

A TREATISE OF PRAYER

Of the means which the soul takes to arrive at pure and generous love; and here begins the Treatise of Prayer.

“When the soul has passed through the doctrine of Christ crucified, with true love of virtue and hatred of vice, and has arrived at the house of self-knowledge and entered therein, she remains, with her door barred, in watching and constant prayer, separated entirely from the consolations of the world. Why does she thus shut herself in? She does so from fear, knowing her own imperfections, and also from the desire, which she has, of arriving at pure and generous love. And because she sees and knows well that in no other way can she arrive thereat, she waits, with a lively faith for My arrival, through increase of grace in her. How is a lively faith to be recognized? By perseverance in virtue, and by the fact that the soul never turns back for anything, whatever it be, nor rises from holy prayer, for any reason except (note well) for obedience or charity’s sake. For no other reason ought she to leave off prayer, for, during the time ordained for prayer, the Devil is wont to arrive in the soul, causing much more conflict and trouble than when the soul is not occupied in prayer. This he does in order that holy prayer may become tedious to the soul, tempting her often with these words: *‘This prayer avails you nothing, for you need attend to nothing except your vocal prayers.’* He acts thus in order that, becoming wearied and confused in mind, she may abandon the exercise of prayer, which is a weapon with which the soul can defend herself from every adversary, if grasped with the hand of love, by the arm of free choice in the light of the Holy Faith.”

Here, touching something concerning the Sacrament of the Body of Christ, the complete doctrine is given; and how the soul proceeds from vocal to mental prayer, and a vision is related which this devout soul once received.

“Know, dearest daughter, how, by humble, continual, and faithful prayer, the soul acquires, with time and perseverance, every virtue. Wherefore should she persevere and never abandon prayer, either through the illusion of the Devil or her own fragility, that is to say, either on account of any thought or movement coming from her own body, or of the words of any creature. The Devil often places himself upon the tongues of creatures, causing them to chatter nonsensically, with the purpose of preventing the prayer of the soul. All of this she should pass by, by means of the virtue of perseverance. Oh, how sweet and pleasant to that soul and to Me is holy prayer, made in the house of knowledge of self and of Me, opening the eye of the intellect to the light of faith, and the affections to the abundance of My charity, which was made visible to you, through My visible only-begotten Son, who showed it to you with His blood! Which Blood inebriates the soul and clothes her with the fire of divine charity, giving her the food of the Sacrament [which is placed in the tavern of the mystical body of the Holy Church] that is to say, the food of the Body and Blood of My Son, wholly God and wholly man, administered to you by the hand of My vicar, who holds the key of the Blood. This is that tavern, which I mentioned to you, standing on the Bridge, to provide food and comfort for the travelers and the pilgrims, who pass by the way of the doctrine of My Truth, lest they should faint through weakness. This food strengthens little or much, according to the desire of the recipient, whether he receives sacramentally or virtually. He receives sacramentally when he actually communicates with the Blessed Sacrament. He receives virtually when he communicates, both by desire of communion, and by contemplation of the Blood of Christ crucified, communicating, as it were, sacramentally, with the affection of love, which is to be tasted in the Blood which, as the soul sees, was shed through love. On seeing this the soul becomes inebriated, and blazes with holy desire and satisfies herself, becoming full of love for Me and for her neighbor. Where can this be acquired? In the house of self-knowledge with holy prayer, where imperfections are lost, even as Peter and the disciples, while they remained in watching and prayer, lost their imperfection and acquired perfection. By what means is this acquired? By perseverance seasoned with the most holy faith.

“But do not think that the soul receives such ardor and nourishment from prayer, if she pray only vocally, as do many souls whose prayers are rather words than love. Such as these give heed to nothing except to completing Psalms and saying many paternosters. And when they have once completed their appointed tale, they do not appear to think of anything further, but seem to place devout attention and love in merely vocal recitation, which the soul is not required to do, for, in doing only this, she bears but little fruit, which pleases Me but little. But if you ask Me, whether the soul should abandon vocal prayer, since it does not seem to all that they are called to mental prayer, I should reply ‘No.’ The soul should advance by degrees, and I know well that, just as the soul is at first imperfect and afterwards

perfect, so also is it with her prayer. She should nevertheless continue in vocal prayer, while she is yet imperfect, so as not to fall into idleness. But she should not say her vocal prayers without joining them to mental prayer, that is to say, that while she is reciting, she should endeavor to elevate her mind in My love, with the consideration of her own defects and of the Blood of My only-begotten Son, wherein she finds the breadth of My charity and the remission of her sins. And this she should do, so that self-knowledge and the consideration of her own defects should make her recognize My goodness in herself and continue her exercises with true humility. I do not wish defects to be considered in particular, but in general, so that the mind may not be contaminated by the remembrance of particular and hideous sins. But, as I said, I do not wish the soul to consider her sins, either in general or in particular, without also remembering the Blood and the broadness of My mercy, for fear that otherwise she should be brought to confusion. And together with confusion would come the Devil, who has caused it, under color of contrition and displeasure of sin, and so she would arrive at eternal damnation, not only on account of her confusion, but also through the despair which would come to her, because she did not seize the arm of My mercy. This is one of the subtle devices with which the Devil deludes My servants, and, in order to escape from his deceit, and to be pleasing to Me, you must enlarge your hearts and affections in My boundless mercy, with true humility. You know that the pride of the Devil cannot resist the humble mind, nor can any confusion of spirit be greater than the broadness of My good mercy, if the soul will only truly hope therein. Wherefore it was, if you remember rightly, that, once, when the Devil wished to overthrow you, by confusion, wishing to prove to you that your life had been deluded, and that you had not followed My will, you did that which was your duty, which My goodness (which is never withheld from him who will receive it) gave you strength to do, that is you rose, humbly trusting in My mercy, and saying: *'I confess to my Creator that my life has indeed been passed in darkness, but I will hide myself in the wounds of Christ crucified, and bathe myself in His Blood and so shall my iniquities be consumed, and with desire will I rejoice in my Creator.'* You remember that then the Devil fled, and, turning round to the opposite side, he endeavored to inflate you with pride, saying: *'You are perfect and pleasing to God, and there is no more need for you to afflict yourself or to lament your sins.'* And once more I gave you the light to see your true path, namely, humiliation of yourself, and you answered the Devil with these words: *'Wretch that I am, John the Baptist never sinned and was sanctified in his mother's womb. And I have committed so many sins, and have hardly begun to know them with grief and true contrition, seeing who God is, who is offended by me, and who I am, who offend Him.'* Then the Devil, not being able to resist your humble hope in My goodness, said to you: *'Cursed that you are, for I can find no way to take you. If I put you down through confusion, you rise to Heaven on the wings of mercy, and if I raise you on high, you humble yourself down to Hell, and when I go into Hell you persecute me, so that I will return to you no more, because you strike me with the*

stick of charity.' The soul, therefore, should season the knowledge of herself with the knowledge of My goodness, and then vocal prayer will be of use to the soul who makes it, and pleasing to Me, and she will arrive, from the vocal imperfect prayer, exercised with perseverance, at perfect mental prayer; but if she simply aims at completing her tale, and, for vocal abandons mental prayer, she will never arrive at it. Sometimes the soul will be so ignorant that, having resolved to say so many prayers vocally, and I, visiting her mind sometimes in one way, and sometimes in another, in a flash of self-knowledge or of contrition for sin, sometimes in the broadness of My charity, and sometimes by placing before her mind, in diverse ways, according to My pleasure and the desire of the soul, the presence of My Truth, she (the soul), in order to complete her tale, will abandon My visitation, that she feels, as it were, by conscience, rather than abandon that which she had begun. She should not do so, for, in so doing, she yields to a deception of the Devil. The moment she feels her mind disposed by My visitation, in the many ways I have told you, she should abandon vocal prayer; then, My visitation past, if there be time, she can resume the vocal prayers which she had resolved to say, but if she has not time to complete them, she ought not on that account to be troubled or suffer annoyance and confusion of mind; of course provided that it were not the Divine office which clerics and religious are bound and obliged to say under penalty of offending Me, for, they must, until death, say their office. But if they, at the hour appointed for saying it, should feel their minds drawn and raised by desire, they should so arrange as to say it before or after My visitation, so that the debt of rendering the office be not omitted. But, in any other case, vocal prayer should be immediately abandoned for the said cause. Vocal prayer, made in the way that I have told you, will enable the soul to arrive at perfection, and therefore she should not abandon it, but use it in the way that I have told you.

And so, with exercise in perseverance, she will taste prayer in truth, and the food of the Blood of My only-begotten Son, and therefore I told you that some communicated virtually with the Body and Blood of Christ, although not sacramentally; that is, they communicate in the affection of charity, which they taste by means of holy prayer, little or much, according to the affection with which they pray. They who proceed with little prudence and without method, taste little, and they who proceed with much, taste much. For the more the soul tries to loosen her affection from herself, and fasten it in Me with the light of the intellect, the more she knows; and the more she knows, the more she loves, and, loving much, she tastes much. You see then, that perfect prayer is not attained to through many words, but through affection of desire, the soul raising herself to Me, with knowledge of herself and of My mercy, seasoned the one with the other. Thus she will exercise together mental and vocal prayer, for, even as the active and contemplative life is one, so are they. Although vocal or mental prayer can be understood in many and diverse ways, for I have told you that a holy desire is a continual prayer, in this sense that a good and holy will disposes itself with desire

to the occasion actually appointed for prayer in addition to the continual prayer of holy desire, wherefore vocal prayer will be made at the appointed time by the soul who remains firm in a habitual holy will, and will sometimes be continued beyond the appointed time, according as charity commands for the salvation of the neighbor, if the soul see him to be in need, and also her own necessities according to the state in which I have placed her. Each one, according to his condition, ought to exert himself for the salvation of souls, for this exercise lies at the root of a holy will, and whatever he may contribute, by words or deeds, towards the salvation of his neighbor, is virtually a prayer, although it does not replace a prayer which one should make oneself at the appointed season, as My glorious standard-bearer Paul said, in the words, *'He who ceases not to work ceases not to pray.'* It was for this reason that I told you that prayer was made in many ways, that is, that actual prayer may be united with mental prayer if made with the affection of charity, which charity is itself continual prayer. I have now told you how mental prayer is reached by exercise and perseverance, and by leaving vocal prayer for mental when I visit the soul. I have also spoken to you of common prayer, that is, of vocal prayer in general, made outside of ordained times, and of the prayers of good-will, and how every exercise, whether performed in oneself or in one's neighbor, with good-will, is prayer. The enclosed soul should therefore spur herself on with prayer, and when she has arrived at friendly and filial love she does so. Unless the soul keep to this path, she will always remain tepid and imperfect, and will only love Me and her neighbor in proportion to the pleasure which she finds in My service."

Of the method by which the soul separates herself from imperfect love, and attains to perfect love, friendly and filial.

“Hitherto I have shown you in many ways how the soul raises herself from imperfection and attains to perfection, which she does after she has attained to friendly and filial love. I tell you that she arrives at perfect love by means of perseverance, barring herself into the House of Self-Knowledge, which knowledge of self requires to be seasoned with knowledge of Me, lest it bring the soul to confusion, for it would cause the soul to hate her own sensitive pleasure and the delight of her own consolations. But from this hatred, founded in humility, she will draw patience, with which she will become strong against the attacks of the Devil, against the persecutions of man, and towards Me, when, for her good, I withdraw delight from her mind. And if her sensuality, through malevolence, should lift its head against reason, the judgment of conscience should rise against it, and, with hatred of it, hold out reason against it, not allowing such evil emotions to get by it. Though sometimes the soul who lives in holy hatred corrects and reproves herself, not only for those things that are against reason, but also for things that in reality come from Me, which is what My sweet servant S. Gregory meant, when he said that a holy and pure conscience made sin where there was no sin, that is, that through purity of conscience, it saw sin where there was no sin.

“Now the soul who wishes to rise above imperfection should await My Providence in the House of Self-Knowledge, with the light of faith, as did the disciples, who remained in the house in perseverance and in watching, and in humble and continual prayer, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit. She should remain fasting and watching, the eye of her intellect fastened on the doctrine of My Truth, and she will become humble because she will know herself in humble and continual prayer and holy and true desire.”

Of the signs by which the soul knows she has arrived at perfect love.

“It now remains to be told you how it can be seen that souls have arrived at perfect love. This is seen by the same sign that was given to the holy disciples after they had received the Holy Spirit, when they came forth from the house, and fearlessly announced the doctrine of My Word, My only-begotten Son, not fearing pain, but rather glorying therein. They did not mind going before the tyrants of the world, to announce to them the truth, for the glory and praise of My Name. So the soul, who has awaited Me in self-knowledge as I have told you, receives Me, on My return to her, with the fire of charity, in which charity, while still remaining in the house with perseverance, she conceives the virtues by affection of love, participating in My power; with which power and virtues she overrules and conquers her own sensitive passions, and through which charity she participates in the wisdom of My Son, in which she sees and knows, with the eye of her intellect, My Truth and the deceptions of spiritual self-love, that is, the imperfect love of her own consolations, as has been said, and she knows also the malice and deceit of the devil, which he practices on those souls who are bound by that imperfect love. She therefore arises, with hatred of that imperfection and with love of perfection, and, through this charity, which is of the Holy Spirit, she participates in His will, fortifying her own to be willing to suffer pain, and, coming out of the house through My Name, she brings forth the virtues on her neighbor. Not that by coming out to bring forth the virtues, I mean that she issues out of the House of Self-Knowledge, but that, in the time of the neighbor’s necessity she loses that fear of being deprived of her own consolations, and so issues forth to give birth to those virtues which she has conceived through affection of love. The souls, who have thus come forth, have reached the fourth state, that is, from the third state, which is a perfect state, in which they taste charity and give birth to it on their neighbors, they have arrived at the fourth state, which is one of perfect union with Me. The two last-mentioned states are united, that is to say, one cannot be without the other, for there cannot be love of Me, without love of the neighbor, nor love of the neighbor without love of Me.”

How they who are imperfect desire to follow the Father alone, but they who are perfect desire to follow the Son. And of a vision, which this holy soul had, concerning diverse baptisms, and of many other beautiful and useful things.

“As I have told you, these latter have issued forth from the house, which is a sign that they have arisen from imperfection and arrived at perfection. Open the eye of your intellect and see them running by the Bridge of the doctrine of Christ crucified, which was their rule, way, and doctrine. They place none other before the eye of their intellect than Christ crucified, not the Father, as they do who are in imperfect love and do not wish to suffer pain, but only to have the delight which they find in Me. But they, as if drunken with love and burning with it, have gathered together and ascended the three steps, which I figured to you as the three powers of the soul, and also the three actual steps, figured to you as in the Body of My only Son, Christ crucified, by which steps the soul, as I told you, ascended, first climbing to the Feet, with the feet of the soul’s affection, from thence arriving at the Side, where she found the secret of the Heart and knew the baptism of water, which has virtue through the Blood, and where I dispose the soul to receive grace, uniting and kneading her together in the Blood. Where did the soul know of this her dignity, in being kneaded and united with the Blood of the Lamb, receiving the grace in Holy Baptism, in virtue of the Blood? In the Side, where she knew the fire of divine Charity, and so, if you remember well, My Truth manifested to you, when you asked, saying: *’Sweet and Immaculate Lamb, You were dead when Your side was opened. Why then did You want to be struck and have Your heart divided?’* And He replied to you, telling you that there was occasion enough for it; but the principal part of what He said I will tell you. He said: Because My desire towards the human generation was ended, and I had finished the actual work of bearing pain and torment, and yet I had not been able to show, by finite things, because My love was infinite, how much more love I had, I wished you to see the secret of the Heart, showing it to you open, so that you might see how much more I loved than I could show you by finite pain. I poured from it Blood and Water, to show you the baptism of water, which is received in virtue of the Blood. I also showed the baptism of love in two ways, first in those who are baptized in their blood, shed for Me, which has virtue through My Blood, even if they have not been able to have Holy Baptism, and also in those who are baptized in fire, not being able to have Holy Baptism, but desiring it with the affection of love. There is no baptism of fire without the Blood, because the Blood is steeped in and kneaded with the fire of Divine charity, because, through love was It shed. There is yet another way by which the soul receives the baptism of Blood, speaking, as it were, under a figure, and this way the Divine charity provided, knowing the infirmity and fragility of man, through which he offends, not that he is obliged, through his fragility and infirmity, to commit sin unless he wish to do so; but, falling, as he will, into the guilt of mortal sin, by which he loses the grace which he drew from Holy Baptism in virtue of the Blood, it was necessary to leave a continual baptism of Blood. This the Divine charity provided in the Sacrament of Holy Confession, the soul receiving the Baptism of Blood,

with contrition of heart, confessing, when able, to My ministers, who hold the keys of the Blood, sprinkling It, in absolution, upon the face of the soul. But, if the soul be unable to confess, contrition of heart is sufficient for this baptism, the hand of My clemency giving you the fruit of this precious Blood. But if you are able to confess, I wish you to do so, and if you are able to, and do not, you will be deprived of the fruit of the Blood. It is true that, in the last extremity, a man, desiring to confess and not being able to, will receive the fruit of this baptism, of which I have been speaking. But let no one be so mad as so to arrange his deeds, that, in the hope of receiving it, he puts off confessing until the last extremity of death, when he may not be able to do so. In which case, it is not at all certain that I shall not say to him, in My Divine Justice: *'You did not remember Me in the time of your life, when you could, now will I not remember you in your death.'*

“You see then that these Baptisms, which you should all receive until the last moment, are continual, and though My works, that is the pains of the Cross were finite, the fruit of them which you receive in Baptism, through Me, are infinite. This is in virtue of the infinite Divine nature, united with the finite human nature, which human nature endures pain in Me, the Word, clothed with your humanity. But because the one nature is steeped in and united with the other, the Eternal Deity drew to Himself the pain, which I suffered with so much fire and love. And therefore can this operation be called infinite, not that My pain, neither the actuality of the body be infinite, nor the pain of the desire that I had to complete your redemption, because it was terminated and finished on the Cross, when the Soul was separated from the Body; but the fruit, which came out of the pain and desire for your salvation, is infinite, and therefore you receive it infinitely. Had it not been infinite, the whole human generation could not have been restored to grace, neither the past, the present, nor the future. This I manifested in the opening of My Side, where is found the secret of the Heart, showing that I loved more than I could show, with finite pain. I showed to you that My love was infinite. How? By the Baptism of Blood, united with the fire of My charity, and by the general baptism, given to Christians, and to whomsoever will receive it, and by the baptism of water, united with the Blood and the fire, wherein the soul is steeped. And, in order to show this, it was necessary for the Blood to come out of My Side. Now I have shown you (said My Truth to you) what you asked of Me.”

