may be relieved from tribulations.

“O unhappy and truly wretched that we are! who not only care not for afflictions and tribulations and temporal punishments, which are the remedies and cures for sins, but even refuse them when offered by our most wise Physician! For if, by the high

wisdom of God ordaining and disposing, it happeneth to be a little cold, straightway we go in search of fire, and put on double raiment ; and if it be hot or warm, we go in search of coolness ; and if we have a pain in our heads or stomachs, we cry out, and weep, and groan, and run off to the doctor, and go in search of remedies, and a soft bed is got ready for us, and delicacies are made use of, and in order that the pain may be mitigated we tease God and the Saints, and earnestly implore them, and we promise and vow fasts and pilgrimages and long prayers ; and all these things we do in order to remove from us the sorrows and afflictions that are useful unto us, and that have been ministered unto us by God, although for the remission of our sins or for the good of our souls we should never do them. And if by God's disposal and permission we suffer for our good some adversity or wrong from some other men, straightway we are disturbed and moved, and we grow angry and fretful, and we form malicious judgments, and are guilty of detraction, and if we can, we justify ourselves, and drive away every wrong, and fly from trouble and avoid it, nor do we desire to bear with patience and complacency any sorrow or affliction or adversity, that may be ministered unto us by the Eternal and Heavenly Physician.

“Ah! how many and how great things are done, and have been done, and how many and how great expenses are incurred, and have been incurred, in order to avoid the sorrows and afflictions and adversities which God in His mercy either sendeth or permiteth, and which beyond all doubt would be for our health, and of greater merit, if they were, so to speak, voluntarily borne, than other afflictions and penances which are of our own choice taken upon ourselves. For the Heavenly Physician knoweth better what afflictions and adversities are required to purify and instruct and perfect the soul, than man himself who is weak and foolish. For such afflictions and penances that are sought for and taken up at the pleasure of the will are very often not without vain-glory. But those that happen by the disposition of God, and when they are accepted with great patience and complacency, are hidden from the eyes of men, and appear as if they were borne by necessity and compulsion of will. I say then, and counsel my children to bear cold and rigorous weather, and heat and warmth, and flies, and sweat, and the burning rays of the sun, and pains of the head and of the stomach, and other pains of the body, consistent with safety; and not to be curious in seeking remedies, except in some extreme necessity, which might be an obstacle to the good of the soul. The

same thing, I say, that if, God so disposing or permitting, it should happen that poverty or death of friends, or hardships, or persecutions, or reproach, or stripes, or robbery, should come upon us, we should not grieve, nay, we should not only bear them with patience, but accept them with great complacency, as having been chosen for us and administered by Him Who is the great Physician and our Saviour, just as if spontaneously, and of our own free will, they had been sought for and accepted. And then beyond all doubt will they be of great merit, nay, of greater merit than if (happening in the same way) we were to accept them at the pleasure of our own will, in order to do penance. O wretched that we are! what more shall we say? we who not only fly from sorrows and afflictions and adversities, administered unto us though they are by God in His wisdom and mercy, as He Himself bore them, but even strive to obtain the very opposite! For day and night we follow after the sweet pleasures of the body, and go in search of temporal consolations, with exceeding zeal and diligence, and continually meditate on vain joys. Of a truth this is not the way of the God-Man Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all men. For how can that wretched soul which in this world ever desireth to have consolation, go unto Him Who is the Way of

Sorrow, and its example? Of a truth, the soul which is wise, and which desireth to live wisely, ought not to seek any other thing in this world, save sorrow. Nay, if she looked at her Beloved Jesus, and had but a spark of love, she ought not to seek for any other gain, or any other state, save that which He had, namely, one of sorrow, and of straitness, and of affliction, and this would be her whole consolation.

“And not only do I say this of earthly and temporal things, and of those of the body, but I also speak of spiritual things. For in the service of God we ought not to care much for the consolations which are found therein. Did Mary, the Beloved Mother of Jesus, when she saw her dear Son wailing upon the cross and dying, did Mary ask for sweetness from Him or consolation? Never, surely; but she received from Him straitness and bitterness and sorrow. So ought it to be in our souls: for it is a sign of little love, nay, of great presumption, if the soul desireth to feel anything in this world from Christ, save sorrow. For more pleasing unto God is the service of a poor man, who serveth Him faithfully for love, without expense and hope of benefits, than the service of a rich man, who every day putteth himself to great expense, and serveth God with the hope of receiving some spiritual benefit. So, too, the soul that is fat and rich

from the great sweetness which she tasteth at the hands of God in His service, if she run unto Him out of love and serve Him, is not of such great merit, as the soul that runneth unto God and serveth Him in like manner, and with like love, but without consolation and with sorrow. So then, as it seemeth unto me, I am taught by the light of God that cometh from the Life of Christ, which is itself the way by which we must go through sorrow unto God and into God, that by the same way by which went our Head, Christ Jesus, by that way ought also to go the hands and arms and feet and other members. And thus at last through temporal poverty will the soul find riches everlasting, and through contempt and shame exceeding honour and magnitude of glory, and by a little penance perfected with pain and sorrow will she possess the Highest Good, with exceeding sweetness and consolation; although the soul ought to serve God for His own sake, for He is worthy of infinite love, and thus with exceeding reverence should He be served by every creature, for the sake of His exceeding and most exalted goodness. To Him be honour and glory world without end. Amen.

“Glory then be to God Almighty, Who hath been pleased, when we were nothing, to bring us into being, and to create us unto His own likeness. Honour, power,

and glory be unto Him the Most Merciful, for that when we were wretched and prisoners, and exiles and damned, it was His will to redeem us, and exalt us by the Passion, sorrow, contempt, and poverty of His Son. But glory be again unto God Most Gentle and Most Merciful, Whose mercy and goodness so greatly prevailed that unto us wretched and unworthy sinners He willed in a certain way to give His kingdom, so that each one of us might in some manner attain unto it. And again, glory and praise be unto our most sweet God Who in His goodness was pleased to give unto us His kingdom and companionship with Him, and enjoyment of Him, by means only of tribulation and sorrow and contempt and poverty. For if we could obtain His kingdom by gold, or silver, or precious stones, or riches, or strength, or wisdom, or power, since we are not all such as can possess these things, the kingdom of heaven would not be for all ; but now it hath seemed good unto Him that by means of things which can easily at all times be had by men, and in abundance, by these we should obtain His kingdom. For there is no one who, if he will, may not be poor for Christ's sake, or labour, or undergo penance at least in his heart, and contempt, for no man can pass through this life without some one of these things, which, at least when they happen not

according to our own will, and are borne for Christ's sake patiently and with good grace, merit the kingdom of God. And yet still more, God be blessed, Who not in much and long suffering of these things hath placed the price of His kingdom, but in the short time of this life, which of a truth is but a moment when compared with His eternal kingdom. And indeed, if for thousands of thousands of years, or of ages upon ages, it were necessary to bear the aforesaid rigours and cruelties and pains, for the love of God and so great a kingdom, it ought of a truth to be accepted with immense joy and desire and thanksgiving, and with folded hands; how much more now, when, by the concession and indulgence of our most merciful God, we have only to bear the aforesaid during the short life which now is. For this our

(1) *Compensetur.* Lammertz thinks that perhaps we should read *compensetur.* *Compensetur,* however, is quite in keeping with the Latin of the period.—*Trans.*

life is as nothing, if it be weighed with' the eternity and duration of His kingdom, which shall never have an end. And yet once more, blessed be our glorious God, Who willed in His own Person, by visibly appearing in this world, by His own word to promise and firmly establish, and by His own example to confirm such a disposal and commutation of His kingdom. As for the rest, it must in no way be doubted

that by the short labours and afflictions and penances of this life, we can and ought to obtain His kingdom, since He Himself hath directly promised it unto us, and what is more, confirmed it by His own example. For it was His will to suffer tribulations, and not otherwise than by bearing extreme sorrow and poverty and contempt would He obtain possession of His kingdom.

“Come then, come, O ye sons of God, and run unto the cross of Christ, unto sorrow, contempt and poverty, and be ye transformed with all your might into that sorrow-stricken God-Man, Who hath loved us so much,¹ that for our sakes He² bore in exceeding bitter sorrow a death of so much ignominy and unutterable pain; and all this simply to redeem us, and to leave us an example of bearing hardships, for the love of Him. For it is true perfection, and a sign of true sonship, to love God and our neighbour; and as the sorrow-stricken God-Man most faithfully and purely loved us, and showed no pity to Himself, but spent His whole being in sorrow for the love of us, so too it is altogether His will that according to their power His true and lawful children should in some way correspond with Him. Now then, O sons of God, know ye that this

(1) MS. and Ed. Prin. have here “the sons of God.”

(2) MS. and Ed. Prin. have “Christ.”

sorrow-stricken God-Man telleth me continually to admonish and exhort you to be faithful unto Him the Most Faithful, and to be also united and joined with your neighbour in most faithful love, for indeed whosoever is faithful unto God, is faithful unto his neighbour. But in what manner and how greatly this sorrow-stricken God-Man hath most purely and faithfully loved us, He hath most clearly shown unto us by His conversation, and by His doctrine, and by His death.

“But because we are unfaithful, we have no vivid and continual perception of His most poor and contemptible birth for our sakes, nor of His dolorous death, nor of His most hard life, nor of His sweet and most true doctrine. And because we have no hearty perception of these divine and salutary truths, therefore it is that His death, although most poor and humble and despised, maketh us not dead unto the world, or unto sin. And who is the man, that correspondeth with this most trusty and divine fidelity, which the Son of God hath shown unto us, even by the smallest amount of living and continual faith? Nay, we throw it away behind our backs, as if it had not been. Come then, my blessed children, and gaze upon the cross, and upon Christ Who died thereon for our sins; come and weep with me, because we are and have been the cause of such great

sorrow by our innumerable crimes. But you, who have not so offended God, as I have done, who am wholly sin, weep no less and mourn, for it is not you yourselves who have resisted sin, but the grace of God which hath preserved you, and defended you by the merits of the cross of Christ, and therefore, holy and innocent though you are, you must mourn no less in your state, than I who am a sinner, and those who are like unto me. For the greater grace you have received, so much the more are you in debt to Him, and therefore, because you have not been as grateful unto Him as you ought, in some way you have stained your life, and in some way you have lost your purity, and so all must mourn, all must weep, and lift up the eyes of their soul unto the cross. For in thus looking at the cross, at which only by continual prayer can the soul look, (as hath been said,) there is received a full knowledge of our sins, and sorrow and contrition for the same, and in this light she is deeply humbled. For the soul, when by looking at the cross she seeth all and each of her sins, and that Christ underwent such passion and affliction for all and each of them, sorroweth herself also in like manner and is sad, and by this sorrow is provoked to punish and reform herself, and each of her members and her spirit.

“Look then, ye blessed sons of God, and behold the exemplar of life in this sorrow-stricken God-Man, and from Him draw forth the rule of divine perfection. Look upon the Book of Life, that is, the Life and Death of this Crucified God-Man, Whose Passion and Cross, when looked upon, give unto the soul knowledge of her sins, and contrition of heart, and profound humility. The soul also seeth and knoweth the multitude of her sins, and how with all her members she offendeth God, and she seeth too the unutterable outpouring of the tender mercy of God upon herself, that is to say, how the God-Man suffered most cruel punishment in each member of His Blessed Body, for the sins of each of our members. Therefore the soul considereth in looking upon that cross, how much and in what way she hath offended God with her head, namely, by washing, combing, and anointing it, and by doing other vain things, in order that she might please men in opposition to God, and afterwards she beholdeth how the God-Man had done penance for these sins of her head, and had borne grievous punishment; for instead of lotions and combings and unctions and plaited braids, His hair was torn from His most holy Head, and it was punctured and pierced by the crown of thorns, and struck with a reed, and made all bloody with His Pre-

cious Blood. In like manner she seeth with regard to her other members, in the same way as we have related in a certain vision, how the God-Man, by a kind of interior speech, murmureth and maketh complaint against us, going through member by member. And not only doth she see the multitude of her sins, but the sins of all her members, and their gravity. For the infinite gravity of each sin is shown and made manifest, when the soul standeth looking at the cross, and knoweth that in no other way could her guilt have been blotted out, nor her offences and punishments remitted, except that God had done such great penance for it, which is beyond the power of man to conceive.