How worldly people render glory and praise to GOD, whether they will or no.

“And so perfect is her vision that she sees the glory and praise of My Name, not so much in the angelic nature as in the human, for, whether worldly people will or no, they render glory and praise to My Name, not that they do so in the way they should, loving Me above everything, but that My mercy shines in them, in that, in the abundance of My charity, I give them time, and do not order the earth to open and swallow them up on account of their sins. I even wait for them, and command the earth to give them of her fruits, the sun to give them light and warmth, and the sky to move above them. And in all things created and made for them, I use My charity and mercy, withdrawing neither on account of their sins. I even give equally to the sinner and the righteous man, and often more to the sinner than to the righteous man, because the righteous man is able to endure privation, and I take from him the goods of the world that he may the more abundantly enjoy the goods of heaven. So that in worldly men My mercy and charity shine, and they render praise and glory to My Name, even when they persecute My servants; for they prove in them the virtues of patience and charity, causing them to suffer humbly and offer to Me their persecutions and injuries, thus turning them into My praise and glory.

“So that, whether they will or no, worldly people render to My Name praise and glory, even when they intend to do Me infamy and wrong.”

How even the devils render glory and praise to GOD.

“Sinners, such as those of whom I have just spoken, are placed in this life in order to augment virtues in My servants, as the devils are in Hell as My justiciars and augmenters of My Glory; that is, My instruments of justice towards the damned, and the augmenters of My Glory in My creatures, who are wayfarers and pilgrims on their journey to reach Me, their End. They augment in them the virtues in diverse ways, exercising them with many temptations and vexations, causing them to injure one another and take one another’s property, and not for the motive of making them receive injury or be deprived of their property, but only to deprive them of charity. But in thinking to deprive My servants, they fortify them, proving in them the virtues of patience, fortitude, and perseverance. Thus they render praise and glory to My Name, and My Truth is fulfilled in them, which Truth created them for the praise and glory of Me, Eternal Father, and that they might participate in My beauty. But, rebelling against Me in their pride, they fell and lost their vision of Me, wherefore they rendered not to Me glory through the affection of love, and I, Eternal Truth, have placed them as instruments to exercise My servants in virtue in this life and as justiciars to those who go, for their sins, to the pains of Purgatory. So you see that My Truth is fulfilled in them, that is, that they render Me glory, not as citizens of life eternal, of which they are deprived by their sins, but as My justiciars, manifesting justice upon the damned, and upon those in Purgatory.”

How the soul, after she has passed through this life, sees fully the praise and glory of My Name in everything, and, though, in her the pain of desire is ended, the desire is not.

“Thus in all things created, in all rational creatures, and in the devils is seen the glory and praise of My Name. Who can see it? The soul who is denuded of the body and has reached Me, her End, sees it clearly, and, in seeing, knows the truth. Seeing Me, the Eternal Father, she loves, and loving, she is satisfied. Satisfied, she knows the Truth, and her will is stayed in My Will, bound and made stable, so that in nothing can it suffer pain, because it has that which it desired to have, before the soul saw Me, namely, the glory and praise of My Name. She now, in truth, sees it completely in My saints, in the blessed spirits, and in all creatures and things, even in the devils, as I told you. And although she also sees the injury done to Me, which before caused her sorrow, it no longer now can give her pain, but only compassion, because she loves without pain, and prays to Me continually with affection of love, that I will have mercy on the world. Pain in her is ended, but not love, as the tortured desire, which My Word, the Son, had borne from the beginning when I sent Him into the world, terminated on the Cross in His painful death, but His love—no. For had the affection of My charity, which I showed you by means of Him, been terminated and ended then, you would not be, because by love you are made, and had My love been drawn back, that is, had I not loved your being, you could not be, but My love created you, and My love possesses you, because I am one thing with My Truth, and He, the Word Incarnate with Me. You see then, that the saints and every soul in Eternal Life have desire for the salvation of souls without pain, because pain ended in their death, but not so the affection of love.

“Thus, as if drunk with the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb, and clothed in the love of the neighbor, they pass through the Narrow Gate, bathed in the Blood of Christ crucified, and they find themselves in Me, the Sea Pacific, raised from imperfection, far from satiety, and arrived at perfection, satisfied by every good.”

How after Saint Paul was drawn to the glory of the blessed, he desired to be loosened from the body, as they do, who have reached the aforesaid third and fourth states.

“Paul, then, had seen and tasted this good, when I drew him up into the third heaven, that is into the height of the Trinity, where he tasted and knew My Truth, receiving fully the Holy Spirit, and learning the doctrine of My Truth, the Word Incarnate. The soul of Paul was clothed, through feeling and union, in Me, Eternal Father, like the blessed ones in Eternal Life, except that his soul was not separated from his body, except through this feeling and union. But it being pleasing to My Goodness to make of him a vessel of election in the abyss of Me, Eternal Trinity, I dispossessed him of Myself, because on Me can no pain fall, and I wished him to suffer for My name; therefore I placed before him, as an object for the eyes of his intellect, Christ crucified, clothing him with the garment of His doctrine, binding and fettering him with the clemency of the Holy Spirit and inflaming him with the fire of charity. He became a vessel, disposed and reformed by My Goodness, and, on being struck, made no resistance, but said: *’My Lord, what do You wish me to do? Show me that which it is Your pleasure for me to do, and I will do it.’* Which I answered when I placed before him Christ crucified, clothing him with the doctrine of My charity. I illuminated him perfectly with the light of true contrition, by which he extirpated his defects, and founded him in My charity.”

How the soul who finds herself in the unitive state desires infinitely to have the barren earthly state and unite herself to GOD.

“And when I depart from the soul in the aforesaid way that the body may return a little to its corporal sentiment, the soul, on account of the union which she had made with Me, is impatient in her life, being deprived of union with Me, and the conversation of the Immortals, who render glory to Me, and finding herself, amid the conversation of mortals, and seeing them so miserably offending Me. This vision of My offense is the torture which such souls always have, and which, with the desire to see Me, renders their life insupportable to them. Nevertheless, as their will is not their own, but becomes one with Mine, they cannot desire other than what I desire, and though they desire to come and be with Me, they are contented to remain, if I desire them to remain, with their pain, for the greater praise and glory of My Name and the salvation of souls. So that in nothing are they in discord with My Will; but they run their course with ecstatic desire, clothed in Christ crucified, and keeping by the Bridge of His doctrine, glorying in His shame and pains. Inasmuch as they appear to be suffering they are rejoicing, because the enduring of many tribulations is to them a relief in the desire which they have for death, for oftentimes the desire and the will to suffer pain mitigates the pain caused them by their desire to quit the body. These not only endure with patience, as I told you they did, who are in the third state, but they glory, through My Name, in bearing much tribulation. In bearing tribulation they find pleasure, and not having it they suffer pain, fearing that I reward not their well-doing or that the sacrifice of their desires is not pleasing to Me; but when I permit to them many tribulations they rejoice, seeing themselves clothed with the suffering and shame of Christ crucified. Wherefore were it possible for them to have virtue without toil they would not want it. They would rather delight in the Cross, with Christ, acquiring it with pain, than in any other way obtain Eternal Life. Why? Because they are inflamed and steeped in the Blood, where they find the blaze of My charity, which charity is a fire proceeding from Me, ravishing their heart and mind and making their sacrifices acceptable. Wherefore, the eye of the intellect is lifted up and gazes into My Deity, when the affection behind the intellect is nourished and united with Me. This is a sight which I grant to the soul, infused with grace, who, in truth, loves and serves Me.”

How they, who are arrived at the aforesaid unitive state, have the eye of their intellect illuminated by supernatural light infused by grace. And how it is better to go for counsel for the salvation of the soul, to a humble and holy conscience than to a proud lettered man.

“With this light that is given to the eye of the intellect, Thomas Aquinas saw Me, wherefore he acquired the light of much science; also Augustine, Jerome, and the doctors, and my saints. They were illuminated by My Truth to know and understand My Truth in darkness. By My Truth I mean the Holy Scripture, which seemed dark because it was not understood; not through any defect of the Scriptures, but of them who heard them, and did not understand them. Wherefore I sent this light to illuminate the blind and coarse understanding, uplifting the eye of the intellect to know the Truth. And I, Fire, Acceptor of sacrifices, ravishing away from them their darkness, give the light; not a natural light, but a supernatural, so that, though in darkness, they know the Truth. Wherefore that, which at first appeared to be dark, now appears with the most perfect light, to the gross or subtle mind; and everyone receives according as he is capable or disposed to know Me, for I do not despise dispositions. So you see that the eye of the intellect has received supernatural light, infused by grace, by which the doctors and saints knew light in darkness, and of darkness made light. The intellect was, before the Scriptures were formed, wherefore, from the intellect came science, because in seeing they discerned. It was thus that the holy prophets and fathers understood, who prophesied of the coming and death of My Son, and the Apostles, after the coming of the Holy Spirit, which gave them that supernatural light. The evangelists, doctors, professors, virgins, and martyrs were all likewise illuminated by the aforesaid perfect light. And everyone has had the illumination of this light according as he needed it for his salvation or that of others, or for the exposition of the Scriptures. The doctors of the holy science had it, expounding the doctrine of My Truth, the preaching of the Apostles, and the Gospels of the Evangelists. The martyrs had it, declaring in their blood the Most Holy Faith, the fruit and the treasure of the Blood of the Lamb. The virgins had it in the affection of charity and purity. To the obedient ones is declared, by it, the obedience of the Word, showing them the perfection of obedience, which shines in my Truth, who for the obedience that I imposed upon Him, ran to the opprobrious death of the Cross. This light is to be seen in the Old and New Testament; in the Old, by it, were seen by the eye of the intellect, and known the prophecies of the holy prophets. In the New Testament of the evangelical life, how is the Gospel declared to the faithful? By this same light. And because the New Testament proceeded from the same light, the new law did not break the old law; rather are the two laws bound together, the imperfection of the old law, founded in fear alone, being taken from it, by the coming of the Word of My only-begotten Son, with the law of Love, completing the old law by giving it love, and replacing the fear of penalty by holy fear. And, therefore, said My Truth to the disciples, to show that He was not a breaker of laws: *‘I came not to dissolve the law, but to fulfill it.’* It is almost as if My Truth would say to them—The Law is now imperfect, but with My Blood I will make it perfect, and I will fill it up with what it

lacks, taking away the fear of penalty, and founding it in love and holy fear. How was this declared to be the Truth? By this same supernatural light, which was and is given by grace to all, who will receive it? Every light that comes from Holy Scripture comes and came from this supernatural light. Ignorant and proud men of science were blind notwithstanding this light, because their pride and the cloud of self-love had covered up and put out the light. Wherefore they understood the Holy Scripture rather literally than with understanding, and taste only the letter of it, still desiring many other books; and they get not to the marrow of it, because they have deprived themselves of the light, with which is found and expounded the Scripture; and they are annoyed and murmur, because they find much in it that appears to them gross and idiotic. And, nevertheless, they appear to be much illuminated in their knowledge of Scripture, as if they had studied it for long; and this is not remarkable, because they have of course the natural light from whence proceeds science. But because they have lost the supernatural light, infused by grace, they neither see nor know My Goodness, nor the grace of My servants. Wherefore, I say to you, that it is much better to go for counsel for the salvation of the soul, to a holy and upright conscience, than to a proud lettered man, learned in much science, because such a one can only offer what he has himself, and, because of his darkness, it may appear to you, that, from what he says, the Scriptures offer darkness. The contrary will you find with My servants, because they offer the light that is in them, with hunger and desire for the soul's salvation. This I have told you, my sweetest daughter, that you might know the perfection of this unitive state, when the eye of the intellect is ravished by the fire of My charity, in which charity it receives the supernatural light. With this light the souls in the unitive state love Me, because love follows the intellect, and the more it knows the more can it love. Thus the one feeds the other, and, with this light, they both arrive at the Eternal Vision of Me, where they see and taste Me, in Truth, the soul being separated from the body, as I told you when I spoke to you of the blissfulness that the soul received in Me. This state is most excellent, when the soul, being yet in the mortal body, tastes bliss with the immortals, and oftentimes she arrives at so great a union that she scarcely knows whether she be in the body or out of it; and tastes the earnest-money of Eternal Life, both because she is united with Me, and because her will is dead in Christ, by which death her union was made with Me, and in no other way could she perfectly have done so. Therefore do they taste life eternal, deprived of the hell of their own will, which gives to man the earnest-money of damnation, if he yield to it."

How this devout soul seeks knowledge from God concerning the state and fruit of tears.

Then this soul, yearning with very great desire, and rising as one intoxicated both by the union which she had had with God, and by what she had heard and tasted of the Supreme and Sweet Truth, yearned with grief over the ignorance of creatures, in that they did not know their Benefactor, or the affection of the love of God. And nevertheless she had joy from the hope of the promise that the Truth of God had made to her, teaching her the way she was to direct her will (and the other servants of God as well as herself) in order that He should do mercy to the world. And, lifting up the eye of her intellect upon the sweet Truth, to whom she remained united, wishing to know somewhat of the aforesaid states of the soul of which God had spoken to her, and seeing that the soul passes through these states with tears, she wished to learn from the Truth concerning the different kinds of tears, and how they came to be, and whence they proceeded, and the fruit that resulted from weeping. Wishing then to know this from the Sweet, Supreme and First Truth, as to the manner of being and reason of the aforesaid tears, and inasmuch as the truth cannot be learnt from any other than from the Truth Himself, and nothing can be learnt in the Truth but what is seen by the eye of the intellect, she made her request of the Truth. For it is necessary for him who is lifted with desire to learn the Truth with the light of faith.

Wherefore, knowing that she had not forgotten the teaching which the Truth, that is, God, had given her, that in no other way could she learn about the different states and fruits of tears, she rose out of herself, exceeding every limit of her nature with the greatness of her desire. And, with the light of a lively faith, she opened the eye of her intellect upon the Eternal Truth, in whom she saw and knew the Truth, in the matter of her request, for God Himself manifested it to her, and condescending in His benignity to her burning desire, fulfilled her petition.

How there are five kinds of tears.

Then said the Supreme and Sweet Truth of God, “Oh, beloved and dearest daughter, you beg knowledge of the reasons and fruits of tears, and I have not despised your desire; open well the eye of your intellect and I will show you, among the aforesaid states of the soul, of which I have told you, concerning the imperfect tears caused by fear; but first rather of the tears of wicked men of the world. These are the tears of damnation. The former are those of fear, and belong to men who abandon sin from fear of punishment, and weep for fear. The third are the tears of those who, having abandoned sin, are beginning to serve and taste Me, and weep for very sweetness; but since their love is imperfect, so also is their weeping, as I have told you. The fourth are the tears of those who have arrived at the perfect love of their neighbor, loving Me without any regard whatsoever for themselves. These weep and their weeping is perfect. The fifth are joined to the fourth and are tears of sweetness let fall with great peace, as I will explain to you. I will tell you also of the tears of fire, without bodily tears of the eyes, which satisfy those who often would desire to weep and cannot. And I wish you to know that all these various graces may exist in one soul, who, rising from fear and imperfect love, reaches perfect love in the unitive state. Now I will begin to tell you of these tears in the following way.”

Of the difference of these tears, arising from the explanation of the aforesaid state of the soul.

“I wish you to know that every tear proceeds from the heart, for there is no member of the body that will satisfy the heart so much as the eye. If the heart is in pain the eye manifests it. And if the pain be sensual the eye drops hearty tears which engender death, because proceeding from the heart, they are caused by a disordinate love distinct from the love of Me; for such love, being disordinate and an offense to Me, receives the meed of mortal pain and tears. It is true that their guilt and grief are more or less heavy, according to the measure of their disordinate love. And these form that first class, who have the tears of death, of whom I have spoken to you, and will speak again. Now, begin to consider the tears which give the commencement of life, the tears, that is, of those who, knowing their guilt, set to weeping for fear of the penalty they have incurred.

“These are both hearty and sensual tears, because the soul, not having yet arrived at perfect hatred of its guilt on account of the offense thereby done to Me, abandons it with a hearty grief for the penalty which follows the sin committed, while the eye weeps in order to satisfy the grief of the heart.

“But the soul, exercising herself in virtue, begins to lose her fear, knowing that fear alone is not sufficient to give her eternal life, as I have already told you when speaking of the second stage of the soul. And so she proceeds, with love, to know herself and My goodness in her, and begins to take hope in My mercy in which her heart feels joy. Sorrow for her grief, mingled with the joy of her hope in My mercy, causes her eye to weep, which tears issue from the very fountain of her heart.

“But, inasmuch as she has not yet arrived at great perfection, she often drops sensual tears, and if you ask Me why, I reply: Because the root of self-love is not sensual love, for that has already been removed, as has been said, but it is a spiritual love with which the soul desires spiritual consolations or loves some creature spiritually. (I have spoken to you at length regarding the imperfections of such souls.) Wherefore, when such a soul is deprived of the thing she loves, that is, internal or external consolation, the internal being the consolation received from Me, the external being that which she had from the creature, and when temptations and the persecutions of men come on her, her heart is full of grief. And, as soon as the eye feels the grief and suffering of the heart, she begins to weep with a tender and compassionate sorrow, pitying herself with the spiritual compassion of self-love; for her self-will is not yet crushed and destroyed in everything, and in this way she lets fall sensual tears—tears, that is, of spiritual passion. But, growing, and exercising herself in the light of self-knowledge, she conceives displeasure at herself and finally perfect self-hatred. From this she draws true knowledge of My goodness with a fire of love, and she begins to unite herself to Me, and to conform her will to Mine and so to feel joy and compassion. Joy in herself through the affection of love, and compassion for her neighbor, as I told you in speaking of the third stage. Immediately her eye, wishing to satisfy the heart, cries with

heartly love for Me and for her neighbor, grieving solely for My offense and her neighbor's loss, and not for any penalty or loss due to herself; for she does not think of herself, but only of rendering glory and praise to My Name, and, in an ecstasy of desire, she joyfully takes the food prepared for her on the table of the Holy Cross, thus conforming herself to the humble, patient, and immaculate Lamb, My only-begotten Son, of whom I made a Bridge, as I have said. Having thus sweetly traveled by that Bridge, following the doctrine of My sweet Truth, enduring with true and sweet patience every pain and trouble which I have permitted to be inflicted upon her for her salvation, having manfully received them all, not choosing them according to her own tastes, but accepting them according to Mine, and not only, as I said, enduring them with patience, but sustaining them with joy, she counts it glory to be persecuted for My Name's sake in whatever she may have to suffer. Then the soul arrives at such delight and tranquillity of mind that no tongue can tell it. Having crossed the river by means of the Eternal Word, that is, by the doctrine of My only-begotten Son, and, having fixed the eye of her intellect on Me, the Sweet Supreme Truth, having seen the Truth, knows it; and knowing it, loves it. Drawing her affection after her intellect, she tastes My Eternal Deity, and she knows and sees the Divine nature united to your humanity.

“Then she reposes in Me, the Sea Pacific, and her heart is united to Me in love, as I told you when speaking of the fourth and unitive state. When she thus feels Me, the Eternal Deity, her eyes let fall tears of sweetness, tears indeed of milk, nourishing the soul in true patience; an odoriferous ointment are these tears, shedding odors of great sweetness.

“Oh, best beloved daughter, how glorious is that soul who has indeed been able to pass from the stormy ocean to Me, the Sea Pacific, and in that Sea, which is Myself, the Supreme and Eternal Deity, to fill the pitcher of her heart. And her eye, the conduit of her heart, endeavors to satisfy her heart-pangs, and so sheds tears. This is the last stage in which the soul is blessed and sorrowful.

“Blessed she is through the union which she feels herself to have with Me, tasting the divine love; sorrowful through the offenses which she sees done to My goodness and greatness, for she has seen and tasted the bitterness of this in her self-knowledge, by which self-knowledge, together with her knowledge of Me, she arrived at the final stage. Yet this sorrow is no impediment to the unitive state, which produces tears of great sweetness through self-knowledge, gained in love of the neighbor, in which exercise the soul discovers the plaint of My divine mercy, and grief at the offenses caused to her neighbor, weeping with those who weep, and rejoicing with those who rejoice—that is, who live in My love. Over these the soul rejoices, seeing glory and praise rendered Me by My servants, so that the third kind of grief does not prevent the fourth, that is, the final grief belonging to the unitive state; they rather give savor to each other, for, had not this last grief (in which the soul finds such union with Me), developed from the grief belonging to the third state of neighborly love, it would not be perfect. Therefore it is necessary that the one should flavor the other, else the soul

would come to a state of presumption, induced by the subtle breeze of love of her own reputation, and would fall at once, vomited from the heights to the depths. Therefore it is necessary to bear with others and practice continually love to one's neighbor, together with true knowledge of oneself.

“In this way will she feel the fire of My love in herself, because love of her neighbor is developed out of love of Me—that is, out of that learning which the soul obtained by knowing herself and My goodness in her. When, therefore, she sees herself to be ineffably loved by Me, she loves every rational creature with the self-same love with which she sees herself to be loved. And, for this reason, the soul that knows Me immediately expands to the love of her neighbor, because she sees that I love that neighbor ineffably, and so, herself, loves the object which she sees Me to have loved still more. She further knows that she can be of no use to Me and can in no way repay Me that pure love with which she feels herself to be loved by Me, and therefore endeavors to repay it through the medium which I have given her, namely, her neighbor, who is the medium through which you can all serve Me. For, as I have said to you, you can perform all virtues by means of your neighbor, I having given you all creatures, in general and in particular, according to the diverse graces each has received from Me, to be ministered unto by you; you should therefore love them with the same pure love with which I have loved you. That pure love cannot be returned directly to Me, because I have loved you without being Myself loved, and without any consideration of Myself whatsoever, for I loved you without being loved by you—before you existed; it was, indeed, love that moved Me to create you to My own image and similitude. This love you cannot repay to Me, but you can pay it to My rational creature, loving your neighbor without being loved by him and without consideration of your own advantage, whether spiritual or temporal, but loving him solely for the praise and glory of My Name, because he has been loved by Me.

“Thus will you fulfill the commandment of the law, to love Me above everything, and your neighbor as yourselves.

“True indeed is it that this height cannot be reached without passing through the second stage, namely the second stage of union which becomes the third (and final) stage. Nor can it be preserved when it has been reached if the soul abandon the affection from which it has been developed, the affection to which the second class of tears belongs. It is therefore impossible to fulfill the law given by Me, the Eternal God, without fulfilling that of your neighbor, for these two laws are the feet of your affection by which the precepts and counsels are observed, which were given you, as I have told you, by My Truth, Christ crucified. These two states united nourish your soul in virtue, making her to grow in the perfection of virtue and in the unitive state. Not that the other state is changed because this further state has been reached, for this further state does but increase the riches of grace in new and various gifts and admirable elevations of the mind, in the knowledge of the truth, as I said to you,

which, though it is mortal, appears immortal because the soul's perception of her own sensuality is mortified and her will is dead through the union which she has attained with Me.

“Oh, how sweet is the taste of this union to the soul, for, in tasting it, she sees My secrets! Wherefore she often receives the spirit of prophecy, knowing the things of the future. This is the effect of My Goodness, but the humble soul should despise such things, not indeed in so far as they are given her by My love, but in so far as she desires them by reason of her appetite for consolation, considering herself unworthy of peace and quiet of mind, in order to nourish virtue within her soul. In such a case let her not remain in the second stage, but return to the valley of self-knowledge. I give her this light, My grace permitting, so that she may ever grow in virtue. For the soul is never so perfect in this life that she cannot attain to a higher perfection of love. My only-begotten Son, your Captain, was the only One who could increase in no perfection, because He was one thing with Me, and I with Him, wherefore His soul was blessed through union with the Divine nature. But do you, His pilgrim-members, be ever ready to grow in greater perfection, not indeed to another stage, for as I have said, you have now reached the last, but to that further grade of perfection in the last stage, which may please you by means of My Grace.”

How the four stages of the soul, to which belong the five aforesaid states of tears, produce tears of infinite value: and how God wishes to be served as the Infinite, and not as anything finite.

“These five states are like five principal canals which are filled with abundant tears of infinite value, all of which give life if they are disciplined in virtue, as I have said to you. You ask how their value can be infinite. I do not say that in this life your tears can become infinite, but I call them infinite, on account of the infinite desire of your soul from which they proceed. I have already told you how tears come from the heart, and how the heart distributes them to the eye, having gathered them in its own fiery desire. As, when green wood is on the fire, the moisture it contains groans on account of the heat, because the wood is green, so does the heart, made green again by the renovation of grace drawn into itself among its self-love which dries up the soul, so that fiery desire and tears are united. And inasmuch as desire is never ended, it is never satisfied in this life, but the more the soul loves the less she seems to herself to love. Thus is holy desire, which is founded in love, exercised, and with this desire the eye weeps. But when the soul is separated from the body and has reached Me, her End, she does not on that account abandon desire, so as to no longer yearn for Me or love her neighbor, for love has entered into her like a woman bearing the fruits of all other virtues. It is true that suffering is over and ended, as I have said to you, for the soul that desires Me possesses Me in very truth, without any fear of ever losing that which she has so long desired; but, in this way, hunger is kept up, because those who are hungry are satisfied, and as soon as they are satisfied hunger again; in this way their satiety is without disgust, and their hunger without suffering, for, in Me, no perfection is wanting.

“Thus is your desire infinite, otherwise it would be worth nothing, nor would any virtue of yours have any life if you served Me with anything finite. For I, who am the Infinite God, wish to be served by you with infinite service, and the only infinite thing you possess is the affection and desire of your souls. In this sense I said that there were tears of infinite value, and this is true as regards their mode, of which I have spoken, namely, of the infinite desire which is united to the tears. When the soul leaves the body the tears remain behind, but the affection of love has drawn to itself the fruit of the tears, and consumed it, as happens in the case of the water in your furnace. The water has not really been taken out of the furnace, but the heat of the fire has consumed it and drawn it into itself. Thus the soul, having arrived at tasting the fire of My divine charity, and having passed from this life in a state of love towards Me and her neighbor, having further possessed that unitive love which caused her tears to fall, does not cease to offer Me her blessed desires, tearful indeed, though without pain or physical weeping, for physical tears have evaporated in the furnace, becoming tears of fire of the Holy Spirit. You see then how tears are infinite, how, as regards the tears shed in this life only, no tongue can tell what different sorrows may cause them. I have now told you the difference between four of these states of tears.”

Of the fruit of worldly men's tears.

“It remains for Me to tell you of the fruit produced by tears shed with desire, and received into the soul. But first will I speak to you of that first class of men whom I mentioned at the beginning of this My discourse; those, that is, who live miserably in the world, making a god of created things and of their own sensuality, from which comes damage to their body and soul. I said to you that every tear proceeded from the heart, and this is the truth, for the heart grieves in proportion to the love it feels. So worldly men weep when their heart feels pain, that is, when they are deprived of something which they loved.

“But many and diverse are their complainings. Do you know how many? There are as many as there exist different loves. And inasmuch as the root of self-love is corrupt, everything that grows from it is corrupt also. Self-love is a tree on which grow nothing but fruits of death, putrid flowers, stained leaves, branches bowed down, and struck by various winds. This is the tree of the soul. For you are all trees of love, and without love you cannot live, for you have been made by Me for love. The soul who lives virtuously, places the root of her tree in the valley of true humility; but those who live thus miserably are planted on the mountain of pride, whence it follows that since the root of the tree is badly planted, the tree can bear no fruits of life but only of death. Their fruits are their actions, which are all poisoned by many and diverse kinds of sin, and if they should produce some good fruit among their actions, even it will be spoiled by the foulness of its root, for no good actions done by a soul in mortal sin are of value for eternal life, for they are not done in grace. Let not, however, such a soul abandon on this account its good works, for every good deed is rewarded, and every evil deed punished. A good action performed out of a state of grace is not sufficient to merit eternal life, as has been said, but My Justice, My Divine Goodness, grants an incomplete reward, imperfect as the action which obtains it. Often such a man is rewarded in temporal matters; sometimes I give him more time in which to repent, as I have already said to you in another place. This also will I sometimes do, I grant him the life of grace by means of My servants who are pleasing and acceptable to Me. I acted in this way with My glorious apostle Paul, who abandoned his infidelity, and the persecutions he directed against the Christians, at the prayer of St. Stephen. See truly, therefore, that, in whatever state a man may be, he should never stop doing good.

“I said to you that the flowers of this tree were putrid, and so in truth they are. Its flowers are the stinking thoughts of the heart, displeasing to Me, and full of hatred and unkindness towards their neighbor. So if a man be a thief, he robs Me of honor, and takes it himself. This flower stinks less than that of false judgment, which is of two kinds. The first with regard to Me, by which men judge My secret judgments, gauging falsely all My mysteries, that is, judging that which I did in love, to have been done in hatred; that which I did in truth to have been done in falsehood; that which I give them for life, to have been given them for death. They condemn and judge everything according to their weak intellect; for they have

blinded the eye of their intellect with sensual self-love, and hidden the pupil of the most holy Faith, which they will not allow to see or know the Truth. The second kind of false judgment is directed against a man's neighbor, from which often come many evils, because the wretched man wishes to set himself up as the judge of the affections and heart of other rational creatures, when he does not yet know himself. And, for an action which he may see, or for a word he may hear, he will judge the affection of the heart. My servants always judge well, because they are founded on Me, the Supreme Good; but such as these always judge badly, for they are founded on evil. Such critics as these cause hatreds, murders, unhappinesses of all kinds to their neighbors, and remove themselves far away from the love of My servants' virtue.

“Truly these fruits follow the leaves, which are the words which issue from their mouth in insult to Me and the Blood of My only-begotten Son, and in hatred to their neighbors. And they think of nothing else but cursing and condemning My works, and blaspheming and saying evil of every rational creature, according as their judgment may suggest to them. The unfortunate creatures do not remember that the tongue is made only to give honor to Me, and to confess sins, and to be used in love of virtue, and for the salvation of the neighbor. These are the stained leaves of that most miserable fault, because the heart from which they proceeded was not clean, but all spotted with duplicity and misery. How much danger, apart from the spiritual privation of grace to the soul, of temporal loss may not occur! For you have all heard and seen how, through words alone, have come revolutions of states, and destructions of cities, and many homicides and other evils, a word having entered the heart of the listener, and having passed through a space not large enough for a knife.

“I say that this tree has seven branches drooping to the earth, on which grow the flowers and leaves in the way I have told you. These branches are the seven mortal sins which are full of many and diverse wickednesses, contained in the roots and trunk of self-love and of pride, which first made both branches and flowers of many thoughts, the leaves of words, and the fruits of wicked deeds. They stand drooping to the earth because the branches of mortal sin can turn no other way than to the earth, the fragile disordinate substance of the world. Do not marvel, they can turn no way but that in which they can be fed by the earth; for their hunger is insatiable, and the earth is unable to satisfy them. They are insatiable and unbearable to themselves, and it is conformable to their state that they should always be unquiet, longing and desiring that thing which they have to satiety. This is the reason why such satiety cannot content them, because they (who are infinite in their being) are always desiring something finite; because their being will never end, though their life to grace ends when they commit mortal sin.