“And the soul seeth also in this Book more clearly than in any other, the justice of God, how it is impossible that sin can remain unpunished. And she seeth that God the Father preferred¹ that His Son should suffer (1) “*Ante-voluit.*” the punishment of death and the torments of the cross, than that the sins of the human race should remain unpunished. And she seeth too the infinite goodness and loving-kindness of God in this Book, how greatly He hath taken compassion upon us, in that, when He saw that we could not sufficiently satisfy for our sins, no nor any other creature, He Himself. rather than that we should re-

main in damnation and contempt and everlasting sorrow, He Himself willed to make satisfaction for us. For in this Book she seeth the infinite will of God and the infinite diligence and care which He had to serve us, and lead us back to our true country; so that nothing was hard for Him to do, even unto death itself, provided only that in justice He could place us in everlasting joy and in His own most happy company.

“Again, in this Book the soul seeth His infinite wisdom, in that, by an ineffable way, not to be conceived by any creature, He so knew how to save us and exalt us by His infinite mercy, as yet to do no injury to His justice. He so knew how to exalt and save us by His death, that His divine nature was in no way shortened. He so knew how to act, that as the seducer and murderer of our race damned us by means of the forbidden tree, so He upon the tree did, Very God and Man, get Himself the victory, and save us. He so knew how to act, that while He was thought to die and fail in His work, at that very moment He gave life unto all things, and destroyed the death of all, and through torments, sorrows, and contempt, prepared joy and glory for the whole world, and merited everlasting glory. He so knew how to act, that by the torment of the cross, which seemeth unto men a

most foolish thing. He confounded all the wisdom of the world, and by this foolishness made known the wisdom of God. Now all these things are manifested in the Cross to one who considereth subtly, by the help of God's grace, and other things also that are infinite and unutterable.

“Likewise, the soul seeth in this Book the infinite gentleness of God, how when He was put to death, He spake no evil, neither avenged Himself, but through the sin and most grievous wrong committed against Him, He merited everlasting glory for the very persons who committed this sin and wrong, and who crucified Him. And also the soul seeth in the Cross the infinite humility of God, for greater humility there cannot be than that the King of Glory should suffer a death so vile. She seeth how the torment of the Cross was at the same time both a delivery and a redemption from hell, the purchase of paradise, and a reconciliation with the Father; and in like manner it was our example, and instructor unto virtue, and our strength against our enemies, and the price of everlasting joy, by which we poor wretches may be saved, nor is there any other way at all possible for us, by which we can be saved. Moreover, the things that can be read in this Blessed Book are infinite, for the true Book of Life and of unutterable truth is our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed

Son of God Almighty, to whom be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

THE SIXTY-SECOND CHAPTER.

Hints of S. Angela on Prayer.

‘As then the knowledge of the Un-created God, and of the sorrow-stricken God-Man, which is altogether necessary to transform the soul unto His love, can in no way be had, except that one read assiduously in the aforesaid Book of Life, that is, in the Life and Death of Jesus Christ, so also this reading and understanding can in no way be had without this devout, pure, humble, violent, attentive, and assiduous prayer, and this prayer must be not of the lips alone, but of the heart and mind, and of all the powers of the soul. On this account, after what hath been said of the Book of Life, something must now be said of prayer.

“Prayer is that by which and in which God is found. Now prayer is threefold, and except in this threefold kind of prayer God is not found. For there is the prayer of the body,⁽¹⁾ the prayer of the soul, and supernatural prayer. The

(1) “Vocal.”
—MS.

prayer of the body is continually joined with the sound of words, and exercise of the body, as for instance genuflections and bowings. And this kind of prayer I never lay aside, for at times when I have been desirous of exercising myself in mental prayer, I have been deceived and impeded by sloth and sleep, and so I lost it; therefore I exercise myself in the prayer of the body. But this kind of prayer leadeth unto mental. And this prayer ought to be made with attention, as when thou sayest the 'Our Father,' and considerest what thou sayest, without running over the words and striving to complete a certain number, like poor little women who do so much work for a given price.

"But mental prayer is that in which God so occupieth the mind that it thinketh of nothing else save God, and if any other thought entereth the mind, I do not call it mental prayer. Now this prayer cutteth off the tongue, so that it cannot speak, for the mind is so full of God that it cannot occupy itself in thinking of aught save God; and so from this mental prayer the soul arriveth at that which is supernatural. Now supernatural prayer is that in which the soul is so lifted up by this thought and fulness of God, that she is stretched above her own nature, and comprehendeth more of God than by her own nature she is able to comprehend, and by

comprehending knoweth ; and that which she knoweth she cannot explain, because almost the whole of what she seeth and feeleth is above nature. In these three degrees, then, of prayer, a man knoweth himself and God, and because he knoweth he loveth God ; and because he loveth he desireth to possess Him Whom he loveth ; and this is the sign of true love, that he who loveth transformeth himself, not partly, but wholly, into the loved one.

“ But because this transformation is not continual, nor lasting, the soul taketh every care to search after every kind of way by which she may be transformed into her Beloved, and again return into this union with Him. But the Divine Wisdom is full of order, and upon all things hath imposed its order, and ineffable Wisdom hath ordained that no man come unto mental prayer except he first have the prayer of the body ; and that to none shall be given supernatural prayer except he have the prayer both of the body and of the mind. And the orderly wisdom of God desireth that the prayer of the Hours¹ be offered Him

(1) The Hours of the Divine Office.

at the hour corresponding to the prayer, unless prevented altogether by so great an influx of mental or supernatural prayer, that the tongue is wholly absorbed thereby ; or unless the persons praying are bowed

down by so great an infirmity as to be wholly unable; and also in His wisdom God desireth that these prayers be offered Him according to a man's capabilities, and that they be performed with mental quiet, (as is fitting,) and in solitude, and with care even as regardeth the body.

“When we pray, it is also His will that we pray wholly, and not in part. Let us then place our whole heart in prayer, and not a divided heart, for if we have our heart divided, we lose the fruit of true prayer. But in other exercises which we practise, we ought not to be wholly given up to them, that is to say, in eating and drinking, and other like business of the body, but when we are engaged in interior exercises, let us have our whole heart in God, if we desire to feel the fruit of true prayer; for on this account are we tempted in prayer, because we have not our whole heart in God. Pray then, and pray without ceasing; for the more thou shalt pray, the more shalt thou be enlightened, and the more deeply, and clearly, and nobly, shalt thou see the Highest Good, and the highest created good, and the more deeply and excellently thou shalt see it, the more shalt thou love it; and the more thou shalt love it, the more shalt thou be delighted by it, and the more shalt thou comprehend it, and the fitter shall thou be made for comprehending it; and after-

wards thou shalt come unto the fulness of light, for thou shalt know what before thou couldst not know.

“Moreover, we have received an example and doctrine and form of glorious prayer, that we should persevere in the same, from the Son of God Himself, the God-Man Jesus Christ, Who hath taught us to pray by word and deed in many ways. For He admonished us by His words to pray when He said unto His disciples, ‘Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.’ And in many other places in the Gospel wilt thou find how in many ways hath He given us instruction concerning these venerable prayers, and hinted to all of us that it is exceeding dear to Him, for many times hath He admonished us concerning it, as One who truly loveth us, and wisheth us great good. And that no excuse might remain for us, if He conferred not on us His grace, since He hath promised to hear our prayer when He said: ‘Ask and ye shall receive,’ He willed Himself to pray, that at least moved and drawn by His example, we might love prayer above all things. For the Evangelist saith: ‘ And being in an agony, He prayed the longer, and His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground.’ Place this mirror before thine eyes, and

(1) S. Luke xxii.
43, 44.

strive with thy whole strength to copy the example of this prayer, for not for Himself but for thee did He pray, when He said: 'Father, if it be possible let this chalice pass from Me, nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done.'

See therefore, how Christ in (1) S. Matt. xxvi. prayer submitted His will to ³⁹

that of the Father; do thou also follow His example. He prayed also when He said: 'Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit.' What more? His whole life was a prayer, because He abode in continual prayer to God, and in knowledge and manifestation of Himself. Did Christ pray in vain? Why then art thou neglectful, since without prayer nothing can be had. Since, therefore, Christ prayed, Very God and Man, not for Himself, but that thou mightest take example from Him of true prayer, if thou wouldst obtain anything from Him, thou must needs pray; for without prayer thou wilt not be able to obtain it. For if He who is Very God could not receive save by praying for, and demanding whatever was pleasing unto Him, dost thou, a wretched creature, wish to receive without supplication and humiliation? Therefore pray.

"Thou knowest, my son, that without the light and grace of God no man is saved. For the light of God maketh a man begin, progress, and arrive at last at

the summit of perfection: and so, if thou wouldst begin and have this light, pray ; if thou hast begun to make progress, and thou art desirous that the aforesaid light should be increased in thee, pray ; if thou hast come unto the summit of perfection, and thou wishest still more to be enlightened, so that thou mayest abide in the same, pray ; if thou desirest faith, pray ; if thou desirest hope, pray ; if thou desirest charity, pray ; if thou desirest the love of poverty, pray ; if thou desirest obedience, pray ; if thou desirest chastity, pray ; if thou desirest any virtue whatsoever, pray. Moreover, thou shalt pray in this way, namely, by reading in the Book of Life, that is, in the life of the God-Man Jesus Christ, which was poverty, sorrow, contempt, and true obedience. And after thou shalt have entered on this path, and made progress therein, many afflictions and temptations of the flesh, and of the world, and of devils, shall afflict and harass thee in many ways, and shall persecute thee horribly, and then if thou wouldst overcome, pray. But when the soul wisheth to pray, she must endeavour to join cleanness of soul with cleanness of body, and interrogate good and evil, and look and see whether there be a good intention in what she hath done in her fastings and prayers and tears, and in all the other things which she hath done, by

considering how peradventure the work of God hath been done negligently and imperfectly, and without reverence, and with many defects, and how evil things, on the other hand, have been done with great care and contempt, and let her confess her sin, and carefully acknowledge it, and do abundance of penance. And in this confusion and contrition of heart, the soul shall find cleanness, and so let it go and pray like the publican and not the Pharisee,' and thus thou shalt have light in prayer. (1) St. Luke, xviii. 10.

“And they who desire to be directed by the Holy Ghost, let them pray; for He came down upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, only when they were in prayer.

“Pray, then, and keep a watch over thyself, lest thou give place unto thine enemies, who are ever watching thee; for then only shalt thou give place unto thine enemies, when thou ceasest to pray. And the more thou shalt be tempted, so much the more persevere in prayer. For by reason of prayer it happeneth sometimes that we are tempted, for the devils are ever trying to prevent our prayer, but do thou care not, except to pray, for thus continually wilt thou merit to be delivered from temptations. For by prayer art thou enlightened, by prayer art thou delivered

from temptations, by prayer art thou made clean, by prayer art thou united unto God. Prayer is nothing else but a manifestation of God and of one's-self. And this manifestation of God and of one's-self is a true humiliation; for then is the soul in a state of humility when she seeth God and herself, as she ought, and then from her profound humility more divine grace is poured into her, and is increased therein. For the deeper the grace of God plungeth the soul in humility, so much the more by this depth of humility, is the grace of God itself increased, and the more the grace of God is increased, so much the more is the soul plunged in profound humility, and lieth therein by continuing in true prayer, and thus the light of God is increased in the soul, and grace ever plungeth the soul more deeply in humility, by reading, as hath been said, and meditating on the life of the God-Man. For to know the greatness of God, and the nothingness of one's own self, this is the perfection of man, but how this is done by looking upon the Book of Life, hath been said above. Therefore, my son, cast away from thee all sloth and negligence altogether.