“Man is placed above all creatures, and not beneath them, and he cannot be satisfied or content except in something greater than himself. Greater than himself there is nothing but Myself, the Eternal God. Therefore I alone can satisfy him, and, because he is deprived of

this satisfaction by his guilt, he remains in continual torment and pain. Weeping follows pain, and when he begins to weep the wind strikes the tree of self-love, which he has made the principle of all his being.”

How this devout soul, thanking God for His explanation of the above-mentioned states of tears, makes three petitions.

Then this soul, eager with the greatness of her desire, through the sweetness of the explanation and satisfaction which she had received from the Truth, concerning the state of tears, said as one enamored—“Thanks, thanks be to You, Supreme and Eternal Father, Satisfier of holy desires, and Lover of our Salvation, who, through Your Love, gave us Love Himself, in the time of our warfare with You, in the person of Your only-begotten Son. By this abyss of Your fiery Love, I beg of You grace and mercy that I may come to You truly in the light, and not flee far in darkness away from Your doctrine, of which You have clearly demonstrated to me the truth, so that, by the light thereof, I perceive two other points, concerning which I fear that they are, or may become, stumbling-blocks to me. I beg, Eternal Father, that, before I leave the subject of these states of tears, You would explain these points also to me. The first is—when a person desirous of serving You, comes to me, or to some other servant of Yours to ask for counsel, how should I teach him? I know, Sweet and Eternal God, that You replied above to this question—‘I am He who takes delight in few words and many deeds.’ Nevertheless, if it please Your Goodness to grant me a few more words on the subject, it will cause me the greatest pleasure. And also, if on some occasion, when I am praying for Your creatures, and in particular for Your servants, and I seem to see the subjects of my prayer, in one I find (in the course of my prayer) a well-disposed mind, a soul rejoicing in You; and in another, as it might seem to me, a mind full of darkness; have I the right, O Eternal Father, to judge the one soul to be in light, and the other in darkness? Or, supposing I should see that the one lives in great penance, and the other does not, should I be right to judge that he who does the greater penance has the higher perfection? I pray You, so that I may not be deceived through my limited vision, that You would declare to me in detail, what You have already said in general on this matter. The second request I have to make is, that You will explain further to me about the sign which You said the soul received on being visited by You—the sign which revealed Your Presence. If I remember well, oh, Eternal Truth, You said that the soul remained in joy and courageous virtue. I would gladly know whether this joy can consist with the delusion of the passion of spiritual self-love; for if it were so, I would humbly confine myself to the sign of virtue. These are the things which I beg You to tell me, so that I may serve You and my neighbor in truth, and not fall into false judgment concerning Your creatures and servants. For it seems to me that the habit of judging keeps the soul far from You, so I do not wish to fall into this snare.”

How the light of reason is necessary to every soul that wishes to serve God in truth; and first of the light of reason in general.

Then the Eternal God, delighting in the thirst and hunger of that soul, and in the purity of her heart, and the desire with which she longed to serve Him, turned the eye of His benignity and mercy upon her, saying—“Oh, best-beloved, dearest and sweetest daughter, my spouse! rise out of yourself, and open the eye of your intellect to see Me, the Infinite Goodness, and the ineffable love which I have towards you and My other servants. And open the ear of the desire which you feel towards Me, and remember, that if you do not see, you can not hear, that is to say, that the soul that does not see into My Truth with the eye of her intellect, cannot hear or know My Truth, wherefore in order that you may the better know it, rise above the feelings of your senses.

“And I, who take delight in your request, will satisfy your demand. Not that you can increase My delight, for I am the cause of you and of your increase; not those of Mine. Yet the very pleasure that I take in the work of My own hands causes Me delight.”

Then that soul obeyed and rose out of herself, in order to learn the true solution of her difficulty. And the Eternal God said to her, “In order that you may the better understand what I shall say to you, I shall revert to the beginning of your request concerning the three lights which issue from Me, the True Light. The first is a general light dwelling in those who live in ordinary charity. (I shall repeat to you here many things concerning these lights, which I have already told you, in spite of My having done so, in order that your creeping intelligence may better understand that which you wish to know.) The other two lights dwell in those who, having abandoned the world, desire perfection. Besides this I will explain to you your request, telling you in great detail that which I have already pointed out to you in general. You know, as I have told you, that, without the light, no one can walk in the truth, that is, without the light of reason, which light of reason you draw from Me the True Light, by means of the eye of your intellect and the light of faith which I have given you in holy baptism, though you may have lost it by your own defects. For, in baptism, and through the mediation of the Blood of My only-begotten Son, you have received the form of faith; which faith you exercise in virtue by the light of reason, which gives you life and causes you to walk in the path of truth, and, by its means, to arrive at Me, the True Light, for, without it, you would plunge into darkness.

“It is necessary for you to have two lights derived from this primary light, and to these two I will also add a third. The first lightens you all to know the transitory nature of the things of the world, all of which pass like the wind. But this you cannot know thoroughly, unless you first recognize your own fragility, how strong is your inclination, through the law of perversity with which your members are bound, to rebel against Me, your Creator (not that by this law any man can be constrained to commit any, even the smallest sin, against his will, but that this law of perversity fights lustily against the spirit). I did not impose this law upon you, in order that My rational creature should be conquered by it, but in order

that he should prove and increase the virtue of his soul, because virtue cannot be proved, except by its contrary. Sensuality is contrary to the spirit, and yet, by means of sensuality, the soul is able to prove the love which she has for Me, her Creator. How does she prove it? When, with anger and displeasure, she rises against herself. This law has also been imposed in order to preserve the soul in true humility. Wherefore you see that, while I created the soul to Mine own image and similitude, placing her in such dignity and beauty, I caused her to be accompanied by the vilest of all things, imposing on her the law of perversity, imprisoning her in a body, formed of the vilest substance of the earth, so that, seeing in what her true beauty consisted, she should not raise her head in pride against Me. Wherefore, to one who possesses this light, the fragility of his body is a cause of humiliation to the soul, and is in no way matter for pride, but rather for true and perfect humility. So that this law does not constrain you to any sin by its strivings, but supplies a reason to make you know yourselves and the instability of the world. This should be seen by the eye of the intellect, with light of the holy faith, of which I said to you that it was the pupil of the eye. This is that light which is necessary in general to every rational creature, whatever may be his condition, who wishes to participate in the life of grace, in the fruit of the Blood of the immaculate Lamb. This is the ordinary light, that is, the light which all persons must possess, as has been said, for, without it, the soul would be in a state of damnation. And, for this reason, because the soul, being without the light, is not in a state of grace, inasmuch as, not having the light, she does not know the evil of her sin or its cause, and therefore cannot avoid or hate it.

“And similarly if the soul know not good, and the reason of good, that is to say virtue, she cannot love or desire either Me, who am the Essential Good, or virtue, which I have given you as an instrument and means for you to receive My grace, and Myself the True Good. See then how necessary is this light, for your sins consist in nothing else than in loving that which I hate, and in hating that which I love. I love virtue and hate vice; he who loves vice and hates virtue offends Me, and is deprived of My grace. Such a one walks as if blind, for he knows not the cause of vice, that is, his sensual self-love, nor does he hate himself on account of it; he is ignorant of vice and of the evil which follows it: he is ignorant of virtue and of Me, who am the cause of his obtaining life-giving virtue; he is ignorant of his own dignity, which he should maintain by advancing to grace, by means of virtue. See, therefore, how his ignorance is the cause of all his evil, and how you also need this light, as has been said.”

Of those who have placed their desire rather in the mortification of the body than in the destruction of their own will; and of the second light, more perfect than the former general one.

“When the soul has arrived at the attainment of the general light, of which I have spoken, she should not remain contented, because, as long as you are pilgrims in this life, you are capable of growth, and he who does not go forward, by that very fact, is turning back. She should either grow in the general light, which she has acquired through My Grace, or anxiously strive to attain to the second and perfect light, leaving the imperfect and reaching the perfect. For, if the soul truly have light, she will wish to arrive at perfection. In this second perfect light are to be found two kinds of perfection; for they may be called perfect who have abandoned the general way of living of the world. One perfection is that of those who give themselves up wholly to the castigation of the body, doing great and severe penance. These, in order that their sensuality may not rebel against their reason, have placed their desire rather in the mortification of the body than in the destruction of their self-will, as I have explained to you in another place. These feed their souls at the table of penance, and are good and perfect, if their penance be illuminated by discretion, and founded on Me, if, that is to say, they act with true knowledge of themselves and of Me, with great humility, and wholly conformed to the judgment of My Will, and not to that of the will of man. But, if they were not thus clothed with My Will, in true humility, they would often offend against their own perfection, esteeming themselves the judges of those who do not walk in the same path. Do you know why this would happen to them? Because they have placed all their labor and desire in the mortification of the body, rather than in the destruction of their own will. Such as these wish always to choose their own times, and places, and consolations, after their own fashion, and also the persecutions of the world and of the Devil, as I have narrated to you in speaking of the second state of perfection.

“They say, cheating themselves with the delusion of their own self-will, which I have already called their spiritual self-will, ‘I wish to have that consolation, and not these battles, or these temptations of the Devil, not, indeed, for my own pleasure, but in order to please God the more, and in order to retain Him the more in my soul through grace; because it seems to me that I should possess Him more, and serve Him better in that way than in this.’ And this is the way the soul often fails into trouble, and becomes tedious and insupportable to herself; thus injuring her own perfection; yet she does not perceive it, nor that, within her, lurks the stench of pride, and there she lies. Now, if the soul were not in this condition, but were truly humble and not presumptuous, she would be illuminated to see that I, the Primary and Sweet Truth, grant condition, and time, and place, and consolations, and tribulations as they may be needed for your salvation, and to complete the perfection to which I have elected the soul. And she would see that I give everything through love, and that therefore, with love and reverence, should she receive everything, which is what the souls in the second state do, and, by doing so, arrive at the third state. Of whom I will now

speak to you, explaining to you the nature of these two states which stand in the most perfect light.”

Of the third and most perfect state, and of reason, and of the works done by the soul who has arrived at this light. And of a beautiful vision which this devout soul once received, in which the method of arriving at perfect purity is fully treated, and the means to avoid judging our neighbor is spoken of.

“Those who belong to the third state, which immediately follows the last, having arrived at this glorious light, are perfect in every condition in which they may be, and receive every event which I permit to happen to them with due reverence, as I have mentioned to you when speaking of the third and unitive state of the soul. These deem themselves worthy of the troubles and stumbling-blocks caused them by the world, and of the privation of their own consolation, and indeed of whatever circumstance happens to them. And inasmuch as they deem themselves worthy of trouble, so also do they deem themselves unworthy of the fruit which they receive after their trouble. They have known and tasted in the light My Eternal Will, which wishes naught else but your good, and gives and permits these troubles in order that you should be sanctified in Me. Wherefore the soul having known My Will, clothes herself with it, and fixes her attention on nothing else except seeing in what way she can preserve and increase her perfection to the glory and praise of My Name, opening the eye of her intellect and fixing it in the light of faith upon Christ crucified, My only-begotten Son, loving and following His doctrine, which is the rule of the road for perfect and imperfect alike. And see, how My Truth, the Lamb, who became enamored of her when He saw her, gives the soul the doctrine of perfection. She knows what this perfection is, having seen it practiced by the sweet and amorous Word, My only-begotten Son, who was fed at the table of holy desire, seeking the honor of Me, the Eternal Father, and your salvation. And, inflamed with this desire, He ran, with great eagerness, to the shameful death of the Cross, and accomplished the obedience which was imposed on Him by Me, His Father, not shunning labors or insults or withdrawing on account of your ingratitude or ignorance of so great a benefit, or because of the persecutions of the Jews, or on account of the insults, derision, grumbling, and shouting of the people. But all this He passed through like the true Captain and Knight that He was, whom I had placed on the battle-field to deliver you from the hands of the Devil, so that you might be free, and drawn out of the most terrible slavery in which you could ever be, and also to teach you His road, His doctrine, and His rule, so that you might open the Door of Me, Eternal Life, with the key of His precious Blood, shed with such fire of love, with such hatred of your sins. It was as if the sweet and amorous Word, My Son, should have said to you: ‘Behold, I have made the road, and opened the door with My Blood.’ Do not you then be negligent to follow, laying yourselves down to rest in self-love and ignorance of the road, presuming to choose to serve Me in your own way, instead of in the way which I have made straight for you by means of My Truth, the Incarnate Word, and built up with His Blood. Rise up then, promptly, and follow Him, for no one can reach Me, the Father, if not by Him; He is the Way and the Door by which you must enter into Me, the Sea Pacific.

“When therefore the soul has arrived at seeing, knowing, and tasting, in its full sweetness, this light, she runs, as one enamored and inflamed with love, to the table of holy desire; she does not see herself in herself, seeking her own consolation either spiritual or temporal, but, like one who has placed his all in this light and knowledge, and has destroyed his own will, she shuns no labor from whatever source it comes, but rather enduring the troubles, the insults, the temptations of the Devil, and the murmurings of men, eats at the table of the most holy Cross, the food of the honor of Me, the Eternal God, and of the salvation of souls; seeking no reward, either from Me or from creatures, because she is stripped of mercenary love, that is of love for Me based on interested motives, and is clothed in perfect light, loving Me in perfect purity, with no other regard than for the praise and glory of My Name, serving neither Me for her own delight, nor her neighbor for her own profit, but purely through love alone. Such as these have lost themselves, and have stripped themselves of the Old Man, that is of their own sensuality, and, having clothed themselves with the New Man, the sweet Christ Jesus, My Truth, follow Him manfully. These are they who sit at the table of holy desire, having been more anxious to slay their own will than to slay and mortify their own body. They have indeed mortified their body, though not as an end in itself, but as a means which helps them to stay their own will, as I said to you when explaining that sentence that I wished few words and many deeds, and so ought you to do. Their principal desire should be to slay their own will, so that it may not seek or wish anything else than to follow My sweet Truth, Christ crucified, seeking the honor and glory of My Name and the salvation of souls. Those who are in this sweet light know it, and remain constantly in peace and quiet, and no one scandalizes them, for they have cut away that thing by which stumbling-blocks are caused, namely their own will. And all the persecutions, with which the world and the Devil can attack them, slide under their feet, standing, as they do, in the waters of many tribulations and temptations, and do not hurt them, for they remain attached to Me by the umbilical cord of fiery desire. Such a man rejoices in everything, nor does he make himself judge of My servants, or of any rational creature, but rejoices in every condition and in every manner of holiness which he sees, saying: ‘Thanks be to You, Eternal Father, who have in Your House many mansions.’ And he rejoices more in the different ways of holiness which he sees, than if he were to see all traveling by one road, because, in this way, he perceives the greatness of My Goodness become more manifest, and thus, rejoicing, draws from all the fragrance of the rose. And not only in the case of good, but even when he sees something evidently sinful, he does not fall into judgment, but rather into true and holy compassion, interceding with Me for sinners and saying, with perfect humility: ‘To-day it is your turn, and tomorrow it will be mine unless the Divine Grace preserve me.’

“Enamor yourself, dearest daughter, of this sweet and excellent state, and gaze at those who run in this glorious light and holiness, for they have holy minds, and eat at the table of holy desire, and, with the light, have arrived at feeding on the food of souls, that is, the

honor of Me, the Eternal Father, being clothed with burning love in the sweet garment of My Lamb, My only-begotten Son, namely His doctrine. These do not lose their time in passing false judgments, either on My servants or the servants of the world, and they are never scandalized by any murmurings of men, either for their own sake or that of others. That is to say, in their own case they are content to endure anything for My Name's sake; and when an injury is done to some one else, they endure it with compassion of this injured neighbor, and without murmuring against him who caused the injury, or him who received it, because their love is not disordinate, but has been ordered in Me, the Eternal God.

“And, since their love is so ordered, these souls, my dearest daughter, never take offense from those they love, nor from any rational creature, their will being dead and not alive, wherefore they never assume the right to judge the will of men, but only the will of My Clemency. These observe the doctrine which, as you know, was given you by My Truth at the beginning of your life, when you were thinking in what way you could arrive at perfect purity, and were praying to Me with a great desire of doing so. You know what was replied to you, while you were asleep, concerning this holy desire, and that the words resounded not only in your mind, but also in your ear. So much so, that, if you remember truly, you returned to your waking body, when My Truth said, ‘Will you arrive at perfect purity, and be freed from stumbling-blocks, so that your mind may not be scandalized by anything?’ Unite yourself always to Me by the affection of love, for I am the Supreme and Eternal Purity. I am that Fire which purifies the soul, and the closer the soul is to Me, the purer she becomes, and the further she is from Me, the more does her purity leave her; which is the reason why men of the world fall into such iniquities, for they are separated from Me, while the soul, who, without any medium, unites herself directly to Me, participates in My Purity. Another thing is necessary for you to arrive at this union and purity, namely, that you should never judge the will of man in anything that you may see done or said by any creature whatsoever, either to yourself or to others. My will alone should you consider, both in them and in yourself. And, if you should see evident sins or defects, draw out of those thorns the rose, that is to say, offer them to Me, with holy compassion. In the case of injuries done to yourself, judge that My will permits this in order to prove virtue in yourself, and in My other servants, esteeming that he who acts thus does so as the instrument of My will; perceiving, moreover, that such apparent sinners may frequently have a good intention, for no one can judge the secrets of the heart of man. That which you do not see you should not judge in your mind, even though it may externally be open mortal sin, seeing nothing in others, but My will, not in order to judge, but, as has been said, with holy compassion. In this way you will arrive at perfect purity, because acting thus, your mind will not be scandalized, either in Me or in your neighbor. Otherwise you fall into contempt of your neighbor, if you judge his evil will towards you, instead of My will acting in him. Such contempt and scandal separates the soul from Me, and prevents perfection, and, in some cases, deprives

a man of grace, more or less according to the gravity of his contempt, and the hatred which his judgment has conceived against his neighbor.