* For I desire, my son, and exhort thee, not to pray less, nor to watch less, nor to do fewer good works, when the grace and fervour of devotion is taken from thee, than in the former time, when thou hadst

the grace of fervour. For it is very acceptable unto God, if with the fervour of divine grace thou prayest and labourest, and performest other good works; but, my son, it is most pleasing unto God, and a most acceptable sacrifice, if, when the grace and fervour of devotion is taken from thee, thou layest not aside thy prayer, nor prayest less, nor watchest less, but goest on working the same things, whether without or with the grace of fervour. Wherefore, my son, if the divine fervour and heat move and drive thee at times to watch and pray and labour, strive thou so to do, whilst thou hast the fire. But when God is pleased to take away from thee fervour and warmth, whether for thy own defects, (as most often happeneth) or that He may amplify and increase His grace within thee, then thou must not the less pray or watch, or be urgent in good works; and even if temptation or tribulation, whose work it is to punish and purge the sons of God, should come upon thee, and the grace of fervour be taken from thee, strive then neither to pray less, nor to watch less, nor to be less urgent in good works, nor to resist less and fight against temptations, so that thou mayest overcome, and that at least by thy continual prayer of every kind, by thy watches, by thy tears, by thine importunity of every kind, thou mayest do such violence to

thyself, that God may thus deign to restore unto thee the fervour and glow of His grace. Do thy part, my son, and God will do His. For prayer that is forced' and exacted under

(1) "Forsata,"
from the Italian,
'forzata." Low
Latin "fortiare,"
from "fortis."

compulsion, is exceeding acceptable unto God. Persevere then thus in thy prayers, and fill not thyself with other occupations, because thou beginnest to feel God more fully than thou wast wont to do, for thy palate is better disposed to taste God than it was before, and an exceeding deep light hath been given thee of seeing God and thyself. And take care that thou give not thyself to any one, except first thou learnest to separate thyself from others, and be on thy guard against thy fervours, that is, against the spirit which is given with fervour, lest thou shouldst follow it unto thy ruin, and look to its beginning, and middle, and end, and as far as it agreeth with the Book of Life, so far do thou follow it, and no more. Again, be on thy guard against those who have sweet words on their lips, and make themselves pleasing, especially in their speech, and make known revelations, which are snares of malignity to draw others after them. Again, be on thy guard against those who have an appearance of sanctity, and a lack of good works, that they draw thee not by that way.

Wherefore look, and look again, and prove, and as far as they agree with the way of the Book of Life, so far do thou follow them, and no more.

“And be on thy guard against those who say they have the spirit of liberty, but who are not following the way of Christ, Who was made under the law, although He was the giver of the law. And He Who was free was made a slave, and therefore is it necessary for those who would follow Christ to conform themselves unto the life of Christ, not in seeking liberty by loosening the law and the precepts of God, as many do, but by subjecting themselves unto the law and the precepts of God, and even unto His counsels. And let them make for themselves a circle, and this circle will give them a rule, that is, the Holy Ghost will give them a rule how they ought to live, and it will bind them, for many things might be lawful for them to do, which are not contrary to God, but which the Holy Ghost suffereth them not to do, by reason of the rule which He giveth them.”¹

(1) The Saint's meaning seems to be, that those who would follow Christ ought to enclose themselves within the circle of a rule of life.—*Trans.*

THE SIXTY-THIRD CHAPTER

Hints on the Virtue of Humility.

“Without humility prayer is vain. Therefore, next to prayer, it is most necessary for man. Look then, ye blessed children of God, upon the example of humility shown unto you in the sorrow-stricken God-Man, and from this draw the rule of all perfection. Look to the way, attend unto doctrine, shewn not in words, but in true works, and strengthened by marvellous virtues. Therefore, with the whole affection of your soul, run ye after Him ‘Who, when He was in the form of God, emptied Himself, and took the form of a slave, and humbled Himself, and was made obedient unto death.’ For He gave Himself unto us as an ensample of humility, with the whole affection of His soul, and He earnestly exhorteth us to look on Him, when He saith: ‘Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart.’”

(1) St. Matt. xi.
29.

“O my children, look and see, and by deep and savoury considerations look deep down into the depth and usefulness of this doctrine, and regard the sublimity

and worth of this instruction, and see in what it is rooted and grounded. 'Learn,' He saith, 'of Me;' but He did not say, to fast, although He for our example fasted forty days and forty nights; nor did He say, 'Learn to despise the world, and to live in poverty,' although He Himself lived in the greatest poverty, and commanded His disciples to live in the same; nor did He say, 'Learn of Me, how I made the heavens;' nor did He say, 'Learn of Me how to work miracles,' or any such things, although He by His own power worked miracles, and would have His disciples also work miracles in His name; but He said simply this: 'For I am meek and humble of heart;' as if He would say: 'If I have not shown unto you an example of humility by deed and word, believe me not.' And again, in a wonderful way did He set before us an example in this matter, and provoke us to look to the example of His humility, and to shape all our actions upon it. For, when He had washed His disciples' feet with His own hands, He said: 'Know ye what I have done? If then I your Lord and Master have washed your feet, so ought ye to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example, that as I have done unto you, so ye do also. Amen, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord. If,' He said, 'you know these

things, blessed are ye, if ye do them.'⁽¹⁾ Of a truth the Saviour of the world laid humility and gentleness of heart as the foundation and root of all virtues, for neither abstinence nor hard fasting, nor poverty, nor vile clothing, nor the appearance of having good works, nor working miracles, are anything without lowliness of heart. But then will abstinence become blessed and acceptable, and hard living and poor clothing will be blessed, and our works will become living and stable, when, namely, they rest on this foundation. And this humility of heart is the mother in which and from which the other virtues, and operations of virtues, are generated and proceed; even as we see the stem and the branches spring out of the root. Since, therefore, this virtue is so precious, and so firm and stable a foundation, that the whole perfection of the spiritual life rises out of it, therefore was it the Lord's will that we should learn this virtue from Him most of all. And since it is the root and guardian of all virtues, the Virgin Mary, as if forgetful of the other virtues in her soul and body, commended herself for this alone, and for this reason more than all did she declare that God had taken His Humanity' from her, when she said: 'Because He hath

(1) St. John xiii.
13-17.

(1) "Humana-
tum."

regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden, for behold, *for this*, and not for other things, shall all generations call me blessed.’¹

“In this humility, O my little children, ought ye to ground and wholly establish yourselves, that as members united and joined with the head by a natural and true connection, ye may be able in Him and by Him to find rest unto your souls. O my little children, in whom shall any creature be able to find rest or peace, save in Him Who is the highest rest, the highest peace, the highest pacification, the highest tranquillity of souls? But to these no soul can come, unless it be grounded in this humility, without which all virtues by which men run towards God, are truly nothing. For this humility of heart, which the God-Man hath desired you to have, and to learn of Him, is a certain marvellous and clear light, by which the soul’s understanding is opened to know her own vileness and nothingness, and the immensity of the goodness of God. And the more she knoweth the greatness of this goodness, the more progress will she make in the knowledge of herself. For when she seeth and knoweth that she is nothing, and needy herself as to every good, then doth she rise higher to laud

(1) Luke i. 48. The Vulgate has “*ex hoc enim*,” and therefore admits of the Saint’s interpretation. The Greek, however, has “*ἀπὸ τοῦ τῆς*,” i.e. henceforth.

and praise the ineffableness of the goodness of God, which by this humility she seeth and understandeth; and then the graces of God and all virtues begin to take their rise and to flow out upon her.

“For the greatest and chief of all virtues is the love of God and of our neighbour, and from this light it taketh its origin or source, and by it the soul, when she seeth herself to be nothing, and that God hath stooped down and made Himself of low estate for so vile a nothing, nay, even hath united Himself so tenderly with her own nothingness, is inflamed with love, and burning with this love is transformed into God; and being transformed into Him by love, where is the creature which she does not love as much as she can? For when she is thus transformed, it is for the love of the Creator that she loveth every creature created by Him, as is fitting, because she understandeth that God is in every creature, and seeth how it is loved by God, and in consequence, being thus transformed, she loveth all that God loveth. And hence it is that she rejoiceth and is glad at her neighbour's good, and mourneth and is sad at his evil. And because she is kind, when she seeth her neighbour's evil she is not puffed up to form judgments about him, or to despise him, for, enlightened by the light aforesaid, she seeth herself per-

fectly, and in thus seeing herself she perceiveth and knoweth that she herself hath fallen into like and greater evils than those which she seeth in her neighbour. And if she hath not fallen, she knoweth and understandeth that by herself she could not have resisted, save only by the help of grace, which held her hand, and strengthened her against evil and temptation, or lightened the temptation; and therefore she judgeth no man, but on this account is she the more humbled, because, by seeing the defects of her neighbour, she returneth into herself, and so seeth and considereth in a clear light, the evils and defects into which she hath either fallen or not fallen, namely, that unless she had been held up by God, she might have fallen more easily than her neighbour. Moreover, if she perceiveth evils of the body in her neighbour, by a transformation of the affection of her love, she thinketh them her own, and grieveth and hath compassion, as when the apostle said: 'Who is weak and I am not weak?'

"And as I said of this virtue of love, that it deriveth its origin from the root of humility, so too can it also be said of faith, of hope, and of each virtue according to its properties, that they have beginning and origin from this foundation of humility, of each of which, however, it would be too long to speak. For when the soul

seeth that in her understanding she is nothing, and that she faileth in the things of God, she believeth those things that are delivered unto her according to our faith. And when she seeth also by humility that she can do nothing, and that she hath no power in anything, then she placeth all her hope in God Almighty, and so too in the other virtues, which you can consider and see for yourselves, if you are taught by God's unction, better than if they were delivered unto you in writing. This, then, only I say unto you, my little children, that ye abide in this foundation; and in this be ye grounded, and in this strive to increase. For of a truth, he who is grounded in humility hath his conversation among the Angels, exceeding pure, and gentle, and full of peace. And because this precious virtue of humility maketh the soul gentle and kind, therefore it is that a humble man is rendered estimable, and full of love to all, and more especially unto the elect of God, for whose conversion he is placed as a light and example, and who, by the reason of this kindness are the more quickly converted. And because he hath interior peace, he is disturbed by no adversity, and can truly say with the apostle, 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' O my children, rest not in seeking after this foundation of humility until you find it, for wit..-

out it every kind of work is ruined, and ye can make no progress in the way of God. For I see this search to be most useful and needful, because I perceive that without this humility all virtues are nothing. Fulfil, my children, the desire of the Eternal King, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath so earnestly entreated you, to learn this virtue of Him. Stand on this foundation, and sink deep down into the depths of the knowledge of your own vileness and nothingness. Fulfil the desire of the Eternal Truth and Wisdom, Who hid the value of humility from the wise of this world, and revealed it,¹ nay, preached and showed it by His example unto little ones. This is my desire, for which I thirst and famish, that ye be lost in the abysses of your own nothingness, and of the immensity of the goodness of God. For if, in the immensity of God's goodness, and the knowledge of yourselves, ye be firm, then must ye have for your foundation humility alone, of which I have already spoken; and if ye have this humility ye will not be so prone to strife and contention, but rather ye will be like the sorrow-stricken God-Man, as deaf men who hear not, as

(1) The MS. and Ed. Prin. here read, "and revealed it not." This reading is no doubt quite in keeping with B. Angela's general style, but Lammertz has eliminated the *non* from the text. Even if we prefer to read with the MS. and the Ed. Prin. "*non revelavit*" the *non* must have the force of *non solum*, as the "*revelavit*" is followed by "*immo*."

the dumb who cannot open their mouths, and so shall ye be true members of Jesus Christ, whose conversation, according to the Apostle, is not in the service of contention, nor of carnal emulation.

“Oh, what good is done by this humility, that maketh those who are filled with it to be peaceful, and quiet, and pleasing unto God, and full of graces! For such men are outwardly so much at peace, by reason of their inward rest, that when they hear hard things, either against themselves, or peradventure against some truth, they are unable to answer so as to excuse themselves, except briefly and humbly, and with regard to that which is sometimes falsely laid to their charge, or said about them, they prefer to confess their own ignorance, and are prepared rather to yield than to serve contention. Moreover, I do not perceive that this power of silence proceedeth from any other root than from this double ‘*in-abyssation*,’ namely, the knowledge of the immensity of God, and of our own vileness, which the soul findeth in the light of the humility aforesaid.

“But where, I ask, is this humility, this usefulness, this light, this power of silence to be found, or by what way are we to reach unto the things aforesaid? I answer, in fervent, and pure, and continual, and hearty prayer, are all these things

found, and by looking into the Book of Life, Jesus Christ. For by looking at the compassion of His Life and Death, there is given unto the soul knowledge of her sins, and when she seeth the multitude of her sins, how by all her members she hath offended God, at this also the soul is humbled, as hath been shown above. Oh ! then, my children, most dear unto my soul, I desire of you, as also of myself, that ye think always the same thing, and that there be no schisms amongst you, nor dissensions. But that which maketh even all who are at discord to agree together, I desire that your soul may know. And that is to be little, and this being little causeth us not to regard any sufficiency of knowledge, nor of natural feeling, but simply inclineth the soul to see her own defects and miseries, and stirreth up against herself questions and inquiries and disputes, so that she may summon together her defects, and strive to amend them. And this being little suggesteth unto a man to like no preeminence or precedence over any one, nor doth it make him burdensome, or contentious in words ; although his life is of such a nature as to have to bear with all men, and to make them opposed to this littleness of which I speak. And this is what

(1) "*Conveniat.*"
In this passage the Saint is speaking of the duty of bringing our souls, as it were, to trial, and prosecuting them.