“A different reward is received by the soul who perceives only My will, which, as has been said, wishes nothing else but your good; so that everything which I give or permit to happen to you, I give so that you may arrive at the end for which I created you. And because the soul remains always in the love of her neighbor, she remains always in Mine, and thus remains united to Me. Wherefore, in order to arrive at purity, you must entreat Me to do three things: to grant you to be united to Me by the affection of love, retaining in your memory the benefits you have received from Me; and with the eye of your intellect to see the affection of My love, with which I love you inestimably; and in the will of others to discern My will only, and not their evil will, for I am their Judge, not you, and, in doing this, you will arrive at all perfection.

“This was the doctrine given to you by My Truth, if you remember well. Now I tell you, dearest daughter, that such as these, who have learnt this doctrine, taste the earnest of eternal life in this life; and, if you have well retained this doctrine, you will not fall into the snares of the Devil, because you will recognize them in the case about which you have asked Me.

“But, nevertheless, in order to satisfy your desire more clearly, I will tell you and show you how men should never discern by judgment, but with holy compassion.”

In what way they, who stand in the above-mentioned third most perfect light, receive the earnest of eternal lift in this life.

“Why did I say to you that they received the earnest of eternal life? I say that they receive the earnest-money, but not the full payment, because they wait to receive it in Me, the Eternal Life, where they have life without death, and satiety without disgust, and hunger without pain, for from that divine hunger pain is far away, and though they have what they desire, disgust is far from satiety, for I am the flawless Food of Life. It is true that, in this life, they receive the earnest, and taste it in this way, namely that the soul begins to hunger for the honor of the Eternal God, and for the food of the salvation of other souls, and being hungry, she eats, that is to say, nourishes herself with love of her neighbor, which causes her hunger and desire, for the love of the neighbor is a food which never satiates him who feeds on it, the eater being insatiable and always remains hungry. So this earnest-money is a commencement of a guarantee which is given to man, in virtue of which he expects one day to receive his payment, not through the perfection of the earnest-money in itself, but through faith, through the certitude which he has of reaching the completion of his being and receiving his payment. Wherefore this enamored soul, clothed in My Truth, having already received in this life the earnest of My love, and of her neighbor’s, is not yet perfect, but expects perfection in immortal life. I say that this earnest is not perfect, because the soul who tastes it has not, as yet, the perfection which would prevent her feeling pain in herself, or in others. In herself, through the offense done to Me by the law of perversity which is bound in her members and struggles against the spirit, and in others by the offense of her neighbor. She has indeed, in a sense, a perfect grace, but not that perfection of My saints, who have arrived at Me, Eternal Life, for, as has been said, their desires are without suffering, and yours are not. These servants of Mine, as I have said to you in another place, who nourish themselves at this table of holy desire, are blessed and full of grief, even as My only-begotten Son was, on the wood of the holy Cross, because, while His flesh was in grief and torment, His soul was blessed through its union with the divine nature. In like manner these are blessed by the union of their holy desire towards Me, clothed, as has been said, in My sweet Will, and they are full of grief through compassion for their neighbor, and because they afflict their own self-love, depriving it of sensual delights and consolations.”

How this soul, rendering thanks to God, humiliates herself; then she prays for the whole world and particularly for the mystical body of the holy Church, and for her spiritual children, and for the two fathers of her soul; and, after these things, she asks to hear something about the defects of the ministers of the holy Church.

Then that soul, as if, in truth, inebriated, seemed beside herself, as if the feelings of the body were alienated through the union of love which she had made with her Creator, and as if, in elevation of mind, she had gazed into the eternal truth with the eye of her intellect, and, having recognized the truth, had become enamored of it, and said, "Oh! Supreme and Eternal Goodness of God, who am I, miserable one, that You, Supreme and Eternal Father, have manifested to me Your Truth, and the hidden deceits of the Devil, and the deceitfulness of personal feeling, so that I, and others in this life of pilgrimage, may know how to avoid being deceived by the Devil or ourselves! What moved you to do it? Love, because You loved me, without my having loved You. Oh, Fire of Love! Thanks, thanks be to You, Eternal Father! I am imperfect and full of darkness, and You, Perfection and Light, have shown to me perfection, and the resplendent way of the doctrine of Your only-begotten Son. I was dead, and You have brought me to life. I was sick, and You have given me medicine, and not only the medicine of the Blood which You gave for the diseased human race in the person of Your Son, but also a medicine against a secret infirmity that I knew not of, in this precept that, in no way, can I judge any rational creature, and particularly Your servants, upon whom oftentimes I, as one blind and sick with this infirmity, passed judgment under the pretext of Your honor and the salvation of souls. Wherefore, I thank You, Supreme and Eternal Good, that, in the manifesting of Your truth and the deceitfulness of the Devil, and our own passions, You have made me know my infirmity. Wherefore I beseech You, through grace and mercy, that, from today henceforward, I may never again wander from the path of Your doctrine, given by Your goodness to me and to whoever wishes to follow it, because without You is nothing done. To You, then, Eternal Father, do I have recourse and flee, and I do not beseech You for myself alone, Father, but for the whole world, and particularly for the mystical body of the holy Church, that this truth given to me, miserable one, by You, Eternal Truth, may shine in Your ministers; and also I beseech You especially for all those whom You have given me, and whom You have made one thing with me, and whom I love with a particular love, because they will be my refreshment to the glory and praise of Your Name, when I see them running on this sweet and straight road, pure, and dead to their own will and opinion, and without any passing judgment on their neighbor, or causing him any scandal or murmuring. And I pray You, Sweetest Love, that not one of them may be taken from me by the hand of the infernal Devil, so that at last they may arrive at You, their End, Eternal Father.

"Also I make another petition to You for my two fathers, the supports whom You have placed on the earth to guard and instruct me, miserable infirm one, from the beginning of my conversion until now, that You unite them, and of two bodies make one soul, and that they attend to nothing else than to complete in themselves, and in the mysteries that You

have placed in their hands, the glory and praise of Your Name, and the salvation of souls, and that I, an unworthy and miserable slave, and no daughter, may behave to them with due reverence and holy fear, for love of You, in a way that will be to Your honor, and their peace and quiet, and to the edification of the neighbor. I now know for certain, Eternal Truth, that You will not despise the desire of the petitions that I have made to You, because I know, from seeing what it has pleased You to manifest, and still more from proof, that You are the Acceptor of holy desires. I, Your unworthy servant, will strive, according as You will give me grace, to observe Your commandments and Your doctrine. Now, O Eternal Father, I remember a word which you said to me in speaking of the ministers of the holy Church, to the effect that You would speak to me more distinctly, in some other place, of the sins which they commit today; wherefore if it should please Your goodness to tell me anything of this matter, I will gladly hear it, so as to have material for increasing my grief, compassion, and anxious desire for their salvation; for I remember that You said, that, on account of the endurance and tears, the grief, and sweat and prayers of Your servants, You would reform the holy Church, and comfort her with good and holy pastors. I ask You this in order that these sentiments may increase in me.”

How God renders this soul attentive to prayer, replying to one of the above-mentioned petitions.

Then the Eternal God, turning the eye of His mercy upon this soul, not despising her desire, but granting her requests, proceeded to satisfy the last petition, which she had made concerning His promise, saying, "Oh! best beloved and dearest daughter, I will fulfill your desire in this request, in order that, on your side, you may not sin through ignorance or negligence; for a fault of yours would be more serious and worthy of graver reproof now than before, because you have learnt more of My truth; wherefore apply yourself attentively to pray for all rational creatures, for the mystical body of the holy Church, and for those friends whom I have given you, whom you love with particular love, and be careful not to be negligent in giving them the benefit of your prayers, and the example of your life, and the teaching of your words, reproving vice and encouraging virtue according to your power.

"Concerning the supports which I have given you, of whom you spoke to Me, know that you are, in truth, a means by which they may each receive, according to their needs and fitness. And as I, your Creator, grant you the opportunity, for without Me you can do nothing, I will fulfill your desires, but do not you fail, or they either, in your hope in Me. My Providence will never fail you, and every man, if he be humble, shall receive that which he is fit to receive; and every minister, that which I have given him to administer, each in his own way, according to what he has received and will receive from My goodness."

Of the dignity of the priest; and of the Sacrament of the Body of Christ; and of worthy and unworthy communicants.

“Now I will reply to that which you asked Me concerning the ministers of the holy Church, and, in order that you may the better understand the truth, open the eye of your intellect, and look at their excellence and the dignity in which I have placed them. And, since one thing is better known by means of contrast with its contrary, I will show you the dignity of those who use virtuously the treasure I have placed in their hands; and, in this way, you will the better see the misery of those who today are suckled at the breast of My Spouse.” Then this soul obediently contemplated the truth, in which she saw virtue resplendent in those who truly taste it. Then said the Eternal God: “I will first, dearest daughter, speak to you of the dignity of priests, having placed them where they are through My Goodness, over and above the general love which I have had to My creatures, creating you in My image and similitude and re-creating you all to the life of grace in the Blood of My only-begotten Son, whence you have arrived at such excellence, through the union which I made of My Deity with human nature; so that in this you have greater dignity and excellence than the angels, for I took your human nature and not that of the angels. Wherefore, as I have said to you, I, God, have become man, and man has become God by the union of My Divine Nature with your human nature. This greatness is given in general to all rational creatures, but, among these I have especially chosen My ministers for the sake of your salvation, so that, through them, the Blood of the humble and immaculate Lamb, My only-begotten Son, may be administered to you. To them have I given the Sun to administer, giving them the light of science and the heat of Divine Love, united together in the color of the Body and Blood of My Son, whose Body is a Sun, because He is one thing with Me, the True Sun, in such a way that He cannot be separated or divided from Me, as in the case of the natural sun, in which heat and light cannot be separated, so perfect is their union; for, the sun, never leaving its orbit, lights the whole world and warms whoever wishes to be warmed by it, and is not defiled by any impurity on which it shines, for its light and heat and color are united.

“So this Word, My Son, with His most sweet Blood, is one Sun, all God and all man, because He is one thing with Me and I with Him. My power is not separated from His wisdom, nor the fiery heat of the Holy Spirit from Me, the Father, or from Him, the Son; for He is one thing with us, the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, and We together forming one and the same Sun; that is to say, I, the Eternal God, am that Sun whence have proceeded the Son and the Holy Spirit. To the Holy Spirit is attributed fire and to the Son wisdom, by which wisdom My ministers receive the light of grace, so that they may administer this light to others, with gratitude for the benefits received from Me, the Eternal Father, following the doctrine of the Eternal Wisdom, My only-begotten Son. This is that Light, which has the color of your humanity, color and light being closely united. Thus was the light of My Divinity united to the color of your humanity, which color shone brightly

when it became perfect through its union with the Divine nature, and, by this means of the Incarnate Word mixed with the Light of My Divine nature and the fiery heat of the Holy Spirit, have you received the Light. Whom have I entrusted with its administration?

“My ministers in the mystical body of the holy Church, so that you may have life, receiving His Body in food and His Blood in drink. I have said to you that this Body is, as it were, a Sun. Wherefore, you cannot receive the Body without the Blood, or the Blood or the Body without the Soul of the Incarnate Word; nor the Soul, nor the Body, without the Divinity of Me, the Eternal God, because none of these can be separated from each other, as I said to you in another place that the Divine nature never left the human nature, either by death or from any other cause. So that you receive the whole Divine Essence in that most Sweet Sacrament concealed under the whiteness of the bread; for as the sun cannot be divided into light, heat, and color, the whole of God and the whole of man cannot be separated under the white mantle of the host; for even if the host should be divided into a million particles (if it were possible) in each particle should I be present, whole God and whole Man. When you break a mirror the reflection to be seen in it is not broken; similarly, when the host is divided God and man are not divided, but remain in each particle. Nor is the Sacrament diminished in itself, except as far as may be in the following example.

“If you have a light, and the whole world should come to you in order to take light from it—the light itself does not diminish—and yet each person has it all. It is true that everyone participates more or less in this light, according to the substance into which each one receives the fire. I will develop this metaphor further that you may the better understand Me. Suppose that there are many who bring their candles, one weighing an ounce, others two or six ounces, or a pound, or even more, and light them in the flame, in each candle, whether large or small, is the whole light, that is to say, the heat, the color, and the flame; nevertheless you would judge that he whose candle weighs an ounce has less of the light than he whose candle weighs a pound. Now the same thing happens to those who receive this Sacrament. Each one carries his own candle, that is the holy desire, with which he receives this Sacrament, which of itself is without light, and lights it by receiving this Sacrament. I say without light, because of yourselves you can do nothing, though I have given you the material, with which you can receive this light and feed it. The material is love, for through love I created you, and without love you cannot live.

“Your being, given to you through love, has received the right disposition in holy baptism, which you receive in virtue of the Blood of the Word, for, in no other way, could you participate in this light; you would be like a candle with no wick inside it, which cannot burn or receive light, if you have not received in your souls the wick which catches this Divine Flame, that is to say, the Holy Faith, which you receive, by grace, in baptism, united with the disposition of your soul created by Me, so fitted for love, that, without love, which is her very food, she cannot live. Where does the soul united in this way obtain light? At the fire of My

Divine love, loving and fearing Me, and following the Doctrine of My Truth. It is true that the soul becomes more or less lighted according to the material which it brings to the fire; for although you all have one and the same material, in that you are all created to My image and similitude, and, being Christians, possess the light of holy baptism, each of you may grow in love and virtue by the help of My grace, as may please you. Not that you change the form of what I have given you, but that you increase your strength in love, and your free-will, by using it while you have time, for when time is past you can no longer do so. So that you can increase in love, as has been said, coming with love to receive this Sweet and Glorious Light, which I have given you as Food for your service, through My ministers, and you receive this Light according to the love and fiery desire with which you approach It.

“The Light Itself you receive entire, as I have said (in the example of those, who in spite of the difference in weight of their candles, all receive the entire light), and not divided, because It cannot be divided, as has been said, either on account of any imperfection of yours who receive, or of the minister; but you personally participate in this light, that is in the grace which you receive in this Sacrament, according to the holy desire with which you dispose yourselves to receive it. He who should go to this sweet Sacrament in the guilt of mortal sin, will receive no grace therefrom, though he actually receive the whole of God and the whole of Man. Do you know the condition of the soul who receives unworthily? She is like a candle on which water has fallen, which can do nothing but crackle when brought near the flame, for no sooner has the fire touched it, than it is extinguished, and nothing remains but smoke; so this soul has cast the water of guilt within her mind upon the candle which she received in holy baptism, which has drenched the wick of the grace of baptism, and, not having heated it at the fire of true contrition and confession, goes to the table of the altar to receive this Light with her body, and not with her mind, wherefore the Light, since the soul is not disposed as she should be for so great a mystery, does not remain by grace in that soul, but leaves her, and, in the soul, remains only greater confusion, for her light is extinguished and her sin increased by her darkness. Of the Sacrament she feels nothing but the crackling of a remorseful conscience, not through the defect of the Light Itself, for that can receive no hurt, but on account of the water that was in the soul, which impeded her proper disposition so that she could not receive the Light. See, therefore, that in no way can this Light, united with its heat and its color, be divided, either by the scanty desire of the soul when she receives the Sacrament, or by any defect which may be in the soul, or by any defect of him who administers it, as I told you of the sun which is not defiled by shining on anything foul, so the sweet Light of this Sacrament cannot be defiled, divided, or diminished in any way, nor can it be detached from its orbit.

“If all the world should receive in communion the Light and Heat of this Sun, the Word, My only-begotten Son, would not be separated from Me—the True Sun, His Eternal Father—because in His mystical Body, the holy Church, He is administered to whoever will receive

Him. He remains wholly with Me, and yet you have Him, whole God and whole man, as I told you, in the metaphor of the light, that, if all the world came to take light from it, each would have it entire, and yet it would remain whole.”