I desire of you, (O my sons,) that your life, even by the silence of your tongues, may be unto your adversaries a mirror of truth in the way of this littleness and zeal, and discreet compassion. O my dearly beloved! if I were to hear of you that your being little had made you of one heart and of one soul, then my soul would be at peace with regard to you, for without unity I cannot in truth see how ye can please God. Spare my pride, O my children, because I have dared to provoke you unto the virtue of humility, for it is zeal and love for you that make me speak.”

THE SIXTY-FOURTH CHAPTER.

Of the Virtue of Charity.

“The charity or love of God is the greatest of all virtues, and without this no prayer is good, nay, without it prayer is useless and displeasing unto God, and the other virtues are without fruit. And that without love prayer is of no merit hear from the Book of Life, Christ Jesus, when He saith: ‘If thou offerest thy gift before the altar, and rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, go first and

be reconciled unto thy brother.' The gift of prayer, ^{(1) S. Matt. v.} therefore, profiteth nothing, ^{23, 24.} except it be offered in the bond of charity. Likewise, He saith the same thing, when in the Lord's Prayer He teacheth us to ask for the forgiveness of our sins and debts. 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors:' as if He would say, 'Your debts are forgiven you when you ask in prayer, in the same proportion as you shall have forgiven your brothers their wrongs and offences against you, and shall have placed yourselves in a state of most united charity.

"But know, my sons, that as in love all good and merit are included, so also all evil and demerit and sin. Wherefore, my most dear children, there is nothing in the world, neither man, nor devil, nor any other thing, which I so suspect as love; because love penetrateth into the soul more than anything else, nor is there anything that so filleth the mind, and penetrateth into the whole heart, as love. And except that by force it be brought into subjection, the soul is easily thrown headlong into a thousand dangers, and suffereth great ruin. And I speak not this of wicked love, for love that is wicked ought to be avoided and rejected by all, as something diabolical and dangerous; but I speak of the spiritual love which is

between God and the soul, and between neighbour and neighbour. Now, that the love which is between God and the soul ought to be an object of suspicion unto every soul, is clear, because the love which the soul hath for God, except it be armed with great knowledge and discretion, either soon falleth away, or is deceived, or cometh to an untimely end, for whatever is inordinately taken, cannot either well or healthily be continued. And there are many who think themselves to stand in the love of God, who are standing in His hatred, and in the love of the flesh, and of the world, and of the devil. Wherefore, when a man loveth God, in order that He may preserve him from infirmities, and tribulations, and temporal dangers, he loveth both himself and God inordinately, by placing himself before God, Who ought to be loved above all things, and for Whose sake all things ought to be loved, and by making his God out of his own body and out of himself, because he only loveth God for his own sake. And, likewise, such a man, who thus loveth himself, loveth all other things for the same reason; for he loveth temporal things on account of their usefulness for his body, which he hath made a god for himself. And he loveth his relations for their usefulness to him, and the honour which they bring him. And he loveth

holy men and spiritual persons, in order that he may make for himself a cloak of their sanctity, for he loveth them not truly for the sake of their goodness. And because such a love is not pure, therefore the fruit of those who love in this way is the lust of the flesh, and a body full of vices and concupiscences. And he loveth such bodily talents and aptitude, as to know how to read and sing well, for the pleasure of others. And he loveth to have great learning, so as to know how to convince others, by his reason and science, and not by charity, and to be able to correct others with pride, so as to have somewhat of a reputation.

“And there are others who believe that they love God, and they do love Him, but with a weak and imperfect love. For they love God that He may spare their sins, and deliver them from hell, and give them the glory of paradise, and not for His own goodness. They love God that He may preserve them in good estate, and that they may no longer offend Him, so as not to lose paradise. Others love God in order to have divine consolations and sweetnesses, and spiritual feelings, and comforts. Others love God that they may be loved by Him. Others love their friends and relations spiritually, because they desire them to be spiritual and good, so that they may not derive dishonour

from them, but usefulness and honour. And they love God that He may open unto them the meaning, and knowledge, and understanding of the Scripture, those, namely, who are literate; and those who are illiterate, desire to know how to speak spiritually, but not for God's honour or their neighbour's good, but that they may be more loved and honoured. These love to be spiritual, that they may be reckoned in the number of the spiritual, and may be loved by them; and all this for their own special usefulness and honour. They love to have poverty, and patience, and obedience, and outward humility, and other virtues, in order to excel others in virtue, and they desire that no other men may approach them in perfection; and because they brook not an equal, in this they seem to resemble Lucifer, who brooked no other creature as his equal. And some love to have a universal fame of sanctity, and these speak well of all, whether spiritual or not, that they may not be judged for rash judgment.

“And there are others who love some devout man or woman with a spiritual and perfect love, because they love them wholly according unto God. But this love at times groweth too great, and becometh bad, except it be subjected by the weapons of great discretion; and at times it becometh carnal, or useless and hurtful, by too

much conversation one with the other, and useless waste of time, because their hearts have become indiscreetly bound up together. For this love groweth, and from this growth there ariseth a desire of enjoying the presence of the person loved, which, if it be not enjoyed, maketh the love weak, and if it be, maketh it to grow too much, and to be wholly transformed into the person loved, so that all that pleaseth the other pleaseth him that loveth, and all that displeaseth the other displeaseth him. And because the soul hath not weapons sufficient to subjugate this fervour of love, which continually increaseth, and is without perfect regulation or discretion, it must needs in the end turn into inordinate love. And if the person loved so inordinately be without the weapons aforesaid, and be wounded with a like sword of love, then is there great cause for fear, because then they begin to manifest one to the other the secret of their love, and amongst other things, they manifest one to the other how they mutually love one another, saying to each other: 'There is none in the world whom I love so much, or whom I so carry in my heart.' And these things they say, because they must needs speak of what they feel; and thus they desire to love each other even for the sake of devotion, and the spiritual usefulness, which they believe to be in

this love: yet the temptations which occur with regard to anything forbidden, which may arise out of this love, are at first resisted by the reason, because as yet it is not wholly choked by love. But afterwards, when love hath grown stronger, the reason beginneth to be clouded over, and the spirit beginneth to be weakened, and to believe that the touch of the person loved, and other such things, are not sin, nor hurtful to the soul, and therefore it permitteth this to be done, and so beginneth to grow faint, and to fall away from the state of perfection, little by little. Moreover, after that the reason hath given way a little, being choked by love, it beginneth to make no account of anything that is dangerous, and to say, 'This can be done, for I intend no evil, and it is not a great sin.' And little by little such things are accounted lawful, and thus by the growth of love each one is transformed and transfused into the other's will, so that he doeth everything that the other wisheth, for there is no other reason to say him nay; so that the person loving followeth the person loved in everything he wisheth, and by reason of this inordinate affection, if he be invited to do evil, he cannot say him nay, and if he be not invited, he himself inviteth the other, feeling that this is pleasing to him whom he loveth, and then he withdraweth himself from prayer and

abstinence, and solitude, and all virtues, in which he had been wont to exercise himself, and all his divine love is changed into this miserable love. And sometimes this love increaseth to such an extent, that even the words of the person loved, and his presence, no longer satisfy as before. But loving more, he desireth to know whether the person loved be also wounded by the arrow of love, like himself; and if he is able to know this, then there is danger for both; for then, trusting and secure of one another, when neither words nor presence any longer satisfy, both are inclined unto the performance of every idle and evil work. And therefore I say, that I suspect love above all things, and in it all evil is included; wherefore, beware of the serpent.

“On account of this evil love, then, I desire that even good love between neighbour and neighbour be held for suspected, because good love becometh bad in the way aforesaid. For the love of God becometh bad, except it be governed and protected by the arms of discretion. Now, the arms by which the good love of God and of our neighbour ought to be governed, are given unto a man in the transformation of his soul. And there is a threefold transformation, by which the soul is transformed into God. For sometimes the soul is transformed into the will

of God, at another time along with God, at another within God, and God within her. The first transformation taketh place when the soul striveth to imitate the life of the sorrow-stricken God-Man ; because in this is manifested the will of God Himself. The second transformation taketh place when the soul goeth farther, and is united with God, and loveth God, not by the will alone, but together with this hath great feelings and delight in regard to God. Yet these can be expressed in words and conceived. The third transformation taketh place when the soul is so transformed within God, and God within her, that she feeleth and tasteth the deep things of God, to so great an extent that what she feeleth can in no way be expressed in words, nor conceived, save by him alone who feeleth it. The first transformation, then, although it hath great power over the lover's love, yet hath it not so much as it ought to have, for it might still be deceived. But the second transformation, if it be truly a living one, is enough to regulate love. But the third is the highest in governing love ; for the third, (and even the second,) is in a perfect manner infused and impressed upon the soul by grace ; and the third and second, although the latter be not perfect, are a sort of wisdom by means of which the soul knoweth how to regulate the love of God and of

her neighbour. For the soul knoweth by this wisdom how to put in order the feelings of God, and the sweetnesses and fervours which spring from the grace of God within her, and so long as love endureth, and in the things which it beginneth, it is able to persevere, nor doth she show her fervours outwardly by laughter, or by boundings of the body, or any other gestures. In like manner also, in the love of her neighbour, or of some devout friend, the soul knoweth so wisely and maturely how to behave herself, that she showeth and directeth when, and to what extent, and how she ought to condescend to her neighbour, and when not. For in the union of the soul with God, she acquireth the aforesaid wisdom, and a certain maturity and gravity of wisdom, and a tasteful discretion, and a certain light, so that by these she so knoweth how to regulate the love of God and of her neighbour, that she cannot be deceived, nor take any precipitous step. And he who feeleth not himself imbued with this wisdom, ought never to join himself with any man or woman by such singular and tender love, even although it might be for God's sake, and with a good intention, on account of the dangers aforesaid, which spring out of such a love; nor ought a man to bind himself to another by love, except first he hath learnt and knoweth

how to separate himself with ease from any one, according to his will, and is able to do so.

“Now, as to the manner how, by the aforesaid wisdom, the love of God is regulated, you must know, that love hath various properties; for the soul, by loving God, first of all groweth tender, secondly, is weakened, thirdly, is strengthened. For when the soul feeleth the fervours of the love of God, she crieth out and maketh a noise, like unto a stone, which is placed in a furnace to be dissolved into lime, and which, crackleth when it is touched by the fire, but when it is baked, maketh no noise, neither crackleth; so also the soul first of all seeketh the consolations of God, and if they be taken away, groweth tender, and crieth out against God and maketh complaint, saying: ‘Thou, O Lord, causest me this languor, why dost Thou do it?’ And other like words she speaketh, and this boldness ariseth from a certain security which she taketh from God, but in this state she is content with consolations. For, know ye, that God, having, as it were, a created¹

(1) That is, a love for the soul, showeth kind of *human love*. unto her blandishments, and at times wonderful and ineffable consolations, which the soul ought not importunately to desire. If, however, they be given by God, they are not to be

despised, for they make the soul to run after her Beloved, and they are her food, and her weariness is taken away; and from these the soul riseth, and is drawn to farther love, and to transform herself into her Beloved, and to seek Him. Moreover, from the want of Him her love is increased, and she beginneth to seek her Beloved; and if she find Him not, she is weakened, and then she taketh no pleasure in consolations, for it is only her Beloved that she seeketh, and the more consolation she hath in her feelings, so much the more is her love increased, and so much the more is she weakened and languisheth, unless she have the presence of her Beloved.

“But after that the soul is united and placed in the seat of truth, and truth is the seat of the soul, she crieth out no more, neither doth she complain of God, nor doth she grow tender or weak. Nay, she knoweth herself to be unworthy of all good, and of every gift of God, and worthy of a deeper hell, than that which hath been made, and wonderful wisdom and maturity is placed in her, and she becometh stable and well regulated, and so strong, that for the sake of the love of her Beloved she would go unto death, and she enjoyeth this union so far as she is able, in its fulness. And God Himself maketh the soul to be capable of receiving

that which it is His will to place in her, and she seeth Him Who is, and she seeth that all things are nothing, save in what they have from Him Who is. And then the soul holdeth all things that have gone before as nothing in comparison, and even all created things, nor doth she care for death, nor sickness, nor honour, nor blame, but is in such a state of peace and quiet, that she desireth nothing, and loseth all desire, nor can she operate, because when she enjoyeth the vision aforesaid, she is joined with God. And so in the light of God, she seeth that God doeth all things in due order, so that even by His absence she is not weakened. And so she is made conformable unto His will, so that when He is absent she seeketh Him not, but is content with all He doeth, and committeth the whole to Him, as unto One Who hath ordered all things well.' But when this vision of the soul is taken away, (for unto no one is it granted in this life that it should persevere in a soul,) there is given unto her, and there remaineth in her a new kind of fiery desire of working without pain the works of penance with greater strength than before; for this state is higher

(1) The MS. has here the following words: "Now it is true, that the soul becometh so fortified and at peace in this love, and loseth the desire of operating, and cannot operate, when, namely, she hath the aforesaid vision of God in its fulness, as hath already been described." These words are omitted in the Ed. Prin.

than the others. And this fiery love is perfect, and maketh the soul that is in love to imitate her Beloved, the sorrow-stricken God-Man, which is the perfection of all perfection. But His Passion, as long as He lived in this mortal life, endured always, for with His life it began, and persevered and ended. For He was always on the cross of poverty, and sorrow, and contempt, and obedience, and other arduous works of penance. And because he who perfectly loveth another striveth to be transformed into him in his manners, and to do those things that are more pleasing unto him, whom he loveth, so too, he who loveth Jesus, the God-Man, endeavoureth to be transformed unto Him, and into His habits, and to do what is pleasing unto Him, and to be made like unto Him in his manner of living. The more perfect then a man is, in his love of God, so much the more let him endeavour to do what He did, and willeth, and commandeth, and counselleth to be done, and to avoid all things that might be displeasing unto Him; and he ought to continue in this his whole life long, because the God-Man, as long as He lived in this world, lived in the continual and most bitter cross of penance; and this ought to be the length and time of penance, which according to His example we ought to do, namely, as long as a man liveth. But as

to its greatness, it ought to be as much as a man is able to do with discretion. Moreover, this is the transformation into His will, which He showed, not only by words, but by passing His whole life in the works of the cross and of penance, which He the God-Man ever performed in His own Person. But when the soul is transformed into God, and is within God, and is in that perfect union and fulness of vision, she is at peace, and then she worketh not at all. But when she returneth into herself, she striveth to be transformed into His will, until she go back again into the vision. Moreover, He hath showed His will by the aforesaid works of the cross and of penance, which He ever performeth in His own Person. It is then by this vision aforesaid that the love of God and of our neighbour is regulated. For in it the soul seeth the being of God, and how every creature hath its being from Him, Who is the Highest Being. And she seeth that there is nothing that hath being, save from this the Highest Being. And when the soul is led unto this vision, she draweth from the vision itself a wonderful wisdom, and ineffable science, and mature gravity, and also a true knowledge, how whatever draweth its being from this Highest Being is excellent; nor is she able to deny that all things that are from Him are excellently made. But evil

cometh in when we destroy what hath been excellently made by Him the Highest Being. Moreover, this vision of the Highest Being, stirreth up a love in the soul, corresponding unto Him, and this Highest Being moveth us to love everything that hath being from Him, such as all things that are good and well made, and teacheth us to love every creature, rational and irrational, for the love of the Highest Being, and teacheth us and stirreth us up to love everything that hath being from Him, and which He loveth and desireth to be. And, above all, He leadeth us to love rational creatures, and more especially those which we see are loved and esteemed by Him the Highest Being. For as the soul seeth the Highest Being inclined by love towards His creatures, so too, is she inclined towards them.

“ Now, a clear sign that they are in the friendship of this Highest Being is when they are true followers of the Only-Begotten of this Highest Being, and are ever intent with the eyes of their soul to love and follow Him, and to transform themselves wholly and altogether into the will of their Beloved, that is, of the Only Begotten of this Highest Being. And the love which is created and excited by the vision of this Highest Being, knoweth how to love creatures according to the suitability of each of them, and more or less

according to the inclination of the Highest Being, and in nothing can it go beyond its limit; and so everything in love is to be suspected, until this love is given unto the soul by God. For after that the soul hath this vision of the Being of God, and a love corresponding to His Being, and sufficient for the same, she remaineth so firmly grounded, that although other visions and elevations may come, they do not change her. And not only they who have this ineffable Vision of God, but they who have strictly weighed this Being of God are strong enough to drive away the malice of every other love, and to resist the sword of all unlawful love. But not only in the Vision aforesaid, the created love of which mention hath been made is given, but the very vision itself of the Uncreated Being leaveth in the soul an uncreated love, with which the soul can in nothing cooperate, because it is wholly absorbed by this vision. But the excellent love itself worketh all the while.

“Moreover, it must be noticed that when this vision was given unto the soul, it was the soul that was operating, and she was wholly desirous of being united still more perfectly with the Highest Being; but afterwards the uncreated love worked in the soul, and inspired her as to how she might leave every creature, so as to be the better united to Him. Wherefore, it

is the uncreated love which worketh the operations of love. But the beginning of this love in its own operation is to enlighten and to give a new desire. For it is a new and strong love, with which the soul in no way cooperateth; for it is the uncreated love that worketh all the good that is done by us; and of ourselves we work all manner of evil; but the good is not from us, but from the Uncreated Love. And this is true humility and annihilation, to see in truth that we ourselves do nothing good, and he who thus feeleth, hath the spirit of truth. But the love of God standeth never idle, for it forceth us to follow the way of the cross in our bodies.

“And this is the sign of the working of true love, to rise up and to lay the cross upon the soul, that is long penance, as long as one liveth, and as great and hard as can conveniently be done. This true love bringeth not laughter to the countenance, nor is it inordinate in eating and drinking, nor doth it bring any vain alacrity, nor doth it say, ‘I am not bound by any law,’ but it subjecteth itself always unto the law; nay, where there is no law, it maketh a law for itself. And when love shall have wrought the works of the cross, and of lively and long and arduous penance, a whole life long, and as far as can be done, then will it see of a truth

that it is itself useless, and that it worketh nothing but evil. But it will know that God is All Love, and that itself is all hatred, and having this knowledge in truth, of necessity it must perform bodily penance. Moreover, whether the penance be light for a man to bear or difficult, it will be all performed by the Uncreated Love itself, yet in a different way, according as it may be useful unto the soul. Therefore, let not the working of penance weigh us down, for God Himself worketh in us; and in order to provoke our will to give consent unto God, Who worketh His will in us, the true Master cometh to do penance for us, and to give us His own example; for His whole life long He lived in most bitter penance. And they who are raised to the vision of the uncreated¹ Being of God by the cross, and the performance of the works of virtue, are at peace, and are provoked unto greater works by a new kind of burning² and fiery love. But they who are not in this spirit of truth, make unto themselves idols of the works of virtue, by attributing glory unto themselves. And the first idol they make for themselves out of the light and knowledge and discretion given unto them; and this is deplorable, for all the good that

(1) To the vision of the uncreated and to the vision of the Being of God. —MS. and Ed. Prin.

(2) "Infocato," from the Italian.

is in us is worked by the Uncreated Love, which is never extinguished in itself, even for ever and ever, and to which be honour and glory, world without end. Amen.”

THE SIXTY-FIFTH CHAPTER.

Of the way by which we come to the love of God, and of the conditions and properties required for those who are to love Him.

“Now the way to this love is by continual and assiduous and devout and burning prayer, and reading of the Book of Life, about which enough hath been said above; and by this way is given and received the knowledge of God, which is altogether necessary in order to have His love, as hath been already said. Oh! my most dearly Beloved! I exhort you, that we all of us love God, and that we be transformed wholly into Him. For the God-Man, the Uncreated God, the Incarnate God is all Love, and giveth us His whole Love, and wisheth for our whole love in return. And for this He wisheth His sons to be wholly transformed into Himself by love. But I call those the spiritual children of His love who live in grace and charity in God Himself, the

Perfect Good, after that they have been transformed by the perfection of love. For we are all God's children by creation, but His spiritual children are those chosen ones, in whom God Himself, Who is Love, hath placed His love, and in whom He taketh delight, for the sake of His likeness which He findeth in them; and this likeness is placed in the soul of every child of God, and fashioned and formed by the grace of God alone, and by His perfect love. I say perfect, in that it hath already transformed their life and conversation into the likeness of the life of Christ, Who in this world was poor and despised, and a Man of Sorrows. Therefore it is that God, Who is noble by nature, wisheth for the whole heart of His child, and not only a part of it, and He wisheth for it without anything to come between Him and it, and without any one to share it with Him, and without any obstacle to oppose Him whatsoever. But He is so

(1) "Curialis." courtly' towards the soul, that if the soul give Him her whole heart, He willingly accepteth it: if a part, He accepteth a part, although perfect love naturally desireth the whole, and not only a part. For we know that the spouse who loveth his bride cannot bear any one else to share her company, whether in secret or openly. So in like manner is it with our God. But I know

that if in the sons of God any man were to know and taste His divine love, the love of a God who became Man, and suffered, and Who is the Highest Good, he would give himself wholly unto Him, and would keep himself wholly for Him from all other creatures, and would love this loving God with his whole heart, and transform himself wholly into God, Who became Man, and Who is the Highest Love.

“ If, then, the soul wisheth to come unto this perfection of perfect love, that giveth itself wholly unto God, and serveth Him not for the sake of the reward that it expecteth to receive from Him in this world, or in the next, but giveth itself unto God, and serveth Him for His own sake, because He is essentially good, and because everything of itself good deserveth to be loved for its own sake ; then must the soul enter into the right way, and walk therein with the feet of pure, and right and fervent, and well-regulated love. Now, the first degree or step which the soul ought to take, that entereth into this right way, and desireth to come near unto God, is to know God in truth, not outwardly only, as it were by the colour of Scripture,⁽²⁾ as hath been said above. For as we know, so also we love ; if only a little, and in a dark manner, and superficially and perfunctorily, we think of Him and consi-

(2) See the fifty-seventh chapter.

der and know Him, so, in like manner, and in consequence, we love Him little. But of the manner in which this must be done, enough hath been already said.

“And there are three properties required in those who love God in order to know Him, and also certain signs of love by which a man may know if he be a true lover. The first property is to be transformed into the will of the Beloved. Now the will of Christ our Beloved seemeth unto me to be His Life, which He showed unto us in Himself, for He showed unto us poverty, sorrow, contempt, and true obedience, and all these things He showed in deed. And when the soul taketh manly exercise in these things, no temptation can enter into it. The second property is, to be transformed into the properties of the Beloved. I will now only tell you three of these. The first is love, namely, to love all creatures, according to what is suitable to each. The second to be truly humble and gentle. The third is that which God giveth unto His true children, namely, unchangeableness. For the nearer the soul approacheth unto God, the smaller and the fewer are the changes which she suffereth in herself, and so we are ashamed when any vile thing moveth us, and in this we know our misery. The third property is to be transformed wholly into God; and then the soul is beyond the

reach of all temptations, because she liveth not in herself but in Him. And therefore, when we return to our misery, let us beware of all creatures and of ourselves; and I beseech of you to be masters of yourselves, and not to give or bestow yourselves wholly upon any creature, but to give yourselves wholly unto Him Who saith: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy mind, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength.'

"Now the signs of love are these. The first sign of true love is that the lover submit his will unto the will of him whom he loveth. The second is, to cause him to leave every other friendship that might be opposed to it, and even to forsake father and mother, and sister, and brother, and every other affection contrary to the will of him whom he loveth. The third is, that there can be nothing hidden in the one which he doth not reveal unto the other, and this third operation, according to my judgment, is the highest, and the fulfilment of all the other signs and workings of love. The fourth is, that he who loveth striveth to become like unto him whom he loveth, so that if he whom he loveth is poor he striveth to become poor; if he be of low estate he striveth to become of low estate as well; if full of sorrow, he striveth to share his sorrow, so

that the condition of each may be similar. For it seemeth not possible that perfect love can be established between a rich man and a poor man, a man of honourable condition and one of low estate, a man of sorrows and one who is in delights; for these conditions differ widely from one another, and between them there can be no perfect love, because the one shareth not in the condition of the other. For love is a virtue which not only assimilateth but uniteth, and which is ever directed towards what is like itself, and not towards that which is unlike.

“Now the Eternal Love, Christ Jesus, had all these signs; for He submitted His will to men, and was made obedient unto those who put Him to death, when, by a single sign He might have resisted, had He willed. Likewise, He forced Himself to leave every other friendship, whether of relations, or of His Mother, or of others, and even of His own Flesh, for the love of man, when He gave Himself up unto death, and forsook them on the cross. Again, He revealed unto us His secrets, as He Himself said: ‘I will not now call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends, because all things, whatsoever I have heard from the Father, I have made known unto you.’”