How the bodily sentiments are all deceived in the aforesaid Sacrament, but not those of the soul; therefore it is, with the latter, that one must see, taste, and touch It; and of a beautiful vision this soul had upon this subject.

“Oh, dearest daughter, open well the eye of your intellect and gaze into the abyss of My love, for there is no rational creature whose heart would not melt for love in contemplating and considering, among the other benefits she receives from Me, the special Gift that she receives in the Sacrament.

“And with what eye, dearest daughter, should you and others look at this mystery, and how should you touch it? Not only with the bodily sight and touch, because in this Sacrament all bodily perceptions fail.

“The eye can only see, and the hand can only touch, the white substance of the bread, and the taste can only taste the savor of the bread, so that the grosser bodily sentiments are deceived; but the soul cannot be deceived in her sentiments unless she wish to be—that is, unless she let the light of the most holy faith be taken away from her by infidelity.

“How is this Sacrament to be truly tasted, seen, and touched? With the sentiment of the soul. With what eye is It to be seen? With the eye of the intellect if within it is the pupil of the most holy faith. This eye sees in that whiteness whole God and whole man, the Divine nature united with the human nature, the Body, the Soul, and the Blood of Christ, the Soul united to the Body, the Body and the Soul united with My Divine nature, not detached from Me, as I revealed to you, if you remember well, almost in the beginning of your life; and not so much at first through the eye of your intellect as through your bodily eye, although the light being so great your bodily eyes lost their vision, and only the sight of the eye of your intellect remained. I showed it to you for your enlightenment in the battle that the Devil had been waging against you in this Sacrament; and to make you increase in love in the light of the most holy faith.

“You know that you went one morning to church at sunrise to hear Mass, having beforehand been tormented by the Devil, and you placed yourself upright at the Altar of the Crucifix, while the priest went to the Altar of Mary; you stood there to consider your sin, fearing to have offended Me through the vexation which the Devil had been causing you, and to consider My love, which had made you worthy to hear Mass, seeing that you deemed yourself unworthy to enter into My holy temple. When the minister came to consecrate, you raised your eyes above his head while he was saying the words of consecration, and I manifested Myself to you, and you saw issue from My breast a light, like a ray from the sun, which proceeds from the circle of the sun without being separated from it, out of the midst of which light came a dove and hovered over the host, in virtue of the words which the minister was saying. But sight remained alone in the eye of your intellect, because your bodily sight was not strong enough to stand the light, and in that place you saw and tasted the Abyss of the Trinity, whole God and whole man concealed and veiled in that whiteness that you saw in the bread; and you perceived that the seeing of the Light and the presence of the Word, which you saw intellectually in the whiteness of the bread, did not prevent you

seeing at the same time the actual whiteness of the bread, the one vision did not prevent the other vision, that is to say, the sight of the God-Man revealed in the bread did not prevent the sight of the bread, for neither its whiteness, nor its touch, nor its savor were taken away. This was shown you by My goodness, as I have said to you. The eye of the intellect had the true vision, using the pupil of the holy faith, for this eye should be your principal means of vision, inasmuch as it cannot be deceived; wherefore, with it you should look on this Sacrament. How do you touch It? By the hand of love. With this hand alone can you touch that which the eye of the intellect has recognized in this Sacrament. The soul touches Me with the hand of love, as if to certify to herself that which she has seen and known through faith. How do you taste It? With the palate of holy desire. The corporal palate tastes only the savor of the bread; but the palate of the soul, which is holy desire, tastes God and Man. See, therefore, that the perceptions of the body are deluded, but not those of the soul, for she is illuminated and assured in her own perceptions, for she touches with the hand of love that which the eye of her intellect has seen with the pupil of holy faith; and with her palate—that is, with fiery desire—she tastes My Burning Charity, My Ineffable Love, with which I have made her worthy to receive the tremendous mystery of this Sacrament and the Grace which is contained therein. See, therefore, that you should receive and look on this Sacrament, not only with bodily perceptions, but rather with your spiritual perceptions, disposing your soul in the way that has been said, to receive, and taste, and see this Sacrament.”

Of the excellent state of the soul who receives the sacrament in grace.

“See, dearest daughter, in what an excellent state is the soul who receives, as she should, this Bread of Life, this Food of the Angels. By receiving this Sacrament she dwells in Me and I in her, as the fish in the sea, and the sea in the fish—thus do I dwell in the soul, and the soul in Me—the Sea Pacific. In that soul grace dwells, for, since she has received this Bread of Life in a state of grace, My grace remains in her, after the accidents of bread have been consumed. I leave you the imprint of grace, as does a seal, which, when lifted from the hot wax upon which it has been impressed, leaves behind its imprint, so the virtue of this Sacrament remains in the soul, that is to say, the heat of My Divine charity, and the clemency of the Holy Spirit. There also remains to you the wisdom of My only-begotten Son, by which the eye of your intellect has been illuminated to see and to know the doctrine of My Truth, and, together with this wisdom, you participate in My strength and power, which strengthen the soul against her sensual self-love, against the Devil, and against the world. You see then that the imprint remains, when the seal has been taken away, that is, when the material accidents of the bread, having been consumed, this True Sun has returned to Its Center, not that it was ever really separated from It, but constantly united to Me. The Abyss of My loving desire for your salvation has given you, through My dispensation and Divine Providence, coming to the help of your needs, the sweet Truth as Food in this life, where you are pilgrims and travelers, so that you may have refreshment, and not forget the benefit of the Blood. See then how straitly you are constrained and obliged to render Me love, because I love you so much, and, being the Supreme and Eternal Goodness, deserve your love.”

How the things which have been said about the excellence of this Sacrament, have been said that we might know better the dignity of priests; and how God demands in them greater purity than in other creatures.

“I have told you all this, dearest daughter, that you may the better recognize the dignity to which I have called My ministers, so that your grief at their miseries may be more intense. If they themselves considered their own dignity they would not be in the darkness of mortal sin, or defile the face of their soul. They would not only see their offenses against Me, but also, that, if they gave their bodies to be burned, they would not repay the tremendous grace and favor which they have received, inasmuch as no greater dignity exists in this life. They are My anointed ones, and I call them My Christs, because I have given them the office of administering Me to you, and have placed them like fragrant flowers in the mystical body of the holy Church. The angel himself has no such dignity, for I have given it to those men whom I have chosen for My ministers, and whom I have appointed as earthly angels in this life. In all souls I demand purity and charity, that they should love Me and their neighbor, helping him by the ministration of prayer, as I said to you in another place. But far more do I demand purity in My ministers, and love towards Me, and towards their fellow-creatures, administering to them the Body and Blood of My only-begotten Son, with the fire of charity, and a hunger for the salvation of souls, for the glory and honor of My Name. Even as these ministers require cleanness in the chalice in which this Sacrifice is made, even so do I require the purity and cleanness of their heart and soul and mind. And I wish their body to be preserved, as the instrument of the soul in perfect charity; and I do not wish them to feed upon and wallow in the mire of filth, or to be inflated by pride, seeking great prelacies, or to be cruel to themselves or to their fellow-creatures, because they cannot use cruelty to themselves without being cruel to their fellow-creatures; for, if by sin they are cruel to themselves, they are cruel to the souls of their neighbors, in that they do not give them an example of life, nor care to draw them out of the hands of the Devil, nor to administer to them the Body and Blood of My only-begotten Son, and Me the True Light, as I told you, and the other Sacraments of the holy Church. So that, in being cruel to themselves, they are cruel to others.”

Of the excellence, virtues, and holy works of virtuous and holy ministers; and how such are like the sun.

“I will now speak to you, in order to give a little refreshment to your soul, and to mitigate your grief at the darkness of these miserable subjects, of the holy life of some of My ministers, of whom I have spoken to you, who are like the sun, for the odor of their virtues mitigates the stench of the vices of the others, and the light thereof shines in their darkness. And, by means of this light, will you the better be able to understand the darkness and sins of My unworthy ministers. Open then the eye of your intellect and gaze at the Sun of Justice, and you will see those glorious ministers, who, through ministering the Sun, have become like to It, as I told you of Peter, the prince of the Apostles, who received the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. I say the same of these others, who have administered, in the garden of the holy Church, the Light, that is to say, the Body and the Blood of My only-begotten Son, who is Himself the undivided Sun, as has been said, and all the Sacraments of the holy Church, which all give life in virtue of the Blood. Each one, placed in a different rank, has administered, according to his state, the grace of the Holy Spirit. With what have they administered it? With the light of grace, which they have drawn from this True Light. With light alone? No; because the light cannot be separated from the warmth and color of grace, wherefore a man must either have the light, warmth, and color of grace, or none at all. A man in mortal sin is deprived of the life of grace, and he who is in grace has illuminated the eye of his intellect to know Me, who gave him both grace and the virtue which preserves it, and, in that light, he knows the misery and the reason of sin, that is to say, his own self-love, on which account he hates it, and thereby receives the warmth of Divine love into his affection, which follows his intellect, and he receives the color of this glorious Light, following the doctrine of My sweet Truth, by which his memory is filled with the benefit of the Blood. You see, therefore, that no one can receive the light without receiving the warmth and the color, for they are united together and are one thing; wherefore he cannot, as I have said to you, have one power of his soul so ordered as to receive Me, the True Sun, unless all three powers of his soul are brought together and ordered in My Name. For, as soon as the eye of the intellect lifts itself with the pupil of faith above sensual vision in the contemplation of Me, affection follows it, loving that which the intellect sees and knows, and the memory is filled with that which the affection loves; and, as soon as these powers are thus disposed, the soul participates in Me, the Sun who illuminates her with My power, and with the wisdom of My only-begotten Son, and the fiery clemency of the Holy Spirit. See, then, that these have taken on them the condition of the Sun, for, having clothed themselves, and filled the power of their soul with Me, the true Sun, they become like Me. The Sun illuminates them and causes the earth of their souls to germinate with Its heat. Thus do My sweet ministers, elected and anointed and placed in the mystical body of the holy Church, in order to administer Me, the Sun, that is to say, the Body and Blood of My only-begotten Son, together with the other Sacraments, which draw their life from this Blood; this they do in two ways, actually,

in administering the Sacraments, and spiritually, by shedding forth in the mystical body of the holy Church, the light of supernatural science, together with the color of an honorable and holy life, following the doctrine of My Truth, which they administer in the ardent love with which they cause barren souls to bear fruit, illuminating them with the light of their science, and driving away the darkness of their mortal sin and infidelity, by the example of their holy and regular life, and reforming the lives of those who live in disorder and darkness of sin, and in coldness, through the privation of charity. So you see that they are the Sun, because they have taken the condition of the Sun from Me, the True Sun, because, through affection of love, they are one thing with Me, and I with them, as I narrated to you in another place, and each one has given light in the holy Church, according to the position to which I have elected him: Peter with preaching and doctrine, and in the end with blood; Gregory with science, and holy scripture, and with the mirror of his life; Sylvester, against the infidels, and with disputation and proving of the most holy faith, which he made in word and in deed, receiving virtue from Me. If you turn to Augustine, and to the glorious Thomas and Jerome, and the others, you will see how much light they have thrown over this spouse, extirpating error, like lamps placed upon the candelabra, with true and perfect humility. And, as if famished for such food, they feed upon My honor, and the salvation of souls, upon the table of the most holy Cross. The martyrs, indeed, with blood, which blood cast up sweet perfume before My countenance; and, with the perfume of blood, and of the virtues, and with the light of science, they brought forth fruit in this spouse and extended the faith, and, by their means, the light of the most holy faith was rekindled in the darkened. And prelates, placed in the position of the prelacy of Christ on earth, offered Me the sacrifice of justice with holy and upright lives. The pearl of justice, with true humility, and most ardent love, shone in them, and in their subjects, with the light of discretion. In them, principally because they justly paid Me My due, in rendering glory and praise to My Name, and, to their own sensuality, hatred and displeasure, despising vice and embracing virtue, with love of Me and of their neighbor. With humility they trampled on pride, and, with purity of heart and of body, came, like angels, to the table of the altar, and, with sincerity of mind, celebrated, burning in the furnace of love. And, because they first had done justice to themselves, they therefore did justice to those under them, wishing to see them live virtuously, and correcting them without any servile fear, because they were not thinking of themselves, but solely of My honor and the salvation of souls, like good shepherds, followers of the Good Shepherd, My Truth, whom I gave you to lead your sheep, having willed that He should give His life for you. These have followed His footsteps, and therefore did they correct them, and did not let their members become putrid for want of correcting, but they charitably corrected them with the unction of benignity, and with the sharpness of fire, cauterizing the wound of sin with reproof and penance, little or much, according to the graveness of the fault. And, in order to correct it and to speak the truth, they did not even fear death. They were true

gardeners who, with care and holy tears, took away the thorns of mortal sins, and planted plants odoriferous of virtue. Wherefore, those under them lived in holy, true fear, and grew up like sweet smelling flowers in the mystic body of the holy Church (because they were not deprived of correction, and so were not guilty of sin), for My gardeners corrected them without any servile fear, being free from it, and without any sin, for they balanced exactly the scales of holy justice, reproving humbly and without human respect. And this justice was and is that pearl which shines in them, and which gave peace and light in the minds of the people and caused holy fear to be with them, and unity of hearts. And I would that you know that, more darkness and division have come into the world amongst seculars and religious and the clergy and pastors of the holy Church, through the lack of the light of justice, and the advent of the darkness of injustice, than from any other causes.

“Neither the civil law, nor the divine law, can be kept in any degree without holy justice, because he who is not corrected, and does not correct others, becomes like a limb which putrefies, and corrupts the whole body, because the bad physician, when it had already begun to corrupt, placed ointment immediately upon it, without having first burnt the wound. So, were the prelate, or any other lord having subjects, on seeing one putrefying from the corruption of mortal sin, to apply to him the ointment of soft words of encouragement alone, without reproof, he would never cure him, but the putrefaction would rather spread to the other members, who, with him, form one body under the same pastor. But if he were a physician, good and true to those souls, as were those glorious pastors of old, he would not give salving ointment without the fire of reproof. And, were the member still to remain obstinate in his evil doing, he would cut him off from the congregation in order that he corrupt not the other members with the putrefaction of mortal sin. But they act not so today, but, in cases of evil doing, they even pretend not to see. And do you know why? The root of self-love is alive in them, wherefore they bear perverted and servile fear. Because they fear to lose their position or their temporal goods, or their prelacy, they do not correct, but act like blind ones, in that they see not the real way by which their position is to be kept. If they would only see that it is by holy justice they would be able to maintain it; but they do not, because they are deprived of light. But, thinking to preserve their position with injustice, they do not reprove the faults of those under them; and they are deluded by their own sensitive self-love, or by their desire for lordship and prelacy, and they correct not the faults they should correct in others, because the same or greater ones are their own. They feel themselves comprehended in the guilt, and they therefore lose all ardor and security, and, fettered by servile fear, they make believe not to see. And, moreover, if they do see they do not correct, but allow themselves to be bound over with flattering words and with many presents, and they themselves find the excuse for the guilty ones not to be punished. In such as these are fulfilled the words spoken by My Truth, saying: *‘These are blind and leaders of the blind, and if the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch.’* My sweet ministers, of

whom I spoke to you, who have the properties and condition of the sun, did not, and do not (if there be any now) act so. And they are truly suns, as I have told you, because in them is no darkness of sin, or of ignorance, because they follow the doctrine of My Truth. They are not tepid, because they burn in the furnace of My love, and because they are despisers of the grandeurs, positions, and delights of the world. They fear not to correct, for he who does not desire lordship or prelacy will not fear to lose it, and will reprove manfully, and he whose conscience does not reprove him of guilt, does not fear.

“And therefore this pearl of justice was not dimmed in My anointed ones, My Christs (of whom I have narrated to you), but was resplendent in them, wherefore they embraced voluntary poverty, and sought out vileness with profound humility, and cared not for scorn or villainies, or the detractions of men, or insult, or opprobrium, or pain, or torment.