Likewise, it was His will to

(1) S. John xv.
15.

make Himself like unto men, and therefore He took upon Him His true human nature and mortality, being made like unto man in all things, yet without sin. Therefore, we also ought to do all this for His sake, otherwise love on our side halteth, and we do a manifest wrong unto so tender a Lover. Let us then make ourselves in all things like unto Him Who made Himself in all things like unto our misery, that is, by doing penance in the poverty, contempt, and contrition of heart in which He spent His life. For if one man alone were to do all the penances which are performed by all men in the world, it would not be enough to pay back the least drop of the sweat which Christ poured out for us, nor would it be enough to merit the least joy of paradise which is promised us, or to satisfy for the least mortal sin committed by us, or to return thanks to God for our creation. Hence, every one should endeavour to do penance in secret, as well as he can, and to desire to do what he cannot, and even to do public penance, provided that in intention he desire not to be seen, for to leave off doing good so that it may not be seen, is lukewarmness and cowardice. Wherefore, in no way ought we to leave off doing good. In this we have the example of our Master, Who did many things that were neither written nor known, yet when

for the love of us He wrought many things in public, He left not off because He was seen by others. And if it seem unto us a hard thing to do penance, yet let it be pleasing unto us to suffer with patience and joy the tribulations which are sent us by God, and thus make a virtue of necessity. For they who are afflicted and troubled inwardly and outwardly, there can be no doubt, nay, it is certain, are loved by the Beloved.

“For that which God the Father hath loved and chosen, and given unto His most dear and Only-Begotten Son, this the Only-Begotten of the Father loveth, and inflicteth upon, and giveth unto His most dear children. Now God the Father chose for His Son poverty, and contempt, and sorrows, and persecutions and afflictions outwardly; and inwardly weariness and fear and straitness and agony, and all these things the Son of God the Master bore, and they were so innumerable and so great that no tongue can express them, neither heart conceive. Let us then show zeal in bearing temporal tribulations with patience, nay, with joy. For in them we receive a sign that we are loved and chosen by the Beloved, and we receive, too, a pledge of His inheritance. See then in your sorrows the sorrows of the desolate God-Man, and it will be a relief for all your grief. For this most holy tri-

bulation worketh three things that we know not. The first is, that it maketh us to be converted unto God ; and if we are already converted, it maketh us to be still more converted, and to cleave unto Him. The second is, that it maketh us to grow. For as good soil, well prepared, when the rain cometh, springeth up and bringeth forth fruit, so too the soul, when tribulation cometh upon her, groweth in virtue. The third is, that it purifieth and strengtheneth, quieteth and giveth peace unto the soul. For this most holy tribulation is very suitable for us, nor should we avoid it or shrink from it, for I say in all security and with my whole heart, that these most holy and precious tribulations, whose value is unknown to us, are noble advocates and true witnesses, to whom much credit is due in the sight of God ; for by them the kingdom of heaven is bought, since by poverty and mourning and sorrow and persecutions, we obtain everlasting joys. For firmly do I believe that nothing contributeth so much unto godly living, as this tribulation, and therefore I have a holy envy for all who are in trouble. And I know, my little children, that the nobleness and value that arise out of tribulation are unknown to us, because, if they were known they would be eagerly grasped at' and

(1) "Esset de ca magna *grapila*," from the Italian *grappo*, *grapare*, *aggrappare*.

seized, and every one would seize from some one else the means whereby he might be troubled. May He Who is the Light and Comfort of those that are in trouble comfort us under the burden of tribulations, to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

“Now the tribulations which are in poverty, contempt, and sorrow, seem to me to be useful unto us, and suitable. And the reason of this is, because a man ought to know himself and God, but the knowledge of God supposeth self-knowledge, so

(1) “That a man may see and consider and see Whom he offendeth, and may consider diligently Whom he offendeth.”—MS. and Ed. Prin.

that a man may see Whom he offendeth. And by this consideration is given grace upon grace, and light upon light, and vision upon vision, and out of these a man beginneth to come unto a fuller knowledge of God, and the more fully he knoweth Him, the more he loveth Him; and the more he loveth Him, with so much the greater strength doth he work, and this working is the sign and measure of love, because by this it is known whether his love is pure and true and right, if he loveth and worketh efficaciously, and endureth what He, Whom he loveth, loved and wrought. But Christ, Whom he loveth, wrought and suffered with joy the three things afore-said His whole life long; he, therefore,

who loveth Him, ought to love and perform these things. As, then, He Who is the wisest of all, hath chosen these things for Himself, so much the more suitable to us hath He shown these things to be.”

THE SIXTY-SIXTH CHAPTER.

Of certain gifts of God, and of the conditions by which it is known that the soul hath been transformed into His love.

“These are the most sweet gifts of God, which whosoever shall have obtained, let him know that he is perfectly finished and perfected, and consummated in our most sweet God Jesus Christ, and that our most sweet Jesus Christ is perfected in him by transformation, and the more perfect he shall be in these things, the more will the transformed Being of Jesus Christ be in him. The first is the love of poverty, by which the soul despoileth herself of the love of every creature, so that she wisheth to have possession of none, save of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor doth she hope in the help of any creature in this life, and this love is not only in the heart, but she showeth it in deed. The second is, for the soul to desire to be

despised and thought little of, and reviled by every creature, and to wish that every creature should believe her worthy of shame, so that no one may take compassion upon her ; and not to desire to live in the heart of any creature, but of God alone, and not to be thought anything of by any one else, in any manner whatsoever. The third is, to desire to have great sorrow, and to be punished, and to be filled and overflowing with all sorrows and pains of the Heart and Body of our most sweet Jesus Christ, and of His most sweet Mother, and to desire that every creature may be the cause of these sorrows without ceasing. And if she cannot wish these three things, let her know that she is very far from Christ's blessed likeness, for these three things accompanied Him in every place, and at all times and in every act of His, as also in like manner they accompanied His Mother, namely, poverty, sorrow, contempt, and ignominy even extreme. The fourth is, that every person should think himself unworthy of such great good, and that in no way can he have these things of himself, and the more he shall have of them, so much the more let it seem unto him that he hath them not ; for he who thinketh that he hath much of anything that he loveth, loseth what he loveth. Wherefore, never let him feel that he hath arrived at this, but

always let it seem unto him that he beginneth again, and that as yet he hath done nothing, and that he hath nothing of these things. The fifth is, for him to continually strive to think, how these things were in Christ, and by continued savoury prayer to cry unto God, that He send these His vestments, and this His company, into his heart, and to ask nothing else but this, and let all his joy in this life be in the perfect transformation of all these things, and let him strive to mount up in his thoughts and think, how the Heart of our most sweet Jesus was full of these things, and overflowing, and infinitely more so than He showed in His Body. The sixth is, for him to fly, as from an exceeding grievous pestilence, from everyone that impedeth him in the pursuit of these things, whether it be some carnal person or spiritual; and everything that in the things of this world may appear unto him unlike or contrary to these things, let him shrink from, and despise, and fly from, as if it were a serpent. The seventh is, for him to pass judgment on no creature, nor to put a stumbling-block in his own way, by judging others, as the Gospel saith; nay, let him think himself viler than all, however wicked and unworthy of every grace of God. Know, that whosoever meriteth to have these things in this life, and in this present conflict, will pos-

sess God in fulness in heaven ; nay, that man's soul becometh by transformation wholly God, unto whom in this life God giveth of His transformation, namely, that he may be transformed into His contempt, and penury, and sorrows ; for the soul ought not to seek in this life for spiritual consolations, except, peradventure, for the sake of refreshing her weakness, but only the dolorous, and poor, and despised Crucifixion of Christ."

THE SIXTY-SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

"Now of the Sacrament of love and grace, which is also said to be and is called the Eucharist, somewhat more remaineth to be said than hath been said already. For Its effect is to cause in us a devout prayer, which, by Its virtue becomes expiatory. In like manner, Its effect is to give deep humility of heart, and it provoketh and bestoweth all charity and true love. For I doubt not, but am certain, that any soul which seeth and contemplateth in this Holy Sacrament, cannot be so dry of love as not to be straightway wholly penetrated thereby, when she thinketh

how much she hath been loved in this Sacrament. But it seemeth unto me that the truth of this Sacrament, and this Most Holy Mystery, ought to be considered with great diligence by those who wish to celebrate this Sacrifice, and to receive Communion, and in this consideration the soul ought not to pass on quickly, or to run over the subject, but to weigh it with great care, and to stop and dwell upon it. For although the things are inexplicable that can be said of this Sacrament, yet it seemeth unto me that they may be reduced to seven considerations, which we must look at and meditate upon one by one.

“For, first of all, this most holy mystery is a new and exceeding great marvel, above our reason. For this mystery, although of old it was typified, as appeareth in Holy Scripture, is ancient indeed as to Its types, but new as to the showing forth and truth of the Sacrament, in which the creature receiveth great newness of life; for we know well, and hold by faith, without any doubt, that that Bread and that Wine, by the infinite power of God over those most holy words that were ordained and spoken by Christ, the God-Man, Who ordaineth all things, and which ought to be spoken and are spoken by the priest, His minister, become in substance the Body of Christ, so that the substance of the bread and wine is transubstantiated,

and becometh the Body of Christ, and Christ, God and Man, is in that consecrated mystery, the colour and taste and virtue and form and mode and the whole quality of bread and wine remaining all the while, not in Him, however, but by the power of God over their proper nature in themselves. For the colour is in itself, and the taste in itself, and the form in itself, and the quality in itself. Wherefore of a truth, in this Sacrament the newness is great, which the Wisdom of God the Creator worketh by His great love and infinite power and goodness in His creature; besides also many other and spiritual new gifts, which the Body and Blood of Christ work in His friends and in His elect. But no man need wonder at these things, or at other things that take place in this Sacrament, if he weigh well the power of Him Who doeth them. Nor let a man wonder how His Body and Blood can be on so many altars, and likewise beyond the sea, and on this side the sea, and as there, so here and here. For He Himself saith: 'I am incomprehensible unto you, and I God have done this thing without you, and I work without you, and unto Me nothing is impossible. And I am He Who have made you, so that now for your own good you cannot understand, for had I so willed, I might have made you able to understand; but this have I done

that ye might have merit through your faith, which would have no merit if ye were to see clearly how this is done. Believe, therefore, nothing doubting.'

"Secondly, this Sacrament is exceeding amiable, and inflameth to love. For that which moved the Ordainer of this Most Holy Sacrament was not the fear of any thing, nor the usefulness that He might draw from it. Nor do I know what name to give it, save measureless love; for, by reason of the unutterable love which He had for us, He instituted this Sacrament; and because His bowels of love were moved towards us, therefore He placed His whole Self therein, and He left His whole Self therein, and that for ever, that is to say, even unto the end of the world. For not alone for the memory of His death, which is our salvation, did He do this, but He also did it that He might remain All for us, and always; and whosoever desireth to enter into this deep abyss of love, ought to have good eyes. For knowing at His supper, that He was soon to be separated in His Body, overcome by love, whose effect it is ever to join together the lover and the loved one, He instituted this Sacrament, that He might ever be joined unto us in His Body. O love inextinguishable! Of a truth that love is and was indeed a most burning love, which He had for us, that although

the presence of death was upon Him, and already He had a foretaste of the horrible sufferings that were to come, yet to the same sinners who were persecuting Him. He desired to give Himself, that at least in this Sacrament He might be with us for ever, He whose delights are to be with the children of men. And where is that soul so exceeding cruel, that in considering this love, if she considereth it well and deeply, would not be moved to love in return such a Lover, Who neither in life nor in death desired to forget us, that is to say, Who desired to give us His whole Mighty Self that He might be joined unto us by love? Of a truth there is no soul that can weigh well this love, without transforming herself into love, by giving her whole self unto Him.

“Thirdly, this Sacrament is exceedingly compassionate, and provoketh in a high degree unto compassion and grief. For He had deadly and unutterable sorrow, when He ordained It. For He was on the point of being separated from His dearest disciples, and from His most loving Virgin Mother, and He knew and saw in His presence all who were to forsake Him. He saw His betrayer, and another also who was to deny Him, and to these He gave His Body and Himself; and most sharp sorrows were soon to come upon Him, in which He was to be forsaken. He fore-

saw His horrible death, and the blows, and the reproaches, and the cross, and the nails, and the other things prepared for Him, by reason of which, straightway after supper during His prayer, His sweat became as large drops of blood trickling down upon the ground. And yet He gave not up the thought of instituting this Sacrament and giving Himself unto us. Nay, this Sacrament seemeth to be nothing else than a kind of memorial of His most bitter Passion and Bloodshedding for us wretched ones, and therefore Christ saith: 'As often as ye do this, do it in remembrance of Me.' And what soul is there that can see these sorrows without being transformed into sorrow? Surely, none, save that one which hath no hearty communion with His most bitter Passion.