“They were cursed, and they blessed, and, with true patience, they bore themselves like terrestrial angels, not by nature, but by their ministry, and the supernatural grace given to them, of administering the Body and Blood of My only-begotten Son. And they are truly angels. Because, as the angel, which I give you to be your guardian, ministers to you holy and good inspirations, so were these ministers angels, and were given by My goodness to be guardians, and therefore had they their eye continually over those under them, like real guardian angels, inspiring in their hearts holy and good thoughts, and offering up for them before Me, sweet and amorous desires with continual prayer, and the doctrine of words, and with example of life. So you see that they are angels, placed by My burning love, like lanterns in the mystic body of the holy Church, to be your guardians, so that you blind ones may have guides to direct you into the way of truth, giving you good inspirations, with prayers and example of life, and doctrine as I said. With how much humility did they govern those under them, and converse with them! With how much hope and lively faith, and therefore with liberality, did they distribute to the poor the substance of the holy Church, not fearing, or caring if for them and their subjects temporal substance diminished. And they scarcely observed that which they were really bound to do, that is, to distribute the temporal substance to their own necessity being the poor in the Church. They saved nothing, and after their death there remained no money at all, and there were some even who, for the sake of the poor, left the Church in debt. This was because through the largeness of their charity, and of the hope that they had placed in My Providence, they were without servile fear that anything should diminish to them, either spiritual or temporal.

“The sign that a creature hopes in Me and not in himself, is that he does not fear with a servile fear. They who hope in themselves are the ones who fear, and are afraid of their own shadow, and doubt lest the sky and earth fade away before them. With such fears as these, and a perverted hope in their own small knowledge, they spend so much miserable solicitude in acquiring and preserving temporal things, that they turn their back on the spiritual, caring not for them. But they, miserable, faithless, proud ones consider not that I

alone am He who provides all things necessary for the soul and the body, and that with the same measure that My creatures hope in Me, will My providence be measured to them. The miserable presumptuous ones do not regard the fact that I am He who is, and they are they who are not, and that they have received their being, and every other additional grace, from My Goodness. And therefore his labor may be reputed to be in vain, who watches the city if it be not guarded by Me. All his labor will be vain, if he thinks by his labor or solicitude to keep it, because I alone keep it. It is true that I desire you to use your being, and exercise the graces which I have bestowed upon you, in virtue using the free-will which I have given you, with the light of reason, because though I created you without your help I will not save you without it. I loved you before you were, and those My beloved ones saw and knew this, and therefore they loved Me ineffably, and through their love hoped so greatly in Me that they feared nothing. Sylvester feared not when he stood before the Emperor Constantine disputing with those twelve Jews before the whole crowd, but with lively faith he believed that I being for him, no one could be against him; and in the same way the others all lost their every fear, because they were not alone but were accompanied, because being in the enjoyment of love, they were in Me, and from Me they acquired the light of the wisdom of My only-begotten Son, and from Me they received the faculty to be strong and powerful against the princes and tyrants of the world, and from Me they had the fire of the Holy Spirit, sharing the clemency and burning love of that Spirit.

“This love was and is the companion of whosoever desires it, with the light of faith, with hope, with fortitude, true patience and long perseverance even until death. So you see that because they were not alone but were accompanied they feared nothing. He only who feels himself to be alone, and hopes in himself, deprived of the affection of love, fears, and is afraid of every little thing, because he alone is without Me who give supreme security to the soul who possesses Me through the affection of love. And of this did those glorious ones, My beloved, have full experience, for nothing could injure their souls; but they on the contrary could injure men and the devils, who oftentimes remained bound by the virtue and power that I had given My servants over them. This was because I responded to the love, faith, and hope they had placed in Me. Your tongue would not be sufficient to relate their virtues, neither the eye of your intellect to see the fruit which they receive in everlasting life, and that all will receive who follow in their footsteps. They are like precious stones, and as such do they stand in My presence, because I have received their labor and poverty and the light which they shed with the odor of virtues in the mystic body of the holy Church. And in the life eternal I have placed them in the greatest dignity, and they receive blessing and glory in My sight, because they gave the example of an honorable and holy life, and with light administered the Light of the Body and Blood of My only-begotten Son, and all the Sacraments. And these My anointed ones and ministers are peculiarly beloved by Me, on account of the dignity which I placed in them, and because this Treasure which I placed in their hands

they did not hide through negligence and ignorance, but rather recognized it to be from Me, and exercised it with care and profound humility with true and real virtues; and because I, for the salvation of souls, having placed them in so much excellency they never rested like good shepherds from putting the sheep into the fold of the holy Church, and even out of love and hunger for souls they gave themselves to die, to get them out of the hands of the devil. They made themselves infirm with those who were infirm, so that they might not be overcome with despair, and to give them more courage in exposing their infirmity, they would oftentimes lend countenance to their infirmity and say, 'I, too, am infirm with you.' They wept with those who wept, and rejoiced with those who rejoiced; and thus sweetly they knew to give everyone his nourishment, preserving the good and rejoicing in their virtues, not being gnawed by envy, but expanded with the broadness of love for their neighbors, and those under them. They drew the imperfect ones out of imperfection, themselves becoming imperfect and infirm with them, as I told you, with true and holy compassion, and correcting them and giving them penance for the sins they committed—they through love endured their penance—together with them. For through love, they who gave the penance, bore more pain than they who received it; and there were even those who actually performed the penance, and especially when they had seen that it had appeared particularly difficult to the penitent. Wherefore by that act the difficulty became changed into sweetness.

“Oh! My beloved ones, they made themselves subjects, being prelates, they made themselves servants, being lords, they made themselves infirm, being whole, and without infirmity and the leprosy of mortal sin, being strong they made themselves weak, with the foolish and simple they showed themselves simple, and with the small insignificant. And so with love they knew how to be all things to all men, and to give to each one his nourishment. What caused them to do thus? The hunger and desire for My honor and the salvation of souls which they had conceived in Me. They ran to feed on it at the table of the holy Cross, not fleeing from or refusing any labor, but with zeal for souls and for the good of the holy Church and the spread of the faith, they put themselves in the midst of the thorns of tribulation, and exposed themselves to every peril with true patience, offering incense odoriferous with anxious desires, and humble and continual prayers. With tears and sweat they anointed the wounds of their neighbor, that is the wounds of the guilt of mortal sin, which latter were perfectly cured, the ointment so made, being received in humility.”

A brief repetition of the preceding chapter; and of the reverence which should be paid to priests, whether they are good or bad.

“I have shown you, dearest daughter, a sample of the excellence of good priests (for what I have shown you is only a sample of what that excellence really is), and I have told you of the dignity in which I have placed them, having elected them for My ministers, on account of which dignity and authority I do not wish them to be punished by the hand of seculars on account of any personal defect, for those who punish them offend Me miserably. But I wish seculars to hold them in due reverence, not for their own sakes, as I have said, but for Mine, by reason of the authority which I have given them. Wherefore this reverence should never diminish in the case of priests whose virtue grows weak, any more than in the case of those virtuous ones of whose goodness I have spoken to you; for all alike have been appointed ministers of the Sun—that is of the Body and Blood of My Son, and of the other Sacraments.

“This dignity belongs to good and bad alike—all have the Sun to administer, as has been said, and perfect priests are themselves in a condition of light, that is to say, they illuminate and warm their neighbors through their love. And with this heat they cause virtues to spring up and bear fruit in the souls of their subjects. I have appointed them to be in very truth your guardian angels to protect you; to inspire your hearts with good thoughts by their holy prayers, and to teach you My doctrine reflected in the mirror of their life, and to serve you by administering to you the holy Sacraments, thus serving you, watching over you, and inspiring you with good and holy thoughts as does an angel.

“See, then, that besides the dignity to which I have appointed them, how worthy they are of being loved; when they also possess the adornment of virtue, as did those of whom I spoke to you, which are all bound and obliged to possess, and in what great reverence you should hold them, for they are My beloved children and shine each as a sun in the mystical body of the holy Church by their virtues, forevery virtuous man is worthy of love, and these all the more by reason of the ministry which I have placed in their hands. You should love them therefore by reason of the virtue and dignity of the Sacrament, and by reason of that very virtue and dignity you should hate the defects of those who live miserably in sin, but not on that account appoint yourselves their judges, which I forbid, because they are My Christs, and you ought to love and reverence the authority which I have given them. You know well that if a filthy and badly dressed person brought you a great treasure from which you obtained life, you would not hate the bearer, however ragged and filthy he might be, through love of the treasure and of the lord who sent it to you. His state would indeed displease you, and you would be anxious through love of his master that he should be cleansed from his foulness and properly clothed. This, then, is your duty according to the demands of charity, and thus I wish you to act with regard to such badly ordered priests, who themselves filthy and clothed in garments ragged with vice through their separation from My love, bring you great Treasures—that is to say, the Sacraments of the holy Church—from

which you obtain the life of grace, receiving Them worthily (in spite of the great defects there may be in them) through love of Me, the Eternal God, who send them to you, and through love of that life of grace which you receive from the great treasure, by which they administer to you the whole of God and the whole of Man, that is to say, the Body and Blood of My Son united to My Divine nature. Their sins indeed should displease you, and you should hate them, and strive with love and holy prayer to re-clothe them, washing away their foulness with your tears—that is to say, that you should offer them before Me with tears and great desire, that I may re-clothe them in My goodness, with the garment of charity. Know well that I wish to do them grace, if only they will dispose themselves to receive it, and you to pray for it; for it is not according to My will that they should administer to you the Sun being themselves in darkness, not that they should be stripped of the garment of virtue, foully living in dishonor; on the contrary I have given them to you, and appointed them to be earthly angels and suns, as I have said. It not being My will that they should be in this state, you should pray for them, and not judge them, leaving their judgment to Me. And I, moved by your prayers, will do them mercy if they will only receive it, but if they do not correct their life, their dignity will be the cause of their ruin. For if they do not accept the breadth of My mercy, I, the Supreme Judge, shall terribly condemn them at their last extremity, and they will be sent to the eternal fire.”

Of the difference between the death of a just man and that of a sinner, and first of the death of the just man.

“Having told you how the world and the devils accuse these wretches, which is indeed the truth, I wish to speak to you in more detail on this point (so that you may have greater compassion on these poor wretches), telling you how different are the struggles of the soul of a just man to those of a sinner, and how different are their deaths, and how the peace of the just man’s death is greater or less according to the perfection of his soul. For I wish you to know that all the sufferings which rational creatures endure depend on their will, because if their will were in accordance with mine they would endure no suffering, not that they would have no labors on that account, but because labors cause no suffering to a will which gladly endures them, seeing that they are ordained by My will. Such men as these wage war with the world, the Devil, and their own sensuality through holy hatred of themselves. Wherefore when they come to the point of death, they die peacefully, because they have vanquished their enemies during their life. The world cannot accuse such a man, because he saw through its deceptions and therefore renounced it with all its delights. His sensual fragility and his body do not accuse him, because he bound sensuality like a slave with the rein of reason, macerating his flesh with penance, with watchings, and humble and continual prayer. The will of his senses he slew with hatred and dislike of vice, and with love of virtue. He has entirely lost all tenderness for his body, which tenderness and love between the soul and the body makes death seem difficult, and on account of it man naturally fears death; but since the virtue of a just and perfect man transcends nature, extinguishing his natural fear and overcoming it with holy hatred of himself and desire of arriving at his last end, his natural tenderness cannot make war on him, and his conscience remains in peace; for during his life his conscience kept a good guard, warning him when enemies were coming to attack the city of his soul, like a watch-dog which stands at the door, and when it sees enemies warns the guards by its barking, for in this way the dog of conscience warns the sentry of reason, and the reason together with the free-will know by the light of the intellect whether the stranger be friend or enemy. To a friend, that is to say, to virtue and holy thoughts, he gave his delighted love, receiving and using these with great solicitude; to an enemy, that is to say, to vice and wicked thoughts, he gave hatred and displeasure. And with the knife of hatred of self, and love of Me, and with the light of reason, and the hand of free-will he struck his enemies; so that at the point of death his conscience, having been a faithful guardian, does not gnaw but remains in peace.

“It is true that a just soul, through humility, and because at the moment of death she realizes better the value of time and of the jewels of virtue, reproves herself, seeming to herself to have used her time but little; but this is not an afflictive pain, but rather profitable, for the soul recollected in herself, is caused by it to throw herself before the Blood of the humble and immaculate Lamb My Son. The just man does not turn his head to admire his past virtues, because he neither can nor will hope in his own virtues, but only in the Blood

in which he has found mercy; and as he lived in the memory of that Blood, so in death he is inebriated and drowned in the same. How is it that the devils cannot reprove him of sin? Because during his life he conquered their malice with wisdom, yet they come round him to see if they can acquire anything, and appear in horrible shapes in order to frighten him with hideous aspect, and many diverse phantasms, but the poison of sin not being in his soul, their aspect causes him no terror or fear, as it would do to another who had lived wickedly in the world. Wherefore the devils, seeing that the soul has entered into the Blood with ardent love, cannot endure the sight, but stand afar off shooting their arrows. But their war and their shouts cannot hurt that soul, who already is beginning to taste eternal life, as I said to you in another place, for with the eye of the intellect illuminated by the pupil of the holy faith, she sees Me, the Infinite and Eternal Good, whom she hopes to obtain by grace, not as her due, but by virtue of Jesus Christ My Son.

“Wherefore opening the arms of hope and seizing Him with the hands of love, she seems to enter into His possession before she actually does so, in the way which I have narrated to you in another place. Passing suddenly, drowned in the Blood, by the narrow door of the Word she reaches Me, the Sea Pacific. For sea and door are united together. I and the Truth, My only-begotten Son being one and the same thing. What joy such a soul receives who sees herself so sweetly arrived at this pass, for in Truth she tastes the happiness of the angelic nature! This joy is received by all those who pass in this sweet manner, but to a far greater extent by My ministers, of whom I spoke to you, who have lived like angels, for in this life have they lived with greater knowledge, and with greater hunger for the salvation of souls. I do not speak only of the light of virtue which all can have in general, but of the supernatural light which these men possessed over and above the light of virtuous living, the light, that is, of holy science, by which science they knew more of My Truth, and he who knows more loves Me more, and he who loves Me more receives more. Your reward is measured according to the measure of your love, and if you should ask Me, whether one who has no science can attain to this love, I should reply, yes it is possible that he may attain to it, but an individual case does not make a general law and I always discourse to you in general.

“They also receive greater dignity on account of their priesthood, because they have personally received the office of eating souls in My honor. For just as everyone has the office of remaining in charity with his neighbor, to them is given the office of administering the Blood, and of governing souls.

“Wherefore if they do this solicitously and with love of virtue they receive, as has been said, more than others. Oh! how happy are their souls when they come to the extremity of death! For they have been the defenders and preachers of the faith to their neighbor. This faith they have incarnated in their very marrow, and with it they see their place of repose in Me. The hope with which they have lived, confiding in My providence and losing all trust in themselves, in that they did not hope in their own knowledge, and having lost hope in

themselves, placed no inordinate love in any fellow-creature or in any created thing; having lived in voluntary poverty, causes them now with great delight to lift their confidence towards Me. Their heart, which was a vessel of love, inscribed by their ardent charity with My name, they showed forth with the example of their good and holy life and by the doctrine of their words to their neighbor. This heart then arises and seizes Me, who am its End, with ineffable love, restoring to Me the pearl of justice which it always carried before it, doing justice to all, and discreetly rendering to each his due. Wherefore this man renders to Me justice with true humility, and renders glory and praise to My Name, because he refers to Me the grace of having been able to run his course with a pure and holy conscience, and with himself he is indignant, deeming himself unworthy of receiving such grace.

“His conscience gives good testimony of him to Me, and I justly give him the crown of justice, adorned with the pearls of the virtues—that is, of the fruit which love has drawn from the virtues. Oh, earthly angel! happy you are in that you have not been ungrateful for the benefits received from Me, and have not been negligent or ignorant, but have solicitously opened your eye by the true light, and kept it on your subjects, and have faithfully and manfully followed the doctrine of the Good Shepherd, sweet Christ Jesus, My only-begotten Son, wherefore you are really now passing through Him, the Door, bathed and drowned in His blood, with your troop of lambs of whom you have brought many by your holy doctrine and example to eternal life, and have left many behind you in a state of grace.

“Oh, dearest daughter! to such as these the vision of the devils can do no harm, because of the vision which they have of Me, which they see by faith and hold by love; the darkness and the terrible aspect of the demons do not give them trouble or any fear, because in them is not the poison of sin. There is no servile fear in them, but holy fear. Wherefore they do not fear the demon’s deception, because with supernatural light and with the light of Holy Scripture they know them, so that they do not cause them darkness or disquietude. So thus they gloriously pass, bathed in the blood, with hunger for the salvation of souls, all on fire with love for the neighbor, having passed through the door of the word and entered into Me; and by My goodness each one is arranged in his place, and to each one is measured of the affection of love according as he has measured to Me.”

Of the death of sinners, and of their pains in the hour of death.

“Not so excellent, dearest daughter, is the end of these other poor wretches who are in great misery as I have related to you. How terrible and dark is their death! Because in the moment of death, as I told you, the Devil accuses them with great terror and darkness, showing his face, which you know is so horrible that the creature would rather choose any pain that can be suffered in this world than see it; and so greatly does he freshen the sting of conscience that it gnaws him horribly. The disordinate delights and sensuality of which he made lords over his reason, accuse him miserably, because then he knows the truth of that which at first he knew not, and his error brings him to great confusion.

“In his life he lived unfaithfully to Me—self-love having veiled the pupil of the most holy faith—wherefore the Devil torments him with infidelity in order to bring him to despair. Oh! how hard for them is this battle, because it finds them disarmed, without the armor of affection and charity; because, as members of the Devil, they have been deprived of it all. Wherefore they have not the supernatural light, neither the light of science, because they did not understand it, the horns of their pride not letting them understand the sweetness of its marrow. Wherefore now in the great battle they know not what to do. They are not nourished in hope, because they have not hoped in Me, neither in the Blood of which I made them ministers, but in themselves alone, and in the dignities and delights of the world. And the incarnate wretch did not see that all was counted to him with interest, and that as a debtor he would have to render an account to Me; now he finds himself denuded and without any virtue, and on whichever side he turns he hears nothing but reproaches with great confusion. His injustice which he practiced in his life accuses him to his conscience, wherefore he dares not ask other than justice.

“And I tell you that so great is that shame and confusion that unless in their life they have taken the habit of hoping in My mercy, that is, have taken the milk of mercy (although on account of their sins this is great presumption, for you cannot truly say that he who strikes Me with the arm of My mercy has a hope in mercy, but rather has presumption), there is not one who would not despair, and with despair they would arrive with the Devil in eternal damnation.

“But arriving at the extremity of death, and recognizing his sin, his conscience unloaded by holy confession, and presumption taken away, so that he offends no more, there remains mercy, and with this mercy he can, if he will, take hold on hope. This is the effect of Mercy, to cause them to hope therein during their life, although I do not grant them this, so that they should offend Me by means of My mercy, but rather that they should dilate themselves in charity, and in the consideration of My goodness. But they act in a contrary way, because they offend Me in the hope which they have in My mercy. And nevertheless, I keep them in this hope so that at the last moment they may have something which they may lay hold of, and by so doing not faint away with the condemnation which they receive, and thus arrive

at despair; for this final sin of despair is much more displeasing to Me and injures them much more than all the other sins which they have committed. And this is the reason why this sin is more dangerous to them and displeasing to Me, because they commit other sins through some delight of their own sensuality, and they sometimes grieve for them, and if they grieve in the right way their grief will procure them mercy. But it is no fragility of your nature which moves you to despair, for there is no pleasure and nothing but intolerable suffering in it. One who despairs despises My mercy, making his sin to be greater than mercy and goodness. Wherefore, if a man fall into this sin, he does not repent, and does not truly grieve for his offense against Me as he should, grieving indeed for his own loss, but not for the offense done to Me, and therefore he receives eternal damnation. See, therefore, that this sin alone leads him to hell, where he is punished for this and all the other sins which he has committed; whereas had he grieved and repented for the offense done to Me, and hoped in My mercy, he would have found mercy, for, as I have said to you, My mercy is greater without any comparison than all the sins which any creature can commit; wherefore it greatly displeases Me that they should consider their sins to be greater.

“Despair is that sin which is pardoned neither here nor hereafter, and it is because despair displeases Me so much that I wish them to hope in My mercy at the point of death, even if their life have been disordered and wicked. This is why during their life I use this sweet trick with them, making them hope greatly in My mercy, for when, having fed themselves with this hope, they arrive at death, they are not so inclined to abandon it, on account of the severe condemnation they receive, as if they had not so nourished themselves.

“All this is given them by the fire and abyss of My inestimable love, but because they have used it in the darkness of self-love, from which has proceeded their every sin, they have not known it in truth, but in so far as they have turned their affections towards the sweetness of My mercy they have thought of it with great presumption. And this is another cause of reproof which their conscience gives them in the likeness of the Devil, reproving them in that they should have used the time and the breadth of My mercy in which they hoped, in charity and love of virtue, and that time which I gave them through love should have been spent in holiness, whereas with all their time and great hope of My mercy they did nothing but offend Me miserably. Oh! blinder than the blind! You have hidden your pearl and your talent which I placed in your hands in order that you might gain more with it, but you in your presumption would not do My will, rather you hid it under the ground of disordinate self-love, which now renders you the fruit of death.

“Your miseries are not hid from you now, for the worm of conscience sleeps no longer, but is gnawing you, the devils shout and render to you the reward which they are accustomed to give their servants, that is to say, confusion and condemnation; they wish to bring you to despair, so that at the moment of death you may not escape from their hands, and therefore they try to confuse you, so that afterwards when you are with them they may

render to you of the part which is theirs. Oh, wretch! the dignity in which I placed you, you now see shining as it really is, and you know to your shame that you have held and used in such guilty darkness the substance of the holy Church, that you see yourself to be a thief, a debtor, who ought to pay his debt to the poor and the holy Church. Then your conscience represents to you that you have spent the money on public harlots, and have brought up your children and enriched your relations, and have thrown it away on gluttony and on many silver vessels and other adornments for your house. Whereas you should have lived in voluntary poverty.

“Your conscience represents to you the divine office which you neglected, by which you fell into the guilt of mortal sin, and how even when you recited it with your mouth your heart was far from Me. Conscience also shows you your subjects, that is to say, the love and hunger which you should have felt towards nourishing them in virtue, giving them the example of your life and striking them with the hand of mercy and the rod of justice, and because you did the contrary your conscience and the horrible likeness of the Devil reproves you.

“And if as a prelate you have given prelacies or any charge of souls unjustly to one of your subjects, that is, that you have not considered to whom and how you were giving it, the Devil puts this also before your conscience, because you ought to have given it, not on account of pleasant words, nor in order to please creatures, nor for the sake of gifts, but solely with regard to virtue, My honor and the salvation of souls. And since you have not done so you are reprov'd, and for your greater pain and confusion you have before your conscience and the light of your intellect that which you have done and ought not to have done, and that which you ought to have done and have not done.

“I wish you to know, dearest daughter, that whiteness is better seen when placed on a black ground, and blackness on a white, than when they are separated. So it happens to these wretches, to these in particular and to all others in general, for at death when the soul begins to see its woes, and the just man his beatitude, his evil life is represented to a wicked man, and there is no reason that any one should remind him of the sins that he has committed, for his conscience places them before him, together with the virtues which he ought to have practiced. Why the virtues? For his greater shame. For vice being placed on a ground of virtue is known better on account of the virtue, and the better he knows his sin, the greater his shame, and by comparison with his sin he knows better the perfection of virtue, wherefore he grieves the more, for he sees that his own life was devoid of any; and I wish you to know that in this knowledge which dying sinners have of virtue and vice they see only too clearly the good which follows the virtue of a just man, and the pain that comes on him who has lain in the darkness of mortal sin. I do not give him this knowledge so that he may despair, but so that he may come to a perfect self-knowledge and shame for his sins, with hope, so that with that pain and knowledge he may pay for his sins, and appease My anger, humbly

begging My mercy. The virtuous woman increases thereby in joy and in knowledge of My love, for he attributes the grace of having followed virtue in the doctrine of My truth to Me and not to himself, wherefore he exalts in Me, with this truly illuminated knowledge, and tastes and receives the sweet end of his being in the way which I have related to you in another place. So that the one, that is to say, the just man, who has lived in ardent charity, exults in joy, while the wicked man is darkened and confounded in sorrow.

“To the just man the appearance and vision of the Devil causes no harm or fear, for fear and harm can only be caused to him by sin; but those who have passed their lives lasciviously and in many sins, receive both harm and fear from the appearance of the devils, not indeed the harm of despair if they do not wish it, but the suffering of condemnation, of the refreshing of the worm of conscience, and of fear and terror at their horrible aspect. See now, dearest daughter, how different are the sufferings and the battle of death to a just man and to a sinner, and how different is their end.

“I have shown to the eye of your intellect a very small part of what happens, and so small is what I have shown you with regard to what it really is, to the suffering, that is, of the one, and the happiness of the other, that it is but a trifle. See how great is the blindness of man, and in particular of these ministers, for the more they have received of Me, and the more they are enlightened by the Holy Scripture, the greater are their obligations and more intolerable confusion do they receive for not fulfilling them; the more they knew of Holy Scripture during their life, the better do they know at their death the great sins they have committed, and their torments are greater than those of others, just as good men are placed in a higher degree of excellence. Theirs is the fate of the false Christian, who is placed in Hell in greater torment than a pagan, because he had the light of faith and renounced it, while the pagan never had it.

“So these wretches will be punished more than other Christians for the same sin, on account of the ministry which I entrusted to them, appointing them to administer the sun of the holy Sacrament, and because they had the light of science, in order to discern the truth both for themselves and others had they wished to; wherefore they justly receive the greater pains. But the wretches do not know this, for did they consider their state at all, they would not come to such misery, but would be that which they ought to be and are not. For the whole world has thus become corrupt, they being much more guilty than seculars, according to their state; for with their stench they defile the face of their soul, and corrupt their subjects, and suck the blood from My spouse, that is, the holy Church, wherefore through these sins they make her grow pale, because they divert to themselves the love and charity which they should have to this divine spouse, and think of nothing but stripping her for their own advantage, seizing prelacies, and great properties, when they ought to be seeking souls. Wherefore through their evil life, seculars become irreverent and disobedient

to the holy Church, not that they ought on that account to do so, or that their sins are excused through the sins of My ministers.”

How this devout soul, praising and thanking GOD, made a prayer for the Holy Church.

Then this soul, as if inebriated, tormented, and on fire with love, her heart wounded with great bitterness, turned herself to the Supreme and Eternal Goodness, saying: “Oh! Eternal God! oh! Light above every other light, from whom issues all light! Oh! Fire above every fire, because You are the only Fire who burn without consuming, and consume all sin and self-love found in the soul, not afflicting her, but fattening her with insatiable love, and though the soul is filled she is not sated, but ever desires You, and the more of You she has, the more she seeks—and the more she desires, the more she finds and tastes of You—Supreme and Eternal Fire, Abyss of Charity. Oh! Supreme and Eternal Good, who has moved You, Infinite God, to illuminate me, Your finite creature, with the light of Your Truth? You, the same Fire of Love are the cause, because it is always love which constrained and constrains You to create us in Your image and similitude, and to do us mercy, giving immeasurable and infinite graces to Your rational creatures. Oh! Goodness above all goodness! You alone are He who is Supremely Good, and nevertheless You gave the Word, Your only-begotten Son, to converse with us filthy ones and filled with darkness. What was the cause of this? Love. Because You loved us before we were. Oh! Good! oh! Eternal Greatness! You made Yourself low and small to make man great. On whichever side I turn I find nothing but the abyss and fire of Your charity. And can a wretch like me pay back to You the graces and the burning charity that You have shown and show with so much burning love in particular to me beyond common charity, and the love that You show to all Your creatures? No, but You alone, most sweet and amorous Father, are He who will be thankful and grateful for me, that is, that the affection of Your charity itself will render You thanks, because I am she who is not, and if I spoke as being anything of myself, I should be lying by my own head, and should be a lying daughter of the Devil, who is the father of lies, because You alone are He who is. And my being and every further grace that You have bestowed upon me, I have from You, who give them to me through love, and not as my due.

“Oh! sweetest Father, when the human race lay sick through the sin of Adam, You sent it a Physician, the sweet and amorous Word—Your Son; and now, when I was lying infirm with the sickness of negligence and much ignorance, You, most soothing and sweet Physician, Eternal God, have given a soothing, sweet, and bitter medicine, that I may be cured and rise from my infirmity. You have soothed me because with Your love and gentleness You have manifested Yourself to me, Sweet above all sweetness, and have illuminated the eye of my intellect with the light of most holy faith, with which light, according as it has pleased You to manifest it to me, I have known the excellence of grace which You have given to the human race, administering to it the entire God-Man in the mystic body of the holy Church. And I have known the dignity of Your ministers whom You have appointed to administer You to us. I desired that You would fulfill the promise that You made to me, and You gave much more, more even than I knew how to ask for. Wherefore I know in truth that the heart of

man knows not how to ask or desire as much as You can give, and thus I see that You are He who is the Supreme and Eternal Good, and that we are they who are not. And because You are infinite, and we are finite, You give that which Your rational creature cannot desire enough; for she cannot desire it in itself, nor in the way in which You can and will satisfy the soul, filling her with things for which she does not ask You. Moreover, I have received light from Your Greatness and Charity, through the love which You have for the whole human race, and in particular for Your anointed ones, who ought to be earthly angels in this life. You have shown me the virtue and beatitude of these Your anointed ones who have lived like burning lamps, shining with the Pearl of Justice in the holy Church. And by comparison with these I have better understood the sins of those who live wretchedly. Wherefore I have conceived a very great sorrow at Your offense and the harm done to the whole world, for they do harm to the world, being mirrors of sin when they ought to be mirrors of virtue. And because You have manifested and grieved over their iniquities to me—a wretch who am the cause and instrument of many sins—I am plunged in intolerable grief.

“You, oh! inestimable love, have manifested this to me, giving me a sweet and bitter medicine that I might wholly arise out of the infirmity of my ignorance and negligence, and have recourse to You with anxious and solicitous desire, knowing myself and Your goodness and the offenses which are committed against You by all sorts of people, so that I might shed a river of tears, drawn from the knowledge of Your infinite goodness, over my wretched self and over those who are dead in that they live miserably. Wherefore I do not wish, oh! Eternal Father, ineffable Fire of Love, that my heart should ever grow weary, or my eyes fail through tears, in desiring Your honor and the salvation of souls, but I beg of You, by Your grace, that they may be as two streams of water issuing from You, the Sea Pacific. Thanks, thanks to You, oh! Father, for having granted me that which I asked You and that which I neither knew nor asked, for by thus giving me matter for grief You have invited me to offer before You sweet, loving, and yearning desires, with humble and continual prayer. Now I beg of You that You will do mercy to the world and to the holy Church. I pray You to fulfill that which You caused me to ask You. Alas! what a wretched and sorrowful soul is mine, the cause of all these evils. Do not put off any longer Your merciful designs towards the world, but descend and fulfill the desire of Your servants.

“Ah me! You cause them to cry in order to hear their voices! Your truth told us to cry out, and we should be answered; to knock, and it would be opened to us; to beg, and it would be given to us. Oh! Eternal Father, Your servants do cry out to Your mercy; do You then reply.

“I know well that mercy is Your own attribute, wherefore You can not destroy it or refuse it to him who asks for it. Your servants knock at the door of Your truth, because in the truth of Your only-begotten Son they know the ineffable love which You have for man, wherefore

the fire of Your love ought not and cannot refrain from opening to him who knocks with perseverance. Wherefore open, unlock, and break the hardened hearts of Your creatures, not for their sakes who do not knock, but on account of Your infinite goodness, and through love of Your servants who knock at You for their sakes. Grant the prayer of those, Eternal Father who, as You see, stand at the door of Your truth and pray. For what do they pray? For with the Blood of this door—Your truth—have You washed our iniquities and destroyed the stain of Adam’s sin. The Blood is ours, for You have made it our bath, wherefore You can not deny it to any one who truly asks for it. Give, then, the fruit of Your Blood to Your creatures. Place in the balance the price of the blood of Your Son, so that the infernal devils may not carry off Your lambs. You are the Good Shepherd who, to fulfill Your obedience, laid down His life for Your lambs, and made for us a bath of His Blood.

“That Blood is what Your hungry servants beg of You at this door, begging You through it to do mercy to the world, and to cause Your holy Church to bloom with the fragrant flowers of good and holy pastors, who by their sweet odor shall extinguish the stench of the putrid flowers of sin. You have said, Eternal Father, that through the love which You have for Your rational creatures, and the prayers and the many virtues and labors of Your servants, You would do mercy to the world, and reform the Church, and thus give us refreshment; wherefore do not delay, but turn the eye of Your mercy towards us, for You must first reply to us before we can cry out with the voice of Your mercy. Open the door of Your inestimable love which You have given us through the door of Your Word. I know indeed that You open before even we can knock, for it is with the affection of love which You have given to Your servants, that they knock and cry to You, seeking Your honor and the salvation of souls. Give them then the bread of life, that is to say, the fruit of the Blood of Your only-begotten Son, which they ask of You for the praise and glory of My name and the salvation of souls. For more glory and praise will be Yours in saving so many creatures, than in leaving them obstinate in their hardness of heart. To You, Eternal Father, everything is possible, and even though You have created us without our own help, You will not save us without it. I beg of You to force their wills, and dispose them to wish for that for which they do not wish; and this I ask You through Your infinite mercy. You have created us from nothing; now, therefore, that we are in existence, do mercy to us, and remake the vessels which You have created to Your image and likeness. Re-create them to Grace in Your mercy and the Blood of Your Son sweet Christ Jesus.”