"Fourthly, this Sacrament is most high, and worthy, and venerable, and humbleth us unto much reverence. For the Ordainer of this holy Sacrifice is the God-Man, the Most High and Uncreated God. But the soul, when she considereth this Sacrament, ought to weigh, not only Who He is Who ordained It, but also that which is contained therein. For in It is contained the Uncreated God, invisible, almighty, omniscient, just, most high and merciful, and Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, and this is the greatest thing to be considered therein.

Afterwards, the soul findeth another thing of lesser dignity in this Sacrament, which is joined with that greater thing of which we have spoken, for she findeth in it the God made Man, that is, the Divinity and the Humanity joined and united in One Person, and sometimes in this present life the soul taketh greater delight in this lesser mystery than in the greater; for the soul is more able to grasp, and more suited for this lesser mystery, which she seeth in God Incarnate, than for the other, which she seeth in His Uncreated Godhead; because the soul herself is a creature, and she is the life of her own flesh, and of the members of her own body, and therefore she taketh delight in the Humanity of the Uncreated God, which she seeth therein, and in Christ, both Creator and creature, and in His Godhead and Human Soul, together with His Flesh and Blood, and all the members of His Holy Body. And the soul seeth in this Sacrament a union of such great things contained therein, and from the lesser mystery, that is, His Humanity, is borne upwards to His Godhead, and the reverse. The soul seeth then, if she consider well, first of all, the unutterable Godhead, in which are all the treasures of wisdom, and knowledge, and of riches that never fade. And in It in the Godhead she beholdeth delights, which can alone satisfy our

minds, and other things that are ineffable. And she seeth therein His Precious Soul, with all its virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and His most holy and spotless oblation. And she seeth therein His Body, the most precious price of our redemption. And she seeth therein His Blood, by which we have been redeemed and made alive, and other things that are unutterable. And, surely, all these things ought in the highest degree to provoke us unto reverence, for in this Sacrament He is truly contained and is, Whom all the thrones of heaven adore, and all the heavenly spirits fear, and before Whom all the strongest powers of heaven tremble. Oh! if we were to see as they see, with what reverence and lowliness would we not handle and receive this Sacrament! For where is the soul so proud, that, considering well these things, would not be humbled at the sight of this Sacrament, both in heart and body?

“Fifthly, It is an exceedingly high and spiritual Sacrament, that raiseth us up to heavenly things. For the Holy Trinity ordained this Sacrament that It might clasp to Itself that which It loveth, that is to say, that It might draw away the soul from herself to Itself, even unto God, and might detach her from all creatures, and join her to the Uncreated God, and so might give her spiritual and divine life,

and make her to die to sin. And the Holy Trinity Which is Infinite Goodness ordained It in order to unite and incorporate us into God, and wisheth us to receive It, that we may be received by Him, and to carry It within us, that He may carry us, by giving us strength and comfort. Where, then, is the soul so wretched, that can consider well, and yet not be drawn after so great a Lord, after so great a Love, that came down from heaven that He might draw us to Himself from the things of earth?

“Sixthly, this Sacrament is highly useful, and bestoweth all goods and graces on the soul. For in this Sacrament the Uncreated God cometh not unto us with such great perfection of Godhead and Humanity empty handed, but giveth for certain unto the soul that receiveth Him, (provided that she hath proved herself, and be not in the intention of sinning,) remission of punishments, strength against temptations; and He restraineth our enemies who attack us, and increaseth our grace, and addeth to our merits, for which reason it ought frequently to be received with great reverence. Moreover, as to the word of S. Augustine with regard to the reception of the Eucharist, when he saith: ‘Daily to receive the Eucharist, I neither praise nor blame.’ I say that S. Augustine was holy and wise, and seeing the good mixed with

the wicked in the Church of God, in order not to throw an obstacle in the way of the good, he did not blame; but lest he might give security unto the wicked he did not praise. And innumerable other gifts there are, and benefits that are conferred upon us, if we worthily receive this Sacrament; nor is it possible to express what grace the soul receiveth in even one single reception, provided that the demerits of the soul offer no resistance.

“Seventhly, this Sacrament is exceeding praiseworthy, and deserving of all thanks and lauds of praise. Whatsoever things are good, whatsoever things are fair, if there be any holiness, all is in this Sacrament. For It is the highest Uncreated Good, namely, the Godhead, and the highest created good, Christ’s Humanity; wherefore, we ought to praise Him assiduously. For the Angels cease not to laud Him, saying, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy,’ and not only the Angels, but also the Saints, and all the Blessed, see and feel this Sacrament, and stand within this Sacrifice, in the infinite and good God, Who maketh them blessed; for in It they have ever present the Uncreated God, the Highest Good, and God made Man, and placed in this admirable Sacrament. And in this mystery they receive new sweetness and joy, and they celebrate new rejoicings, and make merry in their praise;

and I believe that this ariseth from the union which they have in communicating with the Head and members, that is, with Christ Who is God, as the Head, and with His faithful. For they see and feel and know that Christ taketh great delight in this most high Mystery, and that in It He showeth and manifesteth His goodness, and taketh singular complacency in the good and for the good of His friends, and of those who are dear unto Him, whom He joineth unto Himself by means of this Sacrifice. And therefore all the Angels and Saints take delight in this mystery together with Christ, and make new joy and praise, for that which pleaseth Christ, is pleasing likewise to them; for it pleaseth Christ to be with men in this Sacrament; nay, His delights are to be with the children of men. In like manner, all the Blessed in the Church Triumphant rejoice for all the good, and for the advantages which holy souls receive by reason of It in the Church Militant. Wherefore, the whole Church ought to rejoice and praise God for so great a benefit, and for so many graces, by giving thanks and honour unto God.

“Everyone, therefore, who approacheth unto this holy Sacrament, ought to consider unto Whom he goeth, who he is who goeth, and how and why he goeth. For he goeth to receive a good, which is

itself All Good, and the cause of every good, and It is the only good, without which there is nothing good. And this good sufficeth to fill all things, and it sateth all the Saints and the Blessed Spirits, and all the just by grace, and all the souls and bodies of the Blessed who are reigning in glory. He goeth to receive a good, (namely, God made Man,) which sateth and surpasseth and maketh glad all creatures, and it stretcheth even beyond all creatures, without mode and without measure ; and this good no creature can know or have, except in proportion as he desireth it, and so far as he desireth to have as much of it, as the creature, in accordance with its own being, can have from Him, Who is, and Who maketh all being, and is over every being. He goeth to receive a good, beyond which, and besides which, there is no other good. O Good so little thought about, unknown, and unloved, yet found by those who desire to have Thy whole Self for their whole selves ! If, then, a man consider and look to the morsel which he hath to eat in a corporal sense, why doth not the soul look and consider before she receiveth so great a good, both eternal and infinite, which, if it be unworthily taken, is the everlasting death both of the soul and of the body, but if worthily, chaseth away death, and bringeth forth an eternal and blessed life,

and without the reception of which there is no life at all. 'For unless,' saith Christ, 'ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye shall have no life in you.' A man therefore ought to approach unto so great a good, and unto such a table, with great reverence, fear, and trembling, and above all things with great love, and the soul ought to approach all washed and adorned, because she goeth unto Him Who is all fair and glorious in good, and Who is the highest holiness, and happiness, and blessedness, and the highest, and noblest, and truest, and sweetest Love without end. And a man ought to go to receive in order that he may be received, and he ought to go clean, in order that he may be cleansed; and he ought to go with life within him, in order that he may receive more life; and he ought to go just, in order that he may be justified; and he ought to go joined unto God, in order that he may be incorporated with the Uncreated God, Who hath been made Man so sweetly, and that he may be one with Him throughout endless ages of ages."

THE SIXTY-EIGHTH CHAPTER.

*Of the Most Holy Incarnation of Christ,
and of other benefits of God*

This is the last writing and the last letter which the most holy Angela of Foligno, our mother, wrote before she fell sick unto death, and she said at the time that it was her last. For she knew of her happy passing away a long time before. And therefore it was that, with great affection, she spake these words, and forced, as it were, him who hath written these things to write, and she said: "O my God, make me worthy to know Thy most high mystery, which Thy burning charity hath wrought, that is, the high mystery of Thy most holy Incarnation, which Thou hast wrought for our sakes, for the Incarnation is the beginning of our salvation. Now this ineffable Incarnation doeth two things for us. First, it filleth us with love; secondly, it maketh us certain of our salvation. O how unutterable is this charity! Greater love than this there is none, than that my God, the Creator of all things, should be made Flesh, that He might make me God. O tender love! Thou

hast emptied Thyself, and brought Thyself to nought, in order to create me; Thou hast taken the form of a vile servant, that Thou mightest confer on me a royal and a godlike beauty. Yet when Thou didst take my form, Thou didst not so take it as to lessen any of Thy substance, nor to detract from Thy Godhead; but the abyss of Thy most lowly Incarnation maketh and compelleth me to utter these tender words. O Thou Incomprehensible One, made for me comprehensible! O Uncreated One, Thou hast been made for me a creature! O Thou, Who art inconceivable, Thou hast been brought within the range of our thoughts! O Thou that cannot be touched, Thou hast become capable of being handled! O Lord, make me worthy to see the depth of this deep love which Thou hast communicated unto us in this Thy most holy Incarnation! O thou happy fault, (yet not from thee, but from God's mercy) that hast merited for us to know the secret depths of the charity of God, which before were hidden from us! Oh, of a truth I cannot think of any greater charity! O Thou Most High! make me able to understand this deep and unutterable love!

“O Lord, there are five mysteries which Thou hast wrought for us; make us able, O Lord, to understand them. The first is

the mystery of Thy most holy Incarnation. The second is the ineffable mystery of Thy doctrine, example, penance, and affliction. The third is the most bitter death which Thou hast suffered for us. The fourth is the glory of Thy Resurrection. The fifth is Thy exaltation at Thy glorious Ascension. The first is the unutterable love of Thy Incarnation. O Highest Love, how hast Thou been transformed! O love unutterable! Blessed be Thou, O Lord, because Thou makest me to understand that Thou wert born for me! O how glorious a thing it is to know and understand, that I see and understand, how Thou wert born for me! To understand this in all truth is full of delight and sweetness. Wherefore, we have the same certainty from Thy Nativity as we had from Thy Incarnation; for behold! for the end for which He became Incarnate, for this was He born. O wonderful One! how marvellous are Thy mysteries, which Thou hast wrought for us!

“The second mystery which He wrought for us, made known to us how to live, for He became Incarnate, and was born, and lived, in such a way that we might have ever before us the teaching of Jesus Christ, Who was born in poverty and sorrow and contempt, for in these was He born and lived and died.

“The third mystery is that of His

Death, for unto this too was He born, that He might be our redemption and die for us. Now there are five things to be considered in this Death of Christ. The first is the declaration and the working of our salvation. The second is our being strengthened and made victorious against our enemies. The third is the fulness and the superabundance of the love of God, manifested by His Death. The fourth is, that He hath filled us with a certain kind of deep and tender truth. For we are able by this to know and see and understand how God the Father hath made known unto us, and glorified and declared His Son, in this His most holy Incarnation. The fifth is, that by this we are able to know how the Son of God made known unto us the Father, by the obedience which He observed His whole life long, even unto the Death of the cross, and by which He answered unto the Father for the whole human race. Make me worthy, O Uncreated God, to know the depth of Thy love, and the abyss of Thy most burning charity! Make me worthy to understand the unutterable charity which Thou hast communicated unto us, when Thou didst show unto us Thy Son Jesus Christ, in this His Incarnation, and when this Thy Son made Thee known unto us as our Father. O wonderful and gladsome love, for in thee is the

sweetness of every taste, and all delight, and this is the contemplation which raiseth up the soul from the world, and maketh her to stand above herself, and to be at peace and rest.

“The fourth mystery is in the Resurrection, in which two things are to be considered. The first is, that His Resurrection giveth us a firm hope of our resurrection. The second is, that it maketh us to know the spiritual resurrection, which God worketh by His grace, when He maketh a dead man to live, and a sick man to become whole. O deep and unutterable and unknown and unthought of mystery, in which Thou hast fulfilled our perfection! Make me, O Lord, worthy to know this most deep mystery! The fifth mystery is that of His Ascension. O Lord, make me worthy to be able to know the most deep mystery of Thy Ascension, in which is fulfilled the whole of our salvation. O Jesus Christ! then didst Thou place us in possession of Thy Father and ours. These five mysteries form the school of all who are true scholars; and the true school in which these five mysteries are learnt, is the school of continual prayer. Make me then, O Lord, to understand and know that supernatural charity by which Thou hast created and redeemed me. O Incomprehensible God! make me able to understand Thy inestim-

able and burning charity, and that tender love of Thine, by which Thou hast chosen the human race from everlasting for the vision of Thyself; and in Thy deep compassion hast deigned to look at us. Make us, O Lord, to know our fault, that we may escape the punishments which Thou hast threatened to the ungrateful, and to those who recognize not these Thine unutterable mysteries and benefits."

THE SIXTY-NINTH CHAPTER.

Of the Seven Gifts and spiritual benefits, given, amongst other gifts, unto man by God.

After this, she spake of the seven gifts, or most special benefits, bestowed upon us by the goodness of God, and she said: "O most sweet Lord, make me able to understand these seven gifts, which Thou hast given us amongst a multitude of other gifts. The first gift is our ineffable creation. The second is the admirable election by which Thou hast deigned to elect us unto Thy glory. The third is the ineffable gift which Thou hast made to us, when Thou sentest Thy Son to give us life. The fourth is the high gift of Thy

goodness, in deigning to make me a sensible and rational, and not an irrational creature or beast. The admirable reason which Thou hast placed in me, worketh in me three things. First, it maketh me to know that Thou art admirable. Secondly, it maketh me to know my sins. Thirdly, aided by Thy grace, it enableth me to resist my sensuality, which inclineth me unto sin. O Incomprehensible One! of all the gifts that Thou hast given, there is no greater gift than this! Thou hast fashioned us, O Lord, after Thy form, and endowed us with reason, and clothed us with Thy light and with Thy reason. The fifth gift is our understanding. Make us, O Lord, to know this gift which Thou hast given us, that is the understanding, that we may be able to understand Thee, O my God. The sixth gift is that of wisdom. O Lord, make me to know Thy burning charity, by which Thou hast given this gift of wisdom. Oh! of a truth, this gift is the greatest of all gifts, namely, to know Thee truly. The seventh gift is that of love. ¶ O Most High Being, make me to understand this gift, for all the Angels and Saints have nothing else to see, save to see Thee loved, and to love Thee, and to contemplate Thee. ∴ O gift above all gifts! because Thou Thyself art Love. O Highest Good! Thou hast deigned to make us know Thee, **Who art Love**, and

makest us to love this love, and therefore, they who shall come before Thy face shall be rewarded according to the love which they had on earth; and there is nothing that leadeth contemplatives unto contemplation, save true love alone. O Admirable One! Thou workest marvels in Thy children! O Supernal Good! O incomprehensible and most burning charity! O Thou Divine Person, Who hast deigned to *substantify* us in the midst of Thy Substance! O wonder

(1) The Saint seems here to refer to the Most Holy Eucharist.

der of all wonders, that Thou workest in Thy children! O hidden marvel! there is no intellect of man that before that Substance fainteth not away. But by grace and the light of God we feel this Substance, and to all true solitaires it is a pledge of their betrothal, and all the choirs of Angels are occupied therein, and all they too, who are true contemplatives shall occupy themselves therein, and afterwards they shall be solitaires, and separated from earth, whose conversation is in heaven. Thanks be to God. Amen."

THE SEVENTIETH AND LAST CHAPTER.

Of the Testament and last advice of this holy woman, and of her passing away and death.

The testament and last advice of the holy Mother Angela, which she gave unto her children when she was nigh unto death, and spake as follows: "My little children, what I say unto you, I say not save only for the love of God, and because I promised you, that I would not of my own will carry aught away with me under the earth that might be profitable unto you.' For it hath pleased God in His goodness to give me the care and solitudine of His sons and daughters who are in this world, and beyond and on this side the sea. And I have kept them as well as I was able, and I have sorrowed for them, and many more were my sorrows for them than you believe. And now, O my God, I give them back to

(1) The MS. has here the following words: "Behold. God saith unto the soul, 'All that is Mine is thine.' Oh! who is there who deserveth this, that all the good things of God, should be his as well! Oh! of a truth there is nothing that merits this, save love alone!" As these words occur again in the same chapter, Lammertz has placed them in the margin.

Thee, and I ask of Thee, by Thine own unutterable love, to guard them from every evil, and to keep them in every good, in the love of poverty, contempt, and sorrow, and in the transformation and imitation of Thy life and perfection, which Thou hast been pleased to show unto us by word and deed and in Thy living life.

“Oh! my most loving little children, I exhort you in this my last exhortation, to strive to be little, and truly humble and meek, not only outwardly in your works, but much more in the depth of your heart, that ye may be true scholars and true disciples of Him Who said: ‘Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of Heart.’ Care not for power, or honours, or prelacies. O my little children! strive to be little, that Christ may exalt you unto the perfection of merits, and of His grace. Be ye so humble as continually to esteem yourselves as nothing. Cursed be those self-sufficiencies which destroy the soul, namely, power, and honours in prelacy. Fly from them, for there is great deception and danger in them; although there is less deception in them than in spiritual self-sufficiencies, namely, in knowing how to speak of God, or in the understanding of the Scripture, or in making great plans, or in having the heart taken up with spiritual things. For oftentimes men of this kind fall into error, and are more

difficultly corrected, than they who are self-sufficient in temporal things. Wherefore esteem yourselves as nothing. O unknown nothing! Of a truth the soul can have no better vision nor knowledge than to see her own nothing, and to stand in her own prison.

“O my little children! strive to have charity, without which there is neither salvation nor merit. Behold God saith: ‘All that I have is thine.’ Oh! who is there that deserveth this, that all the good things of God should be his as well? Of a truth there is nothing that is deserving of this, save charity. O my little children, my fathers and brothers, strive to have this charity and mutual love; for by this doth the soul merit to inherit the good things of God, and I exhort you, not only to desire to have this charity, one for another, but also for all mankind. For I say unto you, that my soul hath received more from God when I wept and sorrowed for my neighbours’ sins, than when I sorrowed for my own. And the world jests’ at what I say, namely, that a man can weep for the sins of his neighbours as for his own, or even more than for his own, for it seemeth to be against nature. But it is charity which doeth this, and charity is not of this world. O my little children, strive to have this charity, and judge no

(1) “Traffat.”

man; and if ye shall see a man sin mortally, I say not that the sin should not be displeasing unto you, and that ye ought not to abhor the sin; but I say that ye should not judge the sinner, nor despise him, for ye know not the judgments of God. And many are there who before men seem to be damned, yet who before God are saved; and many before men seem to be saved, who before God are already reprobate and damned. And I would that I knew how to tell you, that some there are, some whom ye have despised, of whom I have a firm hope that God will lead them back again into His Hand.

“I make no other testament, save that I recommend unto you mutual love and profound humility. And I leave unto you all my inheritance, which is also that of Christ Jesus, that is, poverty, sorrow, and contempt, namely, the Life of Christ. They who shall have this inheritance of the Life of Christ shall be my children; for they are the sons of God, and there is no doubt but that afterwards they will inherit life everlasting.” And when she had said this, she laid her hand upon the head of each of us, and said: “Blessed be ye, by the Lord and by me, my little children, ye yourselves and all others who are not here present; and as it hath been signified unto me, and shown me by the

Lord, even so do I grant unto you everlasting benediction, to those who are present and to those who are absent; and may the same Christ give it you with that Right Hand which was nailed unto the Cross."

Afterwards, however, shaken by her last illness, and absorbed in mind more than was her wont, in the abyss of God's Infinity, Angela spake but seldom, and then only a few broken words, and with a long pause between them. Yet her words, as far as we who were present were able to catch them, we have gathered together in short, and they are these. Once she said, about the Feast of our Lord's Nativity, during which season she passed away to Christ: "The Word was made Flesh." And after a long pause, she said: "Oh! every creature faileth, and the whole Angelic understanding sufficeth not." And when we asked her, "With regard to what doth every creature fail, nor the Angelic understanding suffice?" She answered: "To comprehend." And afterwards she said: "Oh! of a truth, behold my God, Who hath redeemed unto me His promise that Christ His Son would present me unto the Father." For before she had said: "Know ye not that Christ was in the ship while the tempest was great? Of a truth so is it sometimes in the soul, when He permitteth temptations to come,

and He Himself seemeth to sleep. And again she said: "Of a truth, until God permit a person to be all twisted up and trampled on, and trodden under foot,¹ He suffereth not sometimes temptations and tempests to end; and this He doth chiefly to His true children." Likewise, another time she said unto us: "O my little children, willingly would I say unto you a few words, if I knew that God would not deceive me." Now this she said of the promise made unto her with regard to her departure, for on account of her desire to die, she greatly feared, as she herself said, lest she might not die of this illness. And she said: "What I say unto you, I say not save only that ye may follow what I have not followed." And afterwards she added: "My soul hath been washed and cleansed in the Blood of Christ, Which was as fresh and warm as if it had just come from the Body of the Crucified. And then it was told my soul: This it is that hath made thee clean. And my soul answered: O my God, shall I be deceived? And it was told her: No." Afterwards she said: "Christ, the Son of God, hath now presented me unto the Father, and these words were said unto me: O my bride, and my beautiful one! O thou that art loved by Me with great love and in truth, I desire not that thou

(1) "*totam pig-
gare, vel conterri et
suppeditari*" (*sop-
pestare, Ital.*)

shouldst come unto me with sorrows such as these, but with jubilee, and joy immeasurable, and with the royal robe, even as the King ought to lead home His bride whom He hath loved so long. And He showed unto me the royal robe, even as a bridegroom showeth it unto his bride, whom he hath loved long and much; but it was not of purple, nor of scarlet, nor of sendal,⁽¹⁾ nor of samite, but it —MS. "Tentato" was a kind of marvellous light, with which the soul is clothed. And then God showed unto me the Bridegroom Himself, the Eternal Word, so that now I understand what the Word is, and what the Word meaneth, the Word, namely, that for the love of me would become Incarnate. And the Word Itself passed through me, and touched the whole of me, and embraced me, and said unto me: 'Come, My beloved bride, My own true love, come, for all the Saints are waiting for thee with joy.' And He said also unto me: 'I will not give thee into the charge of the Angels, nor unto the other Saints to lead thee unto Me, but I will come in person for thee, and I will take thee unto myself: for thou hast been made fit for Me, and pleasing unto My Majesty.'"

And when the hour for her passing away drew nigh, that is, on the day before, she said many times: "Father, into Thy Hands I commend my spirit."

And once after this word she said unto those of us who were present: "Now hath answer been made me to this word, and it is this: "That which hath been impressed on thy heart in life, it is impossible but that thou should have in death." And then we said: "Wilt thou then go away and leave us?" And she answered: "So much have I hidden from you, but now I hide it from you no longer, and I say unto you that I must go away for ever." On the same day, when all her pains had ceased, by which, for many days before, she had been horribly tormented, and in many ways afflicted in each of her members, both inwardly and outwardly, she was lying in such great peace of body and gladness of spirit, that already it seemed as if she were tasting of the joy that had been promised her. And then we asked her if the aforesaid jubilee had as yet been given her? And she answered that the aforesaid jubilee had already begun. And she lay exceeding joyful in this quiet of body and gladness of spirit, until after Compline on the Saturday, many of the brethren standing round her, and ministering unto her the holy mysteries, and on the same day, that is, on the Octave of the Innocents, at the last hour of the day,' she fell into a light

(1) That is, a little after sunset, at the *Ave Maria*, according to the Italian way of reckoning time, "*alle ore ventiquattro.*"

sleep, and rested in peace. Then was this most holy soul loosened from the flesh, and taken up into the abyss of God's Infinity, where she received from Christ her Spouse the stole of innocence and immortality, and will reign with Him for ever. Whither, too, may He bring us all by virtue of His cross, and through the merits of His Virgin Mother, and the intercession of this most holy Mother Angela!

Now the Venerable Bride of Christ, Angela of Foligno, passed away from the shipwreck of this world, unto the joys of heaven, which had been promised unto her long before, in the year of our Lord's Incarnation, one thousand three hundred and nine, on the fourth day of January, in the reign of our Lord Pope Clement the Fifth.

All unto the

Greater Glory of G. O. D.